

Beginnings: Study and Discussion Questions

Lesson Eleven: The Beginning of God's Work with Israel – Genesis 11:10-12:1

Read Genesis 11:10-12:1 carefully. From 11:10-27:

- 1) Compare the lifespan of the men in Shem's line following the Flood (see also Genesis 25:7) with the numbers given in chapter 5 and tell what change you find. **The average lifespan in chapter 5 was 900 years. By adding the age given in chapter 11 for each man when he became a father to the number of years he lived thereafter, we find that the lifespans grew shorter and shorter (from 600 years for Shem down to 148 for Nahor). This change may have reflected the general effect of sin on humanity over time. It could have also been a result of the climatic changes on Earth following the Flood.**
- 2) Use the following Biblical genealogies to answer "a" through "e" below: Genesis 5, Genesis 11:10-32, Ruth 4:18-22, and Luke 3:23-38.
 - a) Which name is included in Luke 3 but omitted from the list in Genesis 11? **Cainan (verse 36)**
 - b) If we include the extra name given in Luke 3, how many names would there be in the genealogy of Genesis 11:10-26? (Hint: Count the names of each *father*, omitting the three sons in verse 26.) **10**
 - c) How many names are given in the genealogies in Genesis 5 (again, count the fathers and omit the three sons at the end of the list in verse 32) and Ruth 4:18-22 (count each name once)? **10**
 - d) Compare Genesis 5:32 to Genesis 11:26. What triplicate reference is common to both? **Both genealogies end with a reference to the birth of three sons.**
 - e) Would your findings lead you to believe that every single generation was included in these genealogies or that they might only represent a select group? For further interest, count the number of names in each section of the genealogies given in Matthew 1. **These genealogies may be selective. Listing only 10 generations could have been a mnemonic device to make the oral transmission of information easier. But commentators argue on both sides – some that it is a selective list, and others that it is a tight, complete list. Matthew 1 has fourteen generations in each of the three divisions. It appears to be an obvious pattern of selective names.**
- 3) Read Revelation 20:12. Regardless of whether the genealogies in the Bible are complete or selective, God sees, remembers, and records the details of every life. Name one specific way in which this comforts you today. **Personal sharing**

From Genesis 11:27-32:

- 4) Draw a family tree below to help you understand all the relationships given in Genesis 11:27-31. Include the additional information about Sarai in Genesis 20:2, 12.



- 5) Read Joshua 24:2-3.
 - a) What information does Joshua 24:2 give about Terah? **He was an idolater.**

- b) Joshua 24:3 indicates that God removed Abraham from this family practice. Who do you personally know that God has plucked from an ungodly family and called into a relationship with Himself? **Personal sharing**
- 6) Read Galatians 1:3-5. What has the Lord Jesus Christ rescued (delivered) you from? Be specific. **Personal sharing**

From Genesis 11:27-32:

- 7) What phrase in Genesis 11:31 finds a parallel in Genesis 11:2? Based on the repetition of this phrase, and recalling what you learned in the previous lesson about the Tower of Babel incident, what inference can you make about the outcome of the group's journey in 11:31? See also 9:1, 7; 11:4, 8-9; Acts 7:2-4. **The phrase common to both stories is "settled there." God told the post-Flood generation to multiply and fill the earth. Instead, they settled in Shinar at Babel. God judged their defiance of His direct command when He confused their language, forcing them to scatter. The Biblical writer repeats the phrase "settled there" only a few verses later with regard to Terah's family. The implication is that this was a poor decision on Terah's part. God previously called Abram to Canaan. Most likely he was under his father's authority and unable to continue his journey until after his father's death.**
- 8) Did Terah accomplish his goal? **No**
- 9) What is preventing you from reaching your potential in Christ? What have you "settled" for? **Personal sharing**

From Genesis 12:1:

- 10) Genesis 1-2 tells us that God began the human race with a single human being. In Genesis 12, God chose one man, Abram, to use for His divinely ordained purpose. What other evidence can you find in Genesis 1-11 that one man or woman can have a tremendous and lasting influence, for good or for evil? **God works with individuals to accomplish His plans for all human history. He started with one man, Adam. But Adam sinned, and his sin impacted the entire human race. Cain's influence on his descendants (as seen in the life of Lamech [4:23-24] was powerful and destructive. After the Flood, God again worked through one man (Noah) and his three sons. Ham's influence on his descendants (especially Canaan and Nimrod) resulted in a population that rebelled against God (11:1-9). Genesis 12 shows God again choosing one man through whom to work.**
- 11) God sent Abram from one location and life into another. Next to the following passages, indicate who else was sent by God:
- Exodus 3:10-11 **Moses**
 - 1 Kings 18:1-2 **Elijah**
 - Isaiah 6:8 **Isaiah**
 - Jeremiah 1:4-7 **Jeremiah**
 - Jonah 1:1-3 **Jonah**
 - Mark 6:6-13 **The twelve apostles**
 - Acts 9:10-17 **Ananias**
 - Acts 26:1, 13-18 **The apostle Paul**
- 12) Read Matthew 28:18-20. This commission of Jesus was intended for every believer. Considering your answers to both Questions 10 and 11, what are the implications for you of being "sent" at this time of your life? How will this knowledge cause you to pray differently? **Each life can wield great influence for good or for evil. Since every believer has the potential to be used for great good, none of us can fathom all God may do through us, if we commit ourselves entirely to the mission to which we've been called. Personal sharing**

From Genesis 12:1:

- 13) What three things did God ask Abram to leave behind? **Abram was to leave his country, his people, and his father's household (his family).**
- 14) Is there something you value that God has recently asked you to leave behind? **Personal sharing (volunteers only)**
- 15) According to Genesis 12:1 and Hebrews 11:8:
 - a) Where was Abram to go? **Abram was to go "to the land I will show you."**
 - b) Did he know where this was? **According to Hebrews 11:8, Abram did not know where he was going, but he obeyed and went.**
 - c) What reason does the Hebrews verse give for Abraham's departure? (Abram becomes Abraham later on in Genesis.) **By faith, Abraham went out of obedience.**
 - d) What comes first, faith or obedience? Explain how this works in your own life. **Hebrews 11:8 lists faith first, then obedience. When we truly believe God, we obey him. However, when our faith is weak, God honors our obedience and uses it to strengthen our faith. Personal sharing**