

## **Slide 1 Building on Biblical Foundations**

**“GO”**

Karin Paparelli Peters

Genesis 12:1-8

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**From Shem** comes Terah – father of Haran, Nahor and Abram (aka Abraham).

Haran is the father of Milcah and Sarai (aka Sarah)

Let me tell you a story. . . Once upon a time there was a prince.

Terah was a prince in the kingdom of Nimrod. Nimrod’s kingdom was a wicked kingdom. Terah worshipped the idols as those around him did and yet to him was born a child who would grow up to be a man known as the father of faith, Abram.

Out of an evil generation, once again there is a son born who brings hope and another chance of redemption.

The story continues. . . on the night of Abram’s birth, the seers of Nimrod’s kingdom witnessed an exceedingly bright and large star appear in the sky that chased 4 other stars across the sky. They perceived this to be a sign that the baby would rise to become a mighty king, a king who would dethrone all other kings.

So the seers brought the information of the star and the child’s birth to Nimrod for fear that he would later slay them for withholding this from him. When he heard of the child, he demanded the infant be brought to him immediately that he might kill the child.

Terah could not do it. Instead he tricked Nimrod and brought him the child of a servant instead. The story goes that Nimrod took the child and dashed its head on the ground, killing him.

Terah – fearing Nimrod might discover the infant, took his child and its mother and brought them to live in a cave. Abram lived in the cave for 10 years – far away from the eyes of Nimrod. At the age of 10 Abram went to live with Noah where he was raised and taught to worship the one true God – Jehovah.

Eventually Abram made his way back to his father’s house and at 50 years old he took Sarai – whose father Haran is killed by Nimrod – to be his wife.

We continue our story in Genesis Chapter 11 verse 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.**

Terah leaves for Canaan ... but only gets as far as Haran. He takes along Lot, and Abram and Sarai, and they settle there for 25 years.

In Chapter 12 verses 1- 8

**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:**

**2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:**

**3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.**

**4So 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.**

**5And 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.**

**6And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.**

**7And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.**

**8And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.**

Abram – who becomes Abraham – is known as the father of faith. Not just for the Jews and Christians but also of the Muslims, too. What is it about Abraham that set him apart?

I would say there are **five** distinctions worth noting and emulating in your own walk with God.

1. He believed
2. He obeyed
3. He worshipped
4. He trusted
5. He endured

## 1. He Believed:

When the Lord told him to leave his father's country – more specifically – to “Get thee out” into a land that I will show thee, Abram believed.

*Romans 4:3*

*What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

*James 2:23*

*And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God's friend.*

What did he believe? He believed that God had a plan for him. He believed that God would lead him. He believed that to follow was better than to stay.

What do we know of Abram at this point? We know that he rejected the gods of his father, and all of the pagan practices of his relations and followed the God of Noah. Other texts say that he was raised in Noah's home, apart from his father due to Nimrod's threat to kill him.

At fifty years old he returned to his father's house and refused to worship the idols in the house, and in the land.

He chose to stay true to Yaweh, to follow Jehovah, the MIGHTY God over all. When Terah leaves for Canaan, he only gets as far as Haran. He settles once again among the pagans.

But God called Abram to leave that place and follow him. He called Abram to leave all he knew, and follow Him into the unknown – to a place He will yet show him.

Abram believed the Lord and he acted upon this belief. He obeys.

The Lord also bestowed upon Abram four promises:

1. He shall make of him a great nation.
2. He will bless those who bless Abram, and curse those who curse Abram.
3. He shall make Abram's name great.
4. Abram shall be a blessing - all families of the earth shall be blessed in Abram.

Abram believes the Lord and acts on that belief.

## 2. He obeyed:

*Hebrews 11:8*

*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.*

Abram puts his faith into action and he packs up his family and leaves. This time he obeys the Lord and goes all the way to Canaan. When he leaves Haran he is 75 years old. His wife is barren and there does not seem to be any way in the natural that he can become a great nation. Yet, he believes the Lord and his promises and he goes.

After he believes, after he obeys, the Lord appears to him and again reassures Abram of this promise to be a great nation. He promises to give Abram's seed – his offspring – his progeny – the land of Canaan – what is known today as Israel.

**Verse 7 (a):**

**And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land:**

And how does Abram respond? Does he argue with the Lord? Does he challenge the promise? Does he complain about his condition? A barren wife and he at such an old age?

### **3. He worshipped:**

No – he worships the Lord. He builds an altar.

**Verse 7 (b):**

**“and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.”**

And he moves on from that place – goes to a mountain east of Bethel, pitches his tent and builds another altar unto God.

He worships the Lord at an altar he builds. We are commanded to worship the Lord. We are called to worship Him because He is worthy of our praise – all the time, in our celebration and in our sorrow.

***Psalm 29:2***

***Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.***

Abraham built Altars before God to express his worship.

Altars require:

- sacrifices – what will you give? (time, energy, finance,)
- and death - what will you give up? (to self, agendas, plans, expectations).

We see the faith filled people of God, the ones “right with God” building altars.

Here are just a few:

- Noah (Genesis 8:20)
- Abraham (Genesis 12:7-8)

- Isaac (Genesis 26:25)
- Jacob (Genesis 33:20)
- Moses (Exodus 17:15)
- Joshua (Joshua 8:30)
- Gideon (Judges 6:24)
- Samuel (1 Samuel 7:17)
- Saul (1 Samuel 14:35)
- David (2 Samuel 24:25)
- Solomon (1 Kings 9:25)

There is a pattern when God’s people build his altars - I found this chart which provides a great visual:

Verse	What happened here
Gen 8:20	God spoke and makes a covenant. Noah responds by building an altar.
Gen 12:7-8	God appeared, spoke, makes a promise to bless His people and Abraham worshipped and built an altar.
Gen 13:18	God appeared, spoke, made a promise and Abraham built the altar.
Gen 22:9	God intervene, provides and blesses. Abraham (with Isaac) builds an altar.
Gen 26:25	God spoke to Isaac who built the altar.
Gen 33:20	God intervened and Jacob marked the place.
Gen 35:1-7	God appeared, intervene and Jacob built an altar.
Ex 17:15	Moses built an altar before Sinai. God intervened in the journey through the desert.

<https://www.thefellowship.site/archives/exodus-part-four/gods-holy-presence-and-altar-laws-exo-2022-26>

Altars mark more than meeting times with the Lord. In this chart we see that the response TO BUILD AN ALTAR occurs after:

- The Lord speaks
- The Lord appears
- The Lord promises
- The Lord provides
- The Lord intervenes
- The Lord blesses

## **What is an altar?**

Biblically and historically – the altar was the place where animals were sacrificed to cover sin. This was the price that was required to allow an unholy people to come near to a holy God.

So, how do we respond when a holy God becomes the spotless lamb, sacrificed to make us holy?

When the Lord pays the price with Himself, a price we could never pay, to present us to himself as spotless?

He doesn't just bid us to come, He makes it *possible* for us to come.

Now the Altar has become the place of communion for us. A place of common – union with the Lord. It is a place to share in the fellowship of Jesus' sacrifice, and receive the cleansing of our souls.

It is a place where we are invited to exchange sorrow for joy, suffering for healing, our weakness for his strength, fear for courage, death for eternal life.

Today the Physical Altar still represents a place of holiness where we can:

- meet with God,
- worship and praise him,
- offer thanksgiving,
- make atonement by offering sacrifices for sin,
- make intercession for others

## **Personal Altar**

- Your personal altar is also known as your quiet time or secret place.
- This is where you fellowship alone with the Lord – your one on one time
- This is the place of intimacy for you and the Lord
- It can be anywhere – your home, your prayer closet, your prayer garden, your car,

## **Home Altar**

- Where you gather as a family to worship in your house
- The place where you bring praise reports and offer prayers
- It can be your living room, your front porch or your kitchen table
- It is not the place that makes it special, it is the purpose that sets it apart

## **Church Altar**

- A place of corporate worship
- A place set apart as holy, to be devoted to service unto the Lord
- A place of prayer, repentance, thanksgiving
- A place of honor unto the Lord

## **What should we bring to the Altar?**

1. Your sacrifice of praise
2. Your thanksgiving for His goodness
3. Your hope of salvation
4. Your hunger for God's presence - Faith - Heb.11; 6
5. Your desire for Holiness
6. Your submission to God's will
7. Your passion for his kingdom
8. Your joy for God's courts
9. Your gift of service
10. Your love and devotion for God

***Abraham built an altar everywhere he went. It was not a place. It was a lifestyle.***

Abraham is the father of our faith. His life was an example of faith in action. If we are to follow the Lord like Abraham did – we will also need to:

1. Believe
2. Obey
3. Worship
4. Trust
5. Endure (or overcome)

This week we looked at the first three. Next week we will look at how Abraham trusted and endured, to his credit and God's glory.