



"Community in the Call & Establishment of Abram & Israel"

Idea: The restoration of the community God desired and intended for humanity began through the calling and blessing of Abraham and the establishment of Israel as God's called out people.

Intro: This summer we are examining the concept of biblical community. We have come up with a simple definition of community as that of "a unified body of individuals." We have said that another way of describing community is *one-together*. In our study we have discovered that community exists and is desired in this world because creation follows the pattern of its Creator. God is a communal Deity. He is not one of many gods; there is not a plurality of gods. Instead, there is only one God, and He exists in three distinct Persons. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit dwell together in perfect community. They are equal in being but subordinate in role.

God created all that there is. Last Sunday we learned that every aspect of God's creation bears His mark of community. Every part of the universe has its counterpart. The galaxies are

made up of the stars that inhabit them. Planets have moons orbiting them. The sky corresponds to the land. Here on earth we observe the animals, birds, fish, and even insects grouping together in community. Humanity, however, is the apex of God's creation. It is man who was made in God's image and according to His likeness. There is something divine in man, which is not present within the rest of creation. We find in the creation accounts of Genesis 1 & 2 that Adam and Eve were created in the image and likeness of God. The Lord graciously gave humanity the gift of Himself to us. Like the other species of the animal kingdom, mankind groups together, yet man's creation has something that no other creature has, man can relate to God socially. In man God created a social being, one that He could relate to.

Inquiry: Adam was the very first human created. God formed him from the dust of the ground and breathed life into his nostrils. There on day six of creation, God tasked Adam with the duty of naming the animals. Through that process, Adam realized that something was missing. He found no helper suitable for him. Every other creature had its mate. Every other creature dwelled in community with a helper, but man had no helper. Thus, Adam understood the deep longing of his heart to live in community with God and other humans. God fashioned Eve from Adam's rib, and the two of them became a perfect reflection of the glorious community existing within the Godhead. Adam and Eve enjoyed the beauty and responsibility of overseeing God's creation without any sin (Gen 2:25).

One day Eve was approached by a serpent who questioned God's Word (Gen 3:1). The woman listened to the snake's argument against the command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She gave in to the temptation to question God's goodness and faithfulness. Thus, Adam and Eve rebelled against God by taking the fruit from the forbidden tree and eating it. Even though God had told them that the day they ate from it they would die (Gen 2:17), Adam and Eve took the fruit and sinned against their God (Gen 3:6).

Biblical community is progressively revealed in Scripture. We find its genesis in the Godhead. We discover that God built it into His creation. We also learn from the early chapters of Genesis that biblical community cannot be understood apart from the story of Adam's fall. It is here that we see the grace, mercy, and love of God displayed as He works to bring mankind back into community with Himself. As we look at community in the call and establishment of Abram and Israel, I want to point out two major biblical truths.

1. Man Stepped Away from God.

Read Genesis 3:6.

In taking the fruit from the forbidden tree and eating it, Adam and Eve stepped away from God. The effects of sin, following their rebellion are instantly evident in Scripture.

Read Genesis 3:7-8.

God had told Adam that if he ate from the tree he would die. They both instantly died spiritually when their teeth bit into the fruit. God had created Adam and Eve in His image and according to His likeness. God is holy; therefore, He created the two humans holy. By eating the fruit, they rebelled against God. They stepped away from Him. As a result, standing there in the Garden in their shame, they now fell short of God's glory (Rom 3:23). Adam's one trespass resulted in spiritual death for he and Eve and every person to come after him.

If that wasn't bad enough, the community that the man and woman enjoyed between one another was also broken. From this point till the end of time, a tension will be present in every relationship, even in marriage (Gen 3:16). The perfect relationship man had with the creation is also broken. Pain and suffering are

introduced into history. The woman will bring forth her offspring through pain (Gen 3:16). Likewise, the man will provide for his family through sweat and toil (Gen 3:17-18), and they both will experience the pain of physical death.

The breakdown in community is further illustrated in Genesis 4-11 as sin spreads and alienates mankind from both God and one another. In Genesis 4, the first murder takes place when Cain kills his brother Abel. Cain is portrayed as one who has rejected God. The vast majority of humanity followed in the ways of Cain, living and growing in a perpetual state of rebellion against God. Gen 4:17-24 provides a genealogy of Cain's descendants. They are depicted as godless and arrogant. Gen 6:1-7 describes the despicable spiritual and moral condition of man prior to the flood. Man's sinfulness was so great v. 6 indicates God regretted he had made man. Still, God retained a remnant of people who loved and feared him. A third son named Seth was born to Adam (Gen 4:25; 5:3). He was a godly man who bore godly offspring. It was through Seth's lineage that Noah was born (Gen 5:28-31). In Noah and his immediate family, God preserved a remnant of community through the flood that destroyed the rest of humanity. Following the flood, though, sin still reigned in the hearts of mankind. Their community remained broken even though they continued to come together. In Genesis 11, humanity makes a great attempt to develop a sense of community. They desired to make a great name for themselves (Gen 11:4) by building a city and a tower that would reach up into the heavens. Man sought to establish community without God in the equation. Their coming together at Babel was to declare their independence from God. In response to their rebellious actions, God scattered humanity and confused the languages so that sinful mankind would be unable to come together without him (Gen 11:7-9).

Man in his sin, from Adam to us today, has walked away from God. Adam's trespass has brought condemnation to all men (Rom 5:18). Rebellion became the nature of man; therefore, every person is born in rebellion against God because of the nature of sin. Man is hopeless, because it is impossible for him to be freed from sin. The Good News is that though it may be impossible with man, all things are possible with God (Matt 19:26).

2. God Stepped Toward Man.

God has been stepping toward sinful, rebellious man from the days of the Garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve sinned, God's cursed them, but even in the midst of the curse He offered grace. God spoke of a Messiah who would come and redeem them from sin. Then foreshadowing that redemption, God sacrificed a lamb and made clothing to cover their shame. When Cain and his descendants continued to rebel against God and corrupt His creation, God gave Adam and Eve a son named Seth (Gen 4:25). Seth was a godly man who raised godly children that called upon God. Cain's line, however, dominated the culture of the world. The sin and rebellion became so great that God decided to destroy the world (Gen 6:7), yet God chose to be gracious toward one of Seth's descendants. Noah was the great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandson of Seth, and through him God preserved a faithful remnant of people.

Sin still reigned in human hearts after the flood, so man continued to walk away from God. They sought to live in community without God in the equation, which is pictured best in the Tower of Babel. God's actions in Babel did not mitigate his desire to be in community with humanity as evidenced in Genesis 12.

[Read Genesis 12:1-3.](#)

It is here that God calls to Abram. This call by God is a vivid step toward communal restoration. It is possible, but not proven, that Abram was an idolater like other men; yet it is clear that he was sinful. James Montgomery Boice asserts, "There was nothing in Abram himself that commended him to God." God did not look down from heaven and find saving faith in Abram. Instead, as he looked down from heaven, God found in Abram what he found in every other person: a heart that was filled with evil all the time (Gen 6:5). Nevertheless, God in his sovereignty and wisdom chose to call to Abram and make a covenant with him. God told Abram to leave his country and go to a land that he would show him. He promised to make Abram a great nation, give him a great name, and make him a blessing to all nations. It is here that the restoration first mentioned in Genesis 3:15 takes a huge step toward fulfillment.

Later in the story, God changed Abram's name to Abraham (Gen 17:5). The change is significant. His former name meant "exalted father" or "father of many," but his new name meant "father of many peoples." God also promised to give Abraham a son through whom he would become the father of many nations (Gen 17:16). As revelation unfolds, the son promised and born to Abraham was named Isaac (Gen 21:3-4). Isaac had a son named Jacob (Gen 25:26). God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Gen 32:28). Israel had twelve sons, and those sons became the twelve tribes making up the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel is the nation God promised to make of Abraham. It is also the nation through whom the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Abraham's greatest descendent, as both Matthew and Luke indicate in their respective gospels, is the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38). It is through Jesus Christ that the promised blessing has come to every nation for those who call upon his name. The restoration of the

community God desired and intended for humanity began through the calling and blessing of Abraham and the establishment of Israel as God's called out people. As the revelation continues, community will ultimately be restored in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: The rebellion of man is most evident. Every single person has and continues to walk away from God, yet what we find in the teachings of Scripture is that God continually walks toward rebellious man. God walked toward Adam. He walked toward Seth. He walked toward Noah. He walked toward Abraham. And today He walks toward you. God is pursuing you. He has made a way for your rebellion and sin to be forgiven. He has made a way for community with God to be reestablished. He has made a way for you to be raised from spiritual death to life. The way is found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. – Romans 5:18