

THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 9:1-3, 7-17; 11:1-9; (10:1-32).

LESSON 7 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 9:1-3,

1 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

Genesis 9:7-17;

7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

8 And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,

9 And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;

10 And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

11 And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a

notes:

The Rainbow

God's blessing was upon Noah and his sons when they left the ark. God gave them a wonderful promise that He would never again destroy the people of the earth with a flood. God made a covenant with Noah and his sons. This agreement was between God and man. It was a promise that God would protect and bless them. As a pledge to His promise, God gave the rainbow. Not only did Noah and his family see the rainbow but also we today can see the token of God's promise in the sky. The rainbow is a wonderful reminder, putting worship in the heart and praise on the lips of God's people. Many other people look upon it only as a thing of nature -- the sun's rays reflected on the drops of rain, which cause the colours of the spectrum. There is no godly reverence in their heart.

Babel

The families of the sons of Noah were the people of the earth. They lived in the land of Shinar, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. They had gone there from the mountains of Ararat, where the ark came to rest after the Flood. One of Noah's sons, Ham, had a grandson named Nimrod. Nimrod was a mighty hunter, and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, which, we are told, became the city of Babylon. Besides being the site of an ancient city, there is another reason why Babel is remembered.

Ham, along with his two brothers, Shem and Japheth, probably told their families about the great Flood. No doubt they had heard that God had said they should replenish, or fill, the earth. But they did not like the idea of scattering themselves about over the earth. They liked the plain of Shinar. All the relatives lived there. They all spoke the same language. They talked it over and decided to build a tower, the top of which might reach Heaven. They gave as their reason for building such a tower: "Lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

A Tower

To build even a tall tower would mean much work. There were no stones to use, so they made brick, dried them thoroughly, and used slime, probably a mineral pitch, which is commonly used in Assyria to this day. Their ambition was to make a name for themselves, and they were spurred on by pride. They must have worked hard: some digging clay, some forming bricks, some operating the kilns, while others carried bricks, mixed the slime mortar, and laid the bricks in place. All this work and then failure! They made a name for themselves but not a good name. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (Proverbs 22:1). Everyone who reads the Bible knows about the tower of Babel and the confusion it caused.

The Way

How foolish of the people to think that they could build a tower to reach Heaven! Even in these days of great knowledge and modern machinery, the tallest building in the world, towering over 1,472 feet, comes far short of reaching Heaven; and the highest altitude man has reached by aircraft 79,494 feet above the earth, did not bring him into God's dwelling place.

God provided a way by which man can dwell with Him in Heaven. The way into Heaven is not by good works. It is by obedience to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said, "I am the way,

covenant between me and the earth.

14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:

15 And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

Genesis 11:1-9;

1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Many people try to buy their way, or to work their way, in order to be with God throughout all eternity. Instead of obeying God's Word, they make a religion of their own. They change the Bible to suit themselves. They are deceived into thinking that they actually are doing the right thing. In the Proverbs we read: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 16:25).

Praying

Some children think that they will go to Heaven because their parents are Christians. They think that they will qualify for Heaven by their parents' prayers. But the words of the Lord came to Ezekiel, saying: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:20). Ezekiel continues by saying that one can repent, have his sins forgiven, and do that which is right, and then he will have eternal life. The prayers of Christian parents are wonderful and helpful. But each person must make his peace with God.

A Thief and a Robber

Jesus likened Heaven to a sheepfold, and Christians to the flock. Jesus said: "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9). He also said: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). Those who try to climb up some other way will fail as did the people who started the tower of Babel.

Without God

The families of Noah's sons had said, "Let us make us a name." These people were planning their lives and building without considering the will of God. They probably felt that they did not need any help. They did not pray and ask God what He thought of their plan. They did not want to do what God had said. They were rebelling against God. Nimrod's name means "rebel." When a person wants his own way instead of God's way, he is rebelling against God.

Nothing Hidden

God knew what was taking place at Babel. "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings" (Job 34:21). "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings" (Proverbs 5:21). You may remember some wrong that you did and no one else knows. But God knows about it. Perhaps your Parents or teacher did not see, but God did. Unless you ask forgiveness and make that right, it will be revealed some day. We read: "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops" (Luke 12:2, 3).

Scattered

The Lord went down to have a look at Babel and the tower. He saw more than the city and the tower. God saw rebellion in the hearts of the people. They thought that they would be secure. They put their trust in material things -- the tower of brick and slime. The very thing that they feared happened. They were scattered. God did it. God confused their language so that they could not understand one another. Instead of one language there were many. Can you imagine the confusion? As they were working, one man would try to call for bricks but no one could understand what he said. Someone else would try to get help to take the bricks out of the kiln but no one knew what he said. They finally "left off" building the city and

7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Genesis 10:1-32.

1 Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.

2 The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

3 And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

4 And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

5 By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

6 And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.

7 And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land

did not finish it. They did not like to work together; they did not like to live together when they could not understand one another. They began to scatter about on the face of the earth.

Today there is a need of interpreters, foreign dictionaries, international code, and other means by which people of different nationalities may understand the language of others.

That is only a part of the trouble that was brought about by people who put their confidence in the things of this world. Children of wealthy parents often depend on money to help them in the time of trouble. Some young people look forward to education as their only means of success. Some children depend entirely upon their ability to talk their way out of trouble. Many depend upon the skill of man and modern drugs to insure their good health. What will they do when all those things fail? Some people may seem to succeed now, but what will they do when they stand before God? The Bible tells of a time when idols of silver and gold (money) will be cast to the moles and bats (**Isaiah 2:20**; 20 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;). Jesus never fails but all else has and will fail. From the Psalms of David we read, "Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust" (Psalm 40:4).

Of One Blood

From this lesson about the tower of Babel we learn a fact of history, which is not explained elsewhere. Many people have wondered about the different languages of people, and how people happen to be living in so many places of the earth. The Bible tells us that Noah had three sons and "of them was the whole earth overspread." The Lord mixed up their language that they could not "understand one another's speech". The Lord scattered the people over the earth.

From Noah's three sons, the people of the earth were divided: Shem was the father of the Hebrews; Japheth's descendants were the Greeks, Romans, and Anglo-Saxon races; while Ham's descendants largely live in Africa. The Lord "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26).

QUESTIONS

1. Of what is the rainbow a sign?
2. What are the names of Noah's three sons?
3. What does Nimrod's name mean?
4. Of what was the tower of Babel made?
5. Why did the people start to build the tower?
6. How high did they plan to make it?
7. How were people scattered over the earth?
8. In whom should we put our trust?
9. How many nations did God make of one blood?

of Shinar.

11 Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah,

12 And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.

13 And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,

14 And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim.

15 And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth,

16 And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite,

17 And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,

18 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.

19 And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.

20 These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

21 Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born.

22 The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.

23 And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.

24 And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber.

25 And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.

26 And Joktan begat Almodad,

and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth,
and Jerah,
27 And Hadoram, and Uzal, and
Diklah,
28 And Obal, and Abimael, and
Sheba,
29 And Ophir, and Havilah, and
Jobab: all these were the sons of
Joktan.
30 And their dwelling was from
Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar
a mount of the east.
31 These are the sons of Shem,
after their families, after their
tongues, in their lands, after their
nations.
32 These are the families of the
sons of Noah, after their
generations, in their nations: and
by these were the nations divided
in the earth after the flood.