

Discovery Hour
E 100 Week 2
January 17, 2010
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This week the E100 takes us squarely into the presentation of salvation history. Though the promise of God's saving work is found as early as Genesis 3:15, with the call of Abraham God's unfolding plan becomes particular and specific in Abraham and his descendents. It is instructive to notice that God's call arises out of and in the barrenness of Abraham and Sarah: "Now Sarai was barren, she had no children" (11:30). Abraham is 75 years old at this point and he and Sarah have spent decades childless. It is no wonder that Abraham struggles to trust God (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-18) and Sarah laughed when told of the promise of a child/ heir (Gen. 18:12).

There is a parallel between the call of Abraham, "the Lord said to Abram" (Gen. 12:1; 15:1ff) and God speaking the world into being, "and God said 'let there be light'" (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 22, 24, 26). We can then see a further parallel in the call of Jesus to those who would receive him, "come follow me" (Matt. 4:19; 8:22; Luke 9:23, etc). As one commentator put it: "The purpose of the call is to fashion an alternative community in creation gone awry, to embody in human history the power of the blessing" (Brueggemann, *Genesis*, p. 105). There are two primary elements of this calling: the promise that God makes and the faith that Abraham is able to exercise and does exercise in embracing the promise. We can see seven aspects of the promise Abraham receives:

1. You will be a great nation
2. I will bless you
3. I will make your name great
4. You shall be a blessing
5. I will bless those who bless you
6. I will curse those who curse you
7. All families on earth will be blessed through you

The response of Abraham becomes the pattern for faith for all those who will join God's plan for salvation. We see this in Abraham (Gen. 12:4; 15:6) and it is taken up by Paul as in his letters.

What shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about – but not before God. What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (*Romans* 4:1-3).

Discussion Questions:

1. Abraham was asked to believe when he was in a state of barrenness and loss. As Paul says: "Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations ..."
What does this tell us about living the life of faith? Are we ready for this?
2. Abraham is called on a literal journey (Gen. 12: 5 -9) as were the first disciples. How is living the life of faith still a journey?
3. Abraham was tested beyond our imagination with God's requirement that he sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22). What kind of God requires this? What kind of person is able to carry it out as Abraham is ready to do?