

NOON BIBLE STUDY: GENESIS 12

THE DESCENDANTS OF NOAH ARE FILLING THE EARTH. SOME OF THEM ATTEMPT TO UNITE IN BABYLON TO MAKE A NAME FOR THEMSELVES AND GOD QUICKLY CONFUSES THAT PLAN. HUMANITY IS GROWING AND SPREADING AND LIFE IS MOVING ON. WE'RE FARTHER AND FARTHER FROM THE WORLDWIDE FLOOD AND IT WOULD BE EASY TO THINK THAT THIS NEW ERA IS CONTINUING ON AND SETTLING IN. BUT THAT WOULD BE A MISTAKE.

WE ARE ABOUT TO BEGIN GENESIS 12, AND THOUGH 2000 YEARS HAVE PASSED, AS FAR AS THE BIBLE GOES, WE ARE ONLY IN CHAPTER 11 OF 1,189! AND SO WE CAN'T FORGET HOW CLOSE WE ARE TO THE BEGINNING. HAVE WE FORGOTTEN THAT THE WORLD, THOUGH SPINNING AND MOVING ON, AND HUMANITY, THOUGH GROWING AND SPREADING ARE NOT AS THEY WERE CREATED IN THE BEGINNING? HUMANS ARE NOT IN EDEN AND THE EARTH ITSELF IS NOT WHOLE AND HEALED. AND IF WE AREN'T MINDFUL OF THIS WE WILL FORGET THAT THINGS ARE WRONG WITH THE WORLD AND WE SHOULDN'T ACCEPT THAT THAT'S "JUST THE WAY IT IS AND WILL BE".

AS WE FINISHED GENESIS 11, WE MET THE FAMILY OF SHEM, THROUGH EBER AND LEFT OFF WITH ABRAM AND HIS BARREN WIFE SARAI LIVING IN UR (NEAR BABYLON) MOVING OUT TOWARDS CANAAN. BUT FOR WHATEVER REASON, THEY NEVER MADE IT TO CANAAN AND THEY SETTLED IN HARAN (GENESIS 11:31). BUT THAT'S ABOUT TO CHANGE AS GOD HIMSELF CALLS ABRAM TO A NEW PLACE, TO A NEW LIFE, AND GIVES THE WORLD ITS NEW HOPE.

GENESIS 12:1-4 - GOD CALLS ABRAM, ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

NOT SINCE NOAH HAS GOD DIRECTLY SPOKEN TO A MAN AND CALLED HIM TO DO/BE SOMETHING. HERE IS WHAT GOD SAID TO ABRAM, WHO IS CURRENTLY 75 YEARS OLD:

ABRAM'S ROLE

- 1 - LEAVE YOUR FAMILY, YOUR COUNTRY, YOUR DWELLING
- 2 - GO TO THE PLACE I (GOD) WILL SHOW YOU

GOD'S PROMISE

- 3 - I (GOD) WILL MAKE (FROM) YOU A GREAT NATION
- 4 - I (GOD) WILL BLESS YOU
- 5 - I (GOD) WILL MAKE YOUR NAME (ABRAM) GREAT
- 6 - YOU (ABRAM) WILL BE A BLESSING
- 7 - I (GOD) WILL BLESS THOSE PEOPLE WHO BLESS YOU
- 8 - I (GOD) WILL CURSE THOSE PEOPLE WHO CURSE YOU
- 9 - THROUGH YOU (ABRAM), ALL OF THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH WILL BE BLESSED

THAT IS QUITE THE OFFER. 3-9 ARE WONDERFUL AND TREMENDOUS BLESSINGS TO ABRAM, HIS FAMILY AND THE WORLD AROUND HIM - AND ALL ABRAM NEEDS TO DO IS MOVE OUT OF HIS PARENT'S HOME AND INTO A NEW REGION?! SOUNDS LIKE A NO BRAINER. HOWEVER, LET'S NOT FORGET THAT GOD IS TELLING ABRAM TO LEAVE TO THE PLACE HE WOULD SHOW HIM. GOD DOESN'T GIVE ALL OF THE DETAILS TO ABRAM RIGHT OUT OF THE GATE. HE IS SPEAKING ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD - I WANT YOU TO LEAVE AND BE LED BY ME. I WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU, BLESS YOU, DO GREAT THINGS FOR AND THROUGH YOU...BUT YOU HAVE TO TRUST ME AND FOLLOW MY LEADING. THAT'S ACTUALLY A BIG CALL UPON ABRAM'S LIFE.

YET IT IS ABRAM'S FAITH IN THE PROMISES (3-9) THAT THE LORD MAKES THAT LEADS TO HIS RESPONSE:

GENESIS 12:4A (ESV) - SO ABRAM WENT, AS THE LORD HAD TOLD HIM...

THAT IS WHAT YOU CALL A "STEP OF FAITH". WE SEE ABRAM'S FAITH BY THE ACTION HE TOOK IN LIGHT OF THE WORDS/PROMISE OF THE UNSEEN GOD.

THE ADDITIONAL "BIG DEAL" PART OF THIS PROMISE FROM GOD TO ABRAM IS THAT GOD IS MAKING A PROMISE TO MAKE A "GREAT NATION" FROM ABRAM (12:2). ABRAM IS 75, AND HAS A BARREN WIFE. HE'S OLD AND THEY HAVE NO KIDS. AND SOMEHOW GOD IS PROMISING TO GROW A GREAT NATION FROM THIS COUPLE. WE SHOULD NOTE THIS NOW, AND WILL SEE IT UNFOLDING IN THE FUTURE.

GOD IS BEGINNING TO SET THE THINGS WRONG WITH THE WORLD RIGHT THROUGH THE COVENANTAL PROMISE TO ABRAM. THE SIN OF ADAM AND EVE BROUGHT A CURSING TO THE WORLD - THROUGH ABRAM ALL OF THE WORLD WILL BE BLESSED. NIMROD AND BABYLON SOUGHT TO MAKE A NAME FOR THEMSELVES AND BUILD A KINGDOM - THROUGH ABRAM GOD WILL MAKE A NAME FOR ~~///M~~ AND MAKE HIM A GREAT NATION. THIS IS GOOD NEWS.



GENESIS 12:5-9 - ABRAM'S TRAVELS, THE LORD APPEARS, THE PROMISE EXPANDS

ABRAM AND HIS FAMILY HEAD TOWARD THE LAND OF CANAAN. HE BRINGS SARAI, HIS NEPHEW LOT AND ALL THE PEOPLE AND THINGS THEY HAD ACCUMULATED IN HARAN.

V. 7-8 - ABRAM HAS OBEYED GOD AND NOW GOD WORKS WITH ABRAM. THE FIRST PART OF THE PROMISE (GENESIS 12:1-3) WAS THAT THE LORD WOULD "SHOW" ABRAM THE LAND THAT HE SHOULD GO TO. AND NOW THE LORD APPEARS TO ABRAM IN THE LAND OF CANAAN AND SAYS

SPECIFICALLY "TO YOUR DESCENDANTS I WILL GIVE THIS LAND." THAT'S A LOADED STATEMENT. ("SARAI WAS BARREN; SHE HAD NO CHILD" GENESIS 11:30)

GOD EXPANDS THE PROMISE HE HAS MADE TO SPECIFICALLY TELL ABRAM THAT THE LAND OF CANAAN IS THE LAND THAT HE IS GOING TO GIVE TO ABRAM. ABRAM RESPONDS TO THIS PROMISE BY BUILDING AN ALTAR - A PHYSICAL EXPRESSION OF WORSHIP, SACRIFICE AND THANKSGIVING. THIS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF HOW THE "FATHER OF FAITH" IS MODELING LIVING BY FAITH TO US.

GENESIS 12:10-20 - ABRAM IN EGYPT

A FAMINE IN CANAAN SENDS ABRAM TO EGYPT FOR FOOD AND SURVIVAL. WHILE IN EGYPT, ABRAM HAD A CONCERN THAT THE EGYPTIANS WOULD WANT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SARAI BECAUSE SHE WAS SO BEAUTIFUL AND WOULD KILL ABRAM SO THEY COULD HAVE SARAI. ABRAM HAS AN IDEA TO SAY THAT SARAI WAS HIS SISTER SO THAT THE EGYPTIANS COULD TAKE SARAI AND KEEP ABRAM ALIVE. (YES LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THAT WAS ABRAM'S BRIGHT IDEA!).

THE EGYPTIANS DO IN FACT NOTICE BEAUTIFUL SARAI AND THE EGYPTIAN THAT ACTUALLY WANTS HER IS PHARAOH HIMSELF! PHARAOH TAKES SARAI AS HIS WIFE! (12:19) IN TURN PHARAOH GIVES ABRAM MANY THINGS (LIVESTOCK AND SERVANTS). BUT THE LORD COMES TO SARAI'S AID AND STRIKES PHARAOH'S HOUSE WITH PLAGUES (CURSES?) ON SARAI'S BEHALF. PHARAOH IS NOT HAPPY WHEN HE FINDS OUT SARAI WAS IN FACT ABRAM'S WIFE AND SENDS HER BACK AND COMMANDS THAT ABRAM LEAVES EGYPT.

WHA?! I THOUGHT ABRAM WAS A MAN OF FAITH? I THOUGHT ABRAM WAS THE MAN GOD WAS WORKING THROUGH TO SET ALL THINGS RIGHT IN THE WORLD? I THOUGHT ABRAM WAS GOING TO HAVE A "GREAT NAME" AND BE A "GREAT NATION".

IN MANY WAYS GENESIS 12 IS ONE OF SCRIPTURE'S MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTERS. ABRAM IS CALLED, GOD'S PROMISE IS MADE AND WHAT LIVING BY FAITH LOOKS LIKE IS MODELED. AND YET VERSES 10-20, (MORE THAN HALF OF THE CHAPTER!) TELL A STORY OF ABRAM THAT INVOLVE HIM DECEIVING EGYPTIANS AND GIVING HIS WIFE TO PHARAOH!

BE ASSURED, WE WILL SEE THAT ABRAM'S FOOLISH ACTIONS WILL HAVE RAMIFICATIONS ON HIS LIFE AND ON HIS SON'S LIVES BUT THE BIGGER SPIRITUAL LESSON IN LIGHT OF THIS IMPORTANT CHAPTER IS THIS: THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PROMISES ARE NOT GOING TO BE BASED ON THE PERFECTION OF THE HUMANS GOD WORKS WITH.

GOD MADE EVERYTHING PERFECT IN THE BEGINNING, BUT SINCE ADAM & EVE'S SIN, THE WORLD IS CURSED AND BROKEN - STARTING WITH HUMANS IN GENERAL. INSTEAD OF GIVING UP ON HUMANS BECAUSE OF THEIR FLAWS, THE LOVE OF OUR CREATOR FUELS HIS DESIRE TO WORK FOR AND THROUGH HUMANS, IN SPITE OF THEIR SINS. GENESIS 12 TELLS US THIS. EVEN THOUGH THE CHAPTER OF 20 VERSES HAS MORE PRINT ON ABRAM'S ISSUES, THE TAKEAWAY IS THE PROMISES AND MERCY OF GOD!

ABRAM MADE PLENTY OF MISTAKES - SOME BIG, SOME SMALL. WE ARE GOING TO MAKE MISTAKES - SOME BIG, SOME SMALL. THOSE MISTAKES DON'T HAVE TO DEFINE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND THEY DON'T HAVE TO STOP US FROM GETTING BACK UP AND LIVING BY FAITH. THEY MAY TRY TO, THEY MAY WANT TO - BUT WE MUST CHOOSE TO GET BACK UP AND RESUME WALKING AND LIVING BY FAITH. GOD IS WELL AWARE THAT WE WILL STRUGGLE AND HE IS WORKING IN SPITE OF AND IN LIGHT OF OUR FLAWS AND FAILURES TO ENSURE HIS WILL IS DONE - NOT JUST IN GENERAL - BUT HIS WILL IS DONE IN OUR LIVES!

THIS IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK AT FAITH IN GENERAL AND SPECIFICALLY CONSIDER OUR OWN FAITH. WE CAN'T SEE OUR FAITH BUT WE CAN SEE WHAT OUR FAITH IS LIKE BY THE CHOICES AND DECISIONS WE MAKE, BASED ON THE PROMISES OF GOD.

GOD PROMISES TO PROVIDE FOR US. DO WE MAKE DECISIONS AND CHOICES BASED ON THAT PROMISE OR DO WE FEAR BEING GENEROUS OR BEING MORE AVAILABLE FOR GOD AND OUR FAMILIES (AND LESS FOR OUR JOBS) BECAUSE WE ARE UNSURE IF WE'LL HAVE ENOUGH MONEY, FOOD OR RETIREMENT?

GOD PROMISES TO BE WITH US. DO WE MAKE DECISIONS AND CHOICES BASED ON THAT PROMISE OR DO WE AVOID SITUATIONS WE'RE AFRAID OF, PEOPLE WE'RE INTIMIDATED BY OR PLACES WE'RE UNSURE OF BECAUSE WE ARE UNSURE IF WE'LL BE OK?

GOD PROMISES TO LOVE US. DO WE MAKE DECISIONS AND CHOICES BASED ON THAT PROMISES OR DO WE FEEL LIKE WE'RE UNWORTHY, DO WE LOOK FOR APPROVAL AND LOVE FROM OTHER PEOPLE, DO WE DO WHAT WE DO TO BE NOTICED BECAUSE WE ARE UNSURE IF GOD'S LOVE IS REALLY ALL WE NEED?

GOD PROMISED TO SHOW ABRAM WHERE HE WAS GOING TO LIVE. SO ABRAM PACKED UP HIS FURNITURE AND FAMILY AND "WENT." ALL OF THE DETAILS WEREN'T WORKED OUT YET, BUT ABRAM TOOK ACTION BASED ON THE PROMISE GOD HAD MADE - I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU WHERE TO GO AND I'M GOING TO BLESS YOU. TOO MANY OF US LIVE IN FEAR, LIVE SAFE, AND EMOTIONALLY DEPENDANT ON OTHERS BECAUSE WE ARE AFRAID, UNWILLING OR UNSURE IF GOD'S PROMISES TO US ARE REAL AND SURE ENOUGH FOR US TO ACTUALLY TAKE ACTION ON AND LIVE IN LIGHT OF. YET THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO WALK AND LIVE BY FAITH, AND NOT BY SIGHT. IT'S EASY TO QUOTE THAT PHRASE AND THINK THAT'S WHAT WE'RE DOING BUT KNOWING THE CONCEPT IS NOT THE SAME AS LIVING IN LIGHT OF THE TRUTH. INSTEAD, IT IS WISER TO LOOK AT OUR LIVES AND ASK "WHAT IN MY LIFE COULD NOT BE POSSIBLE OR WOULD NOT BE HAPPENING CURRENTLY IF I WASN'T LIVING BY FAITH?"

THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH AND WHAT ABRAM'S EXAMPLE TEACHES US TODAY. GOD SPEAKS HIS WORD, WE BELIEVE AND TRUST HIS PROMISE AND TAKE ACTION IN OUR LIVES IN LIGHT OF IT.