

GENESIS 10-11

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 10 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

We have seen in our study of Genesis the beginning of history as God created the heavens and the earth as well as all life, including Adam and Eve. And everything was very good!

Then sin entered the world through Adam and now man was not created in the image of God but in the image of Adam, with a sin nature. His spirit was dead to the things of God.

And within ten generations we see the earth so corrupted that God brings judgment upon it. He was preserving the seed of the woman who would bring forth the Messiah and He was going to work through a man named Noah.

God told Noah to build an ark because the rain and flood waters would come and wipe out life upon the earth, except for those in the ark, and, of course, many of the sea creatures.

Now those flood waters have come and gone, and the earth is going to be re-populated through the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

As we dig into Genesis chapter 10 this evening, many don't see this as an important part of the Scriptures. But it is very important for us because this chapter is called – ***THE TABLE OF NATIONS!***

What I mean by that is that we will see where the various groups of people came from, including the Jewish people.

And ultimately they will spread out over the entire earth. But keep in mind that they all spread out of this area of land in the Middle East that has been called, *“The cradle of civilization.”*

As one writer put it, *“The tenth chapter of Genesis. . . . stands absolutely alone in ancient literature, without a remote parallel, even among the Greeks, where we find the closest approach to a distribution of peoples in genealogical framework. . . . The Table of Nations remains an astonishing accurate document.”* (William F. Albright, cited in Boice)

So with that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in Genesis chapter 10, beginning in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

GENESIS 10

VERSE 1

As I have said, this chapter has been called the *“Table of Nations”* because it lists the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth or the fathers of these nations after the flood as the world is being repopulated!

That is what God told them to do as they departed from the ark, to go forth and be fruitful and multiply, both man and beast and that is exactly what they did.

VERSE 2

As we begin to look at the families that populated the earth, the list begins with the sons of Japheth; whose descendants are the *Indo-European people*, stretching from India to the shores of Western Europe.

The term *Indo* speaks of areas of India or the countries to be found in that general direction eastward from the Middle East.

The term *European*, obviously, has to do with the people on the European continent.

And this division of the families of Japheth is the shortest division, only fourteen descendants are mentioned. And yet, this is important to us because many of us are descendants from this family.

Look at the families we see mentioned here.

- **GOMER:** His descendants were the Germanic people or the area of Western Europe. These include the French, the Spanish and the Celtic settlers.
- **MAGOG, TUBAL, MESHECH, TIRAS:** They settled in the far northern area and became the Russian people.
- **MADAI:** These are the ancient Medes that populated the area known today as Iran and Iraq. Also, it is the people of India.
- **JAVAN:** These were the ancient Greek people, and we see their sea-faring ways described for us in Genesis 10:5.

VERSE 3

Here we see the sons of Gomer, one of the sons of Japheth.

- **ASHKENAZ:** They settled in the area of present-day Eastern Germany and Eastern Europe.
- **RIPHATH, TOGARMAH:** They settled in the area of Turkey.

VERSES 4-5

Here we see the descendants of another son of Japheth, Javan and keep in mind that Javan's descendants were the ancient Greeks and Tarshish is probably the area of Spain.

These divisions of mankind developed into language, genetic (families) and ethnic (nations) divisions.

Let me show you what I mean in regard to this family, the sons of Japheth, this ***Indo-European people***.

Back in the 1800's a linguist discovered that the languages in these two areas are related, requiring a common-language ancestor.

What does that mean?

It means that these two people groups were at one time together.

VERSE 6

Now we move to another son of Noah and his descendants, Ham, who populated the area of North Africa and the Far East and Middle East.

- ***CUSH***: Some of his descendants settled in the area of Babylon and others in the area of Ethiopia.
- ***MIZRAIM***: This is the area of Egypt.
- ***PUT***: They settled in the area of North Africa, Libya.
- ***CANAAN***: They settled in the area of the land of Israel.

VERSES 7-12

Here we see the son of Cush being singled out, his name is Nimrod and he settled in the area of Babylon.

His name means "***rebel***" or "***let us rebel***" and the idea here is a rebellion against the true and living God, he was leading the way, leading others down this path, and it was done with force.

This is what Boice had to say about what Nimrod did. *“This is not talking about Nimrod’s ability to hunt wild game. He was not a hunter of animals. He was a hunter of men - a warrior. It was through his ability to fight and kill and rule ruthlessly that his kingdom of the Euphrates valley city states was consolidated.”*

And I do think there is more to it because he used that violence to pressure people into believing his religious ideas.

In fact, the name *Bab-el* means *“the gateway to God”* but not the true and living God.

And this would shortly be known as Babel or confusion. You see, outside of Christ there is confusion. Look at the various false religions and how confusing their beliefs are.

But Christianity is straight forward, you might not agree with it, but you can easily see the truth, there is no confusion about it.

Paul said in I Corinthians 14:33, **“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”**

In fact, in John 8:31-32 we are told, **“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”**

You see, the truth sets you free from the lies that are out there, those false religious teachings and teachers.

And keep in mind we are only some five generations from the flood and look at the wickedness of man.

We should not be surprised for the Lord said after the flood to Noah, **“... ‘I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.’”** Genesis 8:21.

The problem is that sin nature, the flesh continues to rear its ugly head, even and especially in the days we are living in!

Let me share with you what other commentators have said about this man named Nimrod, it will give you some insight into this man.

A Jerusalem Targum says: ***“He was powerful in hunting and in wickedness before the Lord, for he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them, ‘Depart from the judgment of the Lord, and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod!’ Therefore it is said: ‘As Nimrod the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the Lord.’”***

Ginzberg quotes from a Jewish legend: ***“The great success that attended all of Nimrod’s undertakings produced a sinister effect. Men no longer trusted in God, but rather in their own prowess and ability, an attitude to which Nimrod tried to convert the whole world.”***

And we will see that played out, this rebellion against God as we get to Genesis chapter 11 tonight.

And Clarke tells us, ***“Hence it is like that Nimrod, having acquired power, used it in tyranny and oppression; and by rapine [plunder] and violence founded the domination which was the first distinguished by the name of a kingdom on the face of the earth. How many kingdoms have been founded in the same way, in various ages and nations from that time to the present! From the Nimrods of the earth, God deliver the world!”***

He was a very evil man.

VERSES 13-14

From the sons of Mizraim came the Philistines and Caphtorim, those who lived on the Island of Crete.

It wasn't until the twelfth century B. C. that the Philistines conquered and eventually occupied the coastal region from the Gaza Strip in the south all the way to Tel Aviv to the north today, the modern State of Israel.

And just for some background information. The first time the land was called "*Palestine*," which speaks of "*rolling*" or "*migratory*" was in the fifth century B. C. by the Greek Historian Herodotus.

And it was officially renamed Palestine by the Romans around 132 A. D. as they crushed the Jewish revolt known as the Kokhba revolt and wanted to humiliate the Jews by renaming their land after their perennial enemy, the Philistines, not Palestinians!

VERSES 15-20

Keep in mind that the descendants of Canaan settled the land of Canaan. And, as we will see as we continue on in our study of Genesis, this is the land that God promised to Abraham and his descendants. And it is the land they finally conquered and possessed under Joshua around 1200 B. C.

So let's look at a few of the descendants of the sons of Canaan.

- **SIDON:** They are related to the Hittites and the Lebanese.
- **SINITE:** Many believe this is speaking of the oriental people – the Chinese, Japanese and Asian.

VERSES 21-22

Here are the descendants of Shem and where some of them were located.

- **ELAM:** They are the ancestors of the Persian people.
- **ASSHUR:** They are the ancestors of the Assyrians.

- **LUD:** He is the father of the Lydians who lived for a time in Asia Minor.
- **ARAM:** He is the father of the Arameans or as they are known, the Syrians.
- **ARPHAXAD:** He is the ancestor to Abraham and of course, the Hebrew people.

VERSE 23

Uz, the son of Aram was located in the region of Arabia and the land of Uz is where Job was from!

VERSES 24-30

In these verses I want to focus on Eber, who was actually Shem's great-grandson, but he is mentioned here to show the importance of his lineage.

What do I mean by that?

What I mean is this. The name word **Hebrew** comes from the name Eber, so Moses is telling us that the Jewish people came from the family of Eber.

Not only that, but in Genesis 10:25 we are told, "**To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided . . .**"

Many believe this is speaking of the dividing of the languages and people at the tower of Babel, and it is possible this is what it is saying, but I think there is more to it.

I believe prior to the flood and maybe even a short time after the flood that there was one land mass and not the continents we see today.

Scientists today believe this to be true and that the land mass split apart, probably very quickly at first and then slowly over time. That land mass is called Pangea.

Also, the name **Peleg** means "***divided***" and thus, I think that is the idea here with what we read in Genesis 10:25.

Like I have said, I believe this is speaking not of the dividing of the languages and I will show you the reasons for that. If you see it as being the dividing of the languages and the people, great, but I don't think that is the main point here.

The Hebrew word translated "**earth**" in verse 25 is ***ERES***.

And that word appears almost 2500 times in the Old Testament and always refers to the geological, physical earth rather than to the people on the earth.

And that may help explain how the animals were able to spread from Mount Ararat into all the earth, that it was one land mass and then came the dividing!

Not only that, but the word used for "**divided**" here in Genesis 10:25 and associated with Peleg, is the Hebrew word ***PALAG***.

Why is that important?

Because it is a different word that is used than what we see in Genesis 10:5 and 10:32 where it is speaking of languages. That Hebrew word is ***PARAD***.

So what we see is that in Genesis 10:5 and 10:32 it is speaking of a linguistic and geographic division of people groups.

But here in Genesis 10:25 it is speaking of the earth being divided up into continents.

Now those who oppose this say that such a movement would cause millions of lives being destroyed as the earth moved.

Maybe it was not a quick move, but it began and slowly moved, I don't know. All I know is that it seems to be speaking of the earth itself being divided and how God did it, that is up to Him!

I will let you decide for yourself on this one.

VERSE 31

We have seen the descendants of Shem and how they were spread out. And keep in mind that through Shem, and Peleg we will see Abram or Abraham born and that is the genealogy we will follow, through the Jewish people, to the Messiah, Jesus Christ!

VERSE 32

Why does God go into such great detail with this *Table of Nations* or the descendants of Noah's sons?

Because some of these nations, some of these people will play a role in the Scriptures and God wants you to know them, that they are real.

You can trace their ancestry back to the time of Noah and his sons. This is not just a fictitious group of people!

Before we move on, listen to these words from Martin Luther. He wrote,

Hence one must consider this chapter of Genesis a mirror in which to discern that we human beings are, namely creatures so marred by sin that we have no knowledge of our own origin, not even of God Himself, our Creator, unless the Word of God reveals these sparks of divine light to us from afar . . . This knowledge of the Holy Scriptures reveal to us. Those who are without them live in error, uncertainty, and boundless ungodliness; for they have no knowledge about who they are and whence they came.

- Martin Luther

Exactly. 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. And it is all because of the hardness of man's heart, his refusal to obey the Lord.

GENESIS 11

VERSES 1-4

At this time there was only one language and thus, everyone could understand each other.

But there is a problem that arose.

Remember back in Genesis 9:1 where 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.

Pride is still a deadly sin. It brought Lucifer down and it will bring us down. Look at our nation and how proudly, boldly we have gay pride month, and we mock God as they use the rainbow as their symbol, a rainbow that God established!

Pride does come before the destruction of individuals and nations!

Also, 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!

Now, 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 he did it by force if they refused to listen. But it truly looks like they are following him willingly!

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!

What this seems to be saying is that the way it was built they could climb to the top and worship the sun, moon and stars!

And some feel that the correct translation of Genesis 11:4 is this, ***“Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower the top of which will be dedicated to the heavens”*** or even that ***“the top would have a representation of the heavens upon it.”***

And it is possible that on the top of these ziggurats were the signs of the zodiac. You see, astrology or the study of the zodiac originated in Babylon!

And it is possible, as we still see a remnant of it today, that God had placed the Gospel message in the stars, and it was corrupted by the world to what we have today!

Let me share this with you. We are told, “Turn to any book on astrology and you will find that it was the Chaldeans (another name for the inhabitants of Babylon) who first developed the zodiac by dividing the sky into sections and giving meanings to each on the basis of the stars that are found there. A person’s destiny is said to be determined by whatever section or ‘sign’ he is born under.

From Babylon, astrology passed to the empire of ancient Egypt where it mingled with the native animism and polytheism of the Nile.

The pyramids were constructed with certain mathematical relationships to the stars. The Sphinx has astrological significance. It has the head of a woman, symbolizing Virgo, the virgin, and the body of a lion, symbolizing Leo.

Virgo is the first sign of the zodiac, Leo the last.

So the Sphinx (which incidentally means ‘joining’ in Greek) is the meeting point of the zodiac, indicating that the Egyptian priests believed the starting point of the earth in relation to the zodiac lay in Egypt, on the banks of the Nile.”

It is interesting as we see how history lines up with the Bible.

Also, 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.”***

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

God will allow man to go so far and then He will step in and deal with that rebellion, we saw that with the flood.

And yes, God is patient and longsuffering but there comes a point where judgment will come!

Now let me point this out because what we see here is this idea of the Trinity spoken of 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. He was not speaking to angels but to the Godhead!

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 flourish!

Look at man today apart from God and the evil that he has done. And it seems like His judgment is getting closer and closer as we become more and more evil!

But to slow down this process of evil we see that God is going to step in. And to do this we see Him confusing the languages.

What does that do?

It causes 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!

Think about where we are today. We have 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 regard 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!

One more point and that is in regard 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 six months, from spring through summer, and then he was to return to the netherworld for six 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 and in some other denominations as well as some evangelical churches.

And what did this lead into, these forty days?

It led 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, *you shall be like God*, but they proliferated through Nimrod and are even practiced today!

Now, in all this turmoil, what is God going to do to bring forth the Messiah from the seed of the woman?

Please understand that 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

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.

Now don’t be shocked by the fact that Abram was an idol worshipping Gentile, so were you and so was I!

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!

That is what Paul said in Ephesians 2:11-13, **“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh - who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands - that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”**

Praise God for what He has done and is doing and will do in our lives!

So, as we read on, keep in mind that the first eleven chapters of Genesis set the stage for the story of redemption to really begin to unfold which God will bring about through one man named Abram.

VERSES 26-30

Have you ever thought of the period of time that the book of Genesis covers?

The Book of Genesis covers more than 2,000 years and more than 20 generations.

And in spite of that long period of time, the main focus, almost a third of its text here in Genesis is focused upon the life of one man – Abram or Abraham.

Now, as I have said, 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?

I am sure you have. I have felt that way.

And yet, 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!

Now let me share this with you to encourage you because, again, I think we don't see ourselves as important in the body of Christ, the influence we may have may only be a few people and yet, look at what God can do.

Has anyone heard of the name Ed Kimball?

I am sure most if all of us have never heard of his name.

What was so important about this man?

What did he do that was so significant or did he do anything significant? I mean, nobody knows who he is!

We might not be familiar with this man, but God is, and he was used in a mighty way even though most people don't know who he is.

You see, Ed Kimball was a Sunday School teacher, who in 1858 led a Boston shoe clerk to give his life to Christ.

Do you know who that man was, who that shoe clerk was?

That man was Dwight L. Moody, who went on to become an evangelist.

And listen to the repercussions of what transpired.

In England in 1879, he awakened evangelistic zeal in the heart of Frederick B. Meyer, pastor of a small church.

F. B. Meyer, preaching to an American college campus, brought to Christ a student named J. Wilbur Chapman. Chapman, engaged in YMCA work, employed a former baseball player, Billy Sunday, to do evangelistic work.

Billy Sunday held a revival in Charlotte, N.C. A group of local men were so enthusiastic afterward that they planned another evangelistic campaign, bringing Mordecai Hamm to town to preach.

During Hamm's revival, a young man named Billy Graham heard the Gospel and yielded his life to Christ.

Now do you know who Ed Kimball is? I hope so.

And whatever you do for the Lord is significant to Him. He is looking for our faithfulness and He will take care of the rest. Paul reminds us of this in I Corinthians 15:58, **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”**

We might not always see the results, but God is working and thus, may we walk by faith and trust that God is going to use the things that He has called us to do to bring forth fruit!

There is another person who will play a role in the next few chapters of Genesis and that is Lot. Lot was born to Haran, Abram’s brother, but Haran died and thus, Lot was raised by his grandfather Terah and then by his uncle Abram.

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.

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!

And there is no one else in the Scriptures that is called a friend of God!

Well, that is not exactly true. 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.”**

Did you hear what Jesus said of us?

We are friends of God through Jesus Christ!

VERSES 31-32

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! And in Genesis 12 He is reminding Abram.

You see, 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!

Maybe you are wondering where I got that from, that Abram delayed in going to where God called him to go.

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.’”**

What is interesting to me is that the name *Terah* means “*delay.*”

And there were consequences to his disobedience to the Lord as Spurgeon points out for us. He wrote, “*The result of this to Abram was the absence of privilege. God spoke not to his servant in Haran: neither dream, nor vision, nor voice came to him in the place of hesitancy. The Lord loved him, but hid his face from him, and denied him the visits of his grace.*”

Let me fill in some more of this story because the Holy Spirit is teaching us some lessons here.

It is while they were living in Haran, Abram’s father Terah died.

Now here’s the thing. Babylon means “*destruction.*”

What is my point.

Abram came out of the land of “*destruction,*” but he did not go far enough.

Remember what the name Terah means? It 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!

And where was he staying?

He was staying in Haran.

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.

Yes, when we come to Christ we come out of a life of destruction, but it does not end there.

You see, there is that obedience to what the Lord has called us to do.

And if we delay, we might find that our barrenness in our Christian life is a result of us delaying our disobedience to the Lord.

What is the solution?

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 to put it like Jesus said, “. . . **‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’**” Matthew 22:37.

The only difference between those who are used greatly by God and those that aren’t is, those that wind up being used greatly are those who don’t stay in Haran but they get serious and move on.

Let me show you what I mean about the importance of obedience to the Lord. We are told,

Arabian horses go through rigorous training in the deserts of the Middle East.

The trainers require absolute obedience from the horses, and test them to see if they are completely trained.

The final test is almost beyond the endurance of any living thing. The trainers force the horses to do without water for many days. Then he turns them loose and of course they start running toward the water, but just as they get to the edge, ready to plunge in and drink, the trainer blows his whistle. The horses who have been completely trained and who have learned perfect obedience, stop.

They turn around and come pacing back to the trainer. They stand there quivering, wanting water, but they wait in perfect obedience.

When the trainer is sure that he has their obedience, he gives them a signal to go back to drink.

Now this may be severe but when you are on the trackless desert of Arabia and your life is entrusted to a horse, you had better have a trained obedient horse.

We must accept God's training and obey Him.

- Source Unknown

Once we understand, once we believe that God has what is best for us, not the easiest for us, then we can walk by faith just as Abram will do.

Let me show you something else that I pray will bless you. You see, I am sure all of us have struggled with fully obeying the Lord, not taking the steps because we are not willing to walk by faith or let go of those things that are holding us back.

In Hebrews chapter 11 we have that great hall of faith section of the Scriptures where Paul gives to us some great examples of faith. And when you read of who is in there, it is shocking because we see that they did not have great faith, not all the time.

Let's look at the faith of Abraham in Hebrews 11:8 as 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."

Didn't I just say that Abram delayed in going to where God called him to go?

You bet I did, and yet, here in Hebrews we are told, and this is how the Greek has it,

"while the Lord was still speaking Abraham began to obey."

How can that be?

Because by God's grace He chose not to focus on it!

There is no mention at all of Abraham's stumbling faith in Hebrews 11 as he stumbled not only here, but on several other occasions.

He took his nephew Lot with him when the Lord told Abram to leave his family behind.

When he goes down to Egypt to escape the famine in the land, he tells Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister and not his wife because of fear.

He tried to help God in fulfilling the promise He made to Abram to be the father of many nations and yet he had no son. So he has a son of the flesh through his maidservant Hagar.

Again, God was aware of all that Abram or Abraham did. He did not pretend that they did not happen.

What kind of record of sin does God have on you?

What kind of record of failure does God have on you?

There is no record because our sins are forgiven and forgotten and what is left is a life of victory and success. That is the only thing God chooses to focus on.

One more point here

We need to remember that God couldn't deal with Abraham until there was a death in his life. (For him his father Terah)

And I will leave this with you to think about.

What has to die in your life before God can fully work?

It could be a goal, a desire, a relationship!

What has to first die and be buried in your life before you will be able to fully obey God's call upon your life?

Only you and God know!