

GENESIS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 11 as we continue our study through the Word of God. If you remember from our last study we saw in Genesis chapter 10 the Table of Nations or where the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth lived, the nations that were born from them. As Genesis chapter 10 closes we were told, **“These were the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.”** Genesis 10:32.

Now, as we move into Genesis chapter 11 we see an incident that took place prior to the nations being divided, prior to mankind being dispersed and their languages confused. So with that as our background, let’s begin reading in Genesis chapter 11, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening.

GENESIS 11

VERSES 1-4

1. Back in Genesis 9:1 we were told, **“So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.’”** Now, in these verses we see them disobeying the Lord. Instead of filling the earth they are congregating in an area and they are full of pride. How do I know that? Because that phrase, **“let us”** is used some three times in these four verses. Also notice that we are told, **“they wanted to make a name for ourselves”** and instead of being scattered or filling the earth, they want to stay together. Here we see their independence and their disobedience to God or pride!

Solomon warns us in Proverbs 16:18, “**Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.**” That is what we will see here, their fall and their scattering because pride caused them to be independent from the Lord and disobedient to Him, to what the Lord commanded them to do.

2. As Christians, we too can become prideful and thus, independent and disobedient to the Lord. You see, we can think that without us, God is going to be in trouble, which may cause us to do things that are ungodly to sustain what we have. God will deal with you, He will chasten you and He will do whatever it takes to cause you to repent and get right with Him. He doesn't do that because He hates us, but because He loves us, He is in the business of restoration and not destruction! In fact, Paul tells us in I Corinthians 9:24-27, “**Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.**” And in Hebrews 12:1-2 Paul tells us, “**Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**” Don't let the sin of pride cause God to put you on the shelf and not use you for His glory!

3. Whose kingdom was in the land of Shinar or Babylon, only some 500 miles south of where the ark rested? It was Nimrod, who was a man who hunted men's souls to destroy them by keeping them from the true and living God. And now, in this kingdom he has people working together, building a nation and a tower not to communicate with God but to communicate with the spirit world! Obviously they couldn't build a tower to reach up into heaven with but, as I have said, it was a place to communicate with the spirit world! Thus, they used baked brick and asphalt to build this tower and according to Morris, "Archeology has revealed that this type of kiln-fired brick and asphalt construction was common in ancient Babylon."

4. This structure was called a ziggurat or a step-like tower, a religious shrine and these are found in many parts of the world, not just in the Middle East! How did they spread throughout the world? We will see that in a few minutes. Now, is there any historical evidence that this tower ever existed? Well, according to the ancient Greek historian, Herodotus (450 B.C.) this tower still stood in his day and he even saw it, and its height, Herodotus said that it stood over seven hundred feet! So there is evidence in non-biblical writings to this structure.

VERSES 5-9

1. God will allow man to go so far and then He will step in and deal with that rebellion, but He is patient and longsuffering! And we see this idea of the Trinity spoken of here as the Lord said, **"Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."** Genesis 11:7.

Now as you read this it almost seems like God wants to prevent man from gaining knowledge, that He does not want man to grow but to remain primitive in a sense. But that would be inconsistent with our God. You see, He wants what is best for us and thus, God must be stepping in for our good, and He is!

Here, most of the people of this new world have gathered in opposition to God. Thus, as they work together, using the resources of all these great minds, evil will proliferate! Folks, that is obvious. Look at man today apart from God and the evil that he has done. Thus, God is going to slow down this process by confusing the languages, causing them to spread out all over the world. By dividing man both linguistically and geographically, He is putting a check on the power of his fallen nature!

2. Today there are over 3,000 different languages but originally there was only one! And to explain language through the evolutionary process, it is truly impossible. God gave man the ability. But now God will confuse their languages so that they would go out and fill the earth as He also commanded them, besides slowing the process of sin, of evil for a time. And here's the thing, a city that was built in rebellion to God, Bab-el or the gateway to God has now become Babel or confusion! You see, anytime a person turns from the true and living God and they worship false god's, there will be confusion in their lives! And in regards to the Ziggurats that are found all over the world, this technology was taken as the people were scattered and thus, we see their similarity because they originated from the one here in Babel!

3. One more point and that is in regards to this man named Nimrod! As we move on to the Babylonians, who lived in this area, they worshiped Nimrod as god incarnate calling him by the name Merodach or Marduk. Now Nimrod married Semiramis, also known as the queen of heaven. And they had a son named Tammuz. The thing we need to understand is that Semiramis claimed that this child was born to her while she was still a virgin and she was impregnated by a beam of light brought forth by the sun god. And Tammuz was born on December 25th, sound familiar?

Nimrod and Semiramis also had a daughter who fell in love with Tammuz, and they were eventually married. And one day, as he was out hunting, he was attacked by a wild boar and killed. His wife was so overwhelmed by this that she mourned, fasted, and prayed for 40 days to the god of the netherworld. And because of that the god of the netherworld resurrected Tammuz allowing him to come out of the netherworld for 6 months, from spring through summer, and then he was to return to the netherworld for 6 months, from fall through winter.

One other note before we move on. When Constantine had his so-called conversion experience, and made Christianity the state religion, not to offend anyone, he adopted many of the pagan practices, allowing the priests to come right in and bring their influence into the church. For instance, we celebrate the birth of Christ on December 25th, when in all actuality, it is the birthday of Tammuz. The 40 days of weeping, praying and fasting that was done by the wife of Tammuz is called lent in the Catholic church which then leads right into the resurrection of Tammuz, which we call Easter. These are all pagan ideas that the church has incorporated. Thus, if you look at the world's religions, they not only originated from the Garden of Eden and what Satan told Eve, but they proliferated through Nimrod and are even practiced today!

4. In all this turmoil, what is God going to do to bring forth the Messiah from the seed of the woman? God's plans don't change and He will work through a man who will do His will, a man who will be obedient to Him, not a perfect man, but one who has surrendered his life to Him. Folks, God is still looking today to see who He can work through or as we are told in II Chronicles 16:9, "**For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. . . .**" We are now going to be introduced to this man.

VERSES 10-25

1. In these verses we see the lineage from Shem to Terah, the father of Abram, who will begin the lineage of the Hebrew people and from which the Messiah would come and has come! God always has a plan and He always has a faithful remnant that He can work through no matter how dark things may look. And keep in mind that Abram was probably an idol-worshipping gentile before he heard the call of God and responded. How do I know that? We are told in Joshua 24:2, "**And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods.'**" To me, it seems that not only was Terah an idol worshipper but so was Abram, but Abram heard the call of God and came out of that false religious system. And folks, isn't that what God has done with us? Of course it is, we once were living in rebellion against God, idol worshipping gentiles and God has called us and we responded to His call, we turned to the true and living God!

VERSES 26-30

1. Abram, later called Abraham is the father of the Hebrew people and he is going to be called by God to do a great work. Do you ever feel like a nobody, that you have no gift, no talent, how can God use you? Take a good look at the men and women of God who were nobodies and God used them mightily. You see, you can never be too small for God to use you but you can be too big! The point is this, God wants the glory and if the attention is drawn to you, He won't use you. But if you submit to Him, humble yourself before Him, you can't believe the heights He will take you in service for Him!
2. There is another person who will play a role in the next few chapters and that is Lot. Lot was born to Haran, Abram's brother, but Haran died and thus, Lot was raised by his uncle Abram.
3. Abram marries Sarai but they have no children, which will play an important role in God's plan of redemption as we will see over the next few chapters of Genesis.

4. One more point and that is the unique relationship Abraham had with God. In James 2:23 he is called **“the friend of God.”** In II Chronicles 20:7 it says **“Abraham Your friend forever.”** And in Isaiah 41:8 we are told, **“Abraham My friend.”** Can you image, being called a friend of God! Folks, listen carefully to what Jesus said in John 15:12-15, **“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.”** We are friends of God through Jesus Christ!

VERSES 31-32

1. Now why did they go from Ur of the Chaldeans or Babylon and on the way stop in Haran, not only stopping there but dwelling there? I believe the call to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 was given to him earlier on and he began his journey but stopped far short of where God called him to go! Haran was some 600 miles northwest of Ur of the Chaldeans and Canaan was still another 600 miles southwest from Haran. Haran was a son of Terah, thus they went to family, to a city named after him and Abram did not separate like he was told to do! Thus, he took the long way home!

Now, how do I know the call was given to Abram while he was living in the Ur of the Chaldeans? Because Stephen tells us in Acts 7:2-4, **“And he said, ‘Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, “Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.” Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell.”**”

2. While they were living in Haran, Abram’s father Terah died. Now here’s the thing. Babylon means “destruction” so he came out of the land of “destruction,” but he did not go far enough. The name Terah means, “delay.” God called Abram and he was partially obedient to what God said, he did leave the Ur of the Chaldeans, destruction, but he fell short of where God called him to go, he delayed his obedience for some 15 maybe 25 years! The name Haran means “barren” and thus, in Haran, as he delayed his obedience to the Lord, he was barren! What a lesson for us to learn, that our barrenness in our Christian life is a result of our delay, our disobedience to the Lord. The solution – be obedient to what He is telling you, where He is leading you! God wants us in the Promise Land or walking in the Spirit just as He called Abram to do, not a little or part way but all the way or “. . . **‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’**” Matthew 22:37.

GENESIS 12**VERSES 1-3**

1. It seems that God is calling Abram a second time to leave his past ways behind and to begin a new life, walking in obedience to the Lord. As Christians the Lord has told us to separate from the world in the sense that we are not to have that intimate fellowship with them as we do with believers. You see, they will not love the same things as we do, they will do things that we won't do and instead of bringing them up, they will bring us down.

Paul put it this way in II Corinthians 6:14-18, **“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”**

So Abram is told once again to walk by faith. Here's the thing, did Abram's partial obedience to the Lord end God's promise? No, in a sense it was just put on hold and now, as Terah is gone, God calls Abram to walk by faith, not to let things get in the way to prevent him from walking. And keep in mind that he did not own any part of the land God told him was his, it was all based upon faith, based upon God's promise to him so he walked. And Paul picked upon this in Galatians 3:6-9, "**just as Abraham 'believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'** **Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, 'In you all the nations shall be blessed.'** **So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.**" Just as Abram believed God, or Abraham as he would be called, and walked by faith, so must we!

2. Back in Genesis chapter 11 we saw the plans of man that ended with confusion and chaos. Now, here in Genesis chapter 12 we see the plan of God, the promises of God that will and have come to pass! What are these promises that God gave to Abram? Listen Carefully:

- ***I will make you a great nation*** – Keep in mind that Abram had no children at this point in his life and yet God promised that a nation would be born from him – the nation of Israel!
- ***I will make your name great*** – Father Abraham is honored by the Jewish people, Christians and even Muslims.

- *I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you* – How true that is and we can look back and see that played out in nations that have come against Israel. Listen to what Barnhouse tells us as he writes: “When the Greeks overran Palestine and desecrated the altar in the Jewish temple, they were soon conquered by Rome. When Rome killed Paul and many others, and destroyed Jerusalem under Titus, Rome soon fell. Spain was reduced to a fifth-rate nation after the Inquisition against the Jews; Poland fell after the pogroms; Hitler’s Germany went down after its orgies of anti-Semitism; Britain lost her empire when she broke her faith with Israel.” I truly believe that the United States has been blessed so much because she has supported the nation of Israel. But that policy seems to be changing and woe to any nation or people that come against Israel. And we are seeing this attitude growing in the church today as they side with the so-called Palestinians and come against the Jewish people – watch out!
- *In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed* – How true that is for through the seed of the woman, through the Jewish people, the Messiah has come and through Jesus we are all blessed! Paul points this out to us in Galatians chapter 3 as he tells us, “**And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. . . . Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.**” Galatians 3:8-9, 16.

3. For Abram and his descendents, they will be:

- *A witness of God's ways* – In Isaiah 49:6 we are told, **“Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’”** They were to point people to the true and living God, to the ways of God and we, as Christians are to do the same!

- *A keeper of God's Word* – In Romans 3:1-2 we are told, **“What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.”** God's Word, written through the Jewish people and the integrity of the Scriptures kept pure as God wrote these words through the Jewish people. For us as Christians, God has given to us His Word and we too are to protect it, keep it pure, not change what God has said!

- *A channel for God's wonder* – In Isaiah 9:6 we are told, **“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”** As people looked at the Jewish people they saw the power of God working in them and through them, how God preserved these people and provided for them. As Christians people should see us and see the power of God working in us and through us!

VERSE 4

1. God told Abram to separate from his family but he brings his nephew Lot along with him and it will cause some problems down the road.
2. Paul, in Hebrews 11:8-10 tells us, **“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt 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; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”** Folks, Abram waked by faith to a land he didn’t know. Where is God calling you? What steps of faith does He want you to take? You see, faith, like a muscle only grows as you use it and thus, God calls us to walk, to trust in Him and see your faith grow!

VERSES 5-6

1. So Abram arrives in the land of Canaan, but traveling with him is his nephew Lot and all the people that gathered with him in Haran!

VERSES 7-9

1. As Abram is obedient to the Lord, the Lord reminds him of the promises He made to him. All that land was his even though he didn’t own any of it. In fact, the only parcel of land he would come to own would be a burial plot for his family (Genesis 23:14-20). Everything else was a walk by faith believing in the promises of God. And he worships the Lord, offering a sacrifice to Him because he loved the Lord and for the promises that God gave to him.

2. As Abram pitched his tent, Bethel or the house of God was to the west and Ai or heap or dump was to the east. Isn't that true in our own lives, we have a choice to make, to be obedient to the Lord and go to the house of God or to travel down a road that will lead to a dump! It is obvious what is best; thus, don't go down that other road!

3. Also, a tent is a temporary dwelling place; Abram did not own a house in this land, why? Because he was just passing through, he was a pilgrim and he was ultimately looking to the heavenly city, one not built with hands as Paul told us back in Hebrews chapter 11, verses we have read already but I think they bear repeating. We are told, **“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt 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; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. . . . And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.”** Hebrews 11:8-10, 15-16.

VERSE 10

1. A test of faith for Abram, a famine in the land. Now, will he trust in the Lord to provide for him or will he try to take care of the situation on his own? He, like us many times, tried to take care of the situation on his own and thus, we are told that he “**went down to Egypt.**” You see, when you are not obeying the Lord, trusting in Him, you are only going down! And keep in mind that Egypt is a type of the world and thus, instead of trusting God, Abram went down into the world for help! What a lesson for us to learn from.

VERSES 11-13

1. Abram is concerned about his wife’s beauty and how the people down in Egypt might not only take her from him but they may kill him! Thus, he wants her to tell them a half-truth, that she is his sister. The fact is that she was his half-sister, (Genesis 20:12). But it was still a lie and he was not trusting in the Lord, this was his plan to save his own neck! Now, could Abram justify his actions? You bet he could, but it still does not make it right. Folks, we do the same thing and it is still wrong if we are lying or doing something that goes contrary to the Word of God. There is no justification for it. Thus, walk by faith, trust in the Lord, don’t walk by sight coming up with ways to help God out! You see, God promised Abram he would be a great nation, he had no children yet, thus, God would have to protect him until the promise was fulfilled. Again, walking by faith!

VERSES 14-15

1. Because Abram went down to Egypt, look at the consequences that arose because of his disobedience! His wife was being given to Pharaoh!

VERSES 16-20

1. Abram was blessed by the world, by Pharaoh for his actions, but not by God and what the world blesses with and what God blesses with do not compare. Notice that God has to intervene to protect Sarai, something that her husband should have been doing being the spiritual leader of the family but he was too busy reaping the rewards for his lies!
2. Tragically it took a pagan king to rebuke this man of God, Abram for his actions. Folks, it is never a good thing when the world exposes our sin. It is better to repent and get right with God but make no mistake about it, if we don't, your sin will be exposed! In fact, this king tells Abram that if he had only trusted in God, everything would have been okay!
3. And folks, don't think that time spent in the world won't affect you, it will. Abram, as he left Egypt, as he left the world to go back to the land God wanted him in; he took with him some baggage that would be a thorn in his side and in the side of the Jewish people. He picked up a maidservant for his wife and her name was Hagar, (Genesis 16:1-2). When we go into the world it will affect us and those around us because you can't leave without taking something with you!
4. As I close this evening keep in mind that God is not done with Abram. He will continue to grow his faith as He does ours. It is as Barnhouse said, "Faith is not a mushroom that grows overnight in damp soil; it is an oak tree that grows for a thousand years under the blast of wind and rain." How true that is. Thus, don't run to the world; don't run away from faith, but walk by faith and see where the Lord is leading you as He led Abram!