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“For God so Loves all Families”

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Introduction.

Today more and more people are getting interested in knowing about their ancestry.

The advances in medical technology allow us to get important information about our health from our ancestors. Multiple companies offer people the opportunity to buy a DNA test kit that you can order online. With a little bit of your saliva, you can learn important information about your health, ethnicity, and actually where your ancestors came from. In the physical and health aspects, many people now can know what their potential health risks are, and then they can change their habits to improve their health condition.

Now, speaking about ancestry information, I have heard that many people seem amazed to know that they have ethnic roots in very distant places of the world. Yes, we can trace where our families came from.

What would you think if you knew that you were a descendant of people who emigrated from Africa, Australia, Indonesia, or South America? Many people believe that if they were able to know with more certainty about their ancestry, their concepts of themselves as human beings would acquire a different perspective in life. What if you learn that your family is part of an African or European King descendant? What if you know that your ancestors belonged to a prominent and educated priesthood family of the Aztecs or Mayas? Your understanding and interpretation of life surely would change!

What would you do if you were sure that African or Japanese blood flowed through your veins?

As a contemporary society, people of the ancient world wanted to know their origin;

they wanted to know that it could represent an opportunity to make choices regarding their present and future.

Context matters

Our passage is in the book of Genesis; this part of the Bible reflects the journey of the people of Israel to find meaning and identity. By finding their origin and purpose in history, the people of Israel could find answers to their historic struggles. This book is, therefore, a theological attempt to find spiritual answers for their place in the world and in history.

The call of Abram in Genesis 12 represents a very important recounting of the origin of the Jewish people in the Hebrew Bible. An interesting comment found in the New Interpreters Study Bible says that the narratives about the origin of the people through the patriarchs, among them Abram, were primarily important for this community because they “sought to describe its place and purpose on earth.” We can say that the narratives of Genesis are attempts to describe their ethnic, cultural, and spiritual origin and connect those aspects with the realities of their own world. What I found is that the Call of Abram is not just an attempt to find explanations of their past; the people of Israel find answers for their present too.

They found purpose and meaning through the promise of God. For the first hearers, the ancestral narrative of the call of Abram was the opportunity to give and bring direction and the value of their identity as being in God’s family to pursue in their journey and to bless other families with that understanding on their way.

Theological Analysis.

When I read this text, what comes to my mind is that the Bible communicates the origin of our call and the spiritual purpose of our mission. In my personal experience, God’s call to my life

has given me His promises and direction to extend God's blessing for all people, regardless of their personal or economic status, race, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic.

I can see how God called Abram to do His mission and to be a blessing for others in need.

Faith, trust, and obedience in God were necessary for Abram to move beyond his context and reality to start a journey of faith and to walk in a path of challenges where God's presence and promises would never leave him. The future generations of many families would receive the blessings of God through Abram's mission and descendants.

As a personal witness and immigrant, I can surely identify with the call and journey of Abram in my own personal history. I had to leave behind my parents, siblings, extended family, and friends in my country and move to a very different place, here in the Midwestern USA, to follow God's direction and be an active participant in the work of God and extend His blessing to many other people and families. People and even churches who listen to God's call to move out of their comfort zone could experience indecision, anxiety, doubts, and fears.

Dear Church, all of that is part of the natural and spiritual experience of many people who have been immigrants in the world throughout human history. And it is not just physical immigrants but also spiritual immigrants – people who move from one stage to another in their Christian journeys. The tension between the challenge represented by moving from one place to another and the hope, trust, faith, and confidence in God's presence is something that is always part of how we interpret life and the many other circumstances and realities of the world.

Application.

Dear friends, God is still speaking today in our lives and to Christian Communities. He wants to communicate our spiritual origin and heritage so we can trust in His promises and bless others on our Christian journeys and in our church ministry.

Let us focus on what God has done in the past within our church. Let us recognize God's fulfilled promises in our lives!

Many people now are getting their DNA tested to know and better understand their potential health issues and, through their ethnic ancestry, to get a deeper sense of their own identity.

Similarly, the ancient Bible readers and hearers were nurtured and strengthened by the narratives of the call to Abram and their patriarch to move forward in their lives with confidence.

As we have experienced God's promises and presence through the history of our service and ministry to our community, we take all of that and move forward to continue to minister and make a better connection with the families of our community.

God empowered us to extend God's blessings to the families around us! Regardless of their origin, ethnicity, economic status, and sexual orientation, this is a time of deep reflection in our church, a time of prayer and action, a time of listening to the voice of God calling us to move out from our comfort zone, a time of challenge, as well as a time of opportunities. We are reaching out to many people through our community services; now, we can share the spiritual experience of our worship service in a meaningful and inclusive way with the families of our community!

Conclusion

The Bible's narrative of the Call of Abram showed us how God's call and promises could give us direction through His companionship to be a blessing for many. Let us be conscious of our spiritual origin that comes from God, to listen to God's word, and empower us to extend God's presence and blessings to the ones who need new hope. Let us bring a new message about God's loving family that can transform the lives of many in our community. Let us invite people into a loving family of God. For as God so loves all families, God is calling us to love them as well.

AMEN!