

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #30

Genesis 11:10-32

Other than the person of Jesus Christ, there is no person in all of the Bible, both the O.T. and the N.T., more prestigious than Abraham. The things said and written about him in Scripture leave him a gigantic hero to anyone who has a proper understanding of the Word of God.

- 1) He is, by virtue of the number of verses dedicated to him in the faith chapter, the greatest example of a man of faith (Hebrews 11:8-19).
- 2) He is used as an illustration of the important doctrine of justification by faith alone (Romans 4:1-25).
- 3) He is a man upon whom all of Israel's future promises rest (Genesis 17:4-8).
- 4) He is a man who Biblically has both a physical and spiritual family (Galatians 3:7).
- 5) He is a man who was given his own abode title in eternity (Luke 16:19-31).
- 6) He is a man whose story dominates Genesis, the first book of the Bible.

The beginning of Abraham's story is placed here in Genesis 11. As we examine the data, we discover that Abraham, **through no choice of his own**, happened to end up in the right lineage, living in the wrong country, and happened to receive a message of Divine Revelation. Abraham's life was all about God who was working out His Sovereign plan.

THE SOVEREIGN GOD CHOOSES TO CALL AND BLESS THOSE WHOM HE WILL REGARDLESS OF THEIR BACKGROUND.

Dr. S. Lewis Johnson said it well: "The call of Abram gives hope for the world. In the most out of the way places God calls and blesses. From the cloister of the Papal Church, from the bosom of the Sanhedrin, and from the organizations of apostate Protestant churches, God calls his Luthors, his Pauls, His Whitefields, He knows where they are to be found, and He calls them for His purposes of good" (Study #22, p. 6).

SOVEREIGN HEADING #1 - The lineage of Abram. 11:10-26

When God puts a genealogy in His Word, He does so to show that He is carefully watching over individuals to accomplish His sovereign purposes, according to His sovereign plan. People are not lost in a maze of nameless numbers.

Verse 10 makes it clear that this lineage line is being traced through Shem, Noah's son and chapter 5 makes it clear that Shem's lineage is being traced through Seth, Adam's son (5:3, 6, 32). Moses was interested, from both chapters 5 & 10, in tracing the lineage list of Abram. In comparing the two lineage accounts, Abram's lineage looks like this:

Adam begot Seth (5:3). Seth begot Enosh (5:6). Enosh begot Kenan (5:9). Kenan begot Mahalalel (5:13). Mahalalel begot Jared (5:16). Jared begot Enoch (5:18). Enoch begot Methuselah (5:21). Methuselah begot Lamech (5:26). Lamech begot Noah (5:28-29). Noah begot Shem (5:32).

Shem begot Arpachshad (11:10). Arpachshad begot Shelah (11:12). Shelah begot Eber (11:14). Eber begot Peleg (11:16). Peleg begot Reu (11:18). Reu begot Serug (11:21). Serug begot Nahor (11:22). Nahor begot Terah (11:24). Terah begot Abram (11:26).

It is important to note that both lineage lists begin with a “generations of” heading (5:1; 11:10) and then it quickly moves into a “begot” or “became the father of” development. This is very important because the “generations of” or “sons of” formula tends to look back to the ancestor, whereas the “begot” or “became the father of” formula tends to look forward to the progress or development of the line. When we look at these two lineage lists, we may observe that Moses is intent on looking forward to the future birth of Abram and ultimately the Messiah.

Three main differences exist between the lineage list of chapter 5 and chapter 11:

- 1) The lineage list of chapter 5 tabulates total years of life, but chapter 11 does not (i.e. 5:5).
Chapter 11 is interested in how old the man was when he had his firstborn son.
- 2) The lineage list of chapter 5 ends with “and he died” but chapter 11 does not (i.e. 5:5).
Chapter 11 is interested in life and expansion.
- 3) The lineage list of chapter 5 features longer life spans but chapter 11 shorter life spans.
Man’s sin had diminished his longevity, however there seems to be an optimism here.

Analyzing these differences, realizing that both lineage lists (chapter 5 & 11) are interested in getting us to Abram, we conclude that there is a major shift in the program of God and focus of God: **From Adam, the focus was on the curse of death and on the end of life, but from Shem the focus is on the promise of blessing and on the blessing of life. In other words, God stresses death in the lineage of Abram before the flood, but He stresses life in the lineage of Abram after the flood.**

These two lineage lists not only give us a full picture of the line of Abram, but a full picture of the program of God.

Observation #1 - Most of those in the line we know nothing about.

Observation #2 - All who were in this lineage had other sons and daughters.

SOVEREIGN HEADING #2 - The life of Abram. 11:27-32

Fact #1 - We learn facts about Abram’s family. 11:27-28a

Abram was the son of Terah. He had two brothers, Nahor and Haran, who died but produced a son whom he named Lot.

Fact #2 - We learn facts about Abram’s hometown. 11:28

Abram lived in the city of Ur, the capital city of Sumer, which was controlled by the Chaldeans. This place was known as a place that “served other gods” (Joshua 24:2). Ur was located in the southern Mesopotamia area (N.T. called land of Shinar), which is near the Persian Gulf. **Here is where Abram received his call from God** (Acts 7:2-3). God called Abram while in this evil land. This land was known for its idolatry and immorality and when Terah moved his family there, he knew of this because he was an idolater (Joshua 24:2). If ever there were one who came from the wrong side of the tracks, from a locational standpoint, it was Abram.

Fact #3 - We learn facts about Abram's wife . 11:29-30

From the context, we know that before Haran died, he produced a son "Lot" (11:27). Verse 29 informs us that he had other children as well, including Milcah who married Nahor, Abram's brother. Milcah would give birth to many children (Genesis 22:20-23), while Sarai had none.

Abram married Sarai. She was also the daughter of Terah, but not by the same mother of Abram (Genesis 20:12). From a situational perspective Sarai seems to look cursed: 1) She does not come from an ideal family background situation; 2) She does not have any children.

Fact #4 - We learn facts about Abram's relocation. 11:31-32

From Acts 7:2-4, we learn that God Divinely and Gloriously appeared to Abram, while in Mesopotamia and from Genesis 11:31, we learn that Terah seemed to instigate the move out of Mesopotamia. Josephus says it was the death of Terah's son Haran that prompted Terah to want to leave the land of the Chaldeans.

Terah took Abram, his grandson Lot to Haran which was a city located north of Canaan, approximately 600 miles N.W. of Ur and this is the place where Terah, Abram's father, died.

Perhaps you think you can't amount to much for God. Perhaps you think your background is too corrupt to be mightily used by God. Read the accounts of Augustine, Scofield, or Trotter. Read the account of Abram for no other person was taken from so low a position and lifted so high.

Jesus Christ came through Abram's line that He might take people low in sin and lift them high in righteousness. Believe on Him and you too will be in Abram's line of blessing, regardless of your background.