

OT-OV

Lesson 21

1. At our last session I taught Genesis 10 and 11 and when time expired we had just begun a study of Genesis chapter twelve.
2. I want to review some of that learned and then we will return to our study of Terah moving his family from Babylon to Haran.
3. Since we have been away for two weeks I want to review that which we learned in chapter 11 of the Book of Genesis.
4. Verse One: One language, and of one speech ...

Gen 11:1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

4.1 God has tested man under every conceivable condition and found him wanting. In our day there are those who think that bettering man's environment will help him; they forget the perfect environment of Eden.

4.1.1 Even in the future, during the millennial reign of Christ, real perfection will give way to a Satanic led rebellion.

4.2 Others think that education will save man, forgetting that knowledge was received in the Fall when man ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; this knowledge failed to keep man righteous.

4.2.1 Still others think that something like the United Nations can enforce righteousness in the world, even to the most insouciant such a grand postulation has been shown to be wrong.

4.3 The Bible does not teach that man fell once in Eden, but that man always falls when confronted with fresh conditions that are calculated to reveal what he truly is (Jer 17:9 ... deceitful above all things and desperately wicked ...).

5. Verses 3 and 4: Let us ... let us ... let us build a tower ...

Gen 11:3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

Gen 11:4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

5.1 The clue to every action is whether it proceeds from the will of man or from the will of God. Man in rebellion says, "Let us;" man in submission says, "Thy will be done."

5.2 Perhaps the whole key to life's story lies in the phrase, "Let me," instead of "Lord, do it all." The terrible thing about the former prayer is that God lets man do what he wants to do, and then there comes failure and frustration. God's ways are pleasant, and all His paths are peace. Pro 3:17

Pro 3:17 The ways of doctrine are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

5.3 The translators have obscured the sense of verse four by giving us the impression that men were attempting to build a tower that would reach all the way to heaven. They would have been fools to start it by the river when there were mountains in sight a few miles away.

5.3.1 The fact is: The tower was a ziggurat on top of which was a zodiac by which the priests hoped to get knowledge from the stars. It was an open turning to Satan and the beginning of devil worship. This is why the Bible everywhere pronounces a curse on those who consult the sun, the moon, and the stars of heaven.

6. Verse 5: The Lord came down to see the city ...

Gen 11:5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6.1 There are many indications in the Scriptures that the Lord is not only aware of all that goes on upon this earth, whether of good or ill, but that He is aware and vitally interested in all that takes place.

Psa 34:15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

Pro 5:21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

Pro 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

1Pe 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

6.2 Not a sparrow falls without His knowledge, and the very hairs of our heads are numbered (Mat 10: 29 and 30). "His eyes behold, his eyelids test, the children of men" (Psa 11:4). Shall He not then come down to see the first city of rebellion?

Mat 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

Mat 10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Psa 11:4 The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

7. Verse 6: Nothing will be restrained from them ...

Gen 11:6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

7.1 When men begin by running after Satan, they will end by wishing to dethrone God. They had started a city because they did not want to obey the command of God to replenish the earth which would have meant separation from each other, and going to widely remote places.

7.2 Thus they imagined that by binding themselves together they would be able to organize and become strong enough to procure their own will. The imagination which was only evil continually before the Flood is still with the human race, and they are imagining to replace God. "Let us break His bands asunder," is the cry.

8. Verse 7: Let us ... confound their language ...

Gen 11:7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8.1 The Lord stopped the work on the city and the tower in the most unexpected manner.

8.2 The people standing around the tower might have anticipated difficulties through quarrels among themselves or by judgments from heaven, but a miracle in their brains and vocal cords would certainly never have occurred to them.

8.3 Thus God confounds the worldly imaginations of men. Afterwards every time they opened their mouths to speak, there was the reminder of their disunity and failure.

8.4 The multiple earphones in the meetings of the "united" nations are a testimony of the impiety of the fathers of the nations and the first act of God to despoil the first global union.

8.5 Tongues that were divided at Babel were given as a witness at Pentecost and will one day be united in blessing Christ at His return. What a slap at our client nation to God that we seek approval of "the united babel" and even let them house their house of horrors in our nation.

9. Verse 8: They left off to build the city ...

Gen 11:8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

9.1 Those who go their own way will always find frustration. There is no real peace except in the way of the Lord's direction. Most of us could testify that quite often the thing we sought became a bubble in our hands.

9.2 God has many ways to make bitter the things for which men give their lives and He must always do it when something is prized beyond Himself.

10. Verse 9: From thence did the Lord scatter them ...

Gen 11:9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

10.1 God always has His way in the end. It is impossible that the eternal counsels of the Godhead should not be fulfilled. If a man wants to kick against the pricks, he may have success for a while and make a name for himself in the earth, but in the end he is brought either to judgment or to the Damascus road.

10.2 It is either man's way, ending in disappointment and failure, or it is God's way, not only ending in joy and triumph but filled with joy and triumph.

10.3 God is sovereign, and His way shall be accomplished. Here as always, there was mercy blended with judgment. It was judgment that scattered them through the earth, but it was mercy that accompanied them with full supplies of grace.

10.4 Now let's fast forward through the "begattings" of Shem to Abram all the way to Gen 11:30 where we find Sarai mentioned.

11. Verse 30: But Sarai ... had no child ...

Gen 11:30 But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

11.1 Here is the seed from which the next eleven chapters grow. God meant all this for good, and all the testings and the triumphs of the faith of Abraham and Sarah grew out of this.

11.2 God's plan and His purpose in the story of Hagar and Ishmael, the promise of Isaac, the command to offer him up, the divine deliverance, the work of providence in this family, the ultimate arrival of complete faith and the proving of God's promise, are all bound up with the fact that Sarah had no child.

12. Verse 31 -32: Terah took Abram his son

Gen 11:31 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.

Gen 11:32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

12.1 Behind Terah's action was the faith of his son, Abram. God appeared to Abram and gave him the orders. It was evidently Abram's determination to go that moved Terah, his father, to join the procession.

12.1.1 Very often family can impede spiritual growth.

Mat 10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.
Mat 10:35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Mat 10:36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

Mat 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

12.2 Abram was obeying God, but he acknowledged his earthly father's rightful position. It turned out to be a compromise, and Abram lost several years by allowing his father a part in the action that derived from the call and command of God. Terah was a devil worshiper.

13. They came unto Haran, and dwelt there ...

13.1 The world has many a halfway house on the road to God's will. The order was: destination Canaan. The execution was delayed because of the long stop in Haran.

13.2 Terah probably created a great emotional scene at the old home in Ur, when his son announced that God had called him to go to a far country which he had never seen. Finally, the old man said he would go too.

13.3 Since he had the authority of the father, Abram deferred to his wishes and there was the long sojourn at Haran. Terah probably was very proud of his religious progress. Had he not given up Ur? Was he not well out into the desert? Could he not glory in his progress? But Terah died in Haran.

14. Now let's see what we can glean from Genesis Twelve.

15. Gen 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

15.1 Verse One: The Lord had said ... (a direct communication from God)

15.1.1 God did not choose Abram because of anything he was then doing, but because of what God in His omniscience saw Abram later do - faith in the Messiah to come. The Lord distinctly declares: "For when he was but one I called him" (Isa 51: 2).

Isa 51:2 look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many.

15.1.2 There were others just as needy, some perhaps morally better, but God is sovereign. He saw this man's choices and called Him.

Gen 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Jam 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Heb 11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Heb 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

15.2 Get thee out of thy country ...

15.3 The reason for his permanent change of station is the failure of mankind at the tower of Babel. God purposes to rule this earth in righteousness and by means of men. To best do this He decided to create nations. From His sovereignty He also decided to select a people who would later become a promised nation, a one and only Priest nation.

15.3.1 By sovereign grace, God set up one man as the head of one of those nations through whom righteousness should come to the earth through a Saviour, and to whom world government should one day be committed.

15.4 And from thy kindred ...

15.5 It seems heartless to ask a son to leave his father and family, but God was asking the son to leave a godless father and a godless family. Joshua says, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, Your fathers lived of old beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham ... and they served other gods ... Now therefore ... put away the gods which your fathers served ..." (Jos 24:2, 14).

Jos 24:2 Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods.

Jos 24:14 "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

15.6 We remember that later in the days of Jacob, Rachel stole her father's idols and hid them when he searched her tent. The path of holiness is a path of separation.

15.7 From thy father's house ... to a land that I will show thee

15.8 It makes no difference where it is or how appealing or unappealing. If the Lord leads us there, it is the land for us. If the Lord does not lead us, it can never be the right land, even though it is paved with diamonds.

15.8.1 We find the will of God (certainly to include His geographical will) by the use of the two power options.

Rom 12:2 Be ye not conformed to this world but be you transformed, by the renewing of the mind, that you may know what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God.

15.8.2 Literally, Abram was being led out of the land of Ur into the land of Canaan. Spiritually, Abram was being led to the heavenly country. He thus confessed that he was a stranger and a pilgrim in the earth.

15.8.3 But as it is, they desired a better country, that is, a heavenly one. "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God" (Heb 11:13-16).

Heb 11:13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

Heb 11:14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.

Heb 11:15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.

Heb 11:16 Instead, they were longing for a better country-- a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

15.8.4 The early Patriarchs were pleasing God by means of being convinced concerning the truth of Bible Doctrine.

15.9 Verse 2: I will make of thee a great nation

15.9.1 This is the first of the unconditional promises. If God's promises had conditions, they would never have been fulfilled, for we do not have the power to keep any condition.

15.9.2 Therefore, the promises must be in pure grace, and without conditions. "I will make of thee a great nation." But Lord, Abraham might have said, "suppose I get out of Thy will, or my posterity should become idolaters, or my descendants should crucify Thy Son?"

15.9.3 God's answer would have been, and in fact was a resounding unilateral answer "I will make of thee a great nation."

15.9.4 The promise is not because of what Abraham might or might not do or be, but because of God's grace and His design.

16. Gen 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

16.1 Verse Two: I will bless thee ...

16.1.1 But Lord, suppose Abraham becomes a liar; and his grandson, Jacob, becomes a crook; also his greatest son, David, becomes an adulterer and a murderer; and the nation descended from Abraham becomes so evil that it is necessary to scatter them in judgment throughout the earth?

16.1.2 God's sovereign resounding answer would have been "I will bless you."

16.1.3 But can man's sin never make Thee a liar? "I will bless you." Why, Lord? "Because I am the God of whom it is said: 'If we are faithless, he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself ' (2Ti 2:13). This is an Old Testament revelation of His unmerited grace.

2Ti 2:13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

16.2 And make thy name great

16.2.1 By the thousands, Jews, Muslims and Christians have been named Abraham. Abraham is one of the few universal names. But the greatness involved in the promise was not merely that the literal name would be widely used. Abram was to become Abraham and thus be the father of many nations, both a physical seed in the nation and a spiritual seed in the church. The act of leaving Ur and going to the land of Canaan would give him the other name which in the Hebrew means "the one who crossed over."

16.2.2 And, most of all, Abraham is the name that is bound up with all the promises of God. The name is found seventy-four times in the New Testament. Abraham was the recipient of what is famously called The Abrahamic Covenant and the Father of not only the Jewish race but all Arab nations and every believer who has ever exercised faith alone in Christ alone.

End Lesson