

Genesis 11-12

December 12, 2010

Today we begin to learn about the birth of Israel through the man Abraham.

11:1-9: In **chapter 11 verses 1 to 9** we have the story of the Tower of Babel. Who can tell us what happens?

- Have someone tell the story.

1:1: Why did the whole earth speak the same language?

- Everyone was a direct descendant of Noah and his family.

Why was the building of this tower so offensive to God?

- They were doing this for *themselves* and to *build a name for themselves* (11:4). They were making their lives about themselves and not about God. They were building a tower to give themselves an identity rather than getting their identity from God. They also did this so that they would not be scattered. God had told Adam and Eve to “multiply and fill the earth” (1:28). He told Noah the same thing (9:1). They didn’t want to fill the earth; they wanted to stay where they were.

How do people do the same things today?

- See what you get. People today make their lives about themselves, not about God. We seek identity in careers, job titles, houses, cars, marriages, children, etc. rather than our identity being in God and His purpose for our lives. We try to build a name for ourselves rather than living to bring glory to God. And sometimes we want to “plant” our lives where we are rather than being open to what God may want us to do with our lives.

What do we learn about the importance of communication in this story?

- God said that *nothing would be impossible* if they communicated. The inability to communicate divided them.

How important is communication to relationships and progress?

- Completely important!

What are some significant things you’ve learned about communicating?

- See what you get. People *cannot* read your mind (and you *cannot* read theirs). You have to say what you want the person to know. You have to learn how to listen; communicating requires humility. Some think that they will say all of the important things in a conversation; they’re wrong. See **Proverbs 18:2**. Everything you think and feel should *not* be said; we think and feel things that we really (at least eventually) don’t mean. Sticks and stones may break bones, but words break hearts, ruin relationships, and destroy lives. Is it true? Is it necessary? Will it help or hurt? See **Ephesians 4:29**.

11:10-32: These genealogy lists are placed in Scripture but are not a part of the chronology of the stories. We read about Peleg here (11:16-19) and in 10:25; the story of Babel (11:1-9) took place during his life. In 11:31 we read about Abram (Abraham) taking his nephew Lot and going to Canaan. We will read about the details in the chapters to come.

Abram’s name will be changed to Abraham. Does anyone know the meaning of these names?

- Abram means, “the father is exalted”; Abraham means “the father of a multitude”.

What does the name Sarah mean?

- Princess

12:1-3: What was God's promise to Abraham in chapter 12 verses 1 to 3?

- God would give him a land, make him a great nation, bless those who blessed him, curse those who cursed him, and in him *all* the families of the world would be blessed.

What was that land? What was that nation? Who has blessed them and been blessed? Who has cursed them and been cursed? How have all of the families of the world been blessed in him?

- Palestine/Canaan/modern-day Israel. Israel. The United States freed the Jews from Germany, have been allies of Israel, and have been blessed by God for it. Germany was cursed and defeated. Jesus, the Savior of the whole world, came through Abraham and the Jews.

12:4-5: What did Abraham do "right" and what did he do "wrong" in verses 4 and 5?

- He went when and where the Lord told him to go. See [Hebrews 11:8](#). He was supposed to leave his family but he took his nephew Lot.

Why do you think God told him to leave all of his family (including Lot)?

- God knew what would happen with Lot and to Lot. Being eternal, God is already in the future and knows what will happen. Being all knowing, God knows how the choices we make "turn out" and how the choices we don't make would have turned out. Given five options, the eternal, all-knowing God knows how all five choices will turn out. This is why we should follow Him. A "closed" door or God's "no" is as good as an "open" door or God's "yes". We should trust Him because He knows what we don't know.

12:1,7: What do we learn about how God leads Abraham in verses 1 and 7?

- God tells Abraham to "go" and that He will tell Abraham when he gets to where God wants him to be. In [verse 7](#), God tells Abraham, "This is the place!"

What can we learn from this about how God might lead us?

- See [Hebrews 11:6](#). God wants us to trust Him...to have faith. If we have all of the answers, then we don't need any faith. God's leading seldom includes the answers to all of the questions we might have about it. We just have to know that *this* is where he is leading, and we have to trust Him with our doubts, fears, and questions.

12:10-20: Who can tell us what happens in verses 10 to 20?

- Have someone tell the story. Abraham goes to Egypt because of a severe famine. Abraham fears that someone might kill him in order to have Sarah, so he tells her to say that she is his sister. The Pharaoh takes her into his harem but God quickly judges him for it. The Pharaoh confronts Abraham and gives Sarah back to him untouched.

What do we learn about Abraham in this story?

- He was fearful and did not have faith in God.

Romans 4:11: says that Abraham was "the father of all who believe". Abraham is named in [Hebrews 11](#), the great "faith" chapter of the Bible. Often our greatest strengths are birthed out of our greatest weaknesses. This failure and spiritual recovery shows that people can change and people can grow.

What do we learn about Sarah in this story?

- She was apparently incredibly beautiful (12:11,14). Most people today would say that she was crazy to do what Abraham told her to do and to get into the circumstance that she did with the Pharaoh. See 1 Peter 3:1-6. God uses her as an example of both submission (she did what Abraham said) and faith (she trusted God to protect her...and He did).

What do we learn about God in this story?

- God is faithful even when men are faithless. (See 2 Timothy 2:13.) Sarah did the right thing (submitted) and God protected her. We can always count on God's presence when we are in His will. He is able to work miracles to provide for us and to protect us when we are doing what He tells us to do (*He's a rewarder of those who seek Him*).