

GENESIS 12:6-9 TRUSTING THE PROMISE-GIVER

⁶ Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

⁸ From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. ⁹ Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

Abram's first recorded act of faith was to leave his family's dwelling place and venture forth on the promise that God would lead him to where he needed to be. Here we have a second recorded act of faith. Upon arriving in the land of the Canaanites he goes to the site of pagan worship, the "great tree of Moreh." But unlike the local inhabitants, he worships God rather than the local fertility deity. Apparently, the Lord appeared and spoke to Abram in the context of worship. God revealed to Abram that this was indeed the land that he had in mind for his people. Then we have Abram's third recorded act of faith. He built an altar there, a sign that this land belonged to God and as a memorial to the promise of God that his descendants would be given that land.

But Abram moved on. Since we read that he *called on the name of the LORD* before moving on, this might be seen as the fourth recorded act of faith. Faith has a future orientation. Faith is built on the trust in the promise-giver that his promises are true and will ultimately be fulfilled. As the writer to the Hebrews put it: *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see* (Hebrews 11:1). The biblical expression of faith demonstrates that the power of faith lies in the trust in the promise-giver rather than the fulfillment of the promise. Again from the Letter to the Hebrews: *All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance* (Hebrews 11:13a).

Our goal is to allow God to bless the world through us, and not our being blessed. So also, our ultimate goal as a people of faith is not the fulfillment of the promises ("what's in it for us"), but an absolute trust in the Promise-giver.

May I, Lord, be blessed with the faith of Abraham, in order that I might be a blessing to others by making you known through my life. May my faith in you grow each day through the increase in my knowledge of you. Amen.