

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Genesis 12 The Call of Abram*

*Genesis Message Thirty-Five*



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## Genesis Message Thirty-Five The Call of Abraham

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Daniel E. Woodhead

### Review:

#### THE TOWER OF BABEL

This section of Scripture outlines a *significant* event on the stage of all world events. It is just as important as the Great Flood or Creation.

Man was made by God and as such had a need for Him. When Satan deceived Eve and Adam directly disobeyed God they both were cast out of Eden and from God's immediate presence. The need for God our creator did not dissolve with our first parent's sin and subsequent break of fellowship with God. However, that need is often misdirected when we turn away from God and seek our own good, direction and leadership. Nimrod, who enslaved the populace to build the Tower of Babel, knew as all tyrants know, that you cannot subdue people by telling them, "I want to enslave you. I want you to work for my aggrandizement." You have to find a way to appeal to their desire for the God given need for Him. We call this appealing to a "higher purpose." Nimrod was speaking to a spiritual need. The tower was a metaphor for appealing to a higher purpose. Not only is a tower a great building, but also it is the physical depiction of our own human yearning to find transcendent purpose in our lives. Nimrod is saying, "Come with me, I will help you reach your highest aspirations either following yourself, a tyrannical government, or a false religion. Apart from God the result is always enslavement.

#### THE LANGUAGE OF GOD

The earth was originally all one language and everyone spoke the same speech (vocabulary). That language was Hebrew. Before this point in Genesis all the names are Hebrew and the word plays only make sense in Hebrew. One of those word plays appears here in this passage. In the Lord's language, Hebrew,

the word for tower- מגדל miGDaL it has the same root as the word for great-

גדול GaDoL. Hebrew nouns and verbs are built on a system of three root consonants. Those roots morph into words with similar meaning but slightly different spellings and vowels. The roots remain the same though throughout the morphology into the different words.

#### THE REBELLION AGAINST GOD

This section of Scripture shows us how easily we can become slaves to

something. Nimrod knew this, as he was the hunter of men in defiance of God (Genesis 10: 9). The bricks were one example of this. Nimrod hunted people. He hunted people to seduce them into becoming his subjects and to allow him to become their master.

Once they were in Shinar they engaged in a direct rebellion against God in two stages.

1. Building Material
2. Build a Tower to reach heaven

#### BUILDING MATERIAL

The building material has great significance that the plain text does not bring out. The first thing that they do is say “let us make bricks.” God makes it quite clear in the Mosaic Law that His altars are to be built from uncut stone (Exodus 20: 25 etc.). They knew that and in direct defiance to Him they chose to make bricks for a monument to themselves. This tension between the bricks and stones is crucial to our understanding of the level of defiance against God. Bricks and stones are a biblical metaphor for the way people should be; stones, and the way we are easily pulled to be; bricks. There are two obvious differences between bricks and stones. First, every brick is the same as every other brick. That's the whole point. They're totally interchangeable. If you want to turn people to bricks, you are able to turn them into interchangeable social economic cogs that can be just plugged around society. Secondly, bricks are man made. Stones are each unique and God made. When the Bible says that man is created in the image of God (Genesis 1: 26), what it really means is that just as God is unique, so is every single human being is unique, just like a stone. As children of God we must not allow other people to turn us into bricks. We must retain the God given personality in which we are created.

Every tyrant knows that you cannot enslave a people that believe in God. Therefore, any tyranny will always begin to develop hostility to biblical faith. You always find that, whether it's Cuba or the Soviet Union or anywhere else, secularism or some counterfeit faith becomes the religion of the day.

#### THE TOWER TO HEAVEN

The name babel in Hebrew means “gate of God” and as such the point of this passage is to reach the heavens. They did not want God they wanted the counterfeit signs of Astrology or the Zodiac. In addition to enslaving the people by falsely directing their attention away from God, Nimrod wanted to get them to believe in false religion and themselves. This is why Revelation 17: 5 refers to Babylon as THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS. They had a desire for tower (greatness) and this was realized in their desire for a name and reputation (Genesis 11: 4). This desire existed before the Flood (Genesis 4: 17) and continues on today. We see man trying to make others in *our image*.

Human cloning has been taking place since the 1970's. It has reached the stage where hybrid clones which consist of human and animal embryos are being and have been developed in Great Britain since 2008. 155 'admixed' embryos, containing both human and animal genetic material, have been created since the introduction of the 2008 Human Fertilization Embryology Act of Great Britain. It is only a matter of time until a despotic Nimrod like individual gets control over this process and uses it against the population. Certainly the Antichrist will take advantage of this. This is humanism in its purest form. Humanism is motivated from pride. Humanism's greatest example in government is Communism. It is completely anti-God and man (some men) centric. It seeks to enslave people while defying God and declaring His non-existence.

#### GOD'S JUDGMENT

In God's evaluation He says they are all one nationality and have one language. The text let's us see that God realizes that this will be the first act of sin in this manner but, many others will follow. The Jewish rabbis see this as unified defiance (Genesis 11: 6), which if left unchecked would *enthroned idolatry* for all time. If so no man will be able to turn to the worship of the true God and creator.

God says; "Let us" meaning the triune Godhead is about to take action. His action is to implement confusion into the language of the people of the earth. One morphing of the word Babel is Balah, which in Hebrew means to confuse. The Hebrew text literally reads: "That they may not hear a man the language of his friend, and the man said to his friend but now they will not be able to do that anymore. God then scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth. They left Babylon for Assyria. So this is how the many languages of the earth came about.

During the Messianic Kingdom the earth will once again have only one language (Zephaniah 3: 9). It might be Hebrew. Whatever it is God will give us the ability to speak, think and communicated in that language.

#### **Today's Message:**

#### THE TOLDOT OF SHEM

*Genesis 11: 10-25 These are the generations of Shem. Shem was a hundred years old, and begat Arpachshad two years after the flood. and Shem lived after he begat Arpachshad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. And Arpachshad lived five and thirty years, and begat Shelah. and Arpachshad lived after he begat Shelah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters. And Shelah lived thirty years, and begat Eber: and Shelah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and*

*daughters. And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg: and Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu: and Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters. And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug: and Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters. And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor: and Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah: and Nahor lived after he begat Terah a hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters. And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran (ASV 1901).*

The section of Scripture reveals a major division in the book of Genesis and the whole Bible as well. It begins to expose God's next major step in the development of His plan for all mankind, the call of Abram. This Toldot traces the line from Shem, Noah's son to Abraham, which is ten generations. It concludes with Terah's three sons Abram, Nahor, and Haran. It also mentions the nephew of the seed-son, Lot. In chapter ten, the genealogy of Shem explained how they came to be scattered around the earth. Here the line is focused on the Shemites. It does not give the statement as in chapter ten "and he died," nor is the total life span given. We can see from the data that entropy was increasing as the life spans were decreasing. It is also quite probable that the speed of light was decreasing as well. The genealogy of Shem is a "vertical" genealogy designed to define genuine ancestry. This type was often used in the ancient world to establish the legitimacy of a king or a dynasty. This genealogy of Shem demonstrates the linking of Abraham with Shem. This is the ancestry of Israel. It is here that God has provided us with the information to see what He did in calling of Abraham and the Jewish people out of this world.

#### THE FAMILY OF TERAH

*Genesis 11: 27-32 Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. And Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them 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. And Sarai was barren; She had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto*

*Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran (ASV 1901).*

This Toldot is a prelude to the story of Abraham and begins the history of the nation Israel. God had tested mankind three times and each time he failed the challenge that God had put to him. He failed in the Garden of Eden, before the Flood and at Babel. This was to be a new start. It is also, as previously mentioned, a transition from the general history of the earth to a national history of one family and one land. The only difference in this account and that of Luke's is the name Cainan. We believe that Luke used the Septuagint, which drew from the Book of Jubilees. This is probably due to a scribal error in transmission of the Masoretic Text used here in Genesis 11 and I Chronicles.

According to Joshua 24: 2 Terah was an idolater who worshipped the moon god Sin. Other family member names reflect this adherence to idolatry. For example *Sarai* comes from *Sharrate*, which means queen. This was an Akkadian translation of the Sumerian of Ningal, the wife of the moon god Sin. Milcah comes from the word Malkatu, which means princess and was the title of Ishtar, the daughter of the moon god Sin. Laban means white and is a poetical term for the full moon. Looking deeper at the names of Terah's family members names we can see the idolatry influence. They moved from Ur of the Chaldees about six hundred miles northwest to Haran. In the Jewish commentary Beresheis Rabbah this story is expanded in this manner:

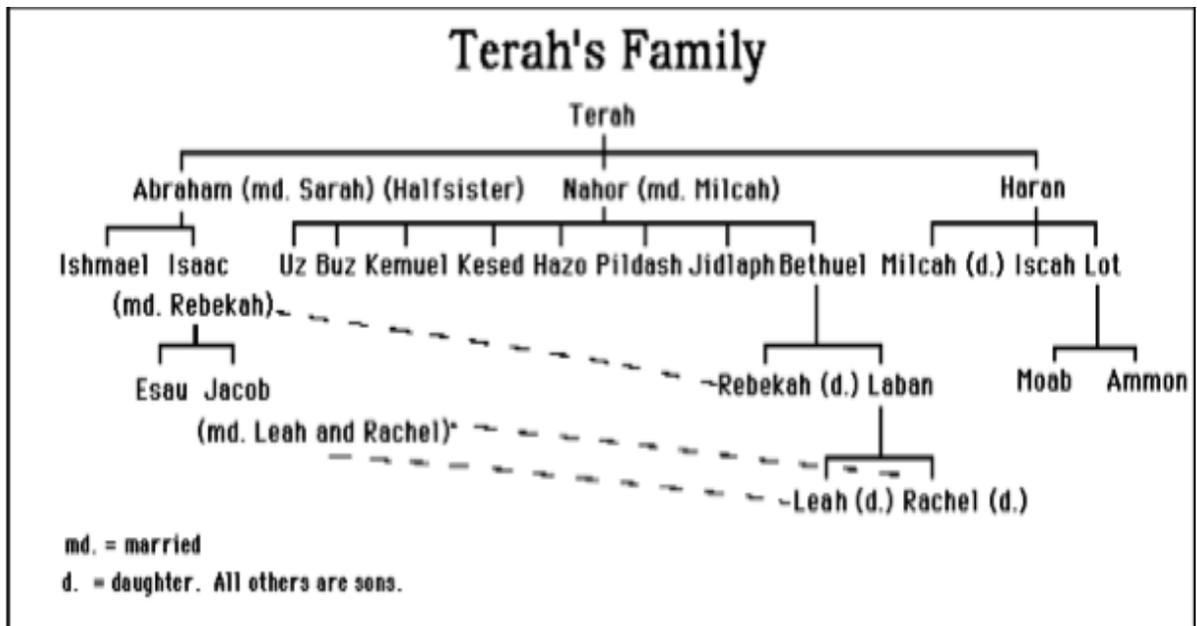


**Ur of the Chaldees:** An ancient city of the early Sumerian kingdom,

*Terah denounced Abram, his son before Nimrod for having smashed his idols. Then Nimrod cast Abram into a fiery pit. Haran was sitting and saying to himself, if Abram emerges victorious then I am of his supporters. If Nimrod emerges victorious then I am his supporter. When Abram was saved Nimrod's supporters asked Haran whom are you supporting here and he said Abram because he emerged from the fiery pit (Beresheis Rabbah 38: 13).*

The Jews see divine significance to the name of Ur of the Chaldees, which in Hebrew is *Ur Kasdim*, which alludes to Ur of the Fire. They further know that Abraham had God's divine providence leading him out of Babylonian idolatry. They see the phrase ""And Haran died before his father"" to mean ""and Haran died through his father."" In other words Terah caused Haran's death. *Kasdim* also can be a Hebrew play on words meaning to bewitch as in magic and astrology. These then are the Jew's thoughts on the early demise of Haran who dies before his father Terah. Lot, Haran's son became fatherless and Lot then became a sort of adopted son to Abram.

Haran died in Ur of the Chaldees where he was born. It seems that Terah came from Haran (his nativity) and moved to Ur of the Chaldees in his youth. Nahor though was born in Ur of the Chaldees.



Abram and Nahor each took wives. Sarai, Abram's wife was his half-sister who came from a union of his father and a different mother than his. Nahor's wife was Milcah. He married Haran's daughter or his niece. Sarai was barren. This sets the stage for the story of Abraham and how God tested him to wait for God's promise. As we will see shortly God called Abram to go to Canaan. The text in this section of Scripture is then implying that Abram tried to persuade Terah out of Haran to Canaan with him (Genesis 11: 31). Terah did not leave. He died in Haran and then the family left for Canaan. According to the Masoretic Text Abram left sixty years earlier.

#### THE CALL OF ABRAM AND THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

*Genesis 12: 1-3 Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*

The Hebrew texts state this calling as Lech-Lecha or get you! לך-לך

It literally means, "go for your benefit." The blessing will only come after he comes into the land of Canaan. As God directs him out He does so with a finality and completeness evidenced by the three situations he must separate himself from.

1. Out of your country
2. Out of your kindred
3. From your father's house.

When God directs us out of a situation to another there is a finality to it that gives us the sense that it is God leading us and not just a personal whim to please ourselves. It is extremely difficult to leave one's country and friends. It is even more difficult to break off from our family unless it is a God-leading situation.

God then gives Abram three promises, which begins the covenant He makes with him.

1. I will make of you a great nation
2. I will bless you (personally)
3. I will make your name great

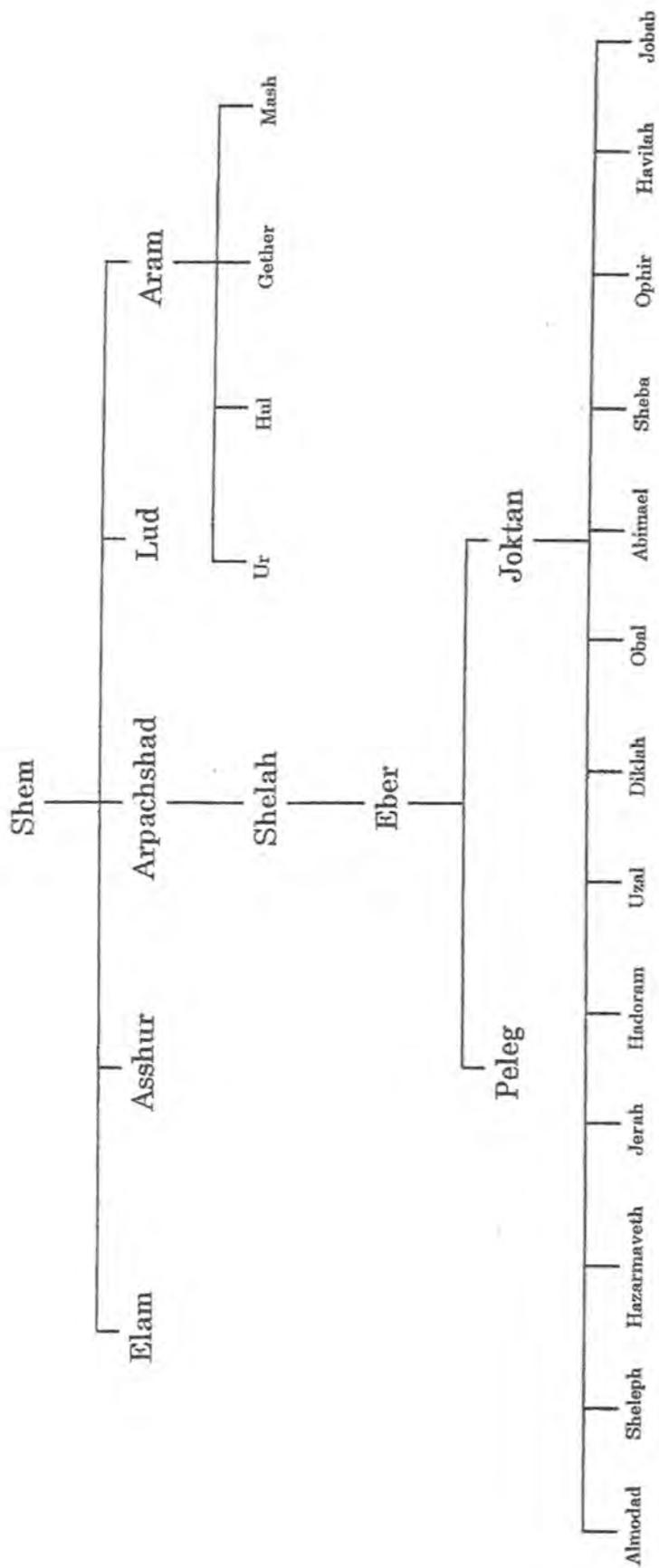
This is one of the unconditional covenants that God made with Israel. The Abrahamic Covenant promised a seed, land, and blessings. The three major promises of this covenant were personal promises to Abraham, national promises to Israel and universal promises to all the people of the earth. God promised that He would bless him and make him a blessing to others, to make his name great, to give him many descendants, to make him the father of a multitude of nations, to give him the land of Canaan for always and to bless them that blessed Abraham and to curse them that cursed him. (Genesis 12; 13; 15 & 17) God also made national promises concerning Israel. They are: to make a great nation of his descendants; to give land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates to his descendants forever; and to give the Abrahamic covenant to his descendants for ever. Finally, God made universal covenants to Abraham that would affect everybody on the earth; it would affect all families of the earth who would be blessed. This promise is intended to be applicable to Israel regarding the blessing and cursing effects. Parts of the covenant have already been fulfilled. For example God did bless him with wealth. His name is great and Israel is a great nation. He fathered three religions of the world, Islam, Christianity and Judaism. The blessings to all have been given to all through the oracles of God the Jews received and they brought forth the Messiah. The promise of the land has not been fulfilled yet. His descendants are in deed in the land but, in unbelief and do not have the boundaries set forth in Scripture yet.

God blessed Abram and he became a blessing to others. Melchizedek received a tithe from Abram's war spoils. God elected Abram personally as He also elected the nation Israel.

NEXT WEEK: THE LINE OF SHEM & CALL OF ABRAHAM (INTRO)

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## The Genealogy of Shem



## The Genealogy of Shem

Person	Age at Birth of Son	A.H.* Year Of Birth	Years After Birth of Son	Total Age	A.H.* Year Of Death	Age at Birth Of Son Samaritan	Age at Birth of Son LXX
Shem	100	1556 (8)	500	600	2156 (8)		
Arpachshad	35	1658	403	438	2096	135	135
Shelah	30	1693	403	433	2126	130	130
Eber	34	1723	430	464	2187	134	134
Peleg	30	1757	209	239	1996	130	130
Reu	32	1787	207	239	2026	132	132
Serug	30	1819	200	230	2049	130	130
Nahor	29	1849	119	148	1997	79	179
Terah	70 (130)	1878	135	205	2083		130
Abraham	100	1948 (2008)	75	175	2123 (2183)		
Isaac	60	2048 (2108)	120	180	2228 (2288)		
Jacob		2108 (2168)		130	2238 (2298)		

Between Arpachshad and Shelah, the LXX has Kenan (Cainan) who begat Shelah at the age of 130.

\*A.H. Stands for Anno Homini - the year of Man. It counts from the creation of Adam onward instead of using the BC-AD system.