

## WEEK 1

### The Call

#### PREPARATION



Hebrews 11:8-19,  
Genesis 11:27 - 12:20

#### LESSON AIMS

To introduce Abraham  
and to discover that  
his faith in God was  
demonstrated by  
obedience.



God's call to Abraham was not on the grounds of any religious or spiritual merit of Abraham's, but purely in accordance with God's choice. Joshua later confirmed that Terah and his family - descendants of Shem - shared in the idolatry around them (Joshua 24:2), but it seems clear that this idolatry did not have the grosser elements that had so poisoned Canaanite religion, e.g. child sacrifice. Without God's call Abraham would not have known God.

Therefore, the call to leave his father's household and country would preserve Abraham from the pagan influence of home and family. Whilst Abraham was being called to a country in which the loss of the knowledge of God had led to even greater depravity of morals and religion, it may have been less of a threat than the shallow, yet deceptive religiosity of his family. Nevertheless, Abraham recognised the potential of local culture to corrupt by insisting that Isaac's wife came from his relatives, not from amongst the local women (Genesis 24:1-4).

#### Hebrews

- 11:8 Abraham's faith was demonstrated by obedience.
- 11:10 See Revelation 21:1-27.
- 11:11 Abraham believed God would keep his promises.
- 11:17 Another example of Abraham's obedience. We need to recognise that it was not the amount of faith that was important, but rather the fact of Abraham's faith being placed in a great big God.

#### Genesis

For location of place names and route of Abraham's journey, please refer to pages 10 and 11.

For NT commentaries on this passage see Acts 7:2-7 and Hebrews 11:8-10.

11:27 It would be helpful to make a family tree that can be added to as the weeks go by.

11:31 'Terah took his son ....'. Acts 7:3 seems to suggest that it was Abraham who was called. There is no reason to suppose that both may not be true. The first stage may have been taken unconsciously in response to God's call. Alternatively, v.31 is the scene as it appeared to the world. The reality of it was God's call (Acts 7:2-3). For whatever reason the journey was interrupted until the death of his father, when Abram was free to continue his journey in response to God's call.

11:32 Terah's age at death presents a difficulty. Various explanations have been suggested. It may be that Abram was the youngest son, being mentioned first in v.26 because of his importance. Or it may be that Terah's age was 145, as given in an alternative reading of the text (Samaritan Pentateuch).

12:1-3 The call may have taken place in Ur ('had said' v.1), making this a reminder of the original call, prompting Abram to resume his journey in v.4.

God's promise to Abram:

v.1 Go to the land I will show you.

v.2 Many descendants

vv.2-3 Abram will be a blessing (See Galatians 3:6-9).

12:2-3 God's blessing means his gracious giving to one in need, material and spiritual. In the wider sense, God's blessing to mankind will be the reversal of the curse of God in Genesis 3:14-19. Therefore, those who reject the blessing through Abraham reject God.

12:4 Note Abram's response.

12:7 God fulfils the promise (cf. 12:1).

12:10 Having been told by God that he was in the right land, Abram leaves the land due to adverse circumstances.

12:11-13 Does Abram demonstrate trust in God in these verses? (Look back to the promise in 12:2 - God had not yet fulfilled this promise.)

12:14-16 It all turned out as Abram had predicted. He may have thought how sensible he had been as the wealth poured in .....

12:17 **but** God took a hand.



1. How does Abram demonstrate his faith in God? Give specific examples.
2. Why did Abram fall into temptation so soon after God had fulfilled part of his promise to him? (12:10-13). Can this help us to avoid succumbing to temptation?
3. What sort of witness was Abram to Pharaoh? (12:14-19).



**Following Instructions** Photocopy the instruction sheet on page 11 and distribute to every member of the group. Make sure that everyone has a pen. Tell them that they have a maximum of 5 minutes to complete the instructions on the sheet. Make sure that there is a reward for any who complete the task successfully. At the end of the exercise discuss the importance of listening to and following instructions. Let's see what Abraham did when God gave him some instructions that did not make much sense to him at the time.



Map to show Abram's journey (see page 10).

## ACTIVITY



Divide the group into teams and use a quiz to review the Bible passage.

On page 11 is a representational drawing of Abram's journey from Ur to Haran and then from Haran to Canaan. Redraw it to the scale you will be using in your situation, i.e. on a large sheet of paper on a board in front of the group, or to fit on the desk or table where they are sitting.

The aim is to get Abram from Ur to Canaan and the first team to do this wins. There are 6 steps between Ur and Canaan, indicated on the diagram by arrows. In order to move from step to step the team has to acquire an arrow by answering a question correctly.

### Requirements:

Representational drawing - 1 for each team.

Eight rectangular cards - a set for each team. On one side the cards are numbered 1 to 8. On the other side of 6 of them there is an arrow (to point the direction of the journey), the remaining 2 cards being left blank. This is to allow for an element of luck in acquiring arrows, so that anyone answering a question incorrectly will not place their team in an irretrievable position.

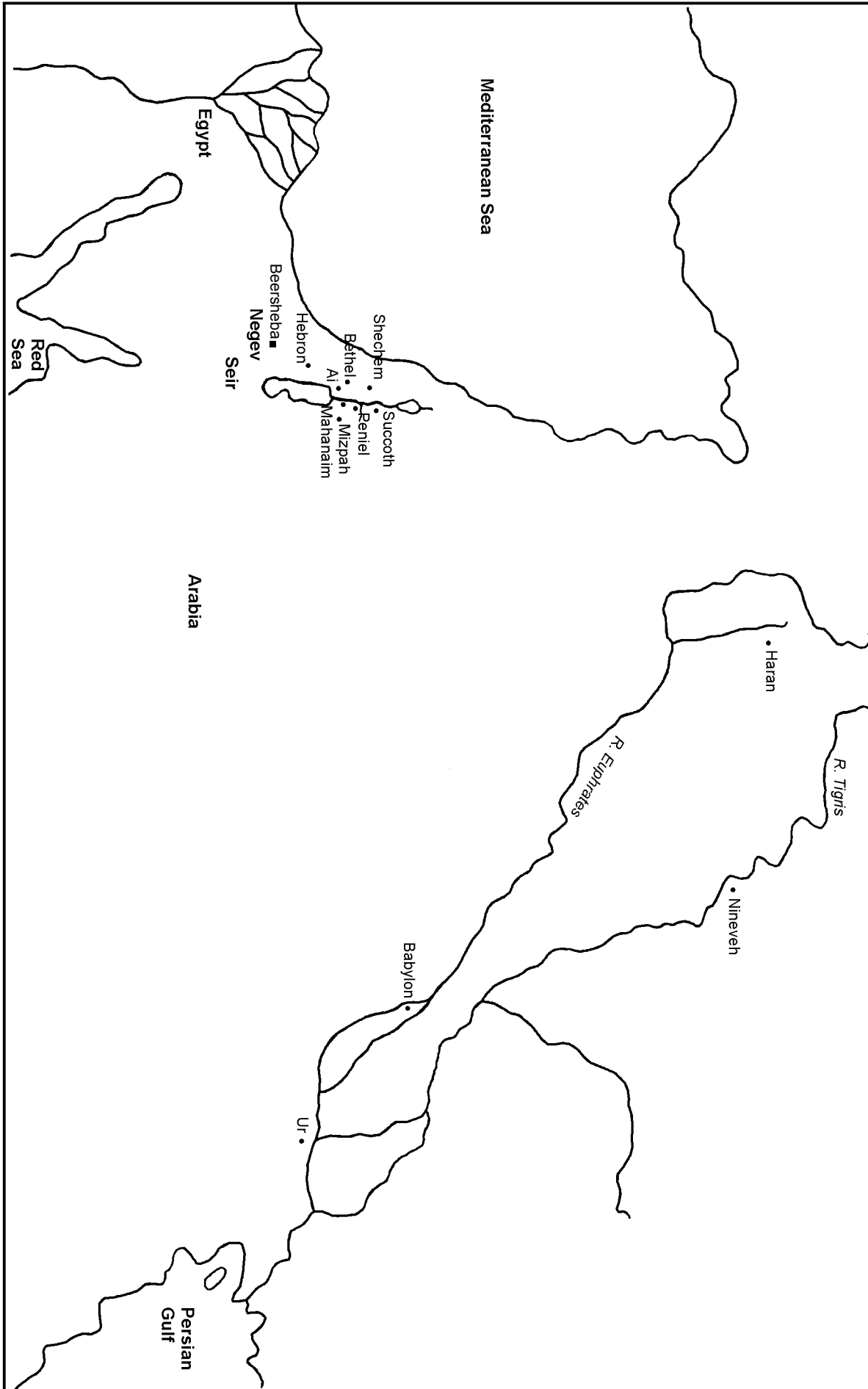
The cards are placed numbered side up to one side of each team's drawing. Because the journey is longer from Ur to Haran you might want to use 4 arrows to get to Haran and only 2 to complete the journey to Canaan.

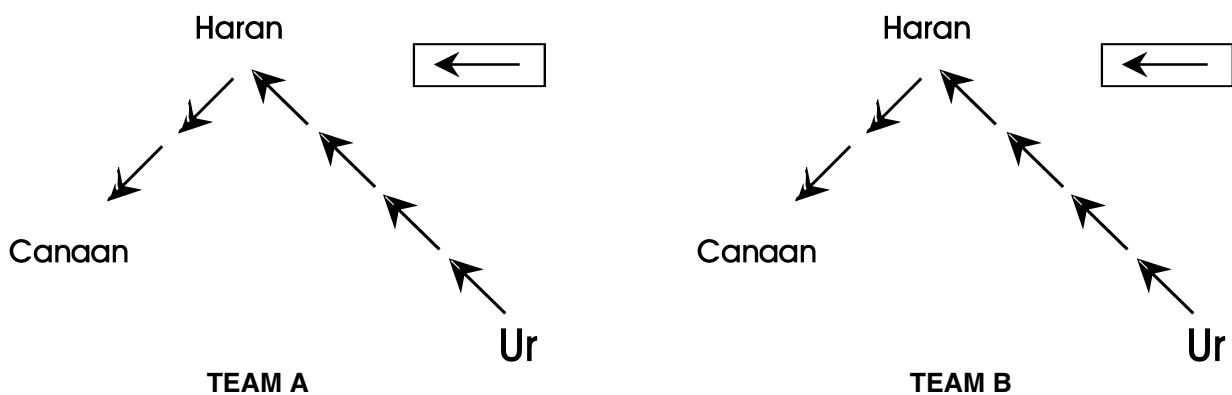
### Rules:

A question is put to each team in turn and, if answered correctly, one of the team members chooses a card by calling out its number. The card is turned over and if it has an arrow on it is placed in position. If there is no arrow the card is placed to one side.

If an incorrect answer is given the question is put to the other team. If the other team gets it right they choose a card (which again could have an arrow or be blank).

Allow 10-15 minutes for the quiz. This should mean that each team will have at least 5-6 cards to their credit! Prepare a minimum of 8 questions per team from the Bible passage.





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### Following Instructions

Follow the instructions on this sheet for a reward.

1. Read all the instructions through before you begin.
2. Write your name in the top right hand corner of this instruction sheet.
3. Tear off a bit of the bottom left corner of this instruction sheet.
4. Do an impression of a cow.
5. Scrumple up this instruction sheet and then open it out again.
6. Hop to one wall of the room and back again.
7. Repeat instruction 4.
8. Draw a circle around the word 'instruction' every time it appears on this sheet.
9. Clap three times as loudly as you can.
10. Do an impression of a dog.
11. Fold this sheet in half with the writing on the outside.
12. Read instruction 13 and say as loudly as you can, 'I am very, very silly.'
13. Ignore instructions 2 to 12, wait a few minutes and then trade this unblemished instruction sheet in for a reward.