

# (Genesis) Genesis 11:10-32

by J. Vernon McGee

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*The speaker introduces the line of Shem and highlights the importance of Abraham, a great man of faith.*

**Duration:** 11:32

**Scripture:** Genesis 4:7, Genesis 5:26, Genesis 6:5, Genesis 11:1-9, Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 15:6

**Topics:** "Faith And Obedience", "Human Sinfulness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the shift in focus from events to important personalities in the Bible, specifically in the book of Genesis. The four main personalities mentioned are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The speaker highlights Abraham as a man of faith and introduces the upcoming chapter 12. The sermon also touches on the tower of Babel and the significance of these events in demonstrating humanity's sinfulness and the need for Christ.

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## Transcript

Now, that brings us to the end of the Tower of Babel, and frankly, I think that's about as far as we care to go with that. There are many other things that we'd like to see. Now you will notice that we're going to take up the line of Shem, because it's the line of Shem that we're going to follow.

Verse 10, these are the generations of Shem. Shem was a hundred years old. And then when you follow down through this, while you have his genealogy given and you come way down to verse 24, and we read, And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Tirah.

And Nahor lived after he begat Tirah a hundred and nineteen years, and he begat sons and daughters. But you see, we're following Tirah. Why Tirah? Well, verse 26, And Tirah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Now we're going to follow Abram's line. You see, we're following the line of Shem, and we're going actually right through the Bible following this line. In other words, the Word of God is going to begin now and go directly to the cross of Christ.

That's exactly. God is going to put down all of this as preliminary. And you see that God now has demonstrated to man that he's in sin.

There at Cain and Abel, we find that Cain would not acknowledge that he was a sinner. You have pride of life there. And then at the flood, you see the sin of the flesh.

They were given over to the sins of the flesh. They were indulging in violence, and every thought and imagination was evil. And they were blind to the need of the person of Christ.

They were deaf to his claim, dead to God, dead in trespasses and sins. And God gave an invitation through Noah. Those are the sins of the flesh at the flood.

And then here at the Tower of Babel, it's the sin of the will. May I say it's rebellion against God. This is the Tower of Babel.

And do you have a Tower of Babel, your own little Tower of Babel that you built away from God, and are you in rebellion against Him? Well, it's natural for human nature to be in rebellion against God. A little boy, he was really very cantankerous one evening. It was a rainy evening, and he was really cutting up.

His mother was having a great deal of trouble with him. And finally, she just had to get her little boy, little Willie, and she put him in the corner and sat him down with his face to the corner and told him to sit there. And she left him in the room, and she went out into the living room with the rest of the family.

And after a while, why, she heard a noise in there, and she said to him, Willie, are you standing up? And he says, No, Mom, I'm sitting down, but I'm standing up on the inside of me. Believe me, friends, there are a lot of men today and women standing up on the inside of them against God, their own little Tower of Babel. Now we are following this line that's going to lead to Christ.

Verse 27, These are the generations of Terah. You see, we're following the families. These are the families of Terah.

Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity in Ur the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives.

The name of Abram's wife was Sarah. The name of Nahor's wife, Melchah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Melchah and the father of Ezekiel. But Sarah was barren.

She had no child. And Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarah his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth with them from Ur the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan, and they came unto Haran and dwelt there. Haran means delay.

And the days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran. Now that is given to us to let us know that we are going to follow Abraham, and his story will begin now in the next chapter. And that will tell to us the story now, and the book of Genesis, and for that matter the Bible now, takes a turn.

Now you will recall at the very beginning we said that there is a great Grand Canyon that goes right down through the book of Genesis. The first 11 chapters are on one side, and then from Genesis 12 all the way through the 50th chapter is on the other side. In these first 11 chapters we cover 2,000 years plus, as much as the rest of the Bible put together, and it's put over against just 350 years from Genesis 12 to Genesis 50.

Now you have in these first 11 chapters, creation, Genesis 1 and 2, and the fall in Genesis 3 and 4, the flood in Genesis 5 and 9, the Tower of Babel, Genesis 10 and 11. And we have seen these four great events, and this has covered a great deal of territory, and it's the reason we've spent so much time here. Now at chapter 12 we go to the other side of the Grand Canyon.

The atmosphere is altogether different now because we are going to slow down to a walk, just as we are in this five-year program. But not only that, the emphasis is from events, stupendous events to great personalities, or shall I say important personalities, because some of them can't quite be called great. We have four here in Genesis, and of course there will be more to follow in the other books of the Bible.

Abraham is the man of faith, Genesis 12 through 23. Then we're going to have after that Isaac, the beloved son, and then Jacob, the chosen and chastened son, and then Joseph, suffering in glory, the one who's more like Christ in his life and the events of his life than any man who ever lived. And yet he's never mentioned as a type of Christ anywhere in the Bible.

Now I just want to introduce us here to chapter 12 today. That'll be coming up next time. We have here in chapter 12, and we probably ought to say this, we're halfway through the Bible, friends, chronologically, and a five-year program just getting underway.

And we're halfway between creation and the cross. And now God has turned from the nations to a man through whom God will make a nation, and in turn from that nation will bring the Savior of the world. Now Abraham, by any person's measuring rod, though, is a great man.

He's one of the greatest men who's ever lived on this earth. And how do you measure great men even today? Well, to begin with, a man has to be famous. And Abraham certainly measures up to that.

I think that he's probably the world's most famous man. Did you know that probably more people have heard of Abraham than have heard of anyone else than the President of the United States or any movie star or any athlete? More have heard of Abraham. May I add to that that the three great religions of the world go back to Abraham? And I'm having to put Christianity in that now.

We have, first of all, Judaism, and then we have Islam, and then we have Christianity. They all go back to Abraham. Abraham's very important.

Literally there are millions of people in Asia and Africa today that have heard of Abraham, but they never heard of the ones that make the headlines in our country today. That's one of the marks of a great man. Abraham was a great man.

What is another mark of a great man? Well, he must be a generous man, a noble character. Well, can you imagine anyone that's more generous than Abraham? I doubt whether as a man living today would have done what he did when he and his nephew came back into that land. He told Lot to choose any portion he wanted, and he'd take what was left.

You think any man would do that today in a business deal? I don't think so. They don't even do it in the church today, friends, let alone in a hard-boiled business world today. But Abraham was a generous man, and if you ever noticed how generous he was with the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, he told them, I won't take the booty, I won't even take a shoestring from you or a piece of thread.

God is the one he was looking to. And then a third thing, a great man must live in a momentous time. He must be, as Napoleon said, a man of destiny.

The man and the right time must meet at the crossroads of life. That was certainly true of Abraham. And then the fourth thing, I believe the world would agree with me up through the first three I've mentioned, but maybe not on this one, he must be a man of faith.

And you'll notice that all great men, even when they're not Christian, have something that they believe in. Now, Abraham has been called a Columbus of faith. I doubt whether that's true, but we are going to see he had seven great visions and four backslidings, and each time brought him closer to God.

And it's said of Abraham, the greatest thing that's said about him in the Bible is that he believed God. Abraham believed God, was counted to him for righteousness. I mention all of this so that you will know next time when we take up Abraham in the twelfth chapter, we are taking up one of the great men of all time, and the great man of either secular or sacred history.

No one quite measures up to him who is just altogether human. And we'll be looking at him next time and spending some time talking about the man that's probably mentioned more than any other in the Word of God.

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