

Genesis 12: The call of Abraham and Sarah

My research books are comfortably resting on one of my two green metal chairs I acquired from Ernie's food, furniture store, also acting as Tioga, Illinois post office in 1968. Currently I am surrounded with my notes, the NRST of the Bible and lots of imagination.

Following the City of Babel which was filled with pride and punishment and later seen as a story to explain cultural diversification, we turn to chapter twelve where we discuss a theological melodrama. We now focus on a family, Abram and Sarai and their grandson Lot.

There was time we talked about the "patriarchy" period of Abraham. That period lasted from 2000 to 1500 BCE Before the Christian Era. Back then men played the major role, today we have in the Bible, mothers and fathers, daughters and sons, aunts and uncles. God always saw it this way, back several thousand years they were rather chauvinistic.

Genesis 12:1-3 God calls a Family

God opens up doing all the speaking. In chapter eleven we left a people dispersed. God is now speaking to a special family handing out promissory notes guaranteeing them they will be a great nation and land to live on.

God continues saying five times, you will be blessed.

Genesis 12:4-9 A Family in Pilgrimage

The one who calls the world into existence is now issuing a second call, to fashion an alternative community. Having no idea

what God is talking about our couple “go forth with eyes closed” to a new land. No destination is given.

Our chosen couple was asked to leave it all behind, but they cheated a little. The word “go” conveys an abruptness. Our shining knights did? Life of faith is a pilgrimage. With God as their partner what could go wrong? They sold the family farm and took off to who knows where?

The seventy-five-year-old and his good-looking wife left Haran and set for the land of Canaan. During their continued moves the family always remembered to build an altar, not a Tower, but an altar honoring God.

Genesis 12:10-20

Like the days of the Exodus, there is a famine, so our family moves to Egypt as aliens to survive. On the trip to Egypt Abraham admitted to his wife that she was a doll and Pharaoh upon seeing you will desire you. Please recall that many times in the Bible the Pharaoh’s name is never mentioned.

Sarah has no voice in the plan created by Abraham. Our trickster adopted his wife to be his sister. There is an older Hurrian practice that adopting one’s wife to be his sister elevates the woman to a higher social position.

Pharaoh spots “sister”, woman was kidnapped, and Abraham in turn received sheep, oxen, donkeys, camels and slaves, Pharaoh discovers the plan, confronts Abraham and sends them all packing.

All downtrodden people need moments of laughter. This story about Abraham pulling a fast one on the Egyptian Pharaoh must

have given many a good side ache laughing so hard. I am certain Israel fully exploited this story about wife becoming a sister.

May we all have faith to begin again knowing that our Creator is by our side. When we cast our anxieties on Him many blessings will come our way.

Blessings.

Dennis Siebert