



**Leaders Note**

Acts 7: 1-8 & Gen 12:1-4

**Thought**

Typically when we think of going on an adventure, we think of a path and a person who looks like anyone but Abraham. Seventeen or twenty-seven rather than seventy-five would probably be the age that would come to mind. And when it comes to a mission trip, we would probably be thinking in terms of weeks or perhaps months — but probably not a century. He's the pioneer adventurer. The first one to hear the call and leave everything no matter how foolish or upside down it all seemed just because when it came right down to it, he believed God. An "exalted father" who had no kids; a man who's non-existent children would own all he could see and bless the world beyond his wildest dreams. But all he ever owned of that land was his own burial plot. His promised land turned out to be a land of famine when he got there. But through it all he walked and waited and plodded — and had his share of stumbling. Abraham was far from perfect. He lied. He didn't listen to his wife when he should have and listened to her when he shouldn't have. He often flinched when faced with the challenges of the day. But he steadily pressed ahead and finished well. Which is the ultimate challenge for all would-be adventurers.

**Context**

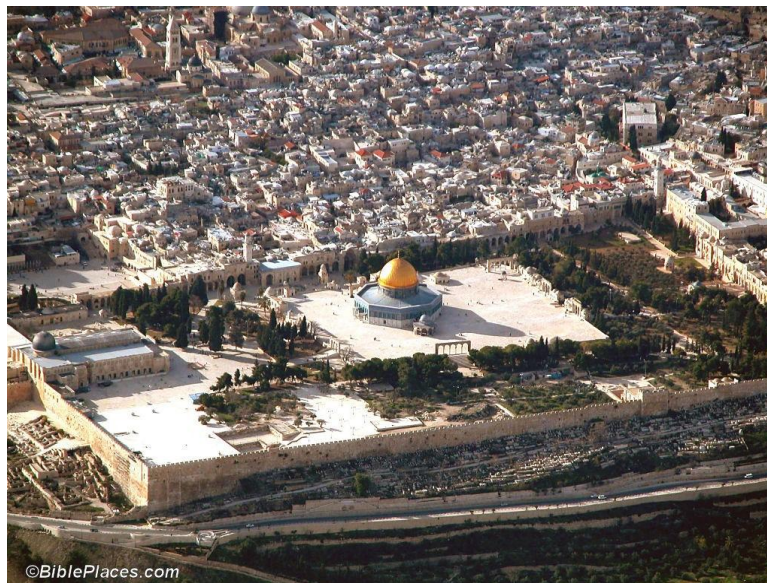
**Ur Kasdim:** Abram, son of Terah, a maker of idols, according to Hebrew traditions was born about 2,000 B.C. in the Ur of the Chaldees. Ur is a city of ancient Sumer in southern Mesopotamia on a site in present-day south-east Iraq. It was a principal port of Sumer, which traded with Egypt and India, was ruled by Queen Shubad, where it flourished into a brilliant culture under the Sumerians. It is one of the oldest cities in Mesopotamia, and became an important centre of Sumerian culture after 3,000 B.C. The city declined after the sixth century B.C. Chaldees or Chaldeans were members of an ancient Semitic people of Chaldea who ruled in Babylonia and were versed in occult learning. Sumer was an ancient country of southern Mesopotamia in present-day southern Iraq. Archaeological evidence dates the beginnings of Sumer to the fifth millennium B.C. By 3,000 B.C. a flourishing civilization existed, which gradually exerted power over the surrounding area and culminated in the Akkadian dynasty founded (c. 2340) by Sargon I. Sumer declined after 2,000 B.C. and was later absorbed by Babylonia and Assyria. The Sumerians are believed to have invented the cuneiform system of writing. Young Abram, from a notable family, must have basked in the sophisticated society and fertile philosophies of the age; he surely visited Babylon to marvel, like Herodotus many centuries later, at those massive walls eighty feet high and twenty feet thick and at the lofty Temple of Marduk where Chaldean astrologers plotted the stars. (W. Raymond Drake)

Ruins in Ur of the Chaldees



**They set out:** for the land of Canaan. At a normal caravan pace of 20 miles per day, the trip from Haran to Canaan (about 500 miles) would have taken the better part of a month. There are three primary names by which we know the Promised Land: 1. Canaan (possibly meaning “low” or “lowland”) because of the original inhabitants; 2. Israel (after the conquest led by Joshua) 3. Palestine (from Philistine) the name given to the land by the Romans

**Mount Moriah:** The author of Chronicles identifies the “region of Moriah” as the temple mount in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 3:1). The name Moriah might be associated with the Hebrew verb meaning to see or provide, a theologically significant term appearing throughout Genesis 22:1-19. In Jerusalem, as in no other place, the Lord would subsequently be “seen” and would “provide” for his people through the sacrifice he would ordain. Today Mount Moriah is occupied by the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim structure erected in AD 691. A large outcropping of rock inside the building is still pointed to as the original site of the intended sacrifice of Isaac.





## Learning Session

Read the passages out loud. Share the context outlined above and then split into smaller group for discussion of the following questions:

1. Why does Stephen start his defence with the story of Abraham?
2. When (like Abraham) has God called you to make a radical change in your life? What did you do? What divine call might you be hearing now?
3. When have you heard really clearly from the Lord as Abraham did in this case...or are you one that's been waiting to really hear God like this? What would you say is the key to really hearing God in your life?

Gather together for feedback and draw out the following points:

- Stephen uses Abraham as a start as he wants to show that Jesus links all the way back to, and indeed is a fulfilment of, God's promises to Abraham.
- God doesn't play by our rules, sometimes he asks us to do the weirdest things, things that we probably think would be done much better by someone else.
- Obedience can isolate us and make us seem foolish in the eyes of the world.
- Ask anyone who has made a radical change for God. I do not know anyone who has lived to regret it.
- Be patient, God speaks when He speaks. We need to get onto His agenda rather than trying to convince Him that our agenda is the way to go.
- Share one of your own stories or talk about something that God might be challenging you to do now!

Move to Ministry

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