

THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES

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

LESSON 7 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5).

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 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

Bible References:

I The Earth Repopulated

1. A blessing was pronounced upon Noah and his posterity, Genesis 9: 1-3.
2. The rainbow was given as a token of God's covenant for the preservation of man, Genesis 9:8-17.
3. The earth was repopulated by the descendants of Noah, Genesis 9:1, 7; 10:1-32.

II Man Against God

1. The people of the earth were united by a common language and speech, Genesis 11:1.
2. United by one speech and language, the people of the earth joined to make a name for themselves, Genesis 11:2-4;

Psalms 49:11;

11 Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.

Isaiah 14:13, 14;

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Habakkuk 2:5.

5 Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people:

III The Evil Alliance of Men Destroyed

1. God observed that all men were united in an evil cause, and that they would not be restrained from further evils, Genesis 11: 5, 6;

Genesis 6:5.

5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

2. God confused their language, and caused the people of the earth to be scattered, Genesis 11:7-9;

Job 5:12-14;

12 He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.

13 He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.

14 They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night.

Isaiah 37:26, 27;

26 Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into ruinous heaps.

27 Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.

I Corinthians 1:19, 20.

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the

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 throughly. 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.
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

disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

Notes

Aftermath of the Flood

When the flood had spent its fury upon the earth, there were but eight people alive -- Noah and his wife, his three sons, and their wives. When once again the earth was habitable, these remaining eight received God's blessing, and they were commanded to go forth and replenish the earth.

God made a covenant with Noah and his sons, for perpetual generations, that He would not again destroy the earth with the waters of a flood. God declared that He would place a rainbow in the cloud as a reminder to all who would see it. Ever since that time that beautify phenomena of nature, the rainbow, has reminded men of God's promise not to destroy the world again with water. There was every opportunity presented to Noah, his sons, and their descendants to so employ their lives before God that life would have been most blessed in every respect. The antediluvians with all their wickedness were gone; Noah and his family were God-fearing people, and with God's blessings the future looked bright. There was reason to believe that after the terrible lesson of the flood, men would take warning and follow after righteousness and serve the Lord.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that Noah told the story of the flood many times to his grandchildren, and their children and that the story of the flood was well known to the generations of Noah. Also the earth for many generations bore fresh and vivid evidence of the deluge that had swept the earth of all its wicked inhabitants. How great a warning this must have spoken to the descendants of Noah of the folly of forsaking God! But the Bible records that it was not long before they, too, had forsaken and refused the ways of righteousness and turned to their own self-sufficiency.

The people of the earth were closely associated because of their common language and speech. They soon became agreed in a common purpose, and they combined their talents, abilities, and strength to bring that purpose into operation. Unfortunately, they had purposed to make a tower that would "reach unto heaven," and to make a name for themselves. Their building was destined to failure because they had left God out of their plans.

Monument of Rebellion

Men whose hearts are darkened by sin have no right conception of God, or of God's power. What these men hoped to obtain by the building of a mammoth tower is a little vague. They feared to be scattered abroad; and perhaps they felt, as do most sinners, that God could not see them in a crowd. They were not lacking for some evil genius to lead them in this mass rebellion against the government of God, even as the nations of the world have not lacked for some unprincipled person to defy God's precepts. The Psalmist expressed this truth, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Psalm 2:2-4). This is exactly what happened when the tower of Babel was being built.

Nimrod and Great Babylon

The tenth chapter of Genesis, often called the table of nations, lists the generations of Noah. Here is chronicled the names of the tribes from which sprang all the nations of the earth. God recorded these in His Word in evidence that He had not yet finished dealing with them. His plan of salvation was eventually revealed to include them all.

One of the descendants of Ham, a son of Noah, was Nimrod.

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 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

His name means "rebellion." He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; and most Bible students believe that he was a mighty hunter in an evil sense. That is, he used his great prowess to dominate men for his evil purposes; but his deeds did not go unobserved by God. In other words, his deeds were so evil that they came under the particular notice of God. "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel" (Genesis 10: 9, 10). It is on the basis of this text that the reasonable premise is given that Nimrod was the guiding personality in uniting the people into the work of building the tower of Babel. He perhaps was one of the first dictators in the world.

It is thought that on the site of the tower of Babel the kingdom of Babylon had its beginning. The Babylonian meaning of Babel is "gate of God"; but, the meaning in the Hebrew is "confusion" -- and it was called that after God scattered the people by confusing their languages. It is significant that Babylon, that great empire so renowned for its great wealth, pride, pomp, and all that is the opposite of the Kingdom of God, should have had its beginning in the evil heart of Nimrod. "An evil man out of the evil treasure [of the heart] bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:35).

Despite the evil ability of Nimrod, he would not have had such success if the hearts of the people had not also been evil and susceptible to such schemes of worldly glory and fame. The dictators of our modern day would not have had such success if they had not found many to help them in their evil causes who were as willing students in evil as their teachers were quick to teach them.

No Fear of God

An unbiased study of the Book of Genesis should convince anyone of the depravity of the unregenerate heart, and the desperate sinfulness of men when they are left to their own devices, without interference by God. The sin principle came into the soul of man as a result of the fall in the Garden of Eden. No good works that man can do will remove it. The threatenings of neither God nor man will turn a sinner into a righteous man. No amount of good resolutions will avail to remove sin from the human soul. Only through the Blood of Jesus Christ as it is applied to the soul will sin be removed from the souls of men.

Although God destroyed all but eight people from the earth, and those eight were righteous people, yet soon the peoples of the earth had again utterly forsaken God.

Men are born in sin (see **Psalm 51:5**; 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. **Romans 3:23**; 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;), and the righteousness of their parents will not give them salvation. Righteousness cannot be passed on from parents to their children, but each individual must seek God's righteousness for himself. Noah's righteousness did not avail for his descendants when they refused to obtain such righteousness for themselves. Their refusal to seek God for themselves made them willing dupes for such an evil business as that of building a tower as a symbol of their own supposed self-sufficiency and might.

It is astounding that within a few short generations the peoples of the earth should so lose their fear of God that they did not hesitate to join themselves in a work of defiance against God. The people no doubt knew of God's promise that He would not again destroy the earth with water. The rainbow in the clouds was an ever-present reminder of that promise; so perhaps they felt safe from God's wrath. Yet with the still visible and fresh evidence before them daily of the terrible destruction that had been upon the world and the people that dared to forsake God, they should have reasoned that God could bring as terrible judgements upon them if they sinned as their forefathers sinned. Sin has such demoralising power and is such a potent anaesthesia to the soul that men lose concern for the

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.

terrible risks they take when they break the laws of God.

God observed that because of their common language they were unified in their common purpose to build a great tower that was symbolic of their independence from God. Because of this unity of purpose there would be nothing to restrain them from further evils in the future. So God confused their language and speech, which caused the people to be scattered throughout the land. The Lord does not permit the world to go its way without some restraint. If the Lord did not intervene in the affairs of men, the world would soon be totally given over unto sin and lawlessness.

May the men of this twenty-first century consider that the day is fast approaching when the world is again going to be joined in a common cause, under the leadership of the evil genius of Satan. The Antichrist, the false prophet, and the beast will rule the world in a trinity of evil. The world will bow to their will, and God will be defied by this government of tyranny. But God shall again confound the peoples of the world as effectually as He did when He confounded the builders of the tower of Babel when He confused their speech.

QUESTIONS

1. Were the people righteous or unrighteous after the flood?
2. How do we know that the descendants of Noah were familiar with the event of the flood?
3. What common purpose did the people of the earth have? What united them in this purpose?
4. Who was Nimrod? And where was his kingdom, Babel, founded?
5. What does Babel mean?
6. Why were not the people who built the tower of Babel afraid of God?
7. Why did the Lord confuse the speech of the people?
8. Why did God stop the building of the tower of Babel?
9. Does God intervene in the affairs of men today? Why?
10. Why did not God destroy the builders of the tower of Babel as He did the antediluvians?