

K-519 Tv Show Part 3 Abraham

by Art Katz

Art Katz discusses the call of Abram, emphasizing the importance of obedience and the transformative power of God's blessing in our lives.

Duration: 26:17

Scripture: Genesis 12:1, Genesis 12:4, Deuteronomy 6:5, Psalm 103:1, Matthew 7:24, Matthew 22:37, John 5:39

Topics: "Interview"

Description

In this video, Art Katz and Paul Gordon discuss their experiences as Messianic Jews and the transformative power of their faith in Jesus Christ. They emphasize the importance of praising, worshiping, and serving God, as well as obeying His call to follow Him. They reference Psalm 103:1, which speaks of seeking God's blessing through obedience. They also reflect on the story of Abram (later known as Abraham) in the Bible, highlighting his immediate obedience to God's call to leave his homeland.

Transcript

Ben Israel, with Art Katz and Paul Gordon. Welcome to Ben Israel. I'm Art Katz.

And I'm Paul Gordon. Glad to have you with us today as we discuss and speak of the things which have been made dear to our own hearts and lives. And I don't know how we can introduce ourselves.

There's a saying, what's in a name? We're Messianic Jews, we're Jewish believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Messiah of Israel, Jesus Christ, Yeshua HaMashiach. Our lives have been revolutionized, transformed by the power and the presence of God which came with that knowledge. And week by week we're seeking to express the new quality of life which has been invested in us by our God.

Among the things that Jewish believers do that we had not done previously is to praise God with all our hearts, to worship Him, to love Him, to serve Him, to speak of Him, to witness of Him and to pray to Him. We hope that you'll think it not strange if we take a moment now, Paul and I, to turn to the God of all this world, ask His blessing upon our time together with you. Because frankly, people, we confess that except that God bless, except that His hand be upon us, except that we enjoy the presence of His Spirit, except that He lead us, there's not much that's profitable.

We desperately need the blessing of God upon our lives, upon our marriages, in our communities, our professions, our relationships. This is what it's all about. And if you're hungry for such blessing, we just ask you to open your heart and we're going to invite His presence right into your living room and upon your life.

Let's do it. Let's join. So precious God, we just call upon you in that one name which is given above every name under heaven and in earth, whereby a man may be saved.

We thank you for that name, Lord God, for the person of the Messiah, Yeshua, Jesus. And we ask, Lord, that you bless our conversation, that you lead us by your wonderful Spirit, that you make this a rich and deep and meaningful experience for those who watch. Lord, we just ask the blessing of the living God upon every home and family and life that's looking in right now.

Speak to them in ways, Lord God, by your Spirit that pleases you. We thank you that you hear us now and that you answer. Thank you, Lord.

For we call upon you according to your name and your will. Thank you, precious God, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Brother Paul? Yes. How are you doing? Fine. What's on your mind and heart? Well, you know, I was thinking, we were talking before about when you called upon the name of the Lord, when you heard that still small voice in Jerusalem.

And you know, when you were telling us about that, it reminded me of the situation that happened to a man by the name of Abram many, many years ago. And I went back during this week and I was looking through the twelfth chapter of the book of Genesis. There's an interesting and a vital account of Abram, and I think it's very similar to what you experienced yourself in Jerusalem.

Same type of a call. Why don't we take a look at that? This is the twelfth chapter of the book of Genesis, and this is the first verse. I'll start there.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee.

And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. There's that word again, blessed. Right.

You know that so many people think that blessing has got necessarily to do with feelings, that it's some kind of sweet or saccharine thing, but the blessing of God is something more than feeling. It's the whole enhancement of life by the life of God itself, without which our human life is a rather drab thing. I like that Jewish spirit which Jacob expressed when he had his opportunity with God.

I will not let you go except that you bless me. I believe God enjoys that spirit in men, that deeply and earnestly seeks the blessing of God. But I think that in the scriptures you read, Paul, it shows that the blessing of God is conditional upon something that's required from us.

There's a pattern here. The thing that's required from us is obedience in response to the voice of God which speaks and calls us out of one situation to follow him. It's rather a fearful call, and I can really understand how men could shrink from it.

And you know when you read the fourth verse, so Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him, and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. How many times had I read that and thought, my, my, my, what a man is Abram. Oh, to be a Jew like that, to hear the call of God, and immediately to be obedient and to respond and to come out.

Wasn't that your impression? Yeah, he didn't respond though right away, did he? What do you mean by that? Well, you know, I thought the same thing until I went back into chapter 11, and I was looking at verse 31. And it seems that when you read this, that Abram must have had that call before. Because it says, And Terah, who was Abram's father, took Abram, his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarah his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan.

And they came unto Haran, and they dwelt there. The first call to Abram was to get thee out of country, kindred, and father's house, a complete separation from all that was familiar to him. And yet we see in chapter 11 that he packed his father, his family, probably all his servants, the cattle and everything that he had in one big package.

And he attempted to, in fact, he didn't even take them. It says here that Terah actually took him. So he was a little slow by responding, wasn't he? I think we ought to be sympathetic and, what can we say, compassionate because he is flesh and blood like as we.

It's really a wrenching call to come out of nation, kindred, and father's house. And we just invite our viewers to begin to contemplate what that would mean. All of the familiar values, the things that are dear, especially when it says nation, kindred, and father's house.

We Jews with our mishpochah and our grandparents and those who have chalked us under the chin and who had us on their knees, to leave these things is really a very serious wrench. And to follow a God into an unfamiliar place, into a land that I will show you, and to pass through a wilderness before we enter into a land of promise is not a call that men would willingly hear. I want to just try this out on you, Paul.

How do you know that you're hearing the voice of God? Maybe this is indigestion or it's a voice of God's adversary trying to trick and to take you away from the things which are familiar and dear. How do you think that Abraham knew that this was God's voice and how can we ourselves know it? That's a good question. Probably because his heart was disposed towards God.

I'm just guessing that Abraham was a man who was right before God, a man who was looking for God, a man whose heart was so disposed that when God spoke, he just intuitively knew. I guess that's the only way I can answer. I think that's a good answer because Jesus said, my sheep will hear my voice.

And we know that his Jewish contemporaries reacted to him in different ways. There were those who heard and believed immediately. There were those who saw the remarkable miracles which attended his life and ministry and yet would not believe.

And of course, I was faced with something of the same predicament as you know, when in that bookstore in Jerusalem eight years ago, I myself heard a still small voice. And we know that the phrase still small voice is the scripture's own description of God's voice. And even as we're speaking, we trust, dear viewers, that you're beginning to get a sense of what it is that we're about.

What does it mean, Jews who believe? Well, it's evident, first of all, that we're Jews who believe that this indeed is the word of God, that this is not a mere literary flourish nor a product of culture, but a divinely inspired word transcribed through men and yet an accurate record but charged with the deepest meaning. There was a very literal call to Abram by a still small voice. And I can see the kind of perplexity to which Abram was likely brought as he had to consider the costs of obedience.

You know, it doesn't tell us in the New Testament what kind of thoughts went through the heads of people like Matthew and people like Peter, the fishermen, when Jesus said, follow me, they dropped everything and without even thinking a second thought just followed him. I've often thought of that. Things have to call.

Jesus is speaking to Matthew at the tax collector's table, follow me, and immediately he followed him. Or leave your nets and your boats and your father's houses and follow me. It would almost suggest that the same one who spoke then is the same God who spoke early to Abraham, the same God who spoke to me eight years ago, and the same God who speaks now, even through the voices and personalities of other men, to a people who must hear that call to come out from nation, kinsmen, father's house and follow him.

And I really believe, Paul, that this is the definitive call of God to every man, Jew and Gentile in every generation. And except that we've heard it and obeyed it, we've not really experienced the call of God, nor have we experienced the reality of God in our lives. And you're right that Abraham procrastinated.

He delayed. Instead of leaving his father's house, he allowed his father to take him. And we read that it wasn't until when the days of terror were 205 years and terror died in Haran in the last verse, the 11th chapter, that then, upon his father's death, Abraham finally was able to bring himself to be obedient to the original call.

And then we read that verse again in a new light. Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country from thy kindred and from my father's house. Had said.

And I wonder how many of us, how many people are listening today to whom God had said, get out, come, follow me, leave your boats and your nets and your father's houses, leave the things which are familiar and dear to you, but which are obstacles and deterrents to a wholehearted obedience to my call, whether it's culture, whether it's tradition, whatever it is, there's a call of God that goes forth to bring men out that he might bring them in. Abraham rightly delayed. And you know, Paul, when I searched those scriptures, I wondered where Haran was, where Abram delayed.

And I looked all over the promised land for Haran, and I could not find it. I thought that I had faulty maps. And one day, inadvertently, my eye fell upon Haran.

And of all places, guess where it is. It was in Mesopotamia, right along the same Euphrates River, where Ur of the Chaldees was located. Don't we have a saying that you can take the boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the boy.

Abraham came out of Ur of the Chaldees, but Ur of the Chaldees was still in him. But there's a very real coming out. And until we're obedient, we're not going to experience the blessing of God.

He made sure that if he ran into any problems, he could always jump in a little raft or something that he built and float right back down to Ur, didn't he? I think that's it, that there's always a kind of a security to know that you can go back to your place of origin. And you know, that brings us to a most significant

verse, and I think one of the most beautiful verses in all the scripture. After Abram was finally obedient, we read, And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land.

And there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. I know that this would arouse some controversy about the literal meaning of the word appear, and I don't want to be sidetracked by whether God literally and visually appeared to Abram, but I think this much is clear, that there was a manifestation of the actuality of the reality of the presence of a living God to the life of a man called Abram that was a decisive factor in enabling him to build an altar and come finally to a place of worship. Oh, absolutely.

And you know, I don't believe that Abram began to be Jewish until he was obedient, until he came out, until God appeared to him, and there he built an altar and worshiped him. What is it that the word Jew actually derives from, Paul, do you know? Well, the word Jew comes from the word Judah, and Judah, of course, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, means praise. So, in effect, a Jew is one who praises God.

I think our point is this, that real praise, I don't mean feigned praise or affected praise or the mechanics of worship or doing our dutiful bit, I mean that genuine praise that whelms up, flowing out of a heart that really knows God, that has experienced His grace in His presence, that praise is impossible until it's evoked out of the life of one to whom God has appeared. And you know that there are countless tens of thousands of Gentiles who call themselves Christians, in all sincerity believing it, or call themselves by denominational names Baptists, Presbyterian Methodists, who have yet to express and to give voice to an authentic praise because God has yet to appear to them, because they've not yet been obedient to come out. Do you think sometimes it might be that God hasn't made His appearance yet because they haven't stopped long enough to listen to what He's saying? I think that's it, maybe they've not understood that this is more than a little historic episode that's being recorded.

It's a pattern, it's God's way, the hearing of a call and the coming out. But you know I think we might be perplexing some of our viewers, and they'll say, are you asking that I should leave the United States of America or break up from my family or leave my familiar denomination? What do you mean, come out? Is that a literal, physical separation? How would you answer that? Well, didn't Jesus say that we are to be, or Paul, not Jesus, Paul said that we are to be in the world but not of it? In other words, that when we come out, we come out of all those, we come out of all those things that we hold dear, we come out of all the things that make the world go round for us, that without them we feel we've failed or the world is dissatisfying, and we cleave to God. We're still in the world, we may be still within our familiar surroundings, but we're not of it, we're not part of the system.

We're God's people. I think there's a kind of separation which God is speaking that doesn't necessarily imply a physical separation. We're in the world, but we're not of it.

And yet I think as our viewers can see that you and I are not ascetics, we're ordinary Jewish men, and yet there has been a separation, a process of withdrawal coming out from the spirit and the entanglements of this world, and as you've said, a cleaving to God, which is more than just a Shabbos or Shabbat or Saturday or Sunday experience. It's a whole giving over of one's life to God, giving him the sovereignty, the lordship. It's beginning to walk in his way and to take upon ourselves his aspect, his thought, his understanding, his direction, his values.

Yeah, you told me once about when you were teaching school and you were trying to instill into your students certain values, and maybe by talking to them and instilling these values, you could help change the world in some way, and it failed miserably. Remember we were talking about that? How about after

God became a reality in your life and the Ruach HaKadosh was working in you? Did you find any difference concerning the students as you were teaching? It's a totally different situation. You know, one is an attempt to live by precept and by principle, and I think Paul himself expressed this deep frustration, this anguish of soul, of a man who has well-intending intentions.

He says, that which I would do, I do not, and that which I ought not to do, that I do. Who can save me from this death but thank God for Yeshua HaMashiach, for Jesus the Christ? God saves us from the predicament of trying to be ethical, of trying to live moral lives, when we have not that innate resource, that very strength and power which alone God can give. You know, it says that Abraham believed God, and God counted that to him for righteousness.

The righteousness which Abraham had was not the consequence of his own moral deeds, but it was something imputed and given from God. When a channel was opened by the believing heart of Abraham, through which God could flood, the righteousness which alone comes from God, that is a kind of Judaism of which few men know anything. But there's a Judaism of another kind with which the world is far more familiar.

It's a Judaism or an ethic of doing, of deeds, of causes, of philosophies, of ideologies, with which I was very familiar in times past, but the end was frustration and defeat. And even as we sought to reform the world, we're incapable even of regulating and controlling our own lives, our own marriages, our own relationships. This is what I was referring to when I was speaking to the students.

It would have been really different, wouldn't it, to have talked to them about coming out of the world, being part of it, but not of the system, just living in it. The Judaism of God is to become a new creature. If any man be in the Messiah, it says, he is a new creature.

All things have passed away and all things are made new. And that becoming new starts with the hearing of a voice, however strange to call, however unfamiliar, however it calls us from the things that are familiar, however challenging, to recognize whose voice that is and to obey it, for God to appear, to become real to us, for us to worship him. And in that very act of worship, there's a lifting up, there's an ennobling, a stretching of our whole dimension of being.

It's not a jealous God who demands worship, because he's petty, but it's a God who knows our frame and knows that except that we worship him in spirit and in truth, we're going to turn to much lesser objects for the objects of our devotion and worship. In the end, we worship ourselves, which is idolatry and which is in the end demeaning, and we become as pagans. Absolutely.

I think it's for that reason that when Jesus had that conversation with the woman at the well, of all the things which he could have spoken, he spoke this, God the Father is seeking those who will worship him in the spirit and in truth. And I believe with all my heart today that the same God, the same Father, is still seeking those who will worship him. And dear friend, whether you're Jew or Gentile, you know if you've come to a place of authentic worship.

You know if this God has made himself real to you in a deeply personal way by his spirit and has imbued his righteousness and his presence and his very spirit into your life, that you might worship him by the spirit and in truth. And I love the beautiful continuity of God and the integrity of God that's to be found throughout all the scriptures. And the same principle of separation by which this whole relationship begins is described again in a book called the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

And we read there in that sixth chapter, the 16th verse, God says, What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them. And I will be their God and they shall be my people.

Wherefore, come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord. And touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you. And notice what the consequence, Paul, is.

And will be a father unto you and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Precious viewers, can you really say that God is your father? Do you know the fatherhood of God? Can you call him Abba, Dad? Do you know his familiar presence, the joy of his spirit? Have you heard his call? Have you come out? Have you followed him? I tell you that if you're not here in the Tanakh, if you're not here out of the word of God, it's not likely that you're going to hear it elsewhere. Search the scriptures, Jesus said, they are they which testify of me.

We invite you to open your heart to a God who still speaks, who still calls, who would still have people to come out and to follow him, that you might know him, worship him, and love him and serve him with all your hearts and souls. It's really the whole difference, isn't it? The difference between nominal belief, nominal assent, and something that's real. That's right.

The presence of the living God. Praise God. Have we sung today? We haven't sung today.

Oh my, we mustn't neglect our viewers and perhaps they're becoming familiar with our favorite verse out of the Psalms. To be able to lift your voice to God, having heard him and having been obedient to come out, having experienced him. I hope that you'll not be perplexed, that you're catching something of the sense and the spirit of the things to which we ourselves have been called by that same still small voice.

And to believe that there's a God who calls you to follow him into the land that he will show you. And that our obedience to that call has brought us to this place before these cameras. We have no program.

We have no chart. It was not given to Moses. It was not given to Abram.

There's a God who leads by his spirit. We hope that you sense this leading. We hope to be obedient to it.

He leads us to speak, to share, to witness, to praise, to pray and sing. How do we sing that now? Where is that found in the Psalms, Paul? It's in Psalm 103, verse 1. And you have to bear with us because we're not Caruso's and we're not Mario Alonzo's, but we're going to give our voices to God. And we ask you to join us.

We're going to make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Now before we sing that, I think it'd be interesting to remind our viewers that the Psalms came essentially from David, who was the singer of Israel. Of course, we have no knowledge of the music that accompanied these verses which he composed by the Spirit of God, but they were intended to be sung.

God is calling the people again to sing and to praise him by the Spirit in the words which he himself has given. I don't know of a more joyous experience. And the same Psalmist David said, Oh God, he said, take not thy spirit from me and let not thy presence depart from me.

There's a real presence. There's a real spirit. And it enables you to praise and to worship him, which elevates, which ennobles your life, which purifies and purges it, and raises you up out of the level of the

world, its entanglements, its viciousness, its gossip, everything that seeks to destroy and to reduce and to pervert our lives and brings us into communion with that wonderful redeeming presence.

We've been dejected at times and we've been discouraged. We've sung out of the Psalms and immediately we're borne up by God. We sing in cars, we sing when we walk along the street, and God's Spirit bears us.

It's tremendous. Praise God. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. And all that is within me, bless his holy name. Let's try it again.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Bless the Lord, O my soul. And all that is within me, bless his holy name.

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