

# GENESIS

## 11:10-12:9

### Genesis 11:10-12:9

Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 8th October 2023 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

**Reading:** Hebrews 12:1-2

### Introduction

Last Sunday morning we studied what in many ways is a key chapter in the Bible, for in chapter 10 we saw the earth's population start to increase again after the flood (and we read there of the earliest descendants of Shem, Ham & Japheth). However, the problem of sin had indeed remained, and we read about Nimrod (whose very name means *to rebel*) as we saw the first mention of many of the giant tribes that Satan again would use to try and destroy the line through to Christ, by trying to destroy Israel. That included the Philistines, Amorites and Canaanites.

### Overview of chapters eleven & twelve

#### Overview of chapter eleven

- **v1-9** — The tower of babel
- **v10-26** — Shem's descendants through to Abram (Abraham)
- **v27-32** — Abraham's family, and their wanderings

And as we ventured into the first 9 verses of chapter 11 we saw the people of the earth gather *together* (contrary to God's command to fill the earth), at a place called *Bab-el*, meaning gateway to God, and there they built a tower — it seems for the purpose of worshipping the stars. As a result, God confused their languages (hence we know the place as *Babel*, meaning *confusion*) and He dispersed the nations throughout the earth — and we *read* that occurred in the days of Peleg, one of Shem's descendants — placing this a little further back than 2200 years BC.

As we pick up our study today in verse 10 of chapter eleven, we'll see Shem's descendants recorded *again*, but not their whole families — rather, Moses records a very specific line of descendants through to a man named Abram, whom we're going to read and learn a lot about over the coming weeks, with this chapter concluding with some details about his immediate family and their move away from their homeland.

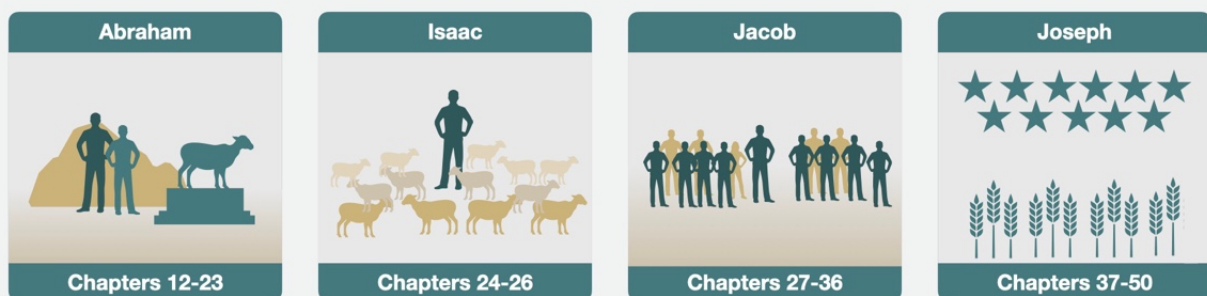
### Overview of chapter twelve

- **v1-3** — God's promise to Abraham
- **v4-9** — Abraham moves to Canaan
- **v10-20** — Abraham goes to Egypt

We'll also begin studying chapter 12 today — and there we'll see God's unconditional promises to Abram. What will follow will be Abram acting *within* God's will — obeying a direct instruction of the Lord to move to Canaan. Then next week we'll see him act *outside* of God's will as he moves temporarily to Egypt in a time of famine — a move that would have bigger implications than he would first realise.

This flawed but godly Character is a pattern we'll see in many of the generations that follow. And, as we reach this point in Genesis, we will now move from the record of events, to the record of 4 individuals...

## The patriarchs of Genesis



...starting with Abram in chapter 12, who will later become known as Abraham. Then in chapter 24 we'll see the life of his son, Isaac, recorded. Then in chapter 27 we'll start reading about Jacob, who would *also* take on another name (in his case, *Israel*). And then we'll see the final 13 chapters of Genesis largely focus on one of Jacob's sons, Joseph.

As we start looking at Abram then, we'll find a man of remarkable character, a man who had faith in God; who took Him at His Word. He was prepared to move where God wanted him to be, and do what God wanted Him to do. A man whose legacy was evident in his family and their descendants, but ultimately a man who put God before all — including his family. And he is rightly often referred to as a hero of faith. But as we read about him, don't think that he was somehow special in the sense that we can't hope to live like that — for he was also flawed. He was a sinner just like you and I.

AW Tozer offered this encouragement:

*We can be in our day what the heroes of faith were in their day, but remember at the time they didn't know they were heroes.*

**AW Tozer**

The aim then, isn't to be a hero, but to be faithful to God, to take Him at His Word, and let Him use us, direct us, lead us, guide us as *He* sees fit. God may not be looking for someone to father an entire nation, but he is looking for you to father your family faithfully. He's looking for you to live faithfully as a single Christian, or married couple, parent, sibling or child. He's looking for you to be obedient to Him, surrendering all — for your good, and His glory. He's still looking for men and women of good character, and full of faith.

So as we journey through these coming chapters, let us pay careful attention to the examples set before us — both those we should follow, and those we should avoid. And let us apply what we learn to our *own* lives.

## Chapter eleven

Picking up where we left off in chapter 11 then, we will see Shem's descendants recorded, along with their ages when they had their firstborn and when they died, and that they had other sons & daughters. But unlike chapter 10, this genealogy is focussed on one line, mentioning by name only the son through whom the line to Abram, and ultimately to Jesus, would come.

Starting in verse 10 we read:

### **Genesis 11:10-19**

This is the genealogy of Shem: Shem was one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. After he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah. After he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters. Salah lived thirty years, and begot Eber. After he begot Eber, Salah lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters. Eber lived thirty-four years, and begot Peleg. After he begot Peleg, Eber lived four hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters. Peleg lived thirty years, and begot Reu. After he begot Reu, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years, and begot sons and daughters.

And that brings us as far in the genealogy as we got in chapter 10, and you may recall one of the descendants, *Eber*, is where we get the word *Hebrew* from — for both the language and the people.

But the new information we get in these verses, aside from the record that they had daughters also, is the record of their ages. Comparatively, Shem's descendants were young dad's being in their 30s, compared to *his* firstborn being born when he was 100. But it's their age at death that is more striking, for whereas Shem lived until he was 600 (which was still much younger than his dad, Noah, who lived to 950), Shem's son (Arphaxad) only lived to 437. His son Salah then only lived until he was 433, and his son, Eber, until he was 464. After that, the ages drop even further — with Rue living to just 239, and his descendants (that we'll read of in a moment) living younger still — Serug living to only 230, Nahor to 148, and Terah to 205. Indeed Abram who'll we'll focus on in these coming weeks, lived to just 175.

Now, those ages are much higher than we see today, of course, but they are *dramatically lower* than those that went *before* them. So what happened? Well, in short; the flood. But how did that affect the ages they lived to? There's a few possibilities. Some note that there was a change in diet, which indeed there was — but I don't think that's much of a factor (if any) in this, for if a vegetarian diet (such as they had pre-flood) made that much difference, then we'd see the same today.

However, a second change that would have had a more notable impact would have been the the environmental changes the flood resulted in on the earth, in both it's climate, and possibly it's atmosphere. Let's not forget that it was a catastrophic worldwide flood, destroying every living that wasn't on the ark — and as I mentioned last week, there's reason to believe it had a massive impact on the geology of the earth, with not only rain falling from the heavens, but the fountains of the deep being broken up.

And one thought that is put forward, is that *had* there been a water canopy over the earth — that is, the *firmament* that the Bible speaks of — then it's removal during the flood could have impacted the atmospheric conditions on the earth. And that's of interest when we consider modern treatments such as *Hyperbaric oxygen therapy*, which involves breathing pure oxygen in a pressurised environment — which is used to treat everything from serious infections such as gangrene, to bubbles of air in blood vessels, to burns, non-healing wounds, sudden deafness or loss of vision, and to crushing injuries and traumatic brain injuries. A post-flood decrease in pressure and oxygen levels could have made a substantial difference to mankind's longevity as individuals.

But there's one more factor that is possibly the most significant of all. For the earth was being repopulated from just Noah's 3 sons and their wives. And so it's quite possible, in fact probable, that as time went on that genetic issues started to creep in and be compounded by the marriages within families and nations as they spread out from Babel, with such issues impacting the lifespan of all those that followed. Indeed, just a few hundred years after these events Moses was given the laws that prohibited such close relationships. But at this stage it was not only permissible, but actually a necessity in the earliest of days after the flood (just as it was with Adam & Eve's children). And we'll see an example of this later in our study this morning.

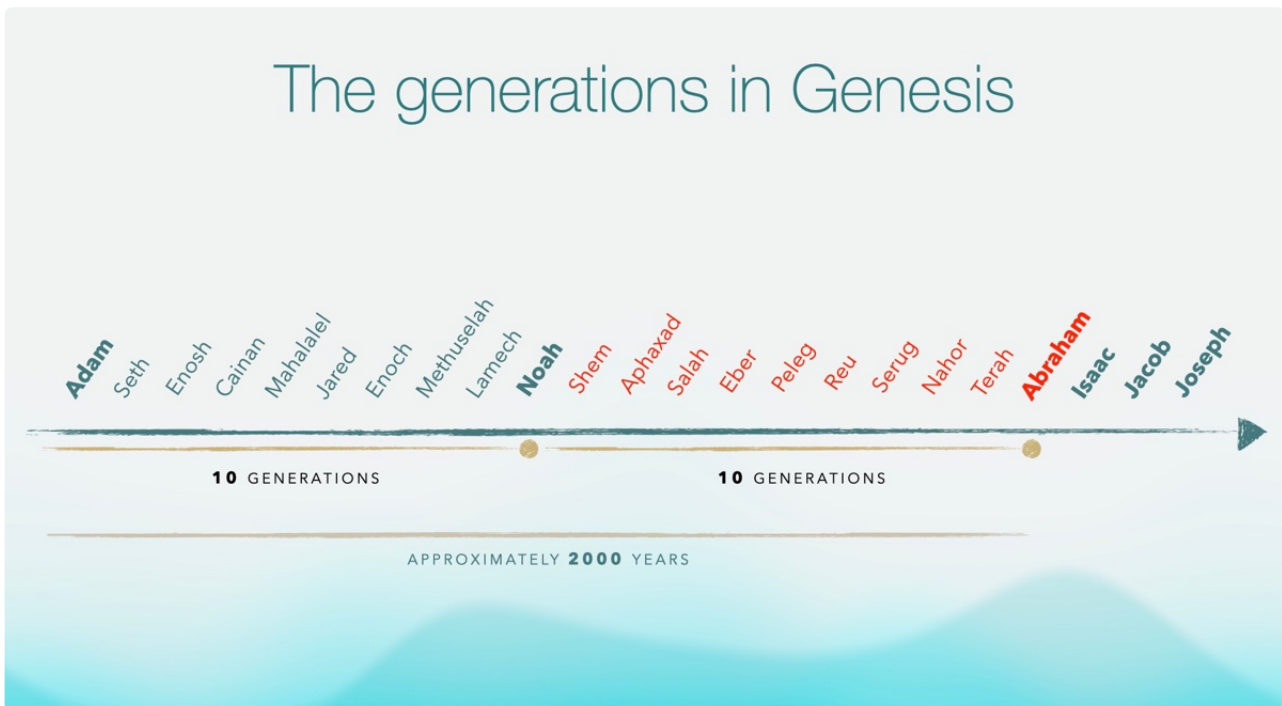
Of course, today in the UK it's pretty unthinkable that a brother would marry a sister, or even half sister — not only because of culture, but because of the medical understanding we have. But you may be surprised to learn that UK law didn't catch up with the laws given to Moses until the *The Punishment of Incest Act* of 1908. That's both more recent than many would expect, and surprisingly unusual compared to some other parts of the world.

Now, as we read on, we start to get new information — that is, the individuals following on from Rue, are not mentioned before this point in the Bible. We read:

### Genesis 11:20-26

Reu lived thirty-two years, and begot Serug. After he begot Serug, Reu lived two hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters. Serug lived thirty years, and begot Nahor. After he begot Nahor, Serug lived two hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and begot Terah. After he begot Terah, Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years, and begot sons and daughters. Now Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

So then, these are the 10 generations from Shem to Abram:



And I can't help but chuckle, wondering if as a little boy, Abram's dad was called a little Terah! Now, having seen Abrams family tree, we begin to see some detail about Abram's ties, which will be significant in how the next part his life pans out. We read:

### Genesis 11:27-28

This is the genealogy of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran begot Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

So, we learn here that Abram had two brothers — Nahor and Haran — and putting a few dates together we learn that Abram was not the eldest, even though he is listed first in this verse. Rather, he is listed first, just as Shem was always mentioned first alongside *his* brothers, for the line would come through him to Christ. And that's the case here with Abram.

I suspect Haran was actually the eldest, for not only do we see that he has a child first, but he also dies first — indeed, dying before his own father. And after this we see Abram takes his nephew, Lot, under his wing. I wonder if they were relatively close in age, for indeed Lot had two daughters who were already of childbearing age by the time Isaac was born to Abram.

As for where they lived, we read that the family had settled in er... oh, sorry. They had settled in a place called *Ur*.



This ancient city of *Ur*, also known as known as *Mugheir*, is in modern day Iraq — and these days its' ruins can be found next to Imam Ali Air Base, which in recent times has been used by the US Air Force, and known as Camp Adder by the US Army. One of the better preserved parts of that city is the *Ziggurat of Ur* that I showed last week, and that you can see here...



... which gives a good idea of what the Tower of Babel may have looked like. Indeed *Ur* was a notable city, with the ruins seen in this pic from the air in 1927.



Indeed, in this next photo you can get idea of how well constructed the homes there were:



This particular example is known as Abraham's house. Whether it was or not, we don't know for sure, but it does help build the picture that Terah and his family were very much settled here. Indeed, in the next verse we read:

**Genesis 11:29**

Then Abram and Nahor took 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.

So following their brother's death, Abram and Nahor both married, and they married within the family. First we read that Abram married Sarai, whom we find out in chapter 20:12 was his half-sister. And his brother, Nahor, married the daughter of Haran, that is he married his niece. Perhaps uncomfortable for us in our day, but of no concern then. And before any evolutionist tries to claim this is a problem in the Bible, we should note they *also* believe mankind descended from a *single* pair of humans — for them to believe anything else would be to believe in someone even more impossible than they already do (if indeed it is possible for something to be *more* impossible).

Almost as an aside, but of course something we'll certainly come back to in chapter 18, we read:

### Genesis 11:30

But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

And this is hard thing for any woman, indeed any couple, to face. We'll take some time to consider that in later weeks. But for now, reading on in verse 31:

### Genesis 11:31

And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there.

And so the family ups and moves to Haran. Where is that? Well, not round the corner, for it is believed to be a city known still known as Harran (though spelt with two r's) in modern day Turkey, around 12 miles from the Syrian border. You can see it on the map here:



This also was more than a collection of tents — for ruins of that city can still be found today, as you can see on screen here:





But, you may be wondering, *why* did they go there? Well, it must have been a significant reason, for we just read that Terah, Abram, Sarai and Lot moved there — but no mention of Abram's surviving brother, Nahor (or his wife), or Lot's other sibling. So at minimum they left these family members behind, and no doubt other more distant relations as well as friends. And indeed we learn from the book of Acts, that it was actually while they were living in Ur, that God first called Abram to leave for a land He would show him — so *that* was their significant reason to leave.

However, it seems it was Abram's father, Terah, that took the final decision to move, taking Abram, Sarai and Lot with him. And while they left with the intent of going to Canaan, we read they came to a place called Haran and settled there.

Now, what are the chances of travelling several hundred miles from your home and finding a place named after your deceased son? I think that's remote. And I therefore suspect it took its name in memory of Haran, Abram's brother that had died. But the meaning of that name is notable too — for it means *delay*. And here indeed we see a delay. God had called Abraham out of Ur to the land of Canaan, but Terah, who leads them out, only gets so far, and settles at a place called delay. I wonder if he never got past losing his son, as I imagine any parent who loses their child would struggle, and as such, delays. And we read it was there he died:

**Genesis 11:32**

So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

And thus concludes chapter 11, and the first 2000 years of human history. What we'll now embark on in Genesis chapters 12-50 only spans a few hundred years. But while the pace changes, there were no chapter breaks in the original manuscript...

## Chapter twelve

...and so what we read here is very much a continuation of what we've been studying. And we read in verse 1 of chapter 12:

**Genesis 12:1**

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.

We can read that and miss a small detail, that the Lord *had* said to Abram. That it is, it wasn't at this moment of delay in Haran that Abram heard God's voice, but earlier back in Ur. How do we know that? Because of Stephen's sermon in Acts chapter 7. We read there:

**Acts 7:2-4**

And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell.

So on one hand, Abram had obeyed God in leaving his home in Ur. But he didn't fully obey the Lord, for he didn't leave *all* his family. What was the result of that? He spent years in Haran, the place of delay, when he could have been in the land of Canaan enjoying God's blessing. Further, it meant that he would also end up having to fight to save Lot's life, as well as interceding for him on a second occasion in the following years. May that be a lesson to us, that when we only partially obey the Lord, we don't do ourselves any favours. Charles Spurgeon, commenting on this passage, said of those that delay in truly obeying God:

*They are willing to be saved by the cross of Christ, but they are not willing to take up Christ's cross, and come right out decidedly on his side at all times. This is a perilous state to be in. They have enough religion to make them miserable, but I fear not enough to outfit them for eternal joys. They may ultimately get into heaven by the skin of their teeth; at least, I hope so; but they have no present joy, no immediate peace, no conscious fellowship with God. Half-way house godliness is wretched stuff: beware of it!*

**Charles Spurgeon**

So, then are we willing to obey the Lord? Are we willing to obey him *fully*? Let me ask you this; what are you *unwilling* to give up for the Lord? Is it your house, your job, or the town you live in? Is it living with your family, or your friends? Is it a relationship, or the chance to marry? Is it your church family?

This isn't theoretical. These are choices we may each face. And the question is, are we willing to obey what God wants, over what we want?

Some of you know that Siân and I had a choice to make in the months after we married. At the moment we married, I moved to Surrey, and we had a nice place there. And I loved the area. Siân was involved in a great church. And it was a great location to be for the type of work I do for my day job. But the question was, *where would we live?* — but in reality there was one place we needed to be, and that was where God wanted us. And so, having prayed much about it, we moved to Deal — far less of a wrench for me than for Siân, for I had grown up here, and had family here. But the reason for moving was ultimately that this was where we believed we *should* be. Not because of family, but because of where *God* was calling me, and *what* He was calling me to do in pastoring.

I share that as one simple example some of you have seen play out. But there are other, far bigger moves I've seen people willing to make. One of our dear friends from Guildford, despite having lived there for decades, and having many friends in a church family numbering in the hundreds, upped and moved to Yorkshire specifically because she felt called to join a small church there and serve them voluntarily as part of the congregation. Then there's another couple of friends who literally moved their family — including 4 boys under 10 at the time — to serve as missionaries in Zambia. And as a church we've seen many godly guys move their families over from the States to plant Bible teaching churches here in the UK.

There is nothing small about the decisions those folks have made to leave friends and family behind, or even comforts behind to serve the Lord! But they've done it out of obedience to Him. And the challenge is, that God may ask any one of us to do *anything* for Him. So, are we willing to forsake all for the sake of the call? Look at the example of the disciples; we read in Mark chapter 1:

**Mark 1:16:-20**

And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

Notice how they *immediately* followed Jesus! I think often we're too comfortable, and too quick to make our excuses. And so we should consider Jesus' words that we read in Luke chapter 9:

**Luke 9:57-62**

Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

So how fit are you or I for the kingdom? Are we so trapped in our blessings, like the rich young ruler of Matthew chapter 19, that we're unwilling to follow the God from whom all blessings flow? Look, I'm *not* saying it is easy to be obedient. Or that everything will be easy if we are. But consider how through Abraham's inaction, he delayed the blessings God had for him.

Now, you may be listening to this. And of course, I hope you and I are *both* listening to what God has to say to us here! But you may be listening to this thinking “well I don’t feel called anywhere else, so that’s pretty easy”. Well, first — obeying the Lord doesn’t always require moving location. In fact, most of the time it requires serving right where we are. But is even that all there is to apply here? No; for we read more about Abram’s family in Joshua, as God spoke to the nation of Israel:

**Joshua 24:2**

And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods.

That is, this family had an idolatrous background! They were themselves idolators! Hardly the family we’d pick to found a nation separated to God. But then again, I’m not sure if Abram would pick us as those who God would save — so that’s a bun fight I’m not going to start! But what’s important to note is that they left their idolatry behind, and turned to serve the one true God.

One Jewish tradition is a story about Abram’s father, Terah. And the story notes that he not only worshipped idols, but he made them too: *While he was out one day, Abram took a hammer and destroyed all but one of the idols in his father’s workshop. Upon returning, and seeing the destruction, he asked Abram — what happened?! To which Abram responded — this one idol took a hammer and destroyed all the others. Terah replied, that’s ridiculous — these idols cannot do anything. To which Abram responded, “exactly”.*

We laugh, but that is the foolishness of the idols we have in our lives. Whether it be the idol of money, or power, or career, or sex, or family, or drink, or drugs, or possessions and gadgets and clothes, or fame and facebook likes. These idols can do nothing to save us. Nothing to help us. They are dead-end endeavours.

So then, are we prepared to turn our back on the idols in our lives, leaving them behind, without delay, fully entering into the blessing of a close walk with the Lord, obeying Him in all things? Or will we cling to our idols?

Let us fully obey the Lord’s calling in our own lives, for we will never regret doing so. Let us walk by faith, as Abraham did. The book of Hebrews has this to say of him:

**Hebrews 11:8-10**

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

What does the writer to the Hebrews conclude after noting this (and many more things about other examples of faith, including Noah)? He writes:

### Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

If there is any area of your life where you have not been fully obedient to God, where you've been delaying, or where you're still clinging onto idols rather than Him, do something about it today — laying those things aside, and run the race of faith with endurance.

Now, as Moses continues writing, having recorded God's call to Abram to leave his home and family, notes what God next said to him:

### Genesis 12:2-3

I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

What a contrast this is to those who built the Tower of Babel, saying "let us make a name for ourselves"! For here, God says "I will make you a great nation". And what an incredible story the nation of Israel has! Both throughout history, and in our present day. And God said "I will make your name great". And what an amazing man of faith Abraham was, an example to us all — and oh, how excited I am that we get to study his life and actions up close in the coming weeks!

God also makes this incredible unconditional promise to Abraham that "I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you" — a promise that still stands. And yet more, that "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." A promise that has literally been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who gave His life for all, that *whoever* believes in Him *will* not perish, but have everlasting life! There could be no greater blessing. There is no greater grace!

And Abraham here, following his father's death (perhaps reflecting on why they moved to Haran in the first place, and these promises that God made), now delays no more, and sets off for the land of Canaan.

### Genesis 12:4

So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Again, Abram finally did what God said (by heading for Canaan), with Lot still under his wing. And as one Bible commentator notes, he was 50 years old when he originally heard God's call, but here he's leaving Haran at 75 years old — in other words, he had delayed his obedience to that call for 25 years! And in that time there are no further instructions he receives from God.

And if we're not careful, we can find *ourselves* unduly frustrated in that situation. "Why doesn't God give me more to do?!" we might ask. When all along we've been ignoring what He has *already* given us to do. Food for thought, for that's the type of situation king Saul found himself in, where he only half-did what God had asked him to do, and then impatiently offered a sacrifice to God as he waited for the prophet Samuel to arrive. But when Samuel did arrive, he rebuked Saul, famously saying "to obey is better than sacrifice". We too can come here on a Sunday morning and sing at the top of our voices of all that God has done, we can hold our hands up in praise and worship to God, but what God wants first and foremost is our obedience.

#### **Genesis 12:5**

Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.

It seems Abram was certain both that God *had* called him, and *where* God had called him — for his decision to go impacted so many people in his life. And in a similar way I believe we should *also* be certain when we're making decisions that affect other people, being serious in prayer about those decisions — not that we doubt God, but because we should be sure we're indeed following what *God* is telling us to do, and not what we *hope* He is telling us to do.

Once in the land we read:

#### **Genesis 12:6**

Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

And you may recognise this place name, for Abram's grandson, Jacob, would one day settle at Shechem for a while too (which didn't work out well for his daughter, or for the men of Shechem for that matter). And Moses notes the presence of the Canaanites at Abram's time — because it would be these same giant tribes that nation of Israel would soon face (from Moses point in time).

#### **Genesis 12:7**

Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

And herein lies the reality that much of mankind still doesn't want to accept — that this world and everything in it belongs to God. And He can do what He wishes with it. And in the case of the land of Israel, it was given to Abraham's descendants — a promise God reiterated to his son Isaac in Genesis 26:3, and Jacob in Genesis 35:12, making this unmistakably a Jewish inheritance.

Before Christ, Satan did all he could to stop the line through to Christ — and that meant he was dead set on destroying the nation of Israel. But since Jesus was born, died and rose again, Satan's attempts continue in an effort to prevent Jesus *second* coming, where He will return specifically for Israel, with the church having already been raptured to Heaven. And that means Satan still wants to destroy Israel today, through any means he can. And oh how we are literally seeing that take place this weekend with the unprovoked attacks by Hamas on Israel. And how we see it in the comments of the Iranian leaders who are cheering them on, as they themselves want to see Israel wiped off the face of the earth.

Now, having arrived in the land, and having heard from God, Abram worships Him, building an altar — something he formed a habit of doing. And then we read:

**Genesis 12:8**

And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.

So Abram moves, and comes to Bethel, which means house of God. And this is the first place we read that he pitched his tent — and again he worships God. Not because he was instructed to, but because he wanted to (in response to all that God had done). So may it be with us.

But also note how Abram, having lived in the established cities of Ur and Haran, now lives in tents here in the land of Canaan. The Israelites were not yet here to stay. There was more to come. And we read in verse 9:

**Genesis 12:9**

So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

Next week, we'll read more of Abram's travels, and we'll see that not only does he go further south in the land of Canaan, and notably away from Bethel, the house of God, but he actually leaves the land, unprompted by God — and that will have repercussions beyond what he would have expected.

## Conclusion

It's exciting to get this far in Genesis, to get to the life of Abraham as we know him. But we must not make the mistake of sitting back and enjoying the story. For as Paul writes in Romans 15, these things are written for our learning. Not as mere information, but for our transformation. So what are you going to do with all that we've looked at today? That choice, as always, is up to you. But I urge you to consider these things, and ask yourself hard questions about your own life.

## Application questions

Three questions that may help you and I do that this week are:

- Are we prepared to follow God's call, wherever He may lead?
- Are we delaying in what He has already called us do?
- Are we being obedient to Him in all things?

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