

Hemphill, KenSurvey of the Old Testament (Nondisposable Curriculum Book 3)

9. The Call of Abraham, the Choice of a People (Genesis 11–13)

Primeval history ends at Babel, where humanity tries to reach heaven and make a name for itself apart from God, and is scattered. God responds not by giving up on people but by calling one man, Abram, to begin a chosen people through whom all nations will be blessed. The chapter traces Abram's call, God's threefold promise, and the first tested steps of his faith journey.

Key takeaways

- Babel is man's self-glorifying rebellion; God scatters the builders, yet even this fulfills His command to fill the earth.
- God calls Abram to leave country, family, and his father's idols for an unrevealed land — obedience grounded in faith, not law.
- The call is a partnership, not a dictatorship: God works through obedient people to expand His kingdom.
- The threefold 'I will' promise: a great nation, God's blessing (presence, provision, protection), and a great name — the opposite of Babel's self-made name.

- Abram is 'blessed to bless' — the blessing is to be shared with all families of the earth, pointing ahead to the Great Commission.
- Israel largely hoarded the blessing instead of passing it on, preferring the privilege to the responsibility.
- Abram's faith wavers: famine sends him to Egypt without asking God, and fear leads him to lie about Sarai — yet God still protects the promise.

Passages worth keeping

“And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

The missionary heart of the call — blessing meant for all nations, not just Abram.

“And so you shall be a blessing.”

The natural outcome of receiving from God is giving to others (memory verse, Gen. 12:2).

How it connects

The scattering at Babel and the gathering promised through Abram frame the whole Bible's story: the nations broken apart by pride are meant to be united again under their King, a hope that reaches its end in the healing of the nations at Christ's return (Rev. 21–22).

Scripture referenced

- **Gen. 11:1-9** -- Babel — human pride, self-made name, and scattering
- **Gen. 12:1** -- God's call for Abram to leave everything
- **Gen. 12:2-3** -- The threefold promise; blessed to bless all nations
- **Gal. 3:6, 9** -- Abram believed and was counted righteous — faith, not law
- **Heb. 11:8** -- Abram obeyed without knowing the destination
- **Matt. 28:19-20** -- The Great Commission fulfills the promise to bless the nations