

LENT 2A - COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LESSONS FOR MARCH 1, 2026

Genesis 12:1-4a

- This passage introduces Abram/Abraham. The preceding verses tell the beginning of Abram's journey: "Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; but when they came to Haran, they settled there. The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran." (Genesis 11:31-33) The maps provide perspective on how long a journey this was. With Terah's death, the journey takes on a greater significance, as God commands the continuation. Though we are not used to thinking of Abraham as being from Babylon, this is the region he originated from. This origin gets described in the apocryphal book of Judith:
"These people are descended from the Chaldeans. At one time they lived in Mesopotamia, because they did not wish to follow the gods of their ancestors who were in Chaldea. Since they had abandoned the ways of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God they had come to know, their ancestors drove them out from the presence of their gods. So they fled to Mesopotamia, and lived there for a long time. Then their God commanded them to leave the place where they were living and go to the land of Canaan. There they settled, and grew very prosperous in gold and silver and very much livestock."
- God's command and Abram's obedience continue to inspire our own faith journeys. Keep in mind that when Abram sets out for Canaan, he is already 75 years old! We are never too old to follow God's call!
- God's words to Abram are central to an understanding of God's people. Abram will be blessed "so that you will be a blessing." Whether we talk about God's people then or now, our blessings are never meant for us alone. We are blessed to be a blessing! What has God blessed you with? How can God use those blessings to bless others?

Psalms 121

- This psalm powerfully expresses God's love and care for us. Particularly when we are faced with any struggles or difficulties, we can pray/chant/sing this psalm to remind us that God watches over us.
- This psalm is included in the possibilities for reading at a funeral committal. What comfort might we find in grief from this psalm?

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

- Paul throughout Romans builds up an argument for God's justification of Jews and Gentiles alike through a faith found in Jesus Christ. Abraham becomes a key piece of evidence for his argument for at least two reasons:
 1. Genesis 15:6 states, "[Abraham] believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness." For Paul, this passage is significant, because Abraham lived 400 years before Moses. Thus, God makes one righteous outside of the Law. Further, this passage takes place before Abraham is circumcised. Thus, God makes one righteous outside of the physical rite of circumcision. Thus, the key to righteousness/justification is faith/belief.
 2. In Genesis 17:5 Abraham will become the "father of many nations." The Greek word for "nations" also means "Gentiles." Thus, the promise is not simply for the Jews. It is for the Gentiles – for all people.

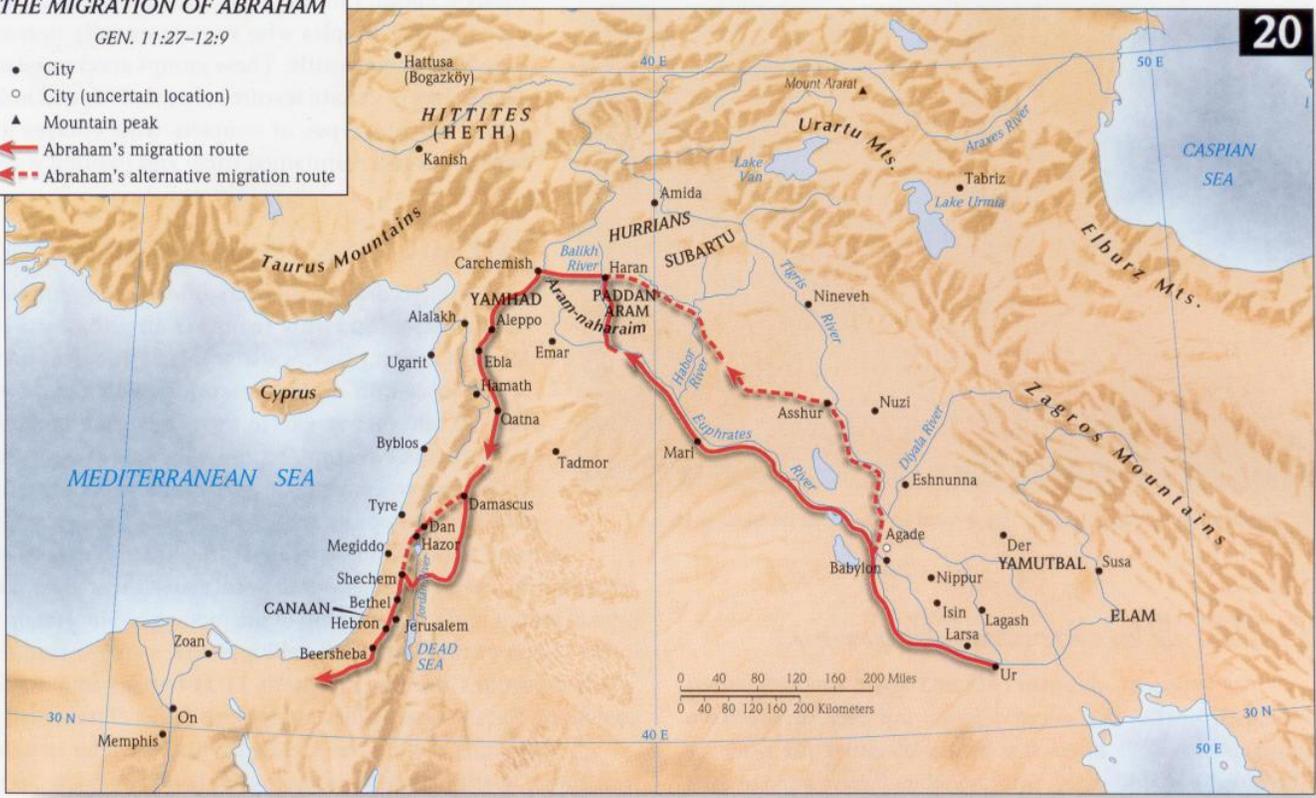
John 3:1-17

- Note that Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night. By indicating the time, John describes the confusion that this Jewish religious leader has in respect to Jesus. Contrast this with the encounter Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, which happens at noon, emphasizing the clarity that the woman will show with Jesus.
- Keep in mind that quotation marks are a later addition to the text. It is difficult to tell where the words of Jesus end and John's commentary begins. Perhaps we have that confusion so that we understand that we have become a part of the conversation. The words are directed to us.
- When Jesus says, "born again," he uses a word that means both "again" and "from above." Nicodemus thinks that Jesus refers to a physical birth. Jesus, however, is speaking of a spiritual birth – "from above."
- Jesus describes the Spirit here as the wind: unpredictable and perhaps unknowable. How can we let this understanding of Spirit as wind affect how we are called to act as a church?
- Note also that John 3:16 emphasizes that God so loved *the world!* God is doing this so that "the world might be saved through him." This is not a world-denying theology. This is a world-affirming theology. Too often this passage has been used to promote an individualistic view of salvation that is not supported in the passage itself.
- What does "eternal life" mean? We generally think of an afterlife in heaven with God. But when Jesus uses this word in John, he refers to a life that starts now, not simply an afterlife. What does it mean to live in eternal life now? What does it mean to live in that light now?

THE MIGRATION OF ABRAHAM

GEN. 11:27-12:9

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak
- ▶ Abraham's migration route
- - -▶ Abraham's alternative migration route



Middle East

