

# Abraham Went Not Knowing Where

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Abraham Departed to Go into Canaan  
(*Genesis 12:5*)

Abraham Went Not Knowing Where  
(*Hebrews 11:8*)

Genesis 12:5 is an historical commentary about Abraham, and was written by Moses many years after it occurred ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah)). Therefore, it is an error to read Genesis 12:5, in the present tense, as if Abraham was recounting what he was doing. Instead, Moses recorded where Abraham journeyed after the fact.

Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:5; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

Abraham left the country of his birth not knowing where God was going to send him.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive as an inheritance. And **he went out, not knowing where he was going** (Heb. 11:8; emphasis added).

The name of the land, and its location, was not as important as the promise associated with it. This is why the phrase "Promised Land" is used to describe the country that God set apart for Abraham and his descendants (Ex. 12:25; Dt. 6:3; 9:28; 19:8; 27:3; Jos. 23:5; Neh. 9:23).

By faith he (Abraham) sojourned **in the land of promise** as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise (Heb. 11:9; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This Promised Land was a "type" of the spiritual Promised Land that all of mankind has the potential to inherit, if they repent of sin and begin living in accordance with God's law and commandments (Mt. 19:17; Rom. 6:1-6).

For he (Abraham) waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10; Ed. note in parenthesis).

So Abraham did not know where he was going, except that it was a land God had promised to him. Traveling to an unknown location required trusting God, which is one of the reasons that Abraham is regarded as a faithful servant of Almighty God (Gal. 3:9). Because Abraham died, he was unable to remain in the physical Promised Land. However, based on his faithfulness and obedience to God, Abraham will enter God's spiritual Promised Land and remain there forever.

... he (Christ) is the mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption (forgiveness) of the transgressions (sins; cf. 1Jn. 3:4) under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive **the promise of the eternal inheritance** (Heb. 9:15b; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The writer of Hebrews described God's Promised Land as a place that will offer lasting rest for those who trust and obey God.

Therefore, since **a promise remains of entering His** (God's) **rest** (in His Kingdom), let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it (through disobedience; cf. Heb. 3:17-19)

(Heb. 4:1; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Since therefore it remains that some must enter it (at the first resurrection; cf. Rev. 20:4-6), and those to whom it was first preached (nation of ancient Israel) **did not enter because of disobedience** (Heb. 4:6; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

**Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience** (as exhibited by ancient Israel) (Heb. 4:11; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In conclusion, there is no contradiction between Genesis 12:5 and Hebrews 11:8. The account in Genesis was not written by Abraham. Instead, Moses recorded some of Abraham's activities, under God's direction and inspiration, and the writer of Hebrews clearly stated that Abraham did not know where he was going. Therefore, a great deal of faith was required on Abraham's part.

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