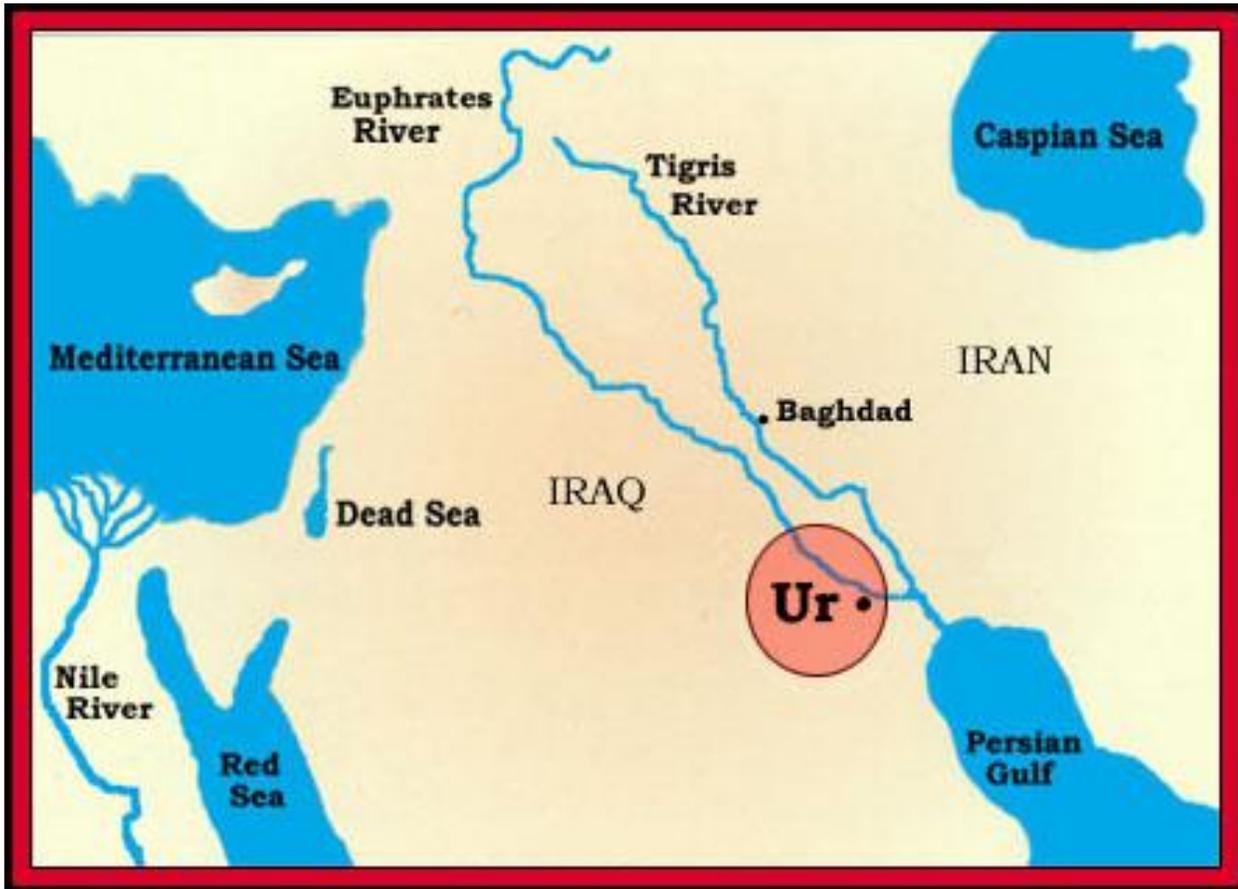


## Midweek Meditation for June 10, 2020 (week of June 7)

Genesis 12:1-9.

As you may know, last week we began the study about the father of our faith, Abraham. At this point in our journey in the life of Abraham, he is known as Abram. Last week, we talked about how Abram and his people came from a place called Ur, located in the southern portion of modern-day Iraq near the northern tip of the Persian Gulf.



God used the first 75 years of Abram's life to mold him into a servant that could accomplish the purpose that God had in store for him and his family. Then, God called Abram, as it says in Genesis 12:1, to "Go from your country, from your people and from your father's household, to the land I will show you." So, Abram was asked by God to leave Ur, and he did. He and Lot, and his father and Sarai, his wife, traveled from Ur to Haran, and then they settled there, and waited for God to clarify what they should do next. We know that Terah, Abram's Father, died while they were in Haran. Perhaps God's plan was to help Abram with the process of letting go of his father's household. By timing Abram's calling by God to coincide with a time after Terah's death, that allowed Abram and those with him to answer God's call, and travel to Canaan, completely separate from the idolatry and the worship of Pagan gods associated with his father's household, and the kingdom in Ur, and the people of Ur.

Just like Abram, we are called by God, often in a way where God asks us to let go of the things that distract us from surrendering our lives to God. And often, that is hard. But that is what God asks, and in fact, that is what God requires of us. It is interesting, Abram was asked to leave his country, his people and his Father's household. The disciples in Jesus time were asked to lay down their nets and follow.

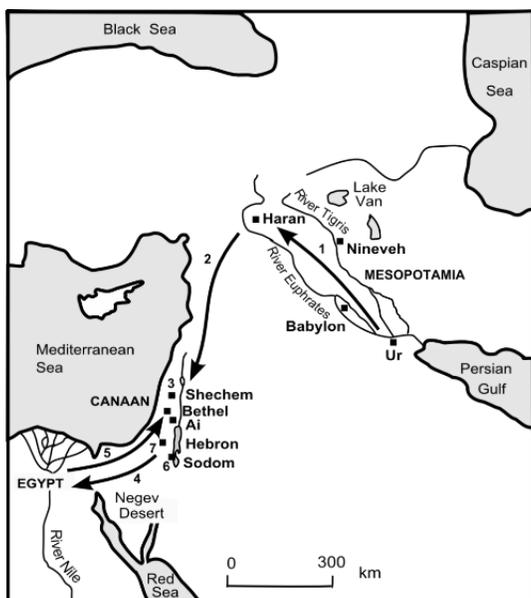
Peter and James and John were asked to leave their families and their livelihood and follow. Our call from God is parallel and connected to the disciples and Abram because we are all a part of the same family, the family of God. God had a purpose for Abram, God had a purpose for his disciples, and God has a purpose for you and me. And do you know what, one is not more important than the other. Because, each time God calls the name of one of his children, God does that for a reason. Each called child of God has an important part in furthering the purpose of God's love shown to the world.

Abram was obedient and look what happened. The disciples were obedient and look what happened. If we are obedient to each portion of our call to love and to serve, then, the same sort of transformation is possible in our world and in our time and in our lives. Can we afford to pass up that transformation, by not answering the call to serve God, and God alone for our church, and for us, as individuals? Big things can either happen by God's light shining from our heart into the lives of others; or, big things can be left as unrealized potential for God's light in the world because we stayed in our own little Ur, or we kept on fishing by our own little seashore, instead of laying down our nets and following the Lord.

What was ahead for Abram? It tells us in our passage of Scripture. <sup>2</sup>"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.<sup>[a3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

We are a part of that great nation that God promised to Abram. We are among the people who are blessed though His faithful witness. And, we must never forget that. We are a portion of the covenant that God made to Abram. Jesus Christ, by His blessed sacrifice has made us a part of this great nation that God told Abram about 4000 years ago.

And just like Abram, just like Jesus, just like Peter, and just like Paul, we are called by God to take our ordained part in the family of God.



So as our Story continues, Abram went into the promised land. First he went to Shechem. And I want to show you where Shechem is on the map here. When Abram arrived in Shechem, God said that He would give this new land to his offspring. This is a place where the family of God, our family, would begin. So, he built an altar to the Lord who had met him there. And you can see in the picture above,

the ancient ruins of Shechem. The building just a little above and to the right of center is the temple in Shechem. The Holy place in the temple was likely the place where the altar that Abram built in Shechem was located. Abram did not just build an altar so that Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Rachel would remember. The promised land, the land of milk and honey, the land where God's love, God's blessing rules over all, is a land that is for all of God's children. That altar was built in Shechem. But the blessing that it commemorates has swelled and become manifest unto every corner of the land, and in every generation of time.

That truth is shown by what Abram did next. He went to Bethel, and pitched a tent there, and built an altar there, and called on the name of the Lord that God would be with his family, and his offspring, the entire family of God. That altar in Bethel and the altar in Shechem is a call for God's blessing on the entire family of God, including you and me, and including our churches.

And from there, the passage said that he went to Negev which is a desert region that included the ancient cities of Hebron and Beersheba as you can see here. And God's family and God's blessing was extended to these regions too.

We will stop our discussion here for today. Just remember for this week, that the thoughts we shared about Abram's call to serve are much more than a story about Abram's travels. Much more than a simple encounter that Abram had with God. That call to obediently and faithfully serve the God of Abram is about the moment in time when the family of God was established. And that call to Abram and Sarai is a call that rings out to every generation of God's family including God's children in Orion and Coal valley. Yes, including you and me.