

ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

A Classic Series

When the Faithful Fail

Genesis 12:7–20



LET'S BEGIN HERE

What courage it must have taken for a 75-year-old man to pull up his tent pegs and strike out by faith, not knowing where he was going. What a model of faith! But while we're right to admire Abram's faith, we must not forget that he was still fully human. When we look more closely at Abram up there on his pedestal, we begin to see his cracks and imperfections. We realize this icon of faith had feet of clay. When a famine hit, rather than standing firm in faith and trusting his God to sustain him and his wife, he fled to Egypt. All of us can learn lessons from faithful Abram's temporary failure and tragic slump into deceit and disobedience.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. A Reality We Dare Not Forget

The good and godly are still human and imperfect. Those who forget this reality can become disillusioned and disappointed when those we admire fail to live up to our unrealistic expectations.

2. An Example of That Reality

Abraham's failure to trust and obey God by running to Egypt for protection reminds us that the good and godly are still human and imperfect.

- The Divine Test: A Severe Famine (Genesis 12:10)
- The Human Reaction: A Quick Escape (12:10–11)



Quotable

When “great ideas” come from our sinful nature, they are “wrong ideas.”

— Charles R. Swindoll



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- The Complicated Consequences: A Carnal Mess (Genesis 12:11–17)

- The Ultimate Outcome: A Personal Offense (12:18–20)



DOORWAY TO HISTORY

Famines in the Biblical World

Chances are, most of us have never experienced a real famine. And even though many meteorologists today speak about “severe drought conditions” that kill crops and send cattle to the butcher, the worst effects most of us personally experience are lawn-watering restrictions and higher-priced vegetables in the supermarket! Real famines do occur in various parts of the world today, but in the ancient world without modern-day dams, reservoirs, and water treatment systems, droughts and famines were always just a few rainless weeks away.

Famines in ancient Canaan came as a result of drought due to a lack of rainfall, destruction of crops due to diseases or locusts, or starvation due to a military siege.¹ In Abram’s day, drought was the likely culprit for the famine in Canaan. The land was particularly susceptible to droughts that could reduce greenery to crumbs, riverbeds to cracked earth, and lakes to mud puddles. Wells dried up, dust storms stirred up, and frequently people gave up. In response, nomadic peoples wandered from place to place in search of better sources of water.

The pagan Canaanites deified the rivers, the winds, and the rains, believing the people were destined to be victims of these fickle and unfriendly “gods,” but Abram, a servant of the one, true God, should have known that God alone was in control of these things. Abram’s God could (and still can!) turn on the rain as easily as we turn on the faucet.



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LET'S LIVE IT

We can learn five practical lessons from the causes and effects of Abraham's failure.

1. There are famines in every life.
2. There is a lie in every carnal escape.
3. There is a weakness in every Abraham.
4. There is a Sarai in every compromise.
5. There is a Pharaoh in every Egypt.

If this message has uncovered an area in your life in which you are “fleeing to Egypt” rather than trusting and obeying God, begin right now to reverse your slippery slope. Write a paragraph committing to take the path of faithfulness rather than the path of faithlessness. Be specific about the steps you will take and offer this commitment in prayer to God.

ENDNOTE

1. G. F. Hasel, “Famine,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, E–J, rev. ed., ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and others (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 281.



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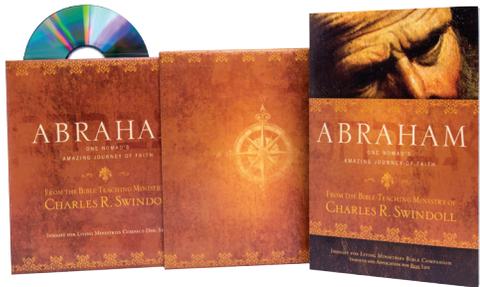
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When the Faithful Fail

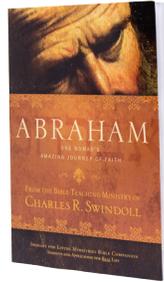
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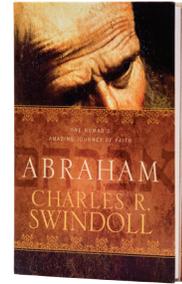
Tools for Digging Deeper



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