

12:1 Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.

12:2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

12:3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

12:4 So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

12:5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.

12:6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

12:7 Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

12:8 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he 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.

From today's sermon

It is a new year, and January is already half over.

The days have been very cold. I hope you have been well.

Last week, we began our sermon with Genesis 1, and today, we will continue reading Genesis 12, where Abram departs for the land God has prepared for him at the age of 75.

Looking back, Abram's father Terah traveled with Abram, his wife Sarai, and his grandson Lot from Ur to Haran, a distance of over 1000 km, where he died.

God commands Abram to travel another 800 kilometers to Canaan. Perhaps some relatives had left the land of their father's separation and did not want to move any further. God said, "Leave the country, leave your relatives, leave your father's house, and go to the land I will show you.

A small, discouraged gathering. But God promised, "I will make you a great nation.

I will make you a great nation, I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a source of blessing.

God will make the little people great, bless them, and make them the basis of blessing for the whole world. We Japanese Christians and we in this church may be a small flock, but let us take heed to God's words that He will make us great and a source of blessing. We always return

to the place of worship and wait for the Lord with our prayers and hearts.

Good morning everyone.

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The days have been very cold. I hope you have been well.

Last week, we began the year with Genesis 1, and today we will continue reading Genesis 12, where Abram departs for the land God has prepared for him at the age of 75.

Looking back, Abram's father Terah traveled with Abram, his wife Sarai, and his grandson Lot from Ur to Haran, a distance of over 1000 km, where he died.

God commands Abram to travel another 800 kilometers to Canaan.

12:1 Sometimes the Lord said to Abram, “Leave your country, separate yourself from your relatives, leave your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you.

That must have been a lonely, solitary, and heartbreakingly journey.

A hard and arduous journey from Ur to Haran. For Abram's father, Terah, it must have been hard in his old age. But they made it. It must have been unimaginable for them to travel 800 km from Haran, which they thought would be a good place to live. A land where they had fond memories of parting with their father. Did the relatives say they did not want to go on any longer? Or did God dare to tell him to leave them and embark on a new journey?

God said, “You shall leave your country, your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you.

But God has a great plan. God reveals His great works through His people. Through separation, heartache, lack, loneliness, and other difficulties, God will accomplish His wonderful and glorious will.

12:2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great. You shall be a foundation of blessing.

That faint-hearted, tiny little flock. The lonely, uncertain steps and life, where it may be going. But there, in the midst of it all, is God.

I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, I will magnify your name.”

We who are Christians. And this church. And each one of us. We tend to think of ourselves as small, but God says, “I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will magnify your name. What is it for?

You shall be a foundation of blessing.”

This is why. We want to keep in mind that our becoming great is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. You shall be the basis of blessing.” We are to be the foundation, the groundwork, the outpouring of the fountain of blessings that will flow all around us.

12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you. All the earth will be blessed by you.

All the earth, all the people of the earth, are “blessed by you. We sometimes go out into the lonely places with our hearts. But the more difficult the situation is, the more we realize that it is not by man's power but by God's power that things are done, and God's name is praised. No matter how hard it is for us to follow what the Lord says, no matter how painful and difficult it is for us to follow, the Lord has a good plan for us and for the whole world in His city. His eyes are with us, He curseth those who curse us, and His abundant blessings are with those who bless us.

Matthew 10:41 He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

10:42 I tell you well, whoever gives one of these little ones a cup of cold water to drink in the name of my discipleship will never be deprived of his reward.

God's eyes are with us, and through us, His blessings will flow to all the willing people of the earth in the wake of us. What an exciting event!

Genesis 15:5 And the Lord took him outside and said to him, “Look up to the heavens and count the stars, if you can. And He said to him, “Your descendants will be like that.”

15:6 And Abram believed the LORD. And the LORD accepted it as his righteousness.

Deuteronomy 7:7 The LORD loved you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than any nation. For you were the least number of all the people of the tares.

7:8 Only because the LORD loved you, and because he wanted to keep the oath which he swore to your fathers, he led you out with a strong hand, and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, out of the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

7:9 Therefore you must know. The LORD thy God, the LORD thy God, the God of truth, loveth him, and keepeth his covenant unto them that keep his commandments, and giveth grace unto them, unto a thousand generations,

7:10 And that they that hate him shall be destroyed in recompense each one of them. 7:10 And to those who hate him he will repay each one individually; he will not spare those who hate him.

14:2 For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God. He has chosen you out of all the peoples of the earth to be his treasured possession.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a people for God.

12:6 And that ye might recount the works of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, that ye might be witnesses unto the truth.

12:7 At the time the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants. Abram built an altar there to the Lord who appeared to him.

12:8 From there he moved to a mountain east of Bethel and pitched his tent. To the west was Bethel, and to the east was Ai. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.

God's promise of blessings is with us and with the good people around us, and together we continue our journey to the Promised Land, rejoicing in God's grace.

Let us go forward this week, trusting in God's protection.

The Lord Take My Hand New Chant 474 (Hymn 294)

The Lord will take my hand
Why should I be afraid or run away?

In the Lord's gentle hands, I leave everything to Him
What a blessing it is to be able to travel

Sometimes it rains, sometimes it winds
Sometimes it rains, sometimes it winds Sometimes it's hard, but I don't think about it
In the Lord's tender hands, we leave everything to Him
What a blessing it is to be able to travel

How long we walk, how far we go
As the Lord wills it, and as He wills it
In His tender hands, I leave everything to Him
What a blessing to be able to travel

Everyone can reach the Ookawa River without trouble
With the Lord's hand on me, I'll cross it without any difficulty
In the gentle Lord's hands, I'll leave everything to Him
What a blessing it is to be able to travel.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for today's worship. Abraham received a word from the Lord at the age of 75. He traveled with his father over 1,000 kilometers from Ur to Haran, and then another 800 kilometers. He said, "Leave your native land, your father's house, and go to the land I will show you." A small flock, an uncertain journey. But the Lord leads the way. He told us, "I will make you a great nation, I will bless you and make your name great, that you may be a source of blessing." Please protect us as we set out this week, trusting in God's word. Bless our families and the people of our community. Use us. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.