

Genesis & A Biblical Worldview

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, October 28, 2012

Introduction

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God

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Creation

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Man

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Sin

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Grace

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Culture

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Purpose

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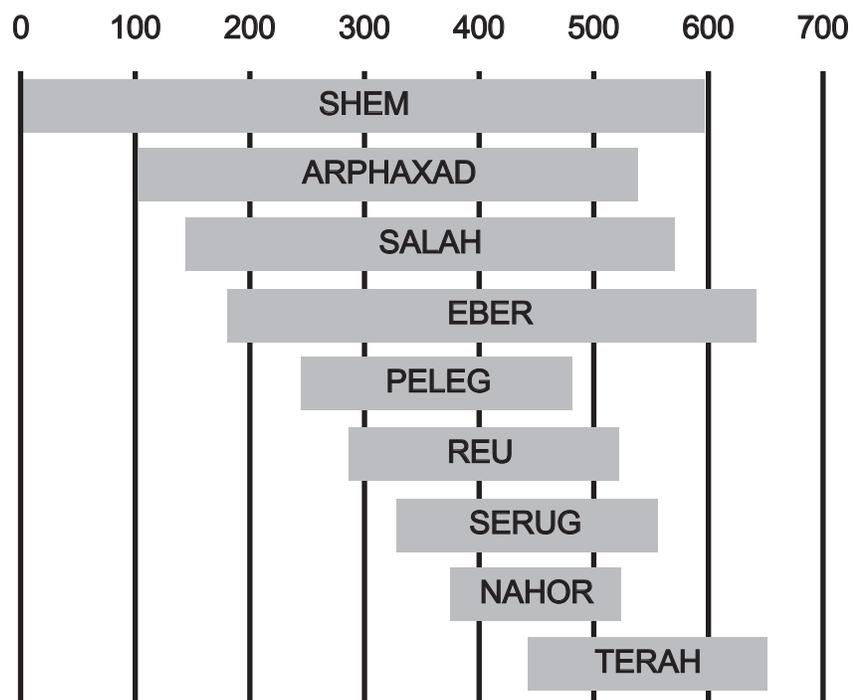
‘And In You All the Families of the Earth Shall Be Blessed’

Perhaps one of the best ways to describe our worldview is to say that it is based--from beginning to end--on a story of redemption. As we have seen from our study of Genesis 1-11, it's the story of a gracious Creator God who--at the time of man's fall--promised a Redeemer. As God told the serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15).

We have seen how God preserved this promise through the godly lineage of Adam's and Eve's son Seth all the way up to the time of the flood; and then through Seth's godly descendent Noah; and then--as the families of the earth became divided and scattered--through Noah's son Shem. The great theme that runs throughout the story is that God would keep His promise to provide redemption through the Seed of the woman. This He did by sending His Son Jesus Christ--God in human flesh--to die for our sins. And now, in this last state of our study, we see how God chose one people group, from out of divided humanity, through whom He would provide the Redeemer by whom all the families of the earth would be blessed. This study provides a capstone to our worldview. It shows us the divine purpose that lies behind all that proceeded it.

I. THE DESCENDENT OF SHEM (11:10-26).

- A. What leads us to the declaration of God's purpose--the promise of redemption--is the genealogy that flows from Shem. Note that in this genealogy, human longevity grows dramatically shorter. Of the nine names mentioned, Shem lived 600 years, Arphaxad lived 438 years, Salah lived 433 years, Eber 464 years, Peleg lived 239 years, Reu lived 239 years, Serug lived 230 years, Nahor lived 148 years; and Terah lived 205 years. Note that if the life spans are followed as they are shown here, then Shem would have been a contemporary of Abram's father Terah:



- B. Verse 27 begins a new “genealogy”; and it’s possible that Shem passed the genealogical records of the lineage from Adam to himself on to Terah personally. Note that there is a similarity between the genealogy recorded here and the one found concerning the Lord Jesus in Luke 3:34-36. In that genealogy, the name Cainan is found listed as the son of Arphaxad (the grandson of Shem). This may be an insertion from a later date; or it may be a son that--for some reason--was not mentioned in the Genesis record. (The statement that someone “begot” someone doesn’t necessarily mean an immediate son.)

II. THE ORIGINS OF ABRAHAM (11:27-32).

- A. The focus narrows down to the person through whom God’s great redemptive promise would be kept. Terah--a man of the land of Ur of the Chaldeans (in Babylon)--had three sons. Abram, Nahor and Haran. Haran’s name is mentioned because of his son Lot; who figures significantly later in the story of Genesis. Nahor, and his wife Milcah, are mentioned later in Genesis as the parents of Rebekah--the future wife of Isaac, (24:15) and Laban her brother (v. 29). Milcah, who Nahor married, was his own niece through Haran.
- B. Note that there is a measure of tragedy in the story of Abram’s beginnings. He lost his brother Haran through death (v. 28)--his having died before his father in Ur. It may be that Nahor took care of Milcah after her father’s death until the time that she was old enough to become his wife. Also, Sarai--the wife of Abram--was barren (v. 30). This, of course, will later become a part of the story how God miraculously kept His promise of a Redeemer (see 21:1-7). And it may be that there was a significant reason for why it was that Terah found it necessary to uproot his family from their homeland. The fact that Terah died in a place that later became named after his deceased son suggests that they were there for some time. Much of the story isn’t told to us. But based on what we can know, it’s clear that God works marvelously through the events of such tragedies to bring about His glorious plan.

III. THE DECLARATION OF THE PROMISE (12:1-3).

- A. It was through the man Abram that the keeping of God’s promise would be kept. Note what an unlikely candidate he was--born from out of a land of paganism, traveling as a wondering nomad, living a life marked by tragedies and uncertainties, and having no physical prospects of a posterity because of the barrenness of his wife. And yet, the great promise of God was kept through such an unlikely man--all so that God could show that it was He who did it, and not man.
- B. Note that the call of God upon Abram consisted of four things: (1) “Get out of your country”--causing him to leave a pagan land; (2) “from your family”--causing the focus of the promise being further narrowed to Abram and not to Nahor or Lot; (3) “and from your father’s house”--causing him to sever himself from the comforts of any earthly inheritance by worldly means; (4) “to a land I will show you”--thus placing him in the position of absolute trust in God for His future. He was truly a man made to stand out in utter dependence upon God.
- C. But notice also that the covenant that God entered into with him consisted of three great promised blessings. First, childless Abram would become a nation--“I will make you a great nation”. This is the birth of the Jewish people. Second, he, and by extension his people, would be uniquely blessed of God and identified as His chosen people--“I will bless you and make your name great”. Abram (Abraham) is honored in three great world

religions. And finally, he would be the one upon whom the blessing of the whole world would center--“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.” It is through Abraham that the nation would be born from whom the Redeemer would come. Jesus’ birth is welcomed as “good tidings of great joy which will be to all people” (Luke 2:10). We live today in the light of God’s redemptive promise kept. It is our message to the world!

¹All Scripture readings are taken from *the Holy Bible, New King James Version*; copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.