

HOW FAR WILL YOU GO?

Genesis 11:31 *And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.*

For some reason, Terah, the father of Abraham, decided to go to the Land of Canaan. This was before the Lord gave the call to Abraham to go to the Land of Canaan. It is important that I rectify this misunderstanding. I have heard many Christians state that Abram heard the call of God in Ur of the Chaldees, but this is not true. Abram the call of God to go to the Land of Canaan in the Haran, Syria, where his father, Terah, had settled. It was actually Terah his father who left Ur for the Land of Canaan. “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” (Genesis 12:4). Could it be that Terah, like Abraham, was a God-fearing man who knew that his faith in the One God of Israel would not survive the idolatry of Ur of the Chaldees? We may never know the reason for his decision to up sticks and move towards the Land of Canaan, but we read that he did make the decision and took with him Abram, Sarai and Lot.

It is a wonderful thing in life when a person can see clearly enough to make a life-changing decision. Elijah challenged the children of Israel along with the over 400 prophets of Baal. “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word” (I Kings 18:21). Terah made the decision to go to the Land of Canaan way before his famous son, Abram, did the same. It is wonderful to have a dream, but it is even better to fulfill the dream. Sadly, Terah stopped in Haran, Syria, and settled there. What happened to the dream or the hope of making it to Canaan, Terah?

Proverbs 13:12 *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.*

The Hebrew word translated “deferred” refers to a drawing out or prolonging something endlessly. In other words, Solomon states that hope must not be postponed or put off unnecessarily – important matters must be given serious consideration and followed up with resolute decisions. Such is the case with the journey to heaven! Terah could not seem to go all the way to the Land of Canaan, he settled down in Haran. Where are you and I in the

journey to the Land of Canaan, which is symbol of heaven? Have we decided, against our will, to settle in some Haran of this world? The heroes of Hebrews 11 had one thing in common: they refused to call this world their home.

Hebrews 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

Perhaps Terah became overwhelmed with the task of looking after his extended family. Perhaps the gravity of his decision and the gradual understanding of the costs involved to make it to Canaan disheartened him. “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful” (Matthew 13:22). Let us determine to return to being strangers and pilgrims on this earth, saints! Sadly, with time, Terah died in Haran, Syria. “And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran” (Genesis 11:32). If we wait too long in Haran, we will die there. Terah’s dream and hope of the Land of Canaan died in Haran. Now, let us study Abram’s call to the Land of Canaan and contrast it with that of his father, Terah.

Genesis 12:1 *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:*

Genesis 12:5 *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; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*

The main difference between the call of Terah and Abram is the voice of God almighty. Clearly, what Terah lacked in travelling on to Canaan, God provided to Abram in the form of an explicit command and direction from heaven. Abram heard the call of God in Haran and was turbocharged – nothing could now stop him from journeying to the land of his father’s dream, Canaan. We, too, like Abram, have heard a clear voice, the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, commanding us to journey on to the heaven he is preparing right now with his own hands. “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:13 & 14). What made Abram gather up everything and leave Haran? What gave him the strength that his father, Terah, lacked? It is clearly the divinely empowering voice of the Almighty! Is anyone struggling today in their journey towards heaven? We can hear the voice of the Lord Jesus once again right now!

1Kings 19:12 *And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.*

1Kings 19:13 *And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?*

Elijah, the same man who challenged Israel to make up their minds at Carmel, was now himself defeated. He had made up his mind to leave Israel and the battle of God and dwell in Horeb. Like Terah, he might have settled down in the area and be forgotten, just as Moses settled down in the same area, Midian, and forty years flew by. Thank God his voice always finds us. Thank God for the still small voice that supercharged Elijah and brought him back to the Land of Canaan! Jesus will not let us settle down in Haran – he will send his voice to remind us of the journey. Often, when driving long distances in Europe for the Ministry, I have daydreamed and driven off course. Fortunately, the friendly but authoritative female voice of the GPS kicks into action with the instruction, “In two hundred meters, make a U-turn!” Thank God for his authoritative voice that never leaves us, constantly affirming or correcting the route we travel until we arrive at our destination: the pearly gates of heaven.

1 Samuel 12:22 *For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.*

1 Samuel 30:21 *And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*

How far will you go? The answer should always be: all the way to heaven! Our destination is not any country or city of this world; it is nothing less than the New Jerusalem that our Lord Jesus is building right now. “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 22: 2). We dare not stop until we too, like John, see this most amazing of sights ever.

1Cor 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

1Co 2:10 *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*