

Genesis 11:10—12:3

(2/11/15)

Genesis 11:10-11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ **This is the genealogy of Shem: Shem was one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. ¹¹ After he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters.**

As we have already pointed out—Genesis chapters 1-11 lay the foundation for the rest of the Bible.

In chapter one we have recorded the original creation of God which was good and undefiled—that is until man sinned in the Garden and the creation was corrupted.

And from that point the human race quickly degenerated into such wickedness that we read in chapter six—

Genesis 6:5-8 (NKJV)

⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. ⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

The rest of Genesis 6 thru chapter 8 is taken up with the Flood—a universal judgment from God upon the wicked.

After God destroyed the earth and everyone on it except for Noah and his family—eight people in all.

After they disembarked from the ark God gives us a quick genealogy of Ham, Shem and Japheth, Noah's sons in chapter ten through whom the whole earth was repopulated.

And then after talking about Nimrod and the Tower of Babel, the Holy Spirit focuses once again on the genealogy of Shem—because it was through this son of Noah that the Messiah would be born.

This genealogy takes us from verse 10 through verse 26 where we read—

Genesis 11:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ Now Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

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.

We should stop for a minute and talk about Abram (Abraham)—who is a very interesting guy.

He is the one man who is elevated in three of the world's major religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—they all place Abraham very high.

He is mentioned 74 times in the N.T. alone and is the only one in the Bible given the title the "*friend of God*".

Another very common title for Abraham is "the father of the faithful"—so much so that when the Bible uses someone as an example of faith—Abraham's name is usually mentioned.

He is a man that personifies faith—and yet as we're going to see he didn't start out that way.

Abraham wasn't a great man of faith when God first called him, and he stumbled in his faith numerous times—

But the more he walked with God and purposed to trust Him with his life—Abraham grew into a man of great faith.

Genesis 11:27-32 (NKJV)

²⁷ **This is the genealogy of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran begot Lot. ²⁸ And Haran died before his father Terah in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans. ²⁹ Then Abram and Nahor took wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah. ³⁰ But Sarai was barren; she had no child. ³¹ And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there. ³² So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.**

Genesis 12:1-5 (NKJV)

¹ **Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. ² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." ⁴ So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ 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.**

So here we see the call of God upon Abraham to leave the Ur of the Chaldeans (modern Iraq)—and to go to the land of Canaan—a land that God would later give to his descendants (the Promised Land).

If you just read Gen. 11:27—12:5 it seems as though while they lived in Haran God told Abraham to go to Canaan.

However, when Stephen was giving his defense before the Sanhedrin in Acts 7 he mentions this incident—

Acts 7:2-4 (NKJV)

² 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,³ and said to him, '*Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.*'⁴ 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.

Mesopotamia is a land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers which is east of Israel.

This was the land where the Chaldeans lived (ancient Babylonians)—this is the area where the city of Ur was located. Haran was another city in Mesopotamia north of Ur.

Once again, if you just read Gen. 11:27—12:5 it seems as though while they lived in Haran God told Abram to go to Canaan but Stephen, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us that God first told Abram to go to Canaan while he lived in Mesopotamia before he dwelt in Haran.

The Lord told him, "*Get out of your country, from your family, from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.*"

And so what did Abraham do?—He took his father, his nephew, his family, his servants and all his possessions—and only moved up river!

He didn't even cross over the Euphrates and he stayed there for the next 25 years until his father Terah died and then God told him a second time to go to Canaan—

Genesis 12:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now the LORD had said to Abram: "**Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you...**"

What am I saying? I'm saying that even though Abraham is held up in Scripture as the very personification of faith and obedience—he didn't start out that way.

The lesson here is this—we are all growing in our faith and obedience.

And along the way we're going to blow it and fail—but that doesn't mean that God gives up on us or stops loving us when we do.

When we stop short of obeying God completely and camp in “Haran”—God is patient and waits for us as He did with Abraham—but time wasted are blessings lost.

It doesn't mean that God's calling upon your life will be removed or that any future chance of being used by Him will be gone.

Many great men and women of God have stopped in “Haran” where they stopped short of complete obedience to the call of God upon their lives—but the time always came to move on.

And maybe you sense that time has come in your life also—maybe you sense that the Lord is speaking to you to leave Haran and fully obey what He has told you to do.

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 they get serious and move on.

It's important to note that God couldn't deal with Abraham until there was a death in his life (for him his father Terah)—the question is 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.

I need to show you one more thing about this and then we'll move on.

Hebrews 11 is a chapter that showcases people in the O.T. that were great examples of faith.

In verse 8 the writer mentions Abraham—

Hebrews 11:8 (NKJV)

⁸ 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.

What's interesting about the account in Hebrews 11:8 when the writer says that Abraham obeyed God when He told Abraham to leave his home and go west—the Greek says “*while the Lord was still speaking Abraham began to obey*”.

So how do we reconcile this with Abraham's delay and partial obedience?

Very simple—God chose not to focus on it.

In fact in all the verses devoted to Abraham in Hebrews 11 God makes no mention of how Abraham stumbled in his faith several times over the course of his life—

- *Dragging his nephew Lot along with him when God told to leave his family behind*
- *Going down to Egypt to escape a famine but telling Sarah to say she was his sister instead of his wife*
- *'Helping' God fulfill His promise to give him a son by having relations with Hagar*

And yet all we see recorded here in Hebrews 11 are the things Abraham did by faith that pleased the Lord.

It's not that God was unaware of the times Abraham blew it or that He was pretending that they didn't exist.

It's just that God loves when we walk by faith and chooses not to focus on our failings but on our life of faith as a whole.

Our sins are forgiven and forgotten and what is left is a life of victory and success—the only thing God chooses to focus on.

Genesis 12:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. ² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

This is a very important passage—we call this the “Abrahamic Covenant”.

- 1. He would make his name great upon the earth.*
- 2. He would make Abraham the father of a great nation.*
- 3. That God would bless anyone that blesses the family of Abraham (the Jewish people).*
- 4. That He would curse anyone that curses the family of Abraham.*
- 5. In Abraham all the families of the earth would be blessed.*

Later we read how that God included in this covenant the promise that He would give to Abraham's descendants the land of Canaan—

Genesis 12:4-7 (NKJV)

⁴ So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ 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. ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

We'll talk more about this promised land that God gave to the Jewish people next time—but for right now let's look at the other parts of the Abrahamic Covenant.

1. He would make his name great upon the earth.

As I've already said Abraham is revered and honored by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike.

- The Jews revere him because he is the father of the Jewish people through his son Isaac.
- Christians honor Abraham because he is the ancestor of the Messiah who is our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Muslim's revere him because he was the father of Ishmael—who was the father of the Arab peoples where Islam started.

2. He would make Abraham the father of a great nation.

Now the obvious interpretation of this is that Abraham became the father of the nation of Israel—and that's true but Israel is hardly a great nation.

We could argue that Israel became a great nation under David and Solomon—but I don't believe that's what God had in mind when He gave Abraham this promise.

The Hebrew word for 'great' is a word that means '*great in number and significance*'.

The nation of Israel has never been a great nation in the sense of containing a great number of people.

And as far as being a nation of significance—a nation that has really made a difference in the world we would have to say that Israel hasn't lived up to that either.

So what is God really saying here when He said that Abraham would be the father of a 'great' (a numerous and significant) nation?

Romans 4:13, 16-18 (NKJV)

¹³ For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith... ¹⁶ Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ¹⁷ (as it is written, "*I have made you a father of many nations*") in the presence of Him whom he believed--God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; ¹⁸ who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "*So shall your descendants be.*"

Abraham is being called the father of all those that believe in the God of Abraham and His Messiah from all nations on the earth that would someday become one great nation—

1 Peter 2:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. (the Church)

We'll take the next two parts of the Abrahamic Covenant together since they're like flip sides of the same coin.

3. That God would bless anyone that blesses the family of Abraham (the Jewish people);

4. That He would curse anyone that curses the family of Abraham.

It is true that any person or nation that has persecuted the Jewish people has been cursed by God.

We see in Scripture how that Egypt enslaved the Jewish people and God judged them and they went from the super power of the known world to a third world country.

Later on the same happened with Assyria and then Babylon—they oppressed the Jewish people and God reduced them to third world countries.

Great Britain was the world super power around the beginning of the 20th century.

They had so many nations around the world that they had conquered and controlled that a motto was born that the sun never sets on the British Empire.

But all that began to change with the Balfour Declaration in November of 1917.

The Balfour Declaration said that the British government endorsed the establishment of a homeland in Palestine for the Jewish people.

The Jewish people were very excited at the prospect of having a nation again in their ancient homeland.

However the British government dragged their feet and in May of 1939 the British government altered its policy in a White Paper recommending a limit of 75,000 further immigrants and an end to immigration by 1944, unless the resident Palestinian Arabs of the region consented to further immigration. Zionists condemned the new policy, accusing Britain of favoring the Arabs.

After that the British Empire began to decline and Britain went from super power status to a relatively insignificant country.

We see the same thing with Germany and its defeat in WWII and its decline afterwards because of the way it treated the Jewish people.

Furthermore, I believe that the ascendancy of America after WWII to the greatest nation on the face of the earth was due to how it blessed the Jewish people by supporting the establishment of the modern state of Israel.

For many years we were Israel's greatest ally and God continued to bless us as a direct fulfillment of the promise He gave to Abraham 4000 thousand years ago that He would bless those who blessed the Jewish people and curse those who cursed the Jewish people.

Of course our support of Israel has declined over the last 25 years and we have even done things that has put them in dangerous positions with regard to their enemies—and God is not happy about it and has let us know it.

1. October 30,1991: The Perfect Storm—

As President George H. W. Bush is opening the Madrid (Spain) Conference to consider “land for peace” in Israel’s Middle East role, the “perfect storm” develops in the North Atlantic, creating the largest waves ever recorded in that region. The storm travels 1000 miles from “east to west” instead of the normal “west to east” pattern and crashes into the New England Coast. Thirty-five foot waves crash into the Kennebunkport home of President Bush.

2. August 23, 1992: Hurricane Andrew—

When the Madrid Conference moves to Washington DC and the peace talks resume, Hurricane Andrew, the worst natural disaster ever to hit America, comes ashore and produces an estimated \$30 billion in damage and leaving 180,000 homeless in Florida.

3. January 16, 1994: Northridge Earthquake—

President Bill Clinton meets with Syria's President Hafez el-Assad in Geneva. They talk about a peace agreement with Israel that includes giving up the Golan Heights. Within 24 hours, a powerful 6.9 earthquake rocks Southern California. This quake, centered in Northridge, becomes the second most destructive natural disaster to hit the United States, behind Hurricane Andrew,

4. September 28, 1998: Hurricane George—

As Secretary of State Albright works on the final details of an agreement in which Israel would give up 13 percent of Yesha (Judah and Samaria), Hurricane George slams into the United States Gulf Coast with 110 mph winds and gusts up to 175 mph. The hurricane hits the coast and stalled.

On that same day, Clinton meets with Yasser Arafat and Netanyahu at the White House to finalize this land deal. Later, Arafat addresses the United Nations about declaring an independent Palestinian state by May 1999, as Hurricane George pounds the Gulf Coast, causing \$1 billion in damage. At the exact time that Arafat departs the country, the storm begins to dissipate.

5. October 15-22, 1998: Texas Flooded—

On October 15, 1998, Arafat and Netanyahu meet at the Wye River Plantation in Maryland. The talks are scheduled to last five days with the focus on Israel giving up 13 percent of Yesha. The talks are extended and conclude

on October 23. On October 17, awesome rains and tornadoes hit southern Texas. The San Antonio area is deluged with rain. The rain and flooding in Texas continue until October 22 and then subside. The floods ravage 25 percent of Texas and leave over one billion dollars in damage. On October 21, Clinton declares this section of Texas a major disaster area.

6. November 30, 1998: Market Capitalization Evaporates—

Arafat comes to Washington again to meet with President Clinton to raise money for a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as the capital. A total of 42 other nations were represented in Washington. All the nations agreed to give Arafat \$3 billion in aid. Clinton promised \$400 million, and the European nations \$1.7 billion. On the same day, the Dow Jones average drops 216 points, and on December 1, the European Market had its third worst day in history. Hundreds of billions of market capitalization were wiped out in the U.S. and Europe.

7. May 3, 1999: The Powerful Super Tornado—

On the day that Yasser Arafat is scheduled to declare a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as the capital, the most powerful tornado storm system ever to hit the United States sweeps across Oklahoma and Kansas. The winds are clocked at 316 mph the fastest wind speed ever recorded. The declaration is postponed to December 1999 at the request of President Clinton, whose letter to Arafat encourages him in his "aspirations for his own land." He also writes that the Palestinians have a right to "determine their own future on their own land" and that they deserve to "live free, today, tomorrow and forever."

8. Week of October 11, 1999: Hurricane, Earthquake and Dow Collapse—

As Jewish settlers in 15 West Bank (Israel) settlements are evicted from the covenant land in Israel, the Dow-Jones financial averages lose 5.7 percent in the worst week since October 1989.

On October 15 the Dow lost 266 points, and a hurricane slams into North Carolina. On the next morning, October 16, a magnitude 7.1 earthquake rocks the southwest in the fifth most powerful earthquake in 20th Century. The earthquake was centered in the California desert and did little damage but was felt in three states.

9. August 2005: Hurricane Katrina

One reporter wrote, *"While most religious authorities seem to agree one cannot discern the intentions of God, there has been talk in some circles here and on the Internet the storm that turned parts of the Gulf Coast into a disaster zone, prompting hundreds of thousands to evacuate their homes and possibly causing upwards of 10,000 deaths, was thrust upon the U.S. for its support of the Gaza evacuation."*

"Katrina is a consequence of the destruction of [Gaza's] Gush Katif [slate of Jewish communities] with America's urging and encouragement," Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Lewin, executive director of the Rabbinic Congress for Peace, told WND.

"The U.S. should have discouraged Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon from implementing the Gaza evacuation rather than pushing for it and pressuring Israel into concessions."

A few months later in January 2006 Ariel Sharon suffered a stroke that left him in a coma for the next eight years. He died on January 11, 2014

Coincidence? I'll let you be the judge.