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WHEN GOD CALLS

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Introduction: Review of VBS

1. Certificates

2. Thank you notes

3. Seven C's of History: Creation, Corruption, Catastrophe, Confusion, Christ, Cross, Consummation

Now, folks, this is where our VBS and today's sermon intersect. You see, we've worked through the book of Genesis in church over the last many months covering those first four C's: Creation, Corruption, Catastrophe, and last week we talked about the Confusion at the Tower of Babel. We've come to a point in the Scriptural record where God is largely silent for a period of about two hundred years after the Babel event; but the great thing about God is that He is active, even when we can't see that with our finite vision.

After the Babel event, humanity spread over an increasingly large portion of the world, eventually spreading to all corners of the earth. Most people and cultures continued to reject God, although they retained some cultural memory of Him and His work. Did you know, for example, that there are over 250 flood legends from around the world? There are flood legends in just about every culture. Obviously the names and certain events were changed from the truth, corrupted over the ages by oral tradition and rejection of the truth; but there are recognizable elements of the truth to be found in cultures far and wide. The Chinese apparently kept the truth alive in their early written language and in their worship of the true God of Heaven, whom they called Shang Di. It's a fascinating study to see the parallels between this ancient belief in Shang Di and the truth of the Bible. Even the ancient Chinese language preserves the truth. For example, the ancient Chinese word for *large boat* used the symbol for *boat* along with two other symbols: *eight* and *people*. The ancient word for *tempter* is made of the symbols *devil*, *tree*, and *cover*. There is much more as well, but I'm going to press on.

God also spoke to Job about this time in history. We don't know exactly when the events of the book of Job unfold, but I think it's interesting that God is silent for most of the book while Job and his friends try to figure things out. When God does speak, He points to natural phenomena and creatures to show His presence and His power in the earth. He says to Job, essentially, "Who made this? Who made that? Am I not stronger and wiser than the things I've made?" Of interest to me is that apparently the earth was cooler then because Job knew about snow down there in the land of Uz, and apparently Job had seen dinosaurs because God used two different kinds to show Job his power. One is called *Leviathan*, which seems to be some kind of Allosaurus or T. Rex, and the other is called *Behemoth*, which is described exactly like an Apotaurus.

But now we come back to Genesis. While it seems God is silent, He is working out His plan. That plan is going to involve a man and His family and ultimately all of us. Let's read Genesis 12:1-3:

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

God here speaks to Abram, possibly for the first time. At this point, notice that God does *not* reveal His whole plan. He gives Abram enough light, enough revelation, to take a first step of faith.

That's what God does: He gives us enough light to respond in faith. He has not left Himself without a witness in this earth. As revealed in Job, and Romans chapter one, among other places, God shows that His design of the natural world is enough to cause us to seek more revelation from Him. Friends, recall Psalm 19:1-3:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

God's first and most obvious witness is His work in the natural world. Through nature, He calls to all men everywhere. Those that respond receive more light from Him. Cornelius in Acts 10 is a good example of this: he believed in God and did the best he could on his own, and God responded by sending him a missionary. In Jonah's day, there were people in Ninevah ready to repent, even though Jonah wasn't ready to share the message with them! The promise that God gives in James 4:8 is for all men everywhere, not just for believers: "*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.*"

God calls all men everywhere through general revelation (i.e., nature), but general revelation is not enough to save us. We need special revelation, the Bible. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). God calls us to know Him as He has revealed Himself in Scripture. Yes, He is the Creator; yes, He is the Judge of the Universe; but the Bible tells us that He longs to have a relationship with us. He desires to be our Heavenly Father.

And that is where this story of Abram comes in. God had a special mission for Abram, and Abram took the first step by faith. That step led to the next, and the next, and the next, and Abram's steps of faith in God have echoed down through the centuries to me and you.

You see, God used Abram to found a nation to preserve His truth. It is largely through Abram's descendants that God revealed the Bible bit by bit over time; and it is through Abram's descendants that He chose to send His own Son, Jesus Christ the Righteous, to restore us to fellowship with Him.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (Romans 5:12).

Yes, Adam had brought sin into this world, and because of that sin, we are all sinners.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Not one of us is perfect enough to enter heaven on our own. We need a Savior.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23).

God used Abram because Abram responded in faith. He was called to leave what he knew and simply trust in God. God responded to Abram's faith by giving him more revelation, more truth, and more privilege.

What about you? Have you accepted God's revelation today? Do you believe that you are a sinner and that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners? If not, then believe me when I say that God is calling! I'm going to close with a familiar verse because it is the summary of God's work in history:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Whosoever will may come!