Palm Sunday - Genesis 11:10-12:3 (PM)

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Preacher: Rev. Aaron Roberts

[0:00] Oh, hello, everybody. Nice to see you. So on the way, just on the way, I was driving over here, and I just called up a mate of mine who's a pastor down in Sacramento.

A guy I went to Regent with, just to catch up, say hi. 20 minutes, drive over here. And he's like, oh, Palm Sunday, fantastic, Palm Sunday. Hey, what gospel are you preaching from?
On Palm Sunday, this Palm Sunday, because it's Palm Sunday. On Palm Sunday. And I said, oh, I'm actually not preaching a gospel narrative of Palm Sunday on Palm Sunday.
This Palm Sunday. And just dead silence. This is just on the phone. This is just on the drive over here. Dead silence. And he goes, like five seconds later, he goes, I don't even think that was allowed.
He said, have you heard of something called the church calendar? And then he said, so what are you preaching?
[1:12] The genealogy? Genesis 11 genealogy. Well, should we just get into it, shall we? And just, should we just get into it?

The kids are learning about it downstairs, so that's fine. All right. So Genesis, if Genesis was like this, right, you could break, there's lots of ways to break up Genesis, but really simplest way is break it into two pieces.
Two pieces, right? So you've got the first bit, 1 to 11, and then 12 to 50. So 1 to 11 is called like the primeval history. So this is the beginnings of humanity, and it's a story painted with a very broad sort of brush, okay?
And that's what we've been looking at these last couple of months, 1 to 11. And then you have 20 to 50. So 1 to 11, and then 20 to 50. And 20 to 50 zooms in on this one family line, Abraham and his descendants.
And God's plan is still to bless the whole world, still wants to bless the whole world, but God's method has changed. God is going to bless the whole world. He's going to do that through a particular people group, a particular family line.
[2:26] So that's really, really big picture. And what we're looking at tonight in our very last sermon in Genesis for a long time is we're looking at the hinge point, the hinge point between those two sections, between 1 to 11 and 12 to 50.

We're looking at the hinge point between those two sections, where primeval history ends and the story of Abraham begins. That's what we're doing. So let's begin with the end, this little part of the hinge, the end of primeval history.
So you heard it read so wonderfully. Thank you, Melanie. You heard it read, genealogy, another genealogy. And I know, I know you hear them and you're like, oh, genealogy is so boring.
But we don't pass over those things quickly because there's always gold in this. There's gold in that stuff and there's always a reason for them. So what's the reason for this one?
What is this particular genealogy telling us? Okay, verse 10. Verse 10 says, well, it tells us, right? It's following the line of Shem.
[3:33] Follow one of those. So remember, Shem, son of Noah, that's the good son. That's the good one. There's Ham, Ham bad, Shem good.

Right? You didn't write that down. Ham bad. Okay. Ham bad, Shem good. So Ham was the one that made fun of his dad. Shem was the one, remember when his dad got blind drunk?
And Shem treated him better than he deserved and he covered it up. So a good son. Good son. So it's a line of Shem, 10 generations. And I want to point out a few things from this kind of genealogy part.

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Okay. So one thing you probably noticed is that those outrageous lifespans are getting shorter. Something's going on. Something's potentially fizzing out.
Okay. Second thing to notice. Verse 27. 27. We get this. The genealogy pauses here. Now these are the generations of Terah. So we've got to Terah.
[4:35] So we go bam, bam, bam, bam. All of a sudden we get to this guy called Terah. Father of Abraham. And it says, they're in the land of Ur.

You see there. 28. So this is Terah. It's got a family. They lived in Ur. That's interesting. Gives us a bit more information there. Why Ur?
So Ur, father of, so Terah, father of Abraham. So Ur is like modern day sort of southern Iraq. You know Ur was excavated. So we didn't know much about Ur until the early 20th century when it was excavated.
And this is 1920s, 30s. Huge, huge thing. Like a really, really big deal. They just started digging up and they found this whole city. And they found tons of stuff.
It was a huge deal internationally. Agatha Christie actually visited. People would go visit this archaeological site. Agatha Christie actually visited this site and wrote a book inspired by the trip called Murder in Mesopotamia.
[5:43] Factoid. I said murder in Mesopotamia. Honestly, what is he doing? Why is he here? Why is he here?

I don't know. This is gold. So rich in artifacts. They found thousands of tablets, like these clay tablets.
You know, these are the right things on, describing Ur. And one of the big discoveries was when they were talking about the life, what life was like in Ur, is they discovered that it was the center of worship of the moon god.
Moon god. So Joshua 24.2 confirms this. Confirms that Terah, the father of Abraham, was really into this. So Joshua 24.2, and Joshua said to the people, Long ago, your fathers, your ancestors, lived beyond the Euphrates.
Terah, the father of Abraham and of Naboo, they served other gods. Family was totally into it. Now, look at verse 31 here of Genesis 11. So Terah took Abraham, a son, grandson, Sarah, and together they left Ur to go to Canaan, which probably sounds like a good idea.
[6:53] They've got to get out of Ur. Dodgy. Ur's dodgy. Let's get out of Ur. But they never made it. They settled in Haran. So they just stopped.

They never made it to Canaan. So what do we know about Haran? Big on moon god worship as well. Now remember, this is supposed to be like, this is the great family.
These people are supposed to, this is, this is the great line. This is the good guys. This is supposed to be the solid family line, not like Ham Ham's useless, terrible, right?
This is supposed to be Shem's line. And they've lost the plot. They've become moon worshipers. One more really important detail here in the genealogy says in verse 30 that Sarah, Abraham's wife.
Now, Abram, Abraham, same person, changes his name. It's fine. Okay. So verse 30 said Sarah, Abraham's wife, couldn't have children there. Verse 30, Sarah was barren.
[7:53] No children. So this family line looks like it was coming to an end. So what's the big message of this genealogy? See, humanity's in bad shape. The family line, this family, this one family line that has been passing down the knowledge of God had become moon worshipers.

They'd lost their faith. They couldn't have kids. It was like if it was a candle. It's a candle that's flickering out. So the line of Shem is coming to a dead end.
It's coming to a dead end physically. It's coming to a dead end spiritually. There is no foreseeable good future here. That's the first section of Genesis.
That's where the first section of Genesis stops and ends. And it looks hopeless, doesn't it? So what's the next thing that happens? An astonishing act of grace.
Chapter 12, 1 to 3. So right now we're dipping in to the very beginning of the next big section of Genesis. Now the Lord said to Abram, into this completely hopeless situation, God speaks.
[9:08] And when God speaks, there's hope. No matter how terrible it is, when God speaks, there is hope. And he speaks to Abraham and he says, leave your life.

Do that and I will bless you and I will bless the whole world through you. That's a big picture. Let's drill down a little bit. God is going to start a nation.

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A particular people. He's going to give birth to a particular people. Through this one couple, this one line, they're going to bless the world. It's great.
Sounds great, right? Sounds great. Fantastic. Here's the problem. The couple is picked. We learn in verse 4. 75. Can't have kids. Moon worshippers.
But God calls them. It all starts from that call. And that's the same for all of us, right?
[10:08] We're all as hopeless as these people here without God. This is all of us. We would all here in this room be idolaters if God hadn't called us.

We wouldn't be worshipping the moon God. We'd be worshipping sex or money or power or salves or something like that. But we would all be idolaters if God hadn't disturbed our life, if God hadn't come into our life, and we hadn't responded in faith.
Let's keep going. Let's look at the call. Just verse 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.
Well, that is a big call, isn't it? Leave your country. Leave your family, your extended family. Leave your immediate family. Leave everything that makes you feel secure and follow my call.
Leave all of that. Leave it all. And I'll tell you where you're going. If you go 20 miles that way and there'll be an oasis and you turn left and then you go five miles and you turn right at the camel and there's the falafel shop.
[11:22] No, you don't get any of that. Leave all of that for a place that I will tell you about some other time. So Abram was told very specifically what to leave, but not where he was going.

Because the really big thing that Abram had to do first was to disentangle himself from this idolatrous place and from an idolatrous people and hit the road not knowing where he was going. See here, man, God's call is a demanding one, isn't it? God's call is a demanding one. God says to all of us, surrender your life to my will.
And that's the call on every disciple since Abram to this day. God calls you to surrender your whole life to him. God says to you, people aren't going to be paid lots of money.
Where you don't have much... People aren't going to be saying to you, oh, that's fantastic what you do. But you do it because Jesus says, that's the job I want for you.
[13:05] God calls you to places where you might not have a whole lot of security. But he says, just be secure in me. God says, I'm going to do it.

Right? So, the next thing we see here is God says, I'm going to bless you. you're going to leave these things I'm going to bless you and you're going to bless other nations but first you must be willing to lose things unless you're willing to lose things you won't see that blessing you cannot be a blessing to others unless you're willing to pay a price when Jesus saw Peter on the fishing boat you know this story right Jesus saw Peter on the fishing boat he's fishing he's got his life he's got his mates he's got his thing follow me Jesus says follow me and they leave their nets they leave their security and they follow him and Jesus says now I'll make you fishers of men you will be a blessing to the world but first there is a cost you can't be a blessing unless you're willing to lose things that's what we learn here at this point in the sermon it would be tempting for me to tell you a story about super faithful missionaries living in some far away place in mud huts for 50 years with no furlough I'm not going to do that because I think that's too remote I just want people to sign up for tea and coffee to be honest wouldn't that be great I need six people to sign up for tea and coffee I want you to give one hour once a month to be a blessing to this community small thing I need six people after the service to see Marion and sign up for that it's a small cost but what a great way to bless each other so that's the call the call there's a cost now look at verse two now I'll make you a great nation and I'll bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing I'll 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 now the call is followed up by God saying all the things he's going to do because I will I will I will I will I will I will I'll show you a new land I'll make you a great nation I'll bless you your name will be I'll make your name no one
I'll bless those who bless you I'll curse those who curse you I'll protect it I'm invested in you I'm going to look after you I'll bless you and you'll be a blessing to others God by his grace is going to give this family line what the people of Babel wanted they wanted to be great and God brought them down and God says no if you sacrifice I'll bless you but again the blessing has a purpose doesn't it the blessing that God wants to give Abraham is not I just want to give you a great name because that you know that'll make you feel good because I'll make you great so you'll be a blessing to others and again this is the experience of all disciples God calls us and he reshapes our

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life he redirects us so that we ask ourselves how can I bless others folks when you get when God has a grip on you and you have a grip on who God is it changes you into a person on a mission so your life is no longer just about
I want to meet my own needs so your life is no longer about just your interest or even just your hurts when you encounter God it should destroy our consumer mentality when you encounter God you should ask yourself how can I spend myself for Jesus God never pulls you into himself into a relationship with him without sending you out in service to others that's the big story here I'm going to finish on this you know when the when when Paul looks back on this passage in Galatians he talks about this passage in Galatians he describes it as the gospel he says this is the gospel I read it to you Galatians 3 8 to 9 and the scripture for seeing 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 this is the gospel there is a demanding call [17:43] Jesus places the same call on you and me walk away from the things the fragile things you put your trust in and trust me that's that's called repentance there's a demanding call followed by an impossibly good promise I will bless you and I will give you what you can't get by living your life just for yourself there's a demanding call a great promise and then he says I will bless others through you folks you are now on mission and what will that look like for your life wow gave you one idea there's lots more isn't there that's for you and Jesus to work out but I have more ideas let's stand real him true to that

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