

Lesson Five: *A New Nation*
Genesis 12:1-9

Themes:

Genesis: Israel's God is the sovereign Creator whose purpose to establish His covenant rule will not be hindered by the sinfulness of humanity.

Patriarchal History (11:10-37:1): God chooses a family (nation) through which He will begin to fulfill His redemptive purposes for humanity.

I. **The Seed Preserved**

- a. (11:1-9) Disobedience and pride (v.4) lead to expulsion (cf. 3:24; 4:12)
- b. (11:10-26) The descendants of Shem:
 - i. Narrows the focus from Shem to Abraham
 1. (cf. 6:8) The particularity of God's redemptive grace
 - ii. Highlights the fruitfulness of the promised seed (God's redemptive plan)
 1. (cf. 5:1-32) *and he died*
 - iii. Forms a transition from Primeval to Patriarchal History
- c. **Purpose:** To show that God's redemptive purposes will be fulfilled despite sin's curse and God's judgment

II. **The Seed Prospered**

- a. (11:27-25:11) God commits Himself to the fulfillment of His promises so that His chosen people will put their trust in Him and obey Him.
- b. (12:1-9) A holy nation:
 - i. (1a) Separation: a chosen people are a consecrated people
 1. God calls Abram to separate himself from unholy influences
 - a. *your country...your relatives...your father's house*
 - i. Separation: the *obligation* of a covenant relationship
 2. God calls the seed of Abram to separate from unholy influences
 - a. Separation is for the eternal good of the individual (*Go for yourself*)
 - i. *If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, and if you scoff, you alone will bear it* (Prov 9:12).
 1. The "individual" nature of salvation
 - b. Separation must be done with all haste
 - i. *For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night* (I Thess 5:2; cf. Matt 3:7; 25:1-13).
 - c. Separation reflects total commitment to God
 - i. *If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple* (Luke 14:26).
 - d. Separation must be violent
 - i. *If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell* (Matt 5:29).
 - e. Separation includes all worldly idols
 - i. *You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol* (Ex 20:3-4).
 - f. Separation requires a kingdom focus
 - i. *The world is passing away, and also its lusts* (I John 2:17; cf. Matt 16:26).

- g. Separation requires dependence on God
 - i. *Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul* (I Peter 2:11).
- h. Separation affords further revelation
 - i. *From Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path* (Ps 119:104-105).
- ii. (1b) Trust: a chosen people must be a trusting people
 - 1. A trying promise:
 - a. (+) A promised destination
 - i. Land and God's people
 - b. (-) God does not indicate where the land is, what the land is like, or how far the journey will be (cf. Heb 11:8)
 - 2. Abram's faith is demonstrated by his trust in God, not his own understanding (Prov 3:5-7a).
 - a. *Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen* (Heb 11:1).
 - 3. Abram's seed will be called upon to trust God beyond the limits of their vision.
 - a. The Christian undertakes the "long journey."
 - b. The Christian's hope rests upon the promises of God
- iii. (2-3) Blessing: a chosen people are a blessed people
 - 1. God *obligates* Himself to Abram promising land, descendants, and fruitfulness.
 - a. All that Abram sacrificed is richly restored.
 - 2. *I will make you a great nation*
 - a. What God required from Abram (*country*, v.1), He replaces
 - b. God will accomplish what is impossible for man (cf. 11:40; Rom 4:19; Luke 18:27)
 - i. An inducement to trust
 - 3. *I will bless you*
 - a. The fruit of obedience
 - b. Abram will be blessed with offspring to replace his family (v.1)
 - 4. *And make your name great*
 - a. Abram's lost name is replaced by an eternal identity (Is 49:16)
 - i. A "name" is established by obedience (cf. 11:4).
 - 5. *I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse*
 - a. Through Abram, many will be blessed
 - b. God restores the protection of Abram's *father's house* (v.1)
 - 6. *In you all the families of the earth will be blessed*
 - a. In Christ (the promised seed), spiritual Israel will be blessed
 - b. Through Abram (Christ), God will overturn the curse
- iv. (4-9) Obedience: a chosen people are an obedient people
 - 1. (4) Abram responds through obedience
 - a. Obedience must be rendered despite obstacles (vv. 4, 6)
 - 2. (7) Obedience brings blessings
 - a. God's appearance and the reminder of His promises
 - b. Greater light—from *show* (v.1) to *give*
 - 3. (7-8) Abram's obedience is evidenced in worship (Rom 12:1)

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance...for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.