Oscarâ??s Travels 2

Description

My name is Oscar and I have written once before of my recollections of an amazing journey I undertook with my employerâ??s servant, a man named Eliazer, who had been charged by our master Abram to find a wife for his son Isaac. This was a journey I undertook as an old camel who had been called back into service from retirement because of â??my experience.â?• You can read this story here.

I would like to recount another story my grandfather told me that took place at the beginning of his employment with Abram.

His recollection started in a place called Haran, a town 600 miles north west of a place called Ur of the Chaldees. It was an ancient semitic speaking nation which existed between late 10th and early 9th century BC and who were eventually absorbed into Babylonian.

Haran was a trading route from Ur to the Mediterranean, east to west, and the people shared the same deity, the moon god, who went by the name nanna or sin. For some reason my masterâ??s family had moved from Ur to Haran and on the death of Abramâ??s father, Terah, Abram decided to move on. I say Abram decided but he says he was told by God to leave all that was familiar â??and go to a land that I will show you.â?•

As a mere camel I am unsure and confused by this notion that you humans sometimes appear to have this â??in builtâ?• need, or desire, or compulsion to attribute your actions to some higher authority. We animals just live and die, but you humans seem to have this hard wired third dimension, a dimension of spirituality, hence you need to worship anything that gives you satisfaction or security.

Oh I do prattle on so much, where was I? Oh yes, recounting my grandfatherâ??s story of the journey he undertook with our master Abram.

It seemed strange to my grandfather at the time that Abram found it necessary to break with the tradition of worshipping this ancient moon god, nanna, and start to explore a creator God. It would appear that Abram was not gaining much â??spiritual refreshmentâ?• from the popular and accepted worship to nanna but was increasingly seeking and developing a deeper more dimensional meaning and understanding of the one true God, a creator God who required His subjects to worship Him in â??Spirit and Truth.â?• So our master Abram began to live by faith and not by sight, something that would stand him in good stead in the years that would follow.

Well I digress, letâ??s get back to the recounting of my grandfatherâ??s story. Just so you have some facts to help you understand the context, my grandfather was acquired as a young working camel to join Abramâ??s team as he obeyed Godâ??s voice which had said to him â??get out of your country, from your family and from your fatherâ??s house and go to a land that I will show you.â?• A journey that was going to be life changing and transforming, not only for Abram and his closest companions but also for my grandfather, one of his trusted workers.

It was a task and a half I tell you, my grandfather said, packing up all the possessions accumulated by Abram in Haran to begin our journey south west. A journey that was given on instruction from our master, who according to him was following instructions from someone or something else. Well, to my grandfather it appeared more like a whim really. All this was based on some words that Abram said God told him, â??Leave your country and go where I will show youâ?•, not really very responsible I hear you say.

Anyway packing up took us days to organise. Abram was comparably rich and successful. This creator God that Abram had started to believe and trust in appeared to have really blessed him with possessions and servants, yes we called ourselves servants but really we were his employees. We were happy to serve this God fearing righteous man and thankful for the security his employment provided for us, so we, including us camels, were happy to be called servants. It was an honour to work for such a man.

There was much excitement amongst us all, especially us camels as we heard that we were preparing for a journey to a land of green fields and plenty of water. What more could a camel ask for?

There I go again, off on a prattle that deters me away from my recollections, memory and age just donâ??t go together. Where was I? Ah yes, packing up the caravan (thatâ??s what we called a group of camels), well my grandfather was, they were getting ready for the journey south west heading to who knows where.

You see this mysterious figure that Abram believed in, was the thing that set him apart from everyone else around. Abram referred to this mysterious figure as a creator God. He believed and trusted in one true God and was prepared to set out on a journey, not knowing where he was going, other than â??a word from Godâ?? which said â??get up and go, leave all you know and trust me and I will bless you.â?• Not many people did it then and I guess not many people will do it now or in the future. I suppose you have to be pretty simple or pretty stupid?

To us it appeared a bit of a whim, yet to Abram it was obedience. He had no idea what was before him. If he did he may never have started out on this journey, but hey, you know what? I am so glad he did. I for one have a story to tell and I am sure others do as well, all because this one man was obedient to God.

You know that Abram was 75 years old when he set out on this journey donâ??t you? I mean it puts us younger ones to shame. I for one was a young camel and a lazy one at that, I had grown accustomed to always having what I wanted, never had to take any responsibility for my actions. Life was easy. I was looked after and fed well. I had no need to over exert myself. I could sit around and watch all those adult camels going about their daily grind and all the young camels playing their games. What a life!

Little did I know that my adolescent life was about to change. I was going to enter the grown up male world which I should have entered when I was weaned from my mother some 10 years earlier. What a shock. Suddenly I found myself having to do back breaking work, carry loads meant for experienced camels and go days without water. My father used to say this was manâ??s work not meant for boys and I suppose I should have entered it sooner instead of believing the lie that I could exist without taking any responsibility.

Well, off we set and after what seemed like days we arrived at Shechem a place in the hill country of Ephraim. It was here that we witnessed some kind of â??spiritual awakeningâ?•, well Abram did anyway. Abram appeared to become so certain that â??The Lordâ?• had promised him all he could see. What I witnessed was a man who, whilst on the one hand appeared grateful and offered a sacrifice, yet on the other hand there seemed to be a restlessness about him, so off we set again to make our camp, of all places between Bethel and Ai. Well I ask you, who would camp in no manâ??s land between the â??house of Godâ?• (Bethel) and â??ruinâ?• (Ai)? But you know what this is exactly where God wanted Abram to be, in a place where he would have to trust Him implicitly for his very survival. You see, there were Canaanites living here as well. They could have overrun us at any time. As I observed all this I began to realise that this God of Abram was someone who wanted to care and look after those who were prepared to obey and put their trust in Him.

It is difficult to say how long we were there but what I do know is that we were getting rather hungry. A famine was taking hold so my master decided, rightly or wrongly, to pull out and take control. Something you humans are rather good at. We mere animals just live for today and make do with what we have but you humans seem determined to be in control. I am so glad I donâ??t have your intellect, trying to work out lifeâ??s problems. So off we set, heading south towards food, towards Egypt. It was as we were getting close I overheard Abram talking with his wife, Sarai. Well what I heard nearly made me want to vomit. Here was a man I had grown to love and respect and who had looked after me well, telling his wife that she had to tell the authorities that she was his sister just so HE did not get killed because of her beauty, how selfish I thought, think of number one why donâ??t you. I actually found out later that Sarai was in fact Abramâ??s sister, well half sister anyway so may be it wasnâ??t so bad after all, small lies are not full blown lies are they and God forgives doesnâ??t He? I thought to myself at the time what is it about this God of Abramâ??s that just wants to go on loving and forgiving those who put their trust in Him despite their obvious failings. I donâ??t think I ever did come to a satisfactory answer other than I am glad He does for Abramâ??s sake and for all of us who were fortunate enough to be called his servants.

Do you know that little trip down to Egypt made a big impression on me as I saw that this mighty God that Abram, my master was engaging with, learning from and learning about on each new day, just cared for him and his family in a way that seemed unjustified and undeserved.

So off we set again, after being ticked off by the Pharaoh for misleading him. He instructed his guards and footmen to release Abram and his family together with all, yes all, his possessions, I mean usually the top brass would retain something for themselves, but no Abram was yet again being protected by the Almighty.

What Abram did next just demonstrated that he knew that God had kept and sustained him and that taking matters into your own hands just does not work. He set out from Egypt and headed straight back to the place where God had settled him in the first place, the place of security between Bethel and Ai, the place that God had promised to Abram that He would give him all the land. Abram did the only thing that could be done when Almighty God steps into our disasters. He built an altar and worshiped. He gave thanks for all that had been entrusted to him from above.

What I saw in this man, my master, was someone who believed God and God counted him righteous because of his faith. It gave me, one of his trusted camels a sense of security knowing that my master served a greater master who even cared for me.

My grandfather concluded his story with some interesting words, words I later learnt were written down and would make their way into the the Christian Bible. They are words that I found, when applied to oneâ??s life, give tremendous freedom and enable me to trust in a magnificent creator God. The words can be found in Genesis 13:17 and read â??Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you.â?•

It would be many years later before this promise would become a reality.

Steve Ford has written about this as well. Just filter by Joshua.

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Category

1. Characters

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