

Pastor Jim Jackson, 11/27/16
Christmas in Temecula, pt. 1—Abraham Looks Forward
Hebrews 11:8-19

Abraham was living in the DARK

Abraham was born around 2100 BC, about 2000 years before Jesus, in the city of Ur in Mesopotamia (near modern Baghdad in Iraq). It was here that he found his wife Sarai and after the death of his brother, Haran, set out with his father Terah and their clan to live in Canaan. Half-way there, they stopped and settled in the city of Haran where Terah died. When God first spoke to Abraham to leave Haran to go to the Promised Land (modern Israel), he had been married for years with his wife Sarai past child-bearing age and no ability to produce a legitimate heir to his house and fortune. For years, Abraham dealt with the darkness of death and the disappointment of not seeing his dreams fulfilled. Abraham had no way of processing the ‘why’ of death in his family or of producing a child with his wife, but trusted in the promise of God (Heb. 10:35, 36). *A believer’s inability allows God’s ability to be realized.*

Abraham looked forward to the LIGHT

From the darkness of despair, God made a promise that Abraham would have innumerable descendants and would bless the whole earth (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:15-18). From God’s initial promise, Abraham waited patiently for 25 years from 75 to 100 years old for God to deliver Isaac to him (Gen. 12:4; 21:5; Heb. 6:13-15). *God often increases the wait to increase the faith!* A portion of Abraham’s hope was realized in his lifetime—Isaac was eventually born to him. The rest of God’s promise was realized thousands of years after his death—down to our day, where Abraham’s descendants (Israelites/Jews) have been innumerable. *The payoff for a believer’s hope might not happen in their lifetime!* Additionally, God’s ultimate payoff on His promise to bless all the people of the world through Abraham was salvation through the arrival of Jesus (Matt. 1:1, 2). Abraham was blessed because his faith in God was not stuck in momentary circumstances but looked beyond himself to the time of Jesus (John 8:52-59)! *Biblical hope does not just have the possibility of coming true, but the certainty of coming true.* The coming of Jesus into the world is the ultimate example of a hope promised, waited for, and realized (Luke 2:21-38). *Believers have an anchor of hope that His promise they patiently wait for will have an eternal payoff someday* (Rom. 5:1-5; Col. 1:27; 1 Peter 1:3-9)!