

Introduction: It is a great thing to be called by The Three-in-One Covenant God, Yahweh. I hope everyone here has been called by God to salvation in Jesus. God's call of a person often starts with a command, such as: go or follow. He may give a truth about Himself related to the command, such as: I am with you or I have done this. And, there is always a promise, such as: I will bless you or I will be your peace. *** What's great about Yahweh is how these three aspects of His call work together. The command may seem difficult to do to the person being called; but, the truth and promise of the call always address the concerns raised by the command of the call. The result is the person called receives faith to respond to the call and grow closer to God. *** The call of Abram is a good example of this. The first words Yahweh spoke to Abram were for him to go out from the place he had lived all his life. But, a seven-fold poetic word contained five promises of blessing and greatness, a command to be a blessing, and the truth that all nations, or families, on earth are blessed in Abram. As hard as it was to leave home at an advanced age, the promises and the truth more than offset the concerns raised by the command. *** With Jesus' last command to His eleven disciples, they must have wondered how they could make new disciples in all nations and teach them to do what they could not do themselves: obey all His commands. But, the promise was great. He would be with them to the end of the age. Once they received The Holy Spirit, they were enabled and equipped to obey. *** Let's look at how God's Word describes all that was contained in Abram's call.

I. Yahweh commands Abram to go with a seven-fold call, and Abram went to Shechem; there, Yahweh promised the land to his descendants, and Abram worshipped Yahweh. (Genesis 12:1-9)

A. Yahweh commands Abram to go to a land He will show him with a seven-fold call, and Abram went five hundred miles southwest to Shechem. (*Verses 1-6*)

1. Then Yahweh said to Abram: Go from your land and from your kindred and from your father's house to the land which I will show you. (*Verse 1*)

Leave: The command is to go, to leave land, kindred and family. Abram ('exalted father') is leaving behind everything of value to people who lived two thousand years before Jesus became human.

Promise: The promise is Yahweh Himself will show Abram the land to which he is called.

2. With seven poetic lines, Yahweh closes His call of Abram. (*Verses 2-3*)

Central command: 'and you must be a blessing /' – this is the fourth line in the form of a command, but Yahweh supplies all Abram needs to obey with the promises and the truth surrounding it.

Five promises: Yahweh puts three promises before the command and two after it.

- i. 'And I will make you a great nation /' – at this point Abram has no children.
- ii. 'and I will bless you /' – to bless means to give success, prosperity, children, and longevity.
- iii. 'and I will make your name great /' – this has to do with fame, as a good gift from God. Today, all Jews and most Christians know his name.
- v. 'and I will bless those who bless you /' – the mutual blessing is for groups of people.
- vi. 'and he who curses you I will curse /' – the cursing is from and to individuals, only the guilty.

Final truth: 'and all the families of the earth have been blessed in you'. Yahweh saves the best for last, the blessing of all families on the earth. With this final word, Yahweh's call to Abram is complete.

The call of Abram

3. Then Abram went as Yahweh had spoken to him, and Lot went with him; Abram was seventy-five years old when he went out from Haran. (*Verse 4*)

Obedience: Abram usually responded quickly with the obedience of faith to Yahweh's commands.

Details: Lot ('covering') went with him. He had lived in the same place with his extended family for seventy-five years. Abram's father Terah ('delay') had uprooted the clan from Ur to go to Canaan; but, he only took them six hundred miles northwest to Haran ('mountaineer'). Now, after his father's death (*Genesis 11:26-32*), Abram goes out from Haran in response to God's call.

4. And Abram took Sarai ('princess') his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions which they had gathered, and the souls whom they had acquired in Haran, and they went out to go to the land of Canaan ('lowland'), then they came to the land of Canaan. (*Verse 5*)

Wife: His princess bride was with him.

Animals: Possessions were primarily animals, livestock. Abram had sheep, cattle, camels and donkeys (*Genesis 24:35*).

People: He had also bought human servants who watched over his many possessions.

Canaan: They headed for and arrived in the land of Canaan, a fertile valley between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. Abram is now beginning to see what Yahweh's call was about; but there is much more to the fulfilling of **the call of Abram**.

5. Then Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem until the oak of Moreh; and, the Canaanites ('zealous') were then in the land. (*Verse 6*)

Shechem: Shechem ('shoulder') was five hundred miles southwest of Haran, fifteen miles west of the Jordan ('descender') River and thirty miles north of the Dead Sea.

Tree of learning: Moreh is from the same root word (yā-rāh – 'to teach') as Torah. Torah means 'instruction'. Moreh means 'learning'. When he arrived in Canaan, Abram stopped at a 'tree of learning'.

Canaanite: Zealous people were already living in the land when Abram arrived.

B. In Shechem Yahweh appears to Abram and promises to give the land to his offspring, Abram builds an altar; then, proceeds to Bethel and builds another altar, calling on The Name of Yahweh. (*Verses 7-9*)

1. Then Yahweh appeared to Abram and said, to your seed (offspring) I will give this land; then he built an altar there to Yahweh, The One appearing to him. (*Verse 7*)

Land of promise: The land of Canaan was promised to the offspring of Abram as a singular entity. That is, all descended from Isaac would be given the land to dwell in as one family of Abram.

Altar: The altar was built to worship Yahweh by sacrifice. Abram was so grateful of being brought this far by Yahweh as a result of his obedience to His call, he offered of the abundance of his animals.

The call of Abram

2. Then he moved on from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel ('house of God') and pitched his tent, Bethel on the west and Ai ('heap of ruins') on the east; and then he built an altar to Yahweh and called on The Name of Yahweh. (*Verse 8*)

Bethel: Bethel was about twenty miles south of Shechem – a one day journey for a man traveling with many people and possessions.

Call on The Name: When Abram built his second altar he also called on The Name of The Covenant God who had called him. The Name represents all God is. Abram worshipped prayerfully. He was in a close relationship Yahweh, They talked with each other.

3. And Abraham journeyed to go to journey to the Negev ('south'). (*Verse 9*)

Negev: The Negev is a four thousand five hundred square mile area in southern Judah north of the Sinai Peninsula with annual rainfall of only eight inches. The summers are very hot. Yet there is a shallow underground water table that allows for limited grazing of animals. Because of this, the land was not able to bear the flocks of both Abram and Lot, so strife arose among their herdsmen and they separated. (*Genesis 13:5-13*)

II. Jesus commands the Eleven to make disciples in three ways before promising to be with them until the end of the age. (*Matthew 28:19-20*)

A. Jesus tells the Eleven that, having been sent, they must instruct to discipleship all nations, baptizing them into God's Name, and teaching them to keep all His commandments. (*Verses 19-20a*)

1. Jesus is speaking to the Eleven (*verses 16-18*): Therefore having (been sent) gone (*Verse 19a*)

Having gone: Soon after calling the Twelve, Jesus sent them on a mission to the lost sheep of Israel (*Matthew 10:1-16*). He may be asking them to recall the initial, limited mission on which they had been sent by Him.

2. ... you must teach all the nations ... (*Verse 19b*)

Teach: To teach is to make a disciple, instruct or cause to follow. It is from a root noun for a learner.

All nations: In His last command, Jesus extends the mission field to which they are sent from Israel to all nations on earth.

Make disciples of all nations

3. ... baptizing them in the Name of The Father and of The Son and of The Holy Spirit. (*Verse 19c*)

Baptizing: A baptism is a cleansing immersion. For Christians it is the initial declaration of a lifetime commitment of growing as a disciple (learner, follower) of The Savior King.

Name: Notice there is one Name with the three persons of God following. Abram called on The Name of The Three-in-One Covenant God after he had come to a place that featured a tree of learning.

4. ... teaching them to observe (keep) all things, as many as, I have commanded to you. (*Verses 20a*)

Teaching: This word for teaching is a synonym to the word for making a disciple with the primary meaning of a teacher instructing learners.

Obedience: The goal of the continual teaching is for disciples to continuously observe (keep, obey) all Jesus commanded in His earthly ministry. This includes His last command to make new disciple from people of every nation.

B. Jesus promises His presence until the end. (*Verses 20bc*)

1. Focusing them with 'Behold', He emphatically promises to continually be with them all the days. (*Verse 20b*)

Emmanuel: This is the Emmanuel ('with us God') promise. It runs throughout the story of God and people from *Genesis* to *Revelation*. It is the only 'blank check' promise God has ever given to all of His people for all of the time!

2. ... until the completion of the age. (*Verse 20c*)

End of age: This promise is for all time until Jesus comes again. So, we know it is for more than just the Eleven.

It is for everyone who becomes a disciple of Jesus, and then lives to make disciples, from then until He comes again.

This is the fulfillment of ***the call of Abram***.

Conclusion: Yahweh commanded Abram to go from his country and family with promises of blessing and greatness plus the truth all families on earth were blessed in him, and he went. When he finally arrived, Yahweh promised the land to Abram's offspring and Abram built two altars before moving farther south. Two thousand years later, Jesus commanded His eleven disciples to teach people of all nations to be His disciples and to obey all He commanded, and He gave the promise He would be with them to the end of the age. This is the fulfillment of the truth in ***the call of Abram***.