

## #5 - Tower of Babel and Abrams Call - Genesis 11:1-12:9

### Engage:

- Here we go again. First it was Adam and Eve, then it was Cain, then it was the people of Noah's day and here it is the people of Babel. The root of sin had not been eliminated by the flood. Selfishness, pride and disobedience continued. As before, God intervened. (Question: Could this be understood to agree with what the Hebrew writer meant when he said that God disciplines those He loves – Hebrews 12:6? This is just a thought. What do you think?) And again, God found another man, Abram to be a person (like Noah) that He could work through to continue His plan of redemption.

### Thoughts About The Story:

- **11:1-9** – Here is another example of humans doing their own thing rather than God's. These people wanted to make a name for themselves (the sin of pride - God does not allow pride to stop His plans. "God's plan will be accomplished, if not with man's obedience, then in spite of man's disobedience." - Bible Knowledge Commentary). They united together to build a tower "that reaches to the heavens." But God knew their hearts. He knew that we all have the desire to be god and to do things our way. (Go back to Adam and Eve in the garden.) Again we see that the Godhead determined that intervention was necessary ("Come, let **US** go down and confuse their language . . . ." Thus the "Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth" (see Genesis 9:1). What these people would not do in obedience, God forced them to do in judgment. Note: When people rebel against God, confusion is the result.

Transition: But there is good news! God was not done with humankind. He does not give up on accomplishing His purpose.

- **12:1-9** – It seems that God chose Abram because of his character as a person, even though he and his family had been worshipers of idols (Joshua 24:2-3). When Abram was 75 years old (Note: you are never too old to learn to walk by faith - after all Abraham lived another 100 years - Genesis 25:7), God called to Abram to go (leave his homeland). The call was clear, but the destination was not. Point: You don't always have to know where you are going, if you know who you are following. Note: "The man who insists on seeing with perfect clarity before he decides never decides" ("*Walk Through The Bible*"). Note: God gave Abram the opportunity to experience the difference in living by faith by following the commands of the living God, in contrast to worshiping a lifeless idol!

Note: "Abraham obeyed even when he did not know *where* (Hebrews 11:8-10), *how* (11:11-12), *when* (11:13-16) or *why* (17-19)." - Wiersbe

God made several promises to Abram (12:2-3, 7)

#### - Genesis 12:2-3:

- I will make you a great nation.
- I will bless you and make your name great. (Note: "The men of Babel wanted to make a name for themselves and failed, but Abraham trusted God and God gave him a great name!" - Wiersbe).
- I will make you a blessing. (Application: One of the reasons for God's blessing in our lives is so that we can be a blessing to others. See Galatians 3:14)

- I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.
- In you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

- Genesis 12:7:

- To your descendants I will give this land. (This promise was made after Abram showed faith in leaving his homeland.)

Note: Abram (exalted father) and Sarai's (princess) names were changed to Abraham (father of many) and Sarah (princess - although the name means the same, the emphasis is that Sarah became the mother of nations and kings - see NIV Study Bible) when the Lord appeared to him to announce that the promised child would be born to Sarai (Genesis 17).

Note: God promised on several occasions that many descendants would become part of his family (Genesis 12:2; 13:16; 15:4-5). Yet there came a time when both Abraham and Sarah both acted foolishly because they became impatient in waiting upon God to do what He said He would do (Genesis 16 - It reminds us of a similar decision that Adam and Eve made.). In addition to their impatience, they demonstrated that God was too small. They did not seem to trust God to keep His promise, possibly because Sarah knew that she was past the age of giving birth.

The character of Abram is further seen as he was moved to build an altar after the Lord appeared to him and announced that the place where he was would be given to Abram's offspring.

Note: The name Bethel means "house of God" (*beth* = house and *el* = God).

### **Summary:**

"Notice the contrast between Genesis 11:1-9 and 12:1-3. At Babel, man said, 'Let us!' but to Abraham, God said, 'I will.' At Babel, men wanted to make a name for themselves; but it was God who made Abraham's name great. At Babel, the workers tried to unite men, only to divide them; but through Abraham, a whole world has been blessed, and all believers are united in Jesus Christ. . . .

It must have seemed incredible to Abraham and Sarah that God would bless the whole world through an elderly childless couple, but that is just what He did. From them came the nation of Israel, and from Israel came the Bible and the Savior. God reaffirmed this covenant with Isaac (Genesis 26:4) and Jacob (Genesis 28:14) and fulfilled it in Christ (Acts 3:25-26). In later years, God amplified the various elements of this covenant; but He gave Abraham and Sarah sufficient truth for them to believe and set out in faith." - Wiersbe

### **Question:**

- God called Abram to move, and he did. God called Noah to build an ark, and he did. Has God called you to do anything? If so, what have or will you do? Remember, for faith to grow you must be obedient.