

Lesson IV.

GOD CALLS ABRAM

July 28, 1901

Genesis 12: 1-9. Commit to memory vs. 1-3. Read Genesis 11: 1 to 12: 9.

1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4 So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran;

Revised Version.—The; 2 Be thou; 3 Him that curseth thee will I curse; 4 The; 5 Went; 6 Shechem; 7 Oak; 8 The; 9 At; 10 South (a proper name).

EXPLANATION

Connection—After the deluge, men soon fell again into sin. Four centuries pass. The race multiplies and scatters. They are of diverse languages. They all alike seem to have turned away from God, who, instead of again cutting them off, selects one man, Abram, from whom a nation should arise, to worship and serve Him. Through the chosen nation and through the Christ who is to spring from it, He will redeem and sanctify men. The Old Testament times were a preparation for the coming of the Christ, the New Testament saw Him appear.

1. The Lord had said unto Abram; when in Ur of the Chaldees and again perhaps in Haran. (Gen. 11: 31; 15: 7, Acts 7: 2, 3.) Get thee out of thy country. God required a complete separation from home and kindred, which doubtless meant much sacrifice. Unto the land that I will show thee. The outlook was left quite uncertain, as a trial of his faith (Heb. 11: 8).

2, 3. I will make of thee a great nation; a magnificent promise, but hard to be credited by a childless man, such as Abram was. I will bless thee. Abram was surrounded by idolatry. Here is a promise from One whom he recognizes as the true God, "the God of glory," as Stephen describes Him (Acts 7: 2). Thou shalt be a blessing; to others. For some hints as to the nature of the blessing, see ch. 23: 4, Gal. 3: 14. I will bless them that bless thee, etc. God makes Himself his servants' champion. Their interests are to be identical. (Compare John 17: 10; 1 Cor. 12: 27.) And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. The world owes much to the Jewish nation for the knowledge of the one true God, but the promise is only completely fulfilled in Christ. It is the second promise we meet of His coming and redemptive work. The first is in ch. 3: 15.

4, 5. So Abram departed. His obedience was exact, without abatement or change, just as the Lord had spoken. This is the sort of a man to earn the title of "the friend of God" (Jas. 2: 23). Abram was seventy-five years old. This is a turning point in his life and in the history of the world; and so his age is given, as in the case of Noah, when he went out of the ark (Gen. 8: 13). Sarai (meaning

and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

7 And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land, and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.

8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east; and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.

9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

10 South.

"my princess") his wife; who voluntarily shared her husband's lot, and is mentioned as one of the heroes of faith. And Lot, his brother's son; an orphan (11: 27, 28). He became a member of Abram's family and shared his faith in God. And all their substance . . . and the souls they had gathered in Haran; a considerable caravan doubtless, with many hired servants and slaves. They had tarried in Haran some length of time (21: 31). Into the land of Canaan; a journey of about 300 miles, possibly by way of Damascus (Gen. 15: 2). They followed the guidance of God on to the land of which He had spoken (v. 1).

6. Passed through the land; from the north, southward. Unto Shechem (Rev. Ver.); between Mts. Ebal and Gerizim, a place afterwards greatly noted. Unto the oak (or oak grove) of Moreh (Rev. Ver.); probably a grove already "sacred," and now made truly so by the appearing of the Lord Himself. The Canaanite; likely of the race of Ham and still more wicked and idolatrous than the people of Ur.

7, 8. The Lord appeared unto Abram. This is the first account of God becoming visible to man, showing a change in the method of His dealing with men. Unto thy seed will I give this land. Abram now knows that this is the country to which God had bidden him come, the land of promise. And there builded he an altar; as did Jacob afterwards in Bethel near by (ch. 28: 18-20). He took possession of the land in the name of Jehovah, the true God. And he removed from thence; to fair grazing for his flocks and herds. Bethel; a famous pasture tract. The name was then Luz. Jacob changed it to Bethel (the House of God), ch. 28: 19. Hai; five miles east of Bethel. There he builded an altar; evidently his standing rule. Wherever he went or abode the Lord was acknowledged—a testimony this to the place true religion had in Abram's daily life.

9. Going on toward the south. He traversed the land from north to south, moving as he could, to obtain pasturage for his flocks, until finally he went down into Egypt, where, servant of God though he was, he fell into deceit and falsehood, and escaped the consequences thereof only by the gracious interference of God on his behalf.