

Old Testament History

Lesson #2

Genesis 8:15-Genesis 14:24

Outline

- I. ***The Account Of Noah (Genesis 6:9-9:29)***
 - A. God's covenant not to destroy the earth (8:15-9:17).
 - B. Prophecies about Noah's sons (9:18-29).
- II. ***The Account Of Shem, Ham, And Japheth (Genesis 10:1-11:9)***
 - A. The spread of the nations (10:1-32).
 - B. The Tower of Babel (11:1-9).
- III. ***The Account Of Shem (Genesis 11:10-26)***
- IV. ***The Account Of Terah (Genesis 11:27-25:11)***
 - A. His genealogy (11:27-32).
 - B. The covenant with Abraham (12:1-22:19).
 1. The call to Canaan (12:1-9).
 2. Sojourn in Egypt (12:10-20).
 3. Lot and Abram separate (13:1-18).
 4. Abram defeats the five kings (14:1-24).

Notes

Genesis 8:15-9:28

- When Noah came out of the ark, he built an altar. This was not just for gratitude to God, but also spiritual worship in which he commenced his life anew, and consecrated the earth to God. In offering an animal sacrifice, Noah followed the example of Abel in calling upon the name of God; he once again followed in the steps of the Sethites.
- It is interesting (and sad) to note that a great difference exists between the state of man before and after the Flood. God now admitted the existence of universal sinfulness. The Lord also noted that the seasons would change regularly and that man was to till the earth and possess it. God also gave man dominion over the animals, but this dominion was now one of force, not willing subjection (cf. Genesis 2:19). The use of animals as food was explicitly permitted, with the exception of consuming their blood (cf. Leviticus 17:11, 14). Perhaps the most important change was the somber prohibition of murder. This crime was not to be avenged directly by God, but He delegated this authority to man (Romans 13:1-2). Finally, in confirmation of all that God had spoken, the rainbow was given as a sign of God's promise.

- Whether Noah did not realize the intoxicating property of the vine, or he neglected moderation, the sad spectacle is presented of the aged patriarch, recently rescued from the Flood, not only falling to drunkenness, but exposing himself in that state to the wicked conduct of his son Ham. It is sad to consider that Ham would not have mocked his father if he had not long before turned away from the proper respect for his parents. The Bible does not specifically say why Canaan was singled out; perhaps he shared the same attitude as his father. As a part of the punishment, they would be the lowest of servants among their brethren.
- Ham's descendants were the nations of Africa, Japheth's descendants were the European nations, and Shem's descendants were the Hebrews (the Asian nations). Shem's blessing was different than Japheth's. It was not outward, but spiritual. God gave enlargement to Japheth, but promised to be Shem's God.

Genesis 10:1-11:10

- Before recording God's judgment, the scriptures provide the genealogy of the different nations to show how the earth was repopulated, to define the relation of Israel to each nationality, and to record their birth in the Bible, indicating that one day they would be included in the ultimate purpose of God's mercy.
- The great Babylonian empire was of Cushite origin. Nimrod, the founder of the empire, the conqueror of Assyria, was the son of Cush. Even the name "Nimrod" occurs in the list of Egyptian kings. It is interesting to note that the earliest Babylonian kings wore a title which is supposed to mean "four races," in reference to the four groups of capitals.
- The people rebelled and this would have frustrated the purpose of God, for the whole nature of a world-empire would have been in defiance of God. Its very purpose was pride and ambition.
- The archaeological remains of the Tower of Babel have commonly been identified with *Birs Nimrud*, about six miles to the southwest of the site of ancient Babylon. It is described as a pyramidal mound, crowned by the apparent ruins of a tower, rising to the height of 165 feet above the level of the plain, and a little more than 2,000 feet in circumference.
- The first attempt to establish a vast world-kingdom was founded in man's strength. The second attempt, founded in God's strength, accomplished its purpose on the day of Pentecost and would soon thereafter include a reunion of the nations.

The Nations And Their Religions

- Josephus, the ancient Jewish historian, regarded Nimrod as the father of heathenism. From the most savage barbarians to the most refined

philosophers, they have all been destitute of the knowledge of the one living and true God.

- Idolatry is the religion of sight as opposed to faith. Instead of the unseen Creator, man regarded what was visible -- the sun, the moon, the stars -- as his ruler. He assigned deity to everything, or else he converted his heroes, real or imaginary, into gods.
- With this setup, man could only feel the insufficiency of his worship, for behind these gods he placed a dark, immovable, unsearchable Fate, which ruled supreme, and controlled gods and men.
- God did not leave Himself without a witness. The inward searching of man after God, the accusing voice of his conscience, the attempt to offer sacrifices, and the remnants of ancient traditions of the truth among men all seemed to point to something greater than man himself.
- The book of Job is set within patriarchal times, outside the ancestry of Abraham. It is a story of Gentile life in the time of the earliest patriarchs. Job had great knowledge of God and was a humble worshiper of Him, even though he was a man of great wealth and rank (Job 27:7, 9). In the book, there are allusions to courts of justice, written indictments, and regular forms of procedure (Job 13:26; 31:28).
- God had those of His own, even among the Gentile nations: Job, Melchizedek, Rahab, Ruth, and Naaman were all examples.

The Chronology Of The Early History Of The Bible

- Ussher dates the year of creation at 4004 B.C. The Flood is dated at 2348 B.C., 1656 years later. Most believe now that Ussher's dating is incorrect. It is true that the word "begat" does not necessarily mean a direct descendant, but there could only be so many gaps in the genealogies.
- Part of the problem lies in the fact of three separate sources of biblical chronology: (1) the original Hebrew text; (2) the Septuagint; and, (3) the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Septuagint chronology differs from that of the Hebrew text in prolonging the ages of the patriarchs, partially before the Flood, but mainly between the Flood and the calling of Abraham.
- Step by step we see in the history of the patriarchs the election of God. Abram was called out of his father's house. The same process of election is seen in the history of Esau and Jacob. The root first sprung up in the patriarchal family, then expanded into the tribes of Israel, and finally blossomed and bore fruit in the chosen people.
- Whereas in the previous era, God spoke to man, either on earth or from heaven, now in the patriarchal era He actually appeared to man (Genesis 12:7).

- The one grand characteristic of the patriarchs was their faith. The lives of the patriarchs prefigure the history of Israel and their divine selection. Abraham was the man of joyous, working faith; Isaac was the man of patient, bearing faith; and Jacob was the man of contending, prevailing faith (cf. Hebrews 11:13).

Genesis 11:27-13:4

- With Abram an entirely new period of Old Testament history begins. He was to be the ancestor of a new race in whom the divine promises were to be preserved, and through whom they would finally be realized. It was appropriate that he leave all behind and have a new beginning. Had he remained in Ur, he would at best only have been a new link in the old chain.
- Up to this point, God had only interjected, as in the Flood and at Babel, to stop the attempts of man against His purpose. But when God called Abram, He personally and actively interfered in mercy, not judgment.
- The history of Abram may be arranged into four stages, each beginning with a personal revelation of God: (1) when he was called to leave his home (Genesis 12-14); (2) when he received the promise of an heir, and he received the covenant (Genesis 15-16); (3) when the covenant was established and his name was changed (Genesis 17-21); and, (4) when his faith was tried, proved, and perfected in the offering of Isaac (Genesis 22-25).
- Ur was one of the oldest of the cities of the Chaldees. It was about six miles from the Euphrates River and about 125 miles from the Persian Gulf.
- The family of Terah had served other gods (Joshua 24:2, 14-15). The first call of God had come to Abram long before the death of Terah, and while the clan was still at Ur (cf. Acts 7:2). God, in His providence, made it easier for Abram to leave, since his father had died in Haran at the age of 205 years.
- Abram's faith determined his obedience (Hebrews 11:8). When Abram was given his promise (land, nation, and seed -- Genesis 12:1-3), he was childless. He was 75 when he departed from Haran to Canaan, a land inhabited by a hostile people. If Abram was to enter in, he must do it through faith in the promises of God.
- A famine in the land drove Abram to Egypt. As we must not underrate the difficulties of the patriarchs, But we also must not overrate their faith and strength. Abraham and Sarai entered into their deception together. Ancient Egyptian monuments remarkably confirm the scriptural account.
- After God cursed Pharaoh with a plague, he summoned Abram and reproached him, which he must have deeply felt coming from the mouth

of an idolater. His experience in Egypt would show him that conflict with fleshly wisdom would not prevail, and that help came only from God.

Genesis 13:1-14:24

- The increase of Abram and Lot's herds led to disputes between their herdsmen. To avoid strife, Abram proposed that they separate. Abram graciously gave his nephew the right of first choice, and he chose the finest of the land, but the worst as far as the morality of its inhabitants was concerned.
- Abram went to Hebron, one of the most ancient cities of the world, where he pitched his tent under a tree, and built an altar to God.
- Lot's area was subdivided among a number of small kings, each probably ruling over a city and the immediately surrounding area. For 12 years the whole district was tributary to Chedorlaomer; in the 13th year they rebelled, and in the 14th year Lot was taken captive. This was the first time in scriptural history that a world-kingdom, founded by Nimrod, was brought into contact with the people of God. Chedorlaomer and his kings occupied the very land where afterwards the Babylonian and Assyrian empires were located.
- Abram divided his force and fell upon the enemy at night. He inflicted a great slaughter, and pursued them almost to Damascus. From the banks of the Jordan the new king of Salem, whose predecessor had fallen in battle against Chedorlaomer, came up to thank Abram, and for Abram to offer him the spoils he had won.
- Melchizedek appears suddenly, unexpectedly, mysteriously, and then disappears as quickly as he appeared. The Hebrew writer discusses in detail the significance of the meeting between Abram and Melchizedek. He was a precursor of Christ, and was probably the last representative of the race of Shem in the land of Canaan, which was now in the hands of the Canaanites.
- Melchizedek was both a priest and king, while Abram was neither. Melchizedek was recognized as the rightful ruler of the country, which was yet only promised to Abram. Melchizedek, the last representative of the Shemitic order, is the type of Christ, who is the last representative of the Abrahamic order. Melchizedek was only a shadow and type; Christ is the reality and the antitype.