

TOWER OF BABEL AND THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

Genesis 10 – 12

Lesson Memory Verse: John 14:15 - "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

Lesson Aim: To show the children that we ought to obey God's commands.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Jack had a dog, but the dog never listened to Jack. He would call his dog, but it would not come unless it was time to eat. He would tell his dog to sit, but it would run. He tried to teach his dog some tricks, but it would not learn even one trick for him. He hoped that it would be a good watch dog, but it even failed to do that. What would you do with a disobedient dog like Jack's dog? (Let students answer.) Some people are like Jack's dog. They are disobedient all of the time. Some are like his dog only part of the time, but that is not the best, either.

HE (for Authority): You may ask, "Why should I obey God? Why should I obey my parents? Why should I obey my teacher?" Our memory verse gives us the answer to these questions. (Have the verse printed on a large card or on the blackboard/whiteboard so the students can see it as well as hear it.) "Keep My commandments" means "obey My commands." Our memory verse says we will obey God's commands if we love Him. He has commanded us to obey our parents and our leaders (teachers) as long as they do not tell us to do something wrong. Do you love God? Are you thankful to Him for giving you salvation? If so, obey Him as our memory verse says.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. Today we are going to learn about two men. One was like Jack's dog and never obeyed God and the other was like Jack's dog only a few times. We will see what God did to these two men.

I. Nimrod

A. Who was Nimrod? (Genesis 10:6-12)

1. He was the nephew of Canaan (10:6, 8).

Canaan was cursed by Noah to be a servant of servants, and his family would have this curse, too. This was done, it seems, because Canaan was disrespectful and disobedient like his father, Ham (Genesis 9:20-27). This relationship of Nimrod to Canaan led him to disobey God.

2. His name means "Let us rebel!" (10:8).

His father, Cush, seems to have resented the curse on his brother Canaan, and by the time his last son was born, he was ready to rebel. This is seen in the name he gave to Nimrod.

3. He began to be mighty (10:8).

The efforts of the Hamites to reverse the curse on Canaan seemed to have success in the leadership of Nimrod, and the Hamites rallied behind him. This gave him more power and he became a mighty one in the earth, ruling over the families of Japheth and even over Shem to some extent.

4. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord (10:9-12).

It appears he was a hunter of men in that he sought key men and persuaded them to obey him rather than the Lord. He became a tyrant, ruling the whole world by building cities loyal to him. The word "before" might be translated "against" to give clearer meaning. Nimrod was a hunter against the Lord. He led men to disobey the Lord.

B. What did Nimrod do? (Genesis 11:1-4)

1. He journeyed to the east (11:2).

After the Flood, the people left the regions of Mount Ararat and moved southeast (not "from the east," but "eastward") to the plain of Shinar (Mesopotamia). It was a flat, fertile land. It is likely that they planned to make this a place like the Garden of Eden because they named the two rivers in the area after two of the four rivers that flowed out of the Garden of Eden (Tigris, or Hiddekel, and Euphrates).

2. He led the people to disobey God (11:3, 4).

- a. God said, "Replenish the earth" (9:2), but Nimrod and his council said, "Let us stay in one place" (11:4).

- b. God planned for several nations to rule in different parts of the earth, but Nimrod wanted to rule all the people in one part of the earth. He did not want any Hamite to be a servant to anyone else.

3. He led the people to build a city (11:4).

Cities do not need to be bad, but every city that man builds turns out to be bad. Some are worse than others because they are specifically built to disobey God. Nimrod's city was Babel, and it was built so that people would not have to obey God. It was a bad city. Someday God will build a good city. All of the people in it will obey God. Sin will be unknown in it. Would you like to live in such a city?

4. He led the people to build a tower (11:4).

This tower was built to worship false gods. Nimrod may have deceived some of the people into thinking it was being built for the worship of the true God, but it soon became evident that the sun, moon, planets, and angels (Satan and his hosts) were the real objects of worship in the temple built at the top of this tower. "Whose top was dedicated unto the heavens" is the meaning of the words, "whose top may reach unto heaven." Nimrod's tower was built to dishonor and disobey God.

5. He led the people to make a name for themselves (11:4).

The purpose for making themselves a name was to remain unified and not be "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Nimrod did not want to obey the Lord because he wanted to rule all men. This would be impossible if they were scattered over the whole earth.

C. What did the Lord do to Nimrod? (Genesis 11:5-9)

1. God decided to judge Nimrod's city and tower (11:5).

This verse does not mean that God did not know what was happening until He came to Babel and looked at the tower. It is a human way of saying He was preparing to judge the city and the tower.

2. God confused the people's language and stopped Nimrod's plans (11:6-9).

God changed the people's language from one to many. No longer could they understand each other. As a result, they could not obey each other. They soon formed into small family groups that spoke the same language and were scattered over the face of all the earth. Nimrod had led the people to disobey God and now God led them to disobey Nimrod. The grand plan of Nimrod was destroyed.

WE: Nimrod disobeyed God all of the time. Why did he do this? (He did not love God.) We need to realize that we show God and everyone around us that we do not love Him when we keep on sinning. We must not be like Nimrod. We will not be like him if we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior.

II. Abram (Abraham)

A. Who was Abram? (Genesis 11:26-32; Acts 7:2, 3)

1. Abram was a son of Terah (11:26-30).

Abram was born into a rich man's family that had three sons. He lived a very comfortable life.

2. Abram was born in Ur of the Chaldees (11:28, 31).

This was a very wealthy city, but also a very wicked city. It was not far from Babylon and may have been built by Nimrod.

3. Abram was called by God to go to a special land (Acts 7:2, 3).

This land was unknown to Abram. It turned out to be far away from his homeland. It was a land specially selected for God's chosen nation of which Abram was to be the father.

B. What did Abram do? (Genesis 11:31-12:20; Acts 7:3, 4)

1. Abram obeyed God by leaving his country (Acts 7:3, 4).

He left Ur of the Chaldees as God told him to.

2. Abram was slow to obey God about leaving his family (Gen 11:31-12:5; Acts 7:3, 4).

He stayed with his immediate family until they reached Haran. He did not leave Haran until his father died. Then he left his brother, Nahor, but kept his nephew, Lot. It was not until after Lot left him and was completely removed from Abram that God blessed Abram with a son, Isaac. God could not bless him fully until he obeyed fully.

3. Abram obeyed God by going to God's special land (Gen 12:5-9).

He went to the land of Canaan, and when he arrived in the middle of the land, God appeared to him and told him this was the land he and his children would be given.

4. Abram disobeyed God by leaving the land promised to him (12:10).

Abram was disobedient in leaving the land during a famine. He should have checked with God before leaving it and going down to Egypt. It would have saved him some serious trouble.

5. Abram disobeyed God by telling his wife to lie (Genesis 12:11-20).

Abram thought the Pharaoh of Egypt would kill him for his beautiful wife while they were in Egypt, so he told his wife to say that she was his sister. All seemed to go well until the Pharaoh was plagued because he had taken Sarah into his house. God protected both Abram and Sarah from harm, but it was by His mercy that they were spared for their disobedience. Abram had to learn to obey God, even when he was afraid of man.

WE: Abram obeyed God most of the time. Why? (He loved God.) We should try to obey God because we love Him. When we disobey God, we should tell God how sorry we are for our sin and name what we have done wrong. Then we should ask God to forgive us and give us the power not to go back and do that sin again. If we are really sorry, we will use God's power to keep from disobeying Him.

BE (for Action): Our lesson today taught us about obeying and disobeying God. Who always disobeyed God? (Nimrod) How did he disobey God? (Students may give two or three of the answers you taught them.) Who obeyed God? (Abram) Did he obey God all of the time? (No!) Did God hate Abram when he did not obey Him? (No, but God allowed him to suffer some for not obeying Him.) God wants us to obey Him, too! We will be happy when we obey Him, but we will suffer in some way when we disobey Him. Let's ask God to remind us to obey Him all of the time. The first way to obey God is to ask Jesus to take away all of our sins. Have you obeyed God by doing this? God wants you to obey Him and receive Jesus Christ as Savior. (Give an invitation for salvation. Then have several pray and ask God to remind them to ~~be~~ obey Him all of the time.)