

Bible Essentials

Scripture Passage: Genesis 12:1-9

Think about your past week. How has God answered prayer or worked in your life? What prayer requests do you have? Write them here. Then take time to pray about your requests and ask him to open your heart for today's study.

Read today's passage. Jot down your initial impressions of the passage.

Here is some context for Genesis 12:1-9.

By the time we reach Genesis 12, it's been at least 300 years since the flood, according to the genealogy given in Genesis 11. Keep in mind that the genealogy says that Shem, one of Noah's sons who was on the ark, lived another 502 years after the flood. This means that Shem would have still been alive when Abram (Abraham), the main character for our next several lessons, was born. Based on the math, Shem would have lived another 200+ years after the birth of Abram. Every single person in the genealogy of Genesis 11 would have been alive when Abram was born. In fact, Noah himself

would have still been alive, because Noah lived 350 years after the flood (Genesis 9:28). Kind of blows the mind a bit, right?

Through the genealogy, we are introduced to Terah, the father of Abram, as well as Abram's two brothers, Haran and Nahor. Abram's brother Haran was the father of Lot, who we'll meet later in our study of Genesis. We also are introduced to Sarai, who is Abram's wife. Genesis 11 also gives us the critical fact that Sarai was unable to conceive, which will become important later in Abram's story.

Genesis 11 tells us that Terah, Abram, Sarai, and Lot all moved from where they were in Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But they didn't quite get there. They decided to settle in Harran instead. Thinking about this in the timeline of the tower of Babel, it seems that the tower of Babel likely happened sometime during the life of Peleg (see Genesis 10:25). Based on the genealogy in Genesis 11, Peleg was born about 100 years after the flood. So 200+ years later, people are still moving around, trying to find a place to settle. After the death of Terah, God tells Abram to move yet again. That's where we find him in Genesis 12.

What are your thoughts about the context? Write some key points here.

Read the passage again. Use a different Bible version if you have one available. Then summarize the passage in your own words.

Look closely at the passage and answer the following questions.

What does the passage say about God?

What does the passage say about people?

What does the passage say about God's plan?

What else strikes you about this passage?

Understanding how a passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible is important.

This story is the foundation for so much of what we read in the Bible. God promised to make Abram into a great nation. It seems at first that this promise wouldn't be fulfilled, but with 25 years (!) of patience, God eventually gave Abram and Sarai a son through which this promise would be fulfilled—Isaac. Isaac then had Jacob, and Jacob had 12 sons that would become the nation of Israel. The rest of Genesis is about Abram (Abraham), Isaac, and Jacob (Israel), along with Jacob's 12 sons.

Then the rest of the Old Testament is about the nation of Israel. God delivered them from slavery in Egypt and led them through the wilderness to eventually settle in the Promised Land, in the land of Canaan, just as God had promised Abram. Once they were settled, the people begged for a king, so God gave them Saul, then David, then Solomon and a whole host of others. The people went through cycles of rejecting God, then repenting and turning back to God. Eventually, they were taken captive, and their lands and homes were taken over by other nations because the people refused to follow God.

Through all of this, God preserved his people because he still had one promise yet to be fulfilled. God promised that all peoples on earth would be blessed through the line of Abram, and that blessing came through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is the one through whom all people on earth will ultimately be blessed because he has paid the penalty for sin for those who believe in him. Through Jesus, we can have the gift of eternal life. This is the greatest blessing of all!

What are your thoughts on how this passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible? Write your thoughts here. If you have any questions, write those as well. You may find answers in future lessons, or you may want to find another Christian that you can ask.

Use the following questions to apply today's Scripture passage to your own life.

How does this passage affect how you view God?

How does this passage affect how you view yourself?

How does this passage affect how you will live your life?

Close in prayer, asking God to help you apply what you learned today.