

## LEAVE...A LOT!

When God calls Abram in the famous Genesis 12:1-5 journey, He begins with a very strong command to leave. The command **get thee out** is powerfully spoken. And Abram is told to “get out” of three areas that are important to any human being.

First, he is to get out **of thy country**. The Hebrew word is *eretz* and is an easily understood word that refers to *land*. Abram was to *leave Haran and move to Canaan*.

Second, he is to get out **from thy kindred**. Here, the idea is certainly more than “relatives,” for that would be explicitly included in the next phrase, and implicitly included in the previous. Sometimes the word means *birthplace*, but Abram had already left there. The most common consensus among Jewish scholars is that the word refers to *nationality*. Abram is to leave behind his “old patriotisms” and move toward a new identity altogether. This is far more difficult than leaving the land. As the old saying goes, “you can take a boy out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of the boy.”

Third, he is to get out **from thy father’s house**. This not only included the relatives of the home, but certainly the values of the home as well since Terah was so associated with idol-making (see sermon 1).

The departure from *land, national identity, and home values* is almost a total “remaking” of Abram, only a name-change would finish the transformation. It is interesting that when Ruth converted to Judaism, she used almost the same words in [Ruth 1:16](#) and [2:11](#).

## GAIN...A LOT!

I find that the bible is filled with *parallel*. Over and over again we find that *one thing corresponds to another*. [Genesis 12:1-3](#) is a great example.

Abram is to *leave the eretz* in order to gain **a land that I will show thee** (v. 1). He loses one *eretz* (translated **country** at the beginning v. 1) to gain another *eretz* (translated **land** at the end of v. 1).

Abram leaves one **kindred** (v. 1) to gain a **nation** (v. 2). The “old patriotisms” may be lost, but “new patriotisms” will be gained.

Abram is to leave his **father’s house** (v. 1), but in doing so **all the families of the earth will be blessed** (v. 3).

Anyone who has even casually read the Bible up to this point (Genesis 1:1-12:5) would recognize that *God is doing something new*. In fact, what God is doing is so

*fundamentally different* that calling it a “new dispensation” would be appropriate. For 10 generations God worked *generally* with mankind. Then for 10 generations God worked *through Noah’s family* alone (see sermon 1). But now, God’s blessings and curses will come *through one man, alone*. God’s work (and nothing less) is being shifted to a totally new format.

Not only would a casual reader of the Bible recognize a new dispensation, but also some new information about the Messianic promise of [Genesis 3:15](#). The *woman’s seed* that would defeat the serpent will come *through the line of Abram*, and therefore we must read future passages in light of this insight.

## WHERE TO GO?

One interesting aspect of the story, well-known to many, is that *Abram did not know where he was supposed to go*. The only forward instruction he had was to go to **a land that I will shew thee** (v. 1). But Abram **departed out of Haran** (v. 4) and **they went forth into the land of Canaan** (v. 5). How did Abram know to go to Canaan? We are not sure. We could surmise that “options were limited,” and that would be true. Or we could speculate that God gave some kind of manifested leadership, and perhaps that was true. Or perhaps, as we speculated previously (sermon 1), God had instructed Terah to go to Canaan and Abram was simply finishing old business.

When Abram arrives in **Sichem** (v. 6) (Shechem), **the LORD appeared unto Abram** (v. 7) and promised to give the land to him. This would appear to be a word from the Lord that “you have arrived.” But Abram didn’t seem to take it this way. He continued from Shechem to Bethel, then Ai, then continued **going on still toward the south** (v. 9). On the journey Abram built altars both in Shechem and Bethel. The purpose is unclear (he may or may not have sacrificed an animal), but appears to be a sign to those who follow that *the land is claimed* and that *God granted the land*.

## DID ABRAM MISS THE PROMISED LAND?

In v. 10 Abram *goes to Egypt*, with disastrous results. This is a strange progression from Shechem, to Bethel, to somewhere in the south, to Egypt. Is Abram still *seeking the Promised Land*, not sure where it is? In [Genesis 13:3-4](#) it looks like Abram retraced his steps *backward*, out of Egypt, back to Bethel. And it is *there* that God will give him a great vision.

Perhaps this can be used to remind us that God does not *always* give us all the answers. We must *seek* and *study* to discover the ways of God. And when we make a mistake...perhaps it is time to retrace our steps!