

Noah then spent 120 years building the Ark and gathering the food and the animals as God had instructed. On the day the flood waters were to come, God instructed Noah to enter the Ark. Noah, his family, and the animals entered the Ark and God shut them in using the door that Noah made in the side of the Ark.

The removing of all humans who rejected God and the saving of Noah and His family was necessary for God to stay on the mission of filling the earth with His image bearers. We know this was still at God's heart because He reiterates the mission that He gave to Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:28) to Noah in Genesis 9:1.

We see a genuine partnership between God and Noah with God instructing and providing what Noah needed and Noah listening, believing, and moving in the direction God instructed. Noah was definitely walking in the Larger Story of God along with God in order to participate in the mission of God.

## ISRAEL

*Genesis 11-22 (Abraham); Exodus 1-Deuteronomy 34 (Moses)*

### CONTEXT

In all that happened from the time of Noah's Ark to Abraham, God was still about accomplishing his mission of filling the earth with his image bearers. We get a clear picture of this at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. The people of the earth, all with one language and culture, rejected God's mandate to spread out across the earth and, instead, built a tower unto themselves to demonstrate their capabilities. So, God confused their languages and dispersed them over the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:9)

### ABRAHAM

Interestingly, once the earth was filled with broken image bearers, God now began a plan to bring about redemption and restoration to the people groups of the earth. God initiated this plan by choosing one man from which He would form a nation to

represent Him to all the other nations of the earth. This was the nation of Israel.

We see Abraham's calling in Genesis 12:1-7. God called Abraham to leave all that he knew and to travel to an unknown land that God promised to show him. God also made promises to Abraham that would have a future fulfillment:

- I **will** make of you a great nation.
- I **will** bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing.
- I **will** bless those who bless you. I **will** curse him to dishonors you.
- In you all the families of the earth **will** be blessed
- I **will** give this land (Canaan) to your offspring.

**God** initiated the call. **Abraham** responded to the call. **God** provided all that **Abraham** needed to participate in the call. God motivated Abraham through future promises (some of which are still in process of being fulfilled today).

Again, we see God forming a partnership with Abraham and giving Abraham the opportunity to step into His mission of redeeming and restoring the image bears who were now spread across the face of all the earth. Although this mission would not be completed in Abraham's lifetime, Abraham believed God and moved in the direction God was leading.

This partnership and set of promises were passed down to Abraham's son Isaac and to Isaac's son Jacob (whose name was later changed to Israel). Through a series of circumstances, Jacob and his family fled to Egypt to escape a famine. While in Egypt, Jacob's family grew over the next 400 years into a nation of more than three million people consisting of 12 tribes who descended from Jacob's 12 sons. The Pharaoh of Egypt enslaved the Israelites

to keep them from rising up and siding with Egypt's enemies.

**MOSES**

When God's people (descended from Abraham) cried out to God for release, He raised up Moses to deliver them. God was now ready for the next phase of His Larger Story of redeeming and restoring the peoples of the earth. As we read through the account in Exodus 3, we notice some things of interest. God is the one who called Moses and gave to Moses all the provisions necessary to accomplish the mission of setting God's people free from slavery in Egypt. In verse 12, God promised to be with Moses as he engages in the mission. God also gave Moses two powerful signs to use to help convince the people of Israel to listen to Moses. God then provided Moses' brother Aaron to be a spokesperson for Moses. Yet, Moses had to make the choice to Go.

Once again, we're seeing God work through a partnership with human agency to accomplish His Larger Story goal. God called Moses. God provided all Moses needed. Moses then made a choice to live life in God's His Larger Story.

**ISRAEL**

God's plan at this point in history, to redeem and restore the people's of the earth, was to raise up a nation of people who would know God and represent Him to the rest of the world. This nation was called Israel. We understand that Israel was to represent God to the rest of the world from Exodus 19:5-6. God's Law was given to distinguish Israel from the rest of the world by the way they lived and by the way they put God's love on display to one another.

God gave to Israel all they needed in order to represent Him to others. He gave them leaders, prophets, His Word, and His Presence in the Tabernacle. He gave them a way to relate to Him through faith in His Word. He provided a covering for their sin through the sacrificial system that maintained the ability to relate

to Him. He promised to protect and prosper them as long as they continued loving Him and living in His Larger Story.

As with Abraham and Moses, God formed a partnership with the entire nation of Israel for them to live in His Larger Story of redeeming and restoring the peoples of the earth. And, He provided all that they needed in order to carry out this mission. Different from Abraham and Moses, the nation of Israel, by and large, failed to believe God and thus, chose not to live in His Larger Story.

Although Israel failed to live in God's Larger Story, God did not change the goal of His Larger Story, to fill the earth with image bearers who love Him and one another in a way that reflects the love in the Trinity. The Law of God exposed Israel's internal sin problem, but could not do anything to actually transform them from the inside out to love God and the love one another. To understand more about Israel and their place in the Larger Story of God's mission, see the course Israelology (ISR 403) in the Institute.

## JESUS

*Luke 1-2; John 1-21*

God did not give up on his plan to fill the earth with His image bearers. Through many of the prophets of Israel, God continued to foretell of one who would come to deal with the sin of the world and to set Israel free from captivity (to sin and to her political oppressors).

When Jesus came onto the scene, humanity was in a very dark place. God had chosen to not send prophets to speak to his people on his behalf for over 400 years. Israel had been dispersed into many of the surrounding nations around the country of Israel. Only two of the twelve tribes of Israel actually lived in the land of