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We have arrived at Genesis 12. I plan to go through chapter 15; chapters 12-15 are primarily narrative with little stories, so we will go somewhat more quickly in terms of the number of verses.

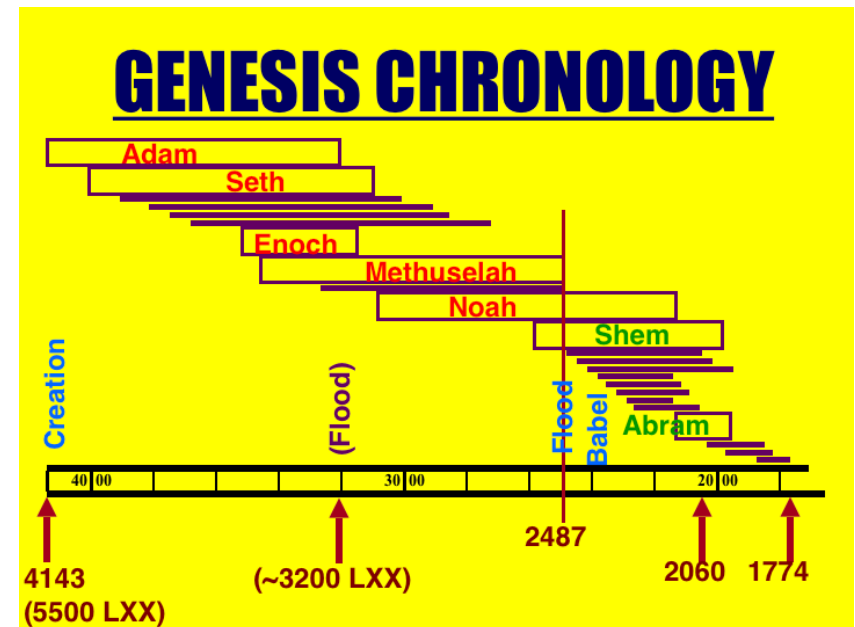
But chapter 12 is extremely important. You could consider it the turning point of the whole book. And in some ways, the turning point of all of world history. In chapter 12, actually starting in 11.7, up until the last lesson, we have been looking at primeval history which extends to the end of the book. So this is a major divisional change and the narrative changes as well as we get into some of the details.

So patriarchal history, as the name indicates, deals with the patriarchs and the nation of Israel. We are starting the history of Israel—its origin and history. You could even consider primeval history as something of an introduction to the story of the nation of Israel. And we can break that down into four parts. The first is the history of Abraham. And each part will be devoted to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the last subdivision will deal with Joseph which is an important narrative as well.

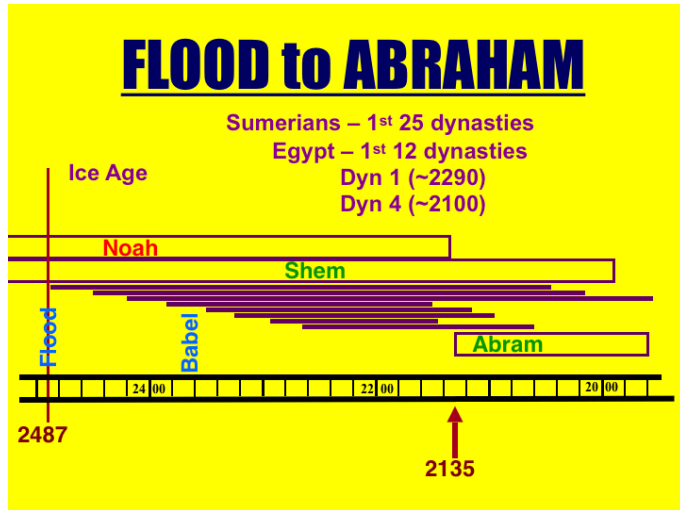
I. Primeval History	1.1-11.26
II. Patriarchal History	11.27-50.26
A. History of Abraham	11.27-25.18
1. His Faith and the Land	11.27-15.21
a. Call to the land	11.27-12.9
1) Background	11.27-32

And, we can break down the history of Abraham in at least 2 parts. I have changed the outline a little: there are 2 emphases, one the land and one faith, so I call it his faith and the land of Israel. So that goes from 11.27 to 15.21. And we can divide that; the call of Abraham is first. We started that last time. So we saw the background, 11.27-32

Just a quick review: we looked at the major events and major patriarchs. You can plot them on a time line because we have numbers, but the numbers differ depending on the Hebrew Masoretic text, or the Greek translation from Hebrew, the Septuagint. We can expand that and take a look at ones after the flood and even after Babel where we spent most of our time when I gave you a little breakdown of the Sumerian culture, and the Egyptian culture. We looked at a lot of photographs showing the high technology in both those cultures, and around the world.



The birth of Abraham, in the second chart was 2135 BC, based on the numbers and using Hoehner's breakdown of those numbers.



And we talked about a new dispensation; this is a 3rd new beginning. The 1st is the creation of the heaven and earth, the 2nd is after the flood, a new beginning with Noah, and now 3rd, a new beginning in terms of the nation of Israel, and particularly Abraham. God calls out of the entire race one man that includes the family or part of the family and then there will be a new family that will be created from it, descendants and eventually the nation of Israel.

One of the key passages, with a 2nd Covenant, the Abrahamic, not relating to the New Covenant later on, but new in terms of the Noahic Covenant. This is the 2nd covenant.

We mentioned last time that there are some themes that continue: the heightened conflict of good and evil, conflict between the seed of the woman and the unbelieving seed finds its background and origin in Satan himself. We are going to see that the curse continues, the emphasis of births and deaths will continue in this passage as well. And I mentioned that in this last paragraph of chapter 11 we have the foundation of world history and, more specifically, the passage where we will spend most of our time, the first 3 verses of chapter 12.

### New Dispensation

1. 3rd new beginning      entire race → 1 man/family
2. 2nd Covenant -      Abrahamic
3. Heightened conflict of good/evil
4. Curse continues -      birth/death
5. Foundation of world history

### Abram and History

Nations (unbelieving)



Individual(Abraham)



Nation (Israel)



World (nations)

Abram is important in history. We saw the nations in chapter 11—unbelieving nations; you might say that God rejects the unbelieving world's system. And He chose one individual named Abraham and through that individual, this passage predicts a nation, (we learned later that it Israel). This passage predicts that that nation will have an impact and influence—and in fact bless *all* nations. We could call this a worldwide reach that God intends, not only with the nation of Israel, but in large measure Israel failed and He passed that responsibility on to the church in *our* dispensation. So this is the plan of world history: I see the Abrahamic Promise first of all, and then the Abrahamic Covenant

as outlining for us the rest of world history which I describe as Jewish.

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1) Background	11.27-32
2) Promises	12.1-3

On our outline we have Promises, and you can divide these first 3 verses of chapter 12 into 2 parts: 2 imperatives. The first is verse 1 and first part of verse 2. Now in the English the first 3 verses are one complete sentence. And I like to show the whole sentence on one slide. You can see at the end of verse 1 there is a semi-colon and at the end of verse 2 there is a semi-colon. You don't find a period until the end of verse 3. Now the Hebrew text actually breaks into 3 parts, after each verse, so since we are using English I thought I would put all three on the slide. This is the NASB. So now we will read the whole passage.

12.1 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you;

2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;

3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

God is speaking to Abraham. It's not clear when this takes place, and depending on the timing, we don't know *where* it takes place either. There are at least 2 views. Remember, we saw last

time they were in Kharan (Haran), and we will see in verse 4 that they *leave* Kharan. So it's possible that these words were spoken in Kharan, but it is also possible and probably, I think, more likely, even though scholars disagree on it, that Abraham got the call in Ur of the Chaldees. That is a minor issue.

He is to go ‘To the land which I will show you’. Then there is a series of blessings....

12.1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you;

2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;

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‘And I will make you a great nation’, And I will bless you: three blessings: ‘,make your name great’. This is followed another imperative, ‘so you shall be a blessing’, and then there are 3 promises associated with it. That is something of the structure.

‘And I will bless those who bless you’, ‘And the one who curses you I will curse.’ ‘And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.’ So the major grammatical elements that give us the structure here: 2 imperatives, the 1st with the verb ‘to go’, or leave. And, in the context, he is to leave all, which summarizes the next few phrases as well. When we look at the details we will talk about the ‘*all*’ there.

And then he follows with 4 things that he is to leave. And that is followed by the three promises.

## Structure

### 1. 2 imperatives

Go forth or leave - all  
4 things and 3 promises

So let's take a look at this 1st imperative. One of the emphases in the passage: 'Go forth'. And then there is the 2nd imperative that we will study later on, 'You shall be a blessing', the verb is in the imperative and followed with the noun 'blessing'. So that is the structure.

Another emphasis is Abraham, God speaking to Abraham. This is very important; Abraham is a very important individual not only in the book of Genesis, but through the rest of the Bible and even world history. If you remember, Matthew traces the lineage of Jesus from Abraham; so that's the beginning of the gospel, going all the way back to Abraham, and their most important king, David.

12.13 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you;

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Notice the emphasis on 'you', and 'your'. 12 references to Abraham. First he is named and then, 'your relatives...your father's house...I will show you...make you a great nation, bless you...you shall be a blessing...who bless you, those who curse you, and in you all the families will be blessed.

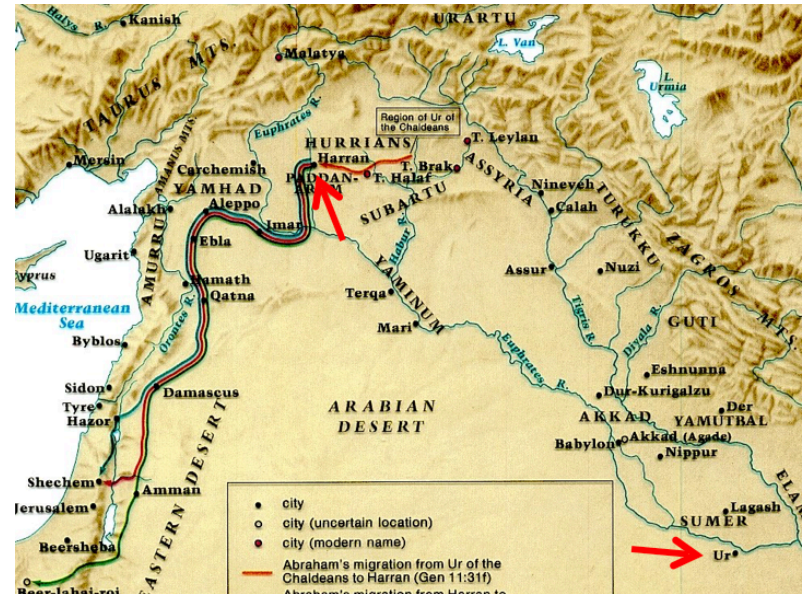
This is a prediction, of a series of promises that will eventuate in that nation that He describes here, obviously Israel.

12.1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you;

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Go forth from your country. Remember we plotted last time where he came from, Ur.



This would be the Sumerian civilization, or culture. Historically the timeframe when Abraham would have lived would be at the height of the Sumerian empire when they were the most prosperous, the most powerful, the most cultural. So this command to Abram to *leave*, means that he was very comfortable,

very settled and it would have taken some sacrifice and a lot of *faith* to leave—that’s one of the themes we will develop. We mentioned that Ur is SE of Babylon; some scholars say other sites. The capital of the high Sumerian civilization and culture with lots of writing—lots of documents have been discovered by archeologists. Schools, oldest law code. Wealthy, but idolatrous: they worship the moon god. And Joshua tells us that Terah was an idolatrous man. We saw the Ziggurat that represents the religion of Ur.

### UR

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Location -      | SE of Babylon                          |
| 2. Sumer capital - | high civilization                      |
| 3. Culture -       | art, writing, schools, oldest law code |
| 4. Economy -       | wealthy                                |
| 5. Idolatry -      | moon god, Ziggurat                     |

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Then he should leave his own nation, but also his relatives, including the extended family, so it appears that many of the cousins and uncles and aunts and all of the other descendants that were alive that would have been living in Ur, or in close proximity—so he is leaving all family ties. And eventually he will leave his father’s house. Now that is one of the reasons that some think that this prediction or promise came from Kharan because it is not

until there that he leaves his *father’s* house. Now he left his relatives in UR, but he didn’t leave Terah—in fact Terah died—but his relatives in Kharan.

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So everything that he was familiar with, everything that was close to him—he was to leave and go to a land that is unknown. God doesn’t even give him location, not a direction, which I will show you.

So it is going to require a commitment of faith. When we get to chapter 15 he is described as being justified and righteous, two words that are related, and I would think that this took place in Ur of the Chaldees and this is an expression of his faith when he leaves, which we have recorded in chapter 12.

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And then we have 3 blessings. I will make you a great nation. Obviously this is the nation of Israel. And the rest of the book of

Genesis is going to outline all of the steps, all of the events and people that lead up to it eventually. We still have just a family at the end of Genesis. It is not until we get to the book of Exodus that we have even the beginnings of the nation. It takes a common people, a constitution—the mosaic law is a covenant, a legal document—and land to make a nation. Most nations have a constitution that rather names the foundation for all the other laws. So you have a common people, a common constitution, and it is not until the conquest that we have a common land, with boundaries. So it's not until the book of Joshua that we have a full nation of Israel.

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The second is personal promises. I will bless you. We have a record of God blessing Abraham throughout the book of Genesis as well and one of the main foci of that blessing is his son—not brought out in this passage, but is one of the major areas of blessing. Alan Ross points out that we have an occurrence of blessing, 5 times in these two verses, as I have highlighted it here. He says it is striking and emphasized that the word ‘blessing’ occurs only 5 times in all the 11 chapters—and here we have a clustering of 5 times in a couple of verses.

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So that is one of the emphases here—that God promises blessings. One of them is that God is going to make his name great—in contrast to the people at Babel wanted to make a name for themselves. God scattered them, but now God is going to make Abraham’s name great. So one individual instead of to all of humanity God is going to bless and make his name great. The NT looks to Abraham as a very great person; Paul uses him an example of justifying faith in the book of Romans. And even the demonic religion of Islam looks to Abraham, but they have a distorted picture of him. Historically Abraham has always been very important through the history of Israel, and later on in Christianity and Islam.

### 7 promises

1. Great nation
2. Blessing
3. Name great

So we have 7 promises. I have somewhat highlighted 6 of them, and I am going to include that next one as the 4th one. The first three were very far-reaching. That’s why I see this passage as promising what God will do and which will encompass all of world history. And with the Abrahamic Covenant God is going to bind himself *legally* to basically accomplish what will take all the rest of world to accomplish. The Abrahamic Covenant will not be fulfilled until the millennium kingdom, the last era of Bible history that is even future from our day. So it is a very far-reaching, important passage.

So that is the first *imperative* along with the four things and the 3 promises. We have a second *imperative* in verse 2b:

- I. Primeval History 1.1-11.26
- II. Patriarchal History 11.27-50.26
  - A. History of Abraham 11.27-25.18
    - 1. Early Development 11.27-14.24
      - a. Call to the land 11.27-12.9
        - 1) Background 11.27-32
        - 2) Promises 12.1-3
          - a) 1st imperative 12.1-2a
          - b) 2nd imperative 12.2.b-3

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And so you shall be a blessing: part of verse 2 and all of verse 3. We have an imperative and 3 promises that follow. Imperative: so you shall be a blessing. Now the verb there is ‘shall be’: this tells us the mission, you might say, the purpose of God’s dealing with Abraham is that he shall be a blessing. And, historically it’s been the nation of Israel through which the Lord has blessed all of the other nations. That will be emphasized at the end of the verse, but already so you shall be a blessing in a broad way.

As we work through Genesis that, in a broad way, is the purpose of the nation of Israel. And in a lot of the passages we look at we will see that Abraham, in fact, will be a blessing. A striking example: he rescues Lot from the kings that invade the

area of Sodom, chapter 14, but even before that there are other examples of him being a blessing, and other examples later on as well.

### Structure

#### 1. 2 imperatives

Go forth or leave - all

4 things and 3 promises

Be something - a blessing

3 promises

Grammatically, this is an imperative: you shall be; you could even translate it be a blessing, but it is also a prediction or a promise. This will be #4 of the promises. The 3 are in verse 3.

Back to the structure: he would leave all; we talked about all including family, national or cultural ties. And be something, in this case a blessing.

12.1 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you;

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And now we will have the 3 promises. #1: I will bless those who bless you, and historically, you can see that in Genesis in relation to Abraham, but it is going to carry over because God is going to repeat a lot of these elements when we get to the Abrahamic Covenant that will deal with the descendants and the nation. And it is in the nation of Israel, historically, that all of of mankind has been blessed.

There are two major ways that all of humanity has been blessed: some close to the time of Abraham, some later on. So there's at least 2 major ways: the coming of the Messiah who brings the message of salvation and the Bible itself—all of Scripture, all of the OT comes through the nation of Israel, and I would include even the NT. Some might say Luke is a gentile, but he may have some Jewish blood. So all the Bible from Genesis on is from the Jews.

In those huge and broad ways all those have been blessed. Job was probably living in patriarchal times, maybe as early as Abraham. We don't know the author, but it shows that they had some revelation. And notice it is I will bless those, plural in the Hebrew text. those who bless you almost indicating that in general people are going to recognize Jewish people as special, and a number will in fact bless them. But notice the contrast:

12.1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you;

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It is singular in the Hebrew text: And the one who curses you I will curse. And it will be a minority that in fact curses the nation of Israel. And historically, both of these have worked themselves out in history. There have been some that have blessed Israel—and we will see examples in the book of Genesis.

And the one who curses you I will curse. There are two words for 'curse' here.

## Structure

1. 2 imperatives
2. Curse

*fa-lál* It can be used in not so strong use, speak lightly, to hold in contempt

man's cursing

*ah-rár* to impose a ban or a curse, much stronger word.

God's judicial cursing

The second is a much stronger word. If you do a word study, you will see that in the context that *ah-rár* is much stronger. And in this context it says that God is going to impose the cursing. Man is going to curse Israel or some. But God is judicial in cursing and more severe upon those that curse Israel. And you could say that God is protecting His people, and He will make sure that they will survive history because He has a plan for them. Now they are going to be *severely* persecuted through many parts of their history, but God is going to intervene and deliver them on many occasions from extermination, dealing judicially with those that are cursing the nation of Israel.

## Persecuting Nations

1. Canaanites—in the book of Genesis
2. Egypt—in the book of Exodus. I think God destroyed the middle kingdom because of their harsh treatment of the Jews. He use the plagues, but remember, the entire army was destroyed at the exodus when the waters of the Red Sea closed upon them.
3. Assyrian—Obviously the Assyrians took captive and scattered the tribes to the north and God has dealt with that empire as well.
4. Babylonian—Destroyed the nation of Israel; this was the end of the history of Israel. The Babylonians were destroyed by the Medo-Persians. So God has worked out not only what He had promised but entered into covenant.
5. Greeks—The Greeks, during the period after Alexander the Great. Antiochus Epiphanes was a Greek who persecuted the



Jewish people and desecrated their temple. And they were dealt with divinely as well.

6. Rome—Even the Romans: the Empire collapsed, over a period of degeneration as well.

7. Spain—In more recent history, Spain was a world empire at one time, the time of Columbus. And it was also the time that the inquisition took place, and not many years afterwards the Spanish Empire somewhat collapsed on itself, no longer a power.

8. Hitler's Germany—And, even more recently, Hitler's Germany tried to impose the final solution. God dealt with them as well.

So this passage looks ahead, and we can conclude from that what is going to take place in the future. There will be an even greater holocaust that still awaits the nation of Israel, but Israel will in fact be delivered and preserved; and God will judge the world system of that future period of time.

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The three blessings: I will bless those who bless Israel, the one who curses them God will curse, and 3rd, And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed. We have already mentioned that all the families of the earth will be blessed through the Gospel based on the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Galatians 3 Paul quotes, or at least summarizes this verse:

3.8 *The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU."*

That's a direct allusion to Genesis 12.3, and if you read the whole context, he is talking about the Gospel message and it's through the Gospel message that all of the nations are blessed.

3.16 *Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.*

That goes to the covenant that we will look at in chapter 15. Paul is exegeting that passage very carefully making a distinction between the plural and the singular, interpreting that it points to Messiah, to Jesus Himself. Very far-reaching promises that we have in these 1st 3 verses.

## 7 promises

1. Great nation
2. a Blessing
3. a great name
4. Will be a blessing, an imperative that is predicted
5. Bless those who bless
6. Curse those who curse
7. All people blessed, including the gentiles

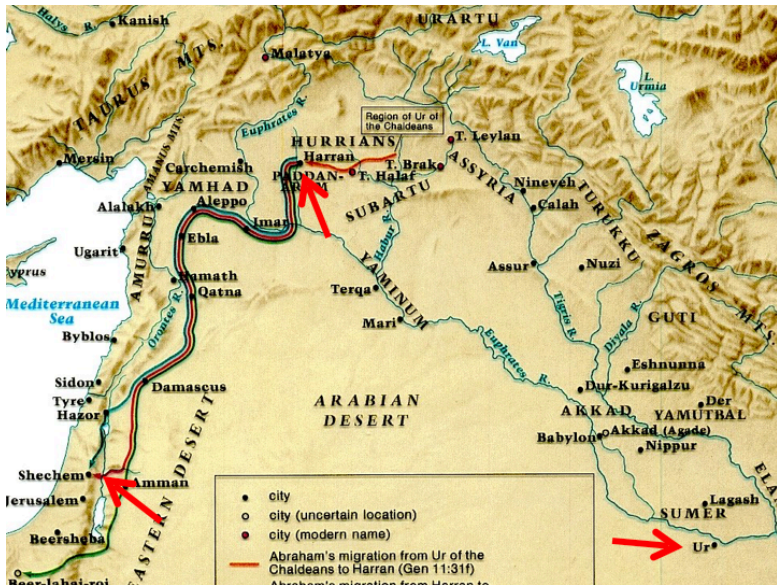
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1) Background	11.27-32
2) Promises	12.1-3
3) Obedience	12.4-9

Now in this short narrative, described in verses 4-9, we have obedience. Basically, the essence of it is that Abraham responded. So we have a response of faith, even though the word is not used, and it describes the faith of Abraham.

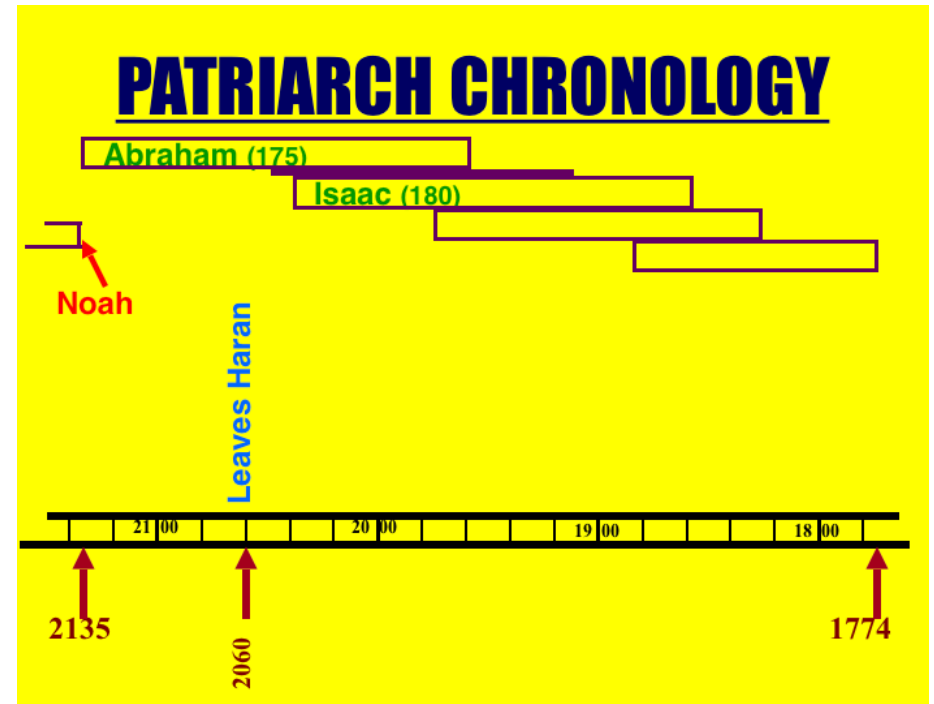
12.4 So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

See the parallelism here? God said ‘Go forth’, So ‘Abram went forth’. So we have obedience and as the Lord had spoken to him—in the 3 verses that we have just expounded. Then we have an addition: and Lot went with him. You have go to the last part of chapter 11 to get that relationship. Lot will come into play.

12.4 So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.



Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. So we can take the numbers in terms of birth and those numbers that we saw in chapter 11 and now we can add 75 years to it, and we have the departure from Ur. And just to give you a perspective: Archeologists have shown that in that timeframe travel was fairly common, so it was not unusual to go 600 miles either on foot or on some animal transportation. It was 600+ miles from Ur to Haran.



We can add or expand the timeline and calculate the numbers and once you have a starting point that Hoehner gives (these numbers might differ from scholar to scholar) the number 2060 as the leaving of Haran. The 2135 would be the date of his birth, and using the numbers that we have, Noah would have died a year before, so 2136 for Noah's death. So Noah lived very close to the Abrahamic time frame.

12.5 Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan

Now we have what Abraham took: Abram took Sarai his wife. Remember that Abram means 'father' and Sarai means 'princess'. Abraham took his wife, Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated. So they are moving.... and the persons which they had acquired in Kharan. La palabra 'persons' is *nefesh*—the people, using *nefesh* in the Hebrew which would have included servants—it was very common that extended and large families would have acquired them in Kharan.

12.5 Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan.

Abraham was not told, but just to leave, and now for the first time the identification of the land that they set out for. And the arrival in the land—when Abraham was 75 years old. I don't know if that was considered *old* in that time; it might have been considered middle age, but certainly not a youngster.

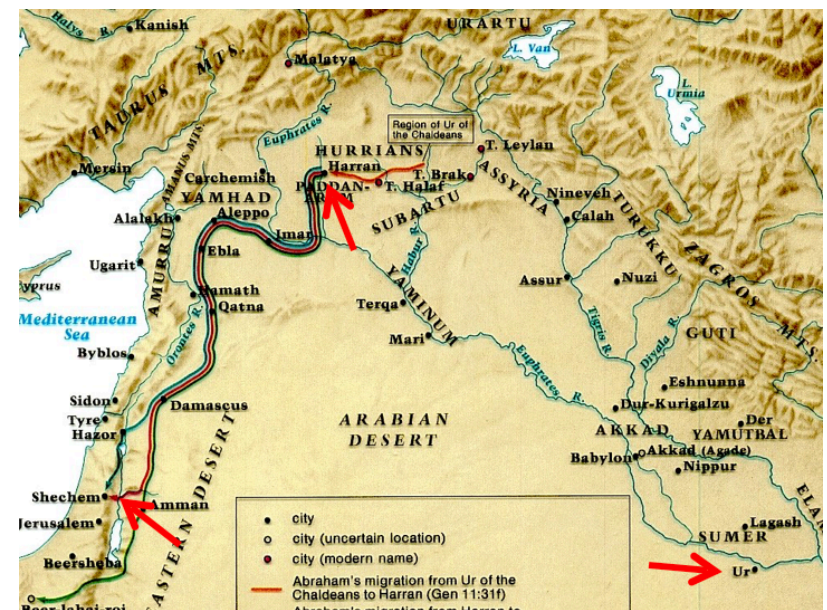
Here is a quick preview:

## Abram and Land

1. Setting out - 12.4 Remember I mentioned the emphasis on the land. First mention and naming of Canaan.
2. Arrival & altars - 12.4-9 The building of altars—in the land, not outside.
3. Fear and Egypt - 12.10-20 A famine occurs and they depart from the land which will put them in jeopardy. There is a problem; fear is the underlying motivation.
4. Strife with Lot's family - 13
5. Victory over kings - 14 Victory over the kings that invade.
6. Covenant giving of the land - 15

12.6 Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land.

He is passing through the land of Canaan as far as the site of Shechem. Very important to the oak of Moreh. So we have another 400+ miles from Kharan to Shechem—so over a thousand mile journey from Ur to Shechem.





Distant and closeup of site of Shechem



This is a church that commemorates Jacob's well, where Jesus meets the Samaritan woman.



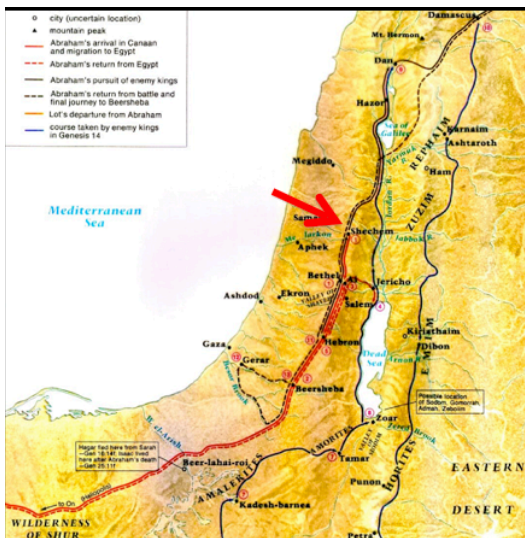
This wall of Shechem from Middle Bronze, Abrahamic period.





Archeological dig for Baal temple of the time.  
Shechem is in the north of Israel, not quite to Galilee.

12.6 Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land.



Now a comment: the Canaanite was then in the land. A little commentary because Abraham is going to have to deal with the Canaanites. They are the inhabitants of the land.

12.7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

Then we have the appearance of the Lord to Abraham. We will talk about some other appearances later on. This is an extended promise; it's not only for Abraham, but it will be for the descendants and God will enter even into a covenant.

12.7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.



Building an altar indicates not only that he believes what God has said, but he is actually dedicating the land back to God. And the altar implies a sacrifice to God dedicating the land back and an expression of faith that this now is what God has promised and this is what God has given to them, so an act of worship.

12.8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.

Beth-el means 'house of God'. Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. We can drive through that area on a tour, going to Shechem from Jerusalem. These two are on the map:



12.8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.

Now he is claiming the *central* part of the land of Israel. Calling upon the name of the Lord is worship, is like a prayer, praising God, calling upon His name.

12.9 Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev.

Then verse 9 which concludes this little narrative. Abram journeyed on...toward the Negev which means 'south'.



Essentially Abraham is surveying the land that God has promised. He starts with Shechem which is toward the north, and then Bethel where he builds an altar between Bethel and Ai; that's central Israel. And the Negev in the south. Then he will spend some time at Beersheba, not on the map, which we will see later on.

We can worship our sovereign Lord for His sovereign plan for the rest of world history and He begins to work out that plan through Abraham, step by step, taking all of the Bible to finish it—what God has promised in Genesis 12.3.