

17-18 Bible Study #23

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Genesis 12

Pre-Historical Period Review

Genesis 1-11

- **The monotheist God of the Hebrews:**
 - Created the Heavens and the Earth from nothing in 6 days
 - Rested on the 7th day, establishing the Sabbath
 - Created Adam and Eve in His image and likeness to live in and govern the garden forever
 - Allowed Adam and Eve to enjoy all the fruits in the garden except the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge
 - Witnessed the fall of Adam and Eve to the temptations of the serpent (the devil), causing them to break their harmony with Him

Pre-Historical Period Review (Cont) Genesis 1-11

- **Cursed:**
 - Eve by causing her pain in childbirth and she will be ruled by her husband
 - Adam by causing hardship in tending the garden and he shall return to dust
 - The snake causing him to crawl on his belly and eat dirt
- Announced the “proto-Evangelium” (Good News) by promising that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent
- Provided clothing for Adam and Eve from animal skins
- Forced their departure from the Garden to ensure they would not eat from the Tree of Life and thus remain in a state of perpetual damnation
- Secured the garden with a Seraphim wielding a flaming sword

Pre-Historical Period Review

Genesis 1-11 (Cont)

- Adam and Eve conceived Cain and Abel
- Cain killed his brother (fratricide) Able because God was more pleased with Able's firstling sacrifice than his sacrifice from his abundance
- God cursed Cain
- Adam and Eve conceived Seth who replaced Abel
- Two genealogical lines followed from Cain and Seth:
 - Cain produced the evil line through Lamech, a murderer & polygamist
 - Seth produced to good (righteous) line through Enoch who did not die but was assumed in his righteousness

Pre-Historical Period Review

Genesis 1-11 (Cont)

- The lines were joined when the sons of Cain married the daughters of Seth
- God ended this remaining evil line by a flood, but spared the righteous Noah, his wife, their three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth and all living things in the ark
- The world was de-created, the recreated by the flood

Pre-Historical Period Review

Genesis 1-11 (Cont)

- The three sons of Noah (Shem, Ham, Japheth) repopulate the earth:
 - Little was known of the descendants of Japheth
 - An evil line started again and went from Ham, through Canaan including Nimrod who built the tower of Babel
 - A righteous line went from Seth through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, Joseph and to *Jesus the Christ* (**Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38**)

Transition

- As we saw last time, the information from **Joshua 24** is important because it says that when the Israelites were brought out of pagan polytheism of *Egypt* they were taken to the land of *Canaan* to serve the one true God
- This is another example of how the **Book of Genesis** is catechetical for the people of *Israel* as they were coming out of *Egypt*
- Clearly *Moses* must have been the source of this information as **Genesis** was related to what followed in **Exodus**

Transition (Cont)

- Father Sebastian believes that we cannot begin to grasp the **Genesis** story until we have read the Book of **Exodus**
- When you read **Genesis** you see the **Exodus** themes throughout the text
- What *Moses* was doing in **Genesis** was providing the oral stories of the patriarchs to this people fleeing *Egypt*
- Father said it was like a father telling one of his children about to go off to college what his college days were like

Introduction to Abraham

- By end of **Genesis 11** all the families of *Adam* had rebelled except the family of *Shem* leading to *Abram*
- The rest of story of the world depended on this one man
- The election of *Abram* was not about God choosing one man and his descendents but that the the salvation of all of the nations began with him as discussed in the 3rd promise to Abraham
- God choose to work through *Abram* and his descendents to return all to the unity lost at the tower of *Babel*

Themes

- A golden thread runs throughout the entire Old Testament by means of the **blessings** vs. the **curses** (kings and priests)
- Names of key individuals were changed upon receipt of a new mission:
 - *Abram to Abraham*
 - *Sarai to Sarah*
 - *Jacob to Israel*
 - *Simon to Peter*

Themes (Cont)

- The curse and blessing of barren wives include:
 - *Sarah – Isaac*
 - *Rebecca – Esau and Jacob*
 - *Rachael – Joseph and Benjamin*
 - *Hannah – Samuel*
 - *Elizabeth – John the Baptist*
- Remember this story was given to those about to enter the Promised Land that was full of *Canaanites*

The Call of Abraham

- *Abram:*
 - Was tested ten times and failed most until he offered his son Isaac in sacrifice
 - Was called to move from *Haran* to the Land of *Canaan*
 - Moved to the “oak of *Moreh*” near *Shechem* where he built an altar
 - Moved on, settled, and built an altar east of ***Bethel***
 - Then he moved toward *Negeb***

Genesis 12

- **Genesis 12:1-3**

- There were two stages of *Abram's* move from *Chaldea*:
 - The departure of Abram with his family under the leadership of his father Terah who led them to Haran
 - Then the departure of Abram, his family and Lot from Haran to Canaan
 - Abram **was called by God** from the nations just identified in **Genesis 10-11** for the sake of all the nations
 - We will see references to Abram's call in **Genesis 12:1-3** and in many other places in the Old and New Testaments

Genesis 12 (Cont)

- This is important because of the Promise of God to *Abram* that all the nations will be blessed through him and his descendants
- We see this in the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew's gospel (**Matthew 1:2-6**)
- Matthew again relates to this call at the end of his gospel when Jesus tells the disciple to go out and **baptize all of the nations** (Matthew 28:19)
- We see this reflected in Paul's letters to the **Romans** and **Galatians**

Genesis 12 (Cont)

- *Paul* tells his audiences that the genetic descendency from Abraham was not as important as having the faith of Abraham leading to faith in Jesus Christ and baptism into the new covenant
- As *Paul* sees it, the three promises made to Abraham were for both the Jews and the Gentile in all the nations
- *Paul* points this out when he tells them that it will be through their seed (singular), meaning Jesus Christ that all will be blessed
- Next, are the three promises of God to Abraham

Genesis 12 (Cont)

- God expands on the three blessings He gave to Abraham (Gn 12:1-9) in:
 - **Genesis 15:1-2** - Land
 - Promised Land
 - **Genesis 17:1-11** Royal dynasty
 - Name Changed to Abraham
 - Circumcision is sign of new covenant
 - **Genesis 22:1-19** - Blessing of the nations
 - Bring nations dispersed at Babel back to God
- Blessings and curses were the language of covenant and they offered a resolution to the problem of sin

The Covenant with Abraham

“I will bless you” Genesis 14:19-20
through Melchizedek

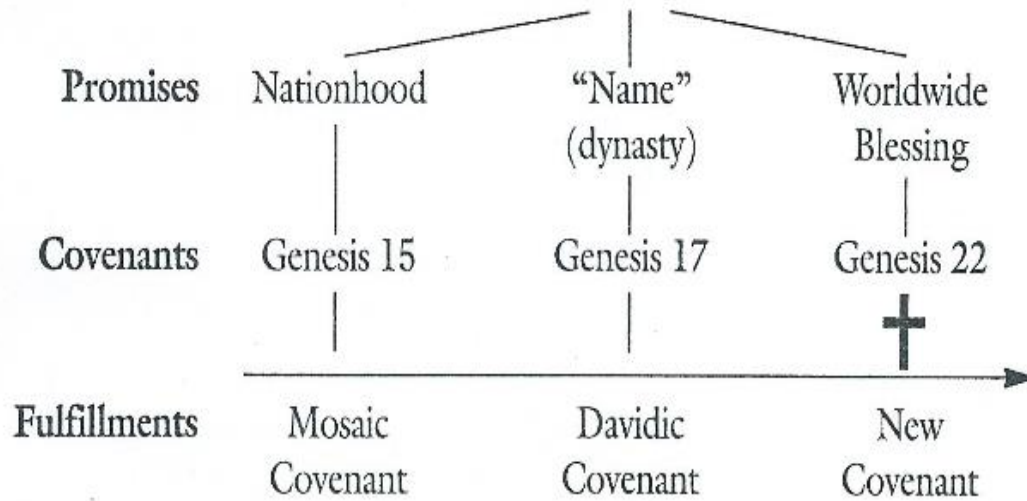
- 1 “I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you” Gn 15:1f
 - A. bound by a covenant in Genesis 15
 - B. fulfilled through Moses/Joshua in the Exodus Promised land
- 2 “I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing Gn 17:1f
 - A. bound by a covenant in Genesis 17
 - B. fulfilled through David/Solomon in the Kingdom of Israel

The Covenant with Abraham (Cont)

- 3 “I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves”
 - A. bound by a covenant in Genesis 22
 - B. fulfilled through Christ in the Church*

God's Threefold Blessing to Abram

Genesis 12:2-3



Genesis 12 (Cont)

- **Genesis 12:4**

- *Abram* was 75 years old at the time he left *Haran* in route to *Canaan*
- *Moses* will remind us of *Abram*'s age throughout this narrative
- As *Abram* gets older and older he remains without a son
- The problem was that *Sarah* was barren and *Abram* was becoming a really, really old man
- This sets the tension throughout the story*

Genesis 12 (Cont)

- **Genesis 12:5-9**

- There was a problem as *Abram* moved south into the land occupied by the *Canaanites* (descendants of *Ham*)
- *Abram* arrives in the land God promised but he kept on heading south until he got into the *Negeb*
- This was a very arid region, and thus *Abram* did not find much food
- He stopped at *Bethel* which was a pretty nice place but was still fairly dry, like parts of California
- Obviously, he discovered a famine in the land

Genesis 12 (Cont)

- At this point *Abram* had a choice: to go back to the fertile land of *Canaan* or continue into *Egypt*
- We see this same dilemma in the **Book of Numbers** as the people of Israel murmured to *Moses* and God wanting to return to the comforts of Egypt
- This is the story of the Nation of Israel encamped in the *Negeb* sending scouts to reconnoiter the Promised Land

Genesis 12 (Cont)

- **Numbers 13:21-23**

- These men went through the Promised Land and even brought back some of the wonderful food (grapes) they found
- Yet, ten of the twelve scouts were fearful of the inhabitants of the land, (not trusting in God) causing the people to want to return to Egypt (**Nu 14:3**)
- The same situation happened to *Abram*
- Although had seen the fruits of *Canaan*, he was tempted to go down to *Egypt*

Genesis 12 (Cont)

- What *Abram* found in *Egypt* was a king who wanted to kill him and take his wife (a polygamist and murderer)
- Later, we will see a Pharaoh who wants to kill all the male children of the people of *Israel* and enslave the entire population
- At this point in the story *Abram* decides to go to *Egypt**

Genesis 12 (Cont)

- **Genesis 12:10-17**

- *Abram* was afraid of what would happen to his wife when he encounter the polygamists and murderers in *Egypt*
- From the genealogy it looks like *Sarai* was the daughter of *Terah* but by a different mother than *Abram*
- This meant that *Saria* was his half-sister
- Thus, in a sense he was not lying to the Pharaoh when he said she was his sister!

Genesis 12 (Cont)

- Father Sebastian believes that neither he or Sari liked this solution and, as we will see later, things did not work out very well for either of them
- But, after they arrived in *Egypt* God, of course, shielded and protected *Abram* by bringing a plague on the Pharaoh and his house because *Sarai* was his wife*

Genesis 12 (Cont)

- **Genesis 12:18-20**

- *As Abram leaves Egypt* as a result of the plagues, he was given man servants, maid servants, asses, camels
- *St Ephraim* points out that this was a prefigurement of the entire Exodus story
 - The family of Jacob goes down to Egypt because of a famine
 - They come out of Egypt after the plagues with great wealth