

# Genesis 10-12: Searching for a City

## GENESIS 10: THE BEGINNING OF NIMROD'S KINGDOM

This chapter outlines the lineage of Shem, Ham and Japheth. We are then introduced to Nimrod, a mighty hunter who built for himself a reputation of power and strength. The beginning of his kingdom was Babel: **Gen 10:8-10**. He represented everything this world strives for - greatness, and a reputation earned by the strength of their own hands. The here and now looks permanent and long lasting. But this is all an illusion. Abraham's life was based on completely opposite principles:

**1 Peter 5:5-7** Be clothed with humility: for God **resisteth the proud**, and **giveth grace to the humble**. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, **that he may exalt you in due time**: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

**Genesis 10-12** contrasts the Kingdom of Men with the Kingdom of God. Out of Babylon God calls a man who is asked to reject his world and place himself in God's Hands. God promises to give Abraham a land, a name and an inheritance, so much greater than that he had given away. But it is **future**. **Joshua 24:2** says Abraham was from a family who worshipped other gods. Our destination is greater than our start! The life of Abraham highlights the importance of making right choices.

## GENESIS 11:1-9 THE TOWER OF BABEL

See notes in the *Background and Overview* about the principles of Babylon. The building of this tower represents the pride and arrogance of the kingdom of men. This principle is revealed through the ages (eg **Dan 3-5**: **Isa 14:13-14**) right to the end: **Rev 16-19**. Abraham rejected all this. **Jesus Christ is our ultimate example**: "(He) made himself of **no reputation**, and took upon him the form of a **servant**." **Phil 2:7**.

## GENESIS 11:10-26: THE GENERATIONS OF SHEM

These verses are a genealogy from Shem through to Abraham. Note the constant emphasis on the **begetting of children**. So between Babel and Abram many children are born. Until Sarai who "was barren, she had no child: **Gen 11:30**. A dramatic contrast! It is written like this for a reason.

God is going to work a miracle in the life of Sarah and Abram. Abram was "**called**" (**Isa 51:2**; **Heb 11:8**), "**chosen**" and "**faithful**" (**Neh 9:7-8**), as are fellow believers: **Jn 15:14-15**; **Rev 17:14**. He is called the "**friend of God**" in **Jas 2:23**; **Isa 41:8**; **2 Chron 20:7**. He was not the firstborn but he is named first because he was the firstborn in God's sight.

## GENESIS 11:27-30: TERAH'S FAMILY LEAVES BABYLON

**v28 Haran died in his land of nativity**: He fell asleep at the half way mark. He never made it to the promised land. **v29 Sarai**: Means *princess*. A daughter of Terah by another wife: **Gen 20:12**. An exemplary woman: **1 Pet 3:6**. **Nahor**: Means *snorer*, represents those who go to sleep half way to the land.

**Colour code**: Blue (God and Jesus Christ); Red (sin/devil/judgment of wicked); Green (Kingdom); Orange (important words & phrases); Purple (return of Jews to the land); Yellow (practical exhortation). Prepared for Study Week 2014 - Abraham, Searching for a City.

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## GENESIS 11

**v28** And **Haran died** before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, **in Ur of the Chaldees**.

**v29** And Abram and Nahor took them 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.

**v30** But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

**v31** 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.**

**v32** And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

over the Euphrates, and of those, one drifted. A great lesson! **Lot**: A type of those well guided by others but who often fail when left to themselves.

**Into the land of Canaan**: lit. *towards*. They went, not knowing the exact location God had for them. The flesh (represented by Terah) was not prepared to go the whole way. **v31 Dwelt there**: lit. *sat down*.

**v32 Terah died in Haran**: His name means *delay*. Like those who make significant initial effort, but then delays. He is a type of the "old man" of the flesh ("your father" **Jn 8:44**). The death of Abram's father removed the influence that had caused Abraham to delay.

## GENESIS 12

**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:**

**v2** 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:

**v3** And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

**v4** So Abram departed, as the **LORD** had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

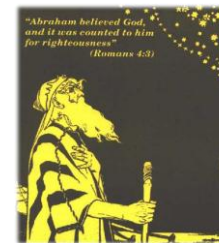
**v3 Bless them that bless thee**: A **family** promise. Those who bless Israel will be blessed. Forgiveness of sins and eternal life to Abraham's seed: **Gal 3:8-9,14,29**. **All nations blessed**: An **international** promise. Jesus Christ reigning over a world at peace: **Isa 2:2-4**; **Psa 72:1-4,17-19**. This promise is frequently repeated: **Gen 18:18**; **22:18**; **26:4**; **28:14**; **Acts 3:25**. It can only be fulfilled through the promised seed, Jesus Christ: **Gen 22:17-18**; **28:14**; **Gal 3:16**; **Acts 15:14-17**; **Rev 11:15**. The final fulfilment will be at end of the millennium: **Rev 21:1-7**. The promises in **Gen 12** are given conditionally, but in **Gen 22** they are confirmed with an oath ("I swear by myself") because of Abraham's faith and obedience.

**v30 Barren**: A real story of heartache and drama: cp. Hannah in **1 Sam 2:1-5** and Elizabeth in **Lk 1:36-37** ("with God nothing shall be impossible"), also **Psa 113:9**. Christ's bride would otherwise be barren if not for faith enabling "the seed" of God to germinate and produce fruit: **1 Pet 1:23**; **Heb 11:11**; **Isa 54:1**.

## GEN 11:31-32: THE FIRST CALL TO ABRAM IN UR OF THE CHALDEES

This is confirmed in **Acts 7:2-5**; **Gen 15:7**. The call was to Abram, but initially he allowed his father Terah to take the initiative. Likewise, only when our flesh "dies" in baptism, are we then ready to commence a new life of righteousness, leaving our old ways behind.

**v31 They came**: Of the four men who left Ur, two remained in Haran, two went



## GENESIS 12:4-5 ABRAM AND LOT ENTER CANAAN

**v4 Abram departed**: He crosses over the Euphrates to a new life, leaving his old life behind. He becomes known as the Hebrew, the "crosser-over". He crossed over from a previous way of life that leads to death to one which promises life: **1 Jn 3:14**; **2 Cor 2:16**.

**v5 Souls gotten in Haran**: Many hundreds, because Abram in **Gen 14:14** had 318 men to support Lot. **Into the land of Canaan**: More than 400km, a significant journey, passing Damascus: **15:2**.

## GENESIS 12:6-9 THE PROMISE CONFIRMED IN THE LAND

**v6 Sichem**: Shechem, lit. *between the shoulders*, ie. *burden bearer*. The physical centre of the land, with Mt Ebal and Mt Gerazim on either side, representing 2 decisions in life. We can either assimilate with Canaanites (Ebal) or be separate (Gerazim). Joshua gave the Israelites a choice: **Josh 8:30-35**. This place became a rallying place for Israel: **Josh 24:1**; **1 Kgs 12:1-19**. **Plain**: lit. *oak tree*. These trees are strong and solitary, symbolic of Abram in the land. **Moreh**: lit. *teacher*, pointing forward to Christ, our burden bearer. **Canaanite in the land**: A test for Abraham! They were cursed of God: **Gen 9:25**. Immoral people, symbolising false religion. Look at the final statement in **Zech 14:21**.

**v7 Unto thy see will I give this land**: An absolute promise, not conditional as in **12:2-3**. Also **13:15**; **17:8**; **Psa 105:9-12**. **Altar**: Jesus Christ: **Heb 13:10**; **Ex 20:24-25**. Abram "saw his day and was glad" **Jn 8:56**. **v8 Bethel**: means *House of God*. **Hai**: means *ruin*. Only 2.4km from Bethel. **Altar**: Between the house of God and ruin is the answer to making choices in life, Jesus Christ: **2 Cor 2:14-16**. **Called upon the name of Yahweh**: God's Name tells of His character and purpose: **Joel 2:28-32**. **v9 Toward the south**: A subtle difference to **12:10** where it says Abram went **down** to Egypt.

## GENESIS 12:10-20 ABRAM'S JOURNEY INTO EGYPT

**v10-11** Abram is now faced with trial, as are all the faithful. God promised him the land, but it's full of enemies, his wife's barren and there is a drought. Hadn't he been promised **exactly the opposite**? Here is a real test. He went to Egypt only to "*sojourn*" **temporarily**. He didn't go home to Ur, where he could easily have returned: **Heb 11:15-16**. This was evidence of his faith. However, going **down** to Egypt is always a backward step: **Isa 30:2**. Abram typified the Jews who were driven to Egypt at a time of spiritual famine: **Amos 8:11,13**. Sarai's attractiveness was clearly a miracle of God.

**v12-13** A low point in his life, but one we can relate to: **Prov 29:25**.

**v14-16** An Egyptian rebukes Abram on the principles of marriage. Consider **2 Sam 12:14**; **1 Tim 3:7**. **v17-20** Consider this summary: **Psa 105:9-16**. Trials and disappointments in life can strengthen our faith: **1 Pet 1:7**. Abram learnt from his mistakes. Can we?