

GENESIS: Where Grace Begins

Why an Abraham?

²⁶ When Terah had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

²⁷ Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot.

²⁸ Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. ²⁹ And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰ Now Sarai was barren; she had no child.

³¹ Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. ³² The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.

Genesis 11:26-32

1st, Adam and Eve ...

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 1:27-28

Then, Noah ...

¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." ¹⁷ God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Genesis 9:15-17

Now, Abram ... Why?

Reason 1: The Tower of _____

The call of Abraham is a response to the historical necessity of the confusion at Babel.

Genesis 11:1-9 (ESV)

¹ Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ² And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." ⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶ And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

Reason 2: God's sovereign right to _____

Israel would learn by this account that their very existence as a nation was by God's _____ of one man who responded by faith. It would affirm to the nation that their beginnings were rooted in the _____.

True faith always responds in _____. And remember: Abram's obedience began with _____. He was a _____ who responded to the _____ of God.

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 (ESV)

⁶ "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷ It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 10:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. ¹⁵ Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.

Deuteronomy 14:2 (ESV)

² For you are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Genesis 12:1-2 (ESV)

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

"... at this time Terah's tiny, inbred family were moon worshipers residing in the leading center of lunar religion. The city was dominated by a massive, three-staged ziggurat built by Ur-Nammu during the beginning of the second millennium b.c. Each stage was colored distinctively, with the top level bearing the silver one-roomed shrine to Nanna, the moon-god. The royal cemetery reveals that ritual burials were sealed with the horrors of human sacrifice.

If there be any doubt that this was Abraham's context, Joshua removes it with his words to Israel during the covenant renewal in Shechem: "Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, "Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods" ' " (Joshua 24:2). Abram's family, including Abram himself, were polytheistic idolaters. Their names come right out of the cult of moon worship. Terah's name is related to the word *yārēah*, "moon" and *yerah*, "lunar month." Sarai is the equivalent to the Akkadian *sarratu*, "queen," and was the name of the wife of the moon god Sin. Milcah is the same as the goddess *Malkātu*, a title of Ishtar, daughter of the moon god.¹

What we learn about **grace** from God's choice of Abram:

Grace is a gift, not an _____

Grace is not a _____, it is a favor.

Grace flows _____ Abram (and his line) not just ____ Abram.

It was only with Christ, the ultimate seed of Abram, that the fulfillment came and blessing went out to all people.

"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.' So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith" (Galatians 3:8,9).

Reason 3: God's _____ for the World

Genesis 12:3 (ESV)

³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word, 177–178.

Reason 4: God's Plan of _____

God promised to Abram everything men sought at Babel and were denied: *name, family, land*.

"Seed" = A common _____

Genesis 13:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted.

"Land" = A central _____

Genesis 12:7 (ESV)

⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

"Blessing" = A clear _____

Genesis 12:3b (CEV)

³ ... Everyone on earth will be blessed because of you.

Matthew 1:1 (ESV)

¹ The book of the genealogy of **Jesus Christ**, the son of David, **the son of Abraham**.

Matthew 1:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ So all the generations **from Abraham** to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon **to the Christ** fourteen generations.

Next week: **The Call of Abram**