

Bible Stories

Babel

Genesis 11:1

May 28, 2022

Today we continue our series: **BIBLE STORIES**

Coming to Genesis 10, we find another set of Genealogies, which follows the 3 sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth

- **Genesis 10:2-5** - The sons of **Japheth** were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras....
- **Genesis 10:6-20** - And the sons of **Ham** were Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan....⁸ Now **Cush** became the father of **Nimrod**; he became a mighty one on the earth. ⁹ He was a **mighty hunter** before the LORD {had superior strength}¹⁰ **And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.** ¹¹ **From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah**
 - In the 2nd generation after the flood, Nimrod - the mighty hunter - went to the land of Shinar and it is at Shinar that Nimrod builds the city of Babel.
- **Genesis 10:22-32** - The sons of **Shem** were Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud and Aram....²⁴ And Arpachshad became the father of Shelah; and Shelah became the father of Eber. ²⁵ And two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was **Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided;** and his brother's name was Joktan.
 - Peleg was born in the 4th generation after the flood and it was during his life time that the events of the Tower of Babel took place.

The Genealogy of Shem's family continues in Genesis 11:10-26, which we will look at more closely next week, but for today we are going to focus on the little story that was placed right in the middle of Shem's Genealogy - the story of the Tower of Babel.

Genesis 11:1-9 - Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. ² And it came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. ⁴ And they said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." ⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. ⁶ And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

John helped me with a little math - as he does - to come to a rough idea of the size of the population at the time of our story. We came to a # of approximately 500,000 people. Now, as of 2020, the size of San Jose was 1.01 million people, so we are talking ½ the population of San Jose. Not a massive #, then.

Everyone spoke the same language and had an aversion to leaving home. Great cities had been built and the rainbow covenant had been forgotten.

Remember..... Every time they saw a rainbow it was to remind them of God's unconditional promise to never destroy the world again with a global flood. Yet, it didn't take long for them to look inward to their own genius and choose to try to outsmart God. The structure - a tower - would be a symbol of their pride and arrogance and rebellion against God as well as their united power and self-sufficiency.

They didn't need God to rule over them—they could rule themselves; they could reach the heavens on their own terms, with their own hands, by their own means, using their own skills - not to the honor and glory of God, but to the honor and glory of themselves.

Sound familiar?

- **Isaiah 14:13-14** - But you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.
- **Daniel 4:28-31** - All *this* happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. ²⁹ Twelve months later he was walking on the *roof* of the royal palace of Babylon. ³⁰ The king reflected and said, **'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'** ³¹ While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, *saying....* '

This grand scheme was a deliberate rejection of God's instruction to **"fill the earth"** {Genesis 9:1} and a flagrant example of the insidious pride of man - **"Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."**

Some historians believe that Nimrod had an additional motive for wanting to build the tower of Babel.

Notice the words of the ancient historian Josephus: **"He also said he would be revenged on God if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach and that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers"** (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 1, Chapter 4).

Evolutionists would like us to believe that early humans scraped their knuckles on the ground and that it took 10's of thousands of years for man to venture out of their caves and advance beyond "hunter/gatherer" to agriculture and another who knows how long before they were capable of writing or the advanced thought required to construct civilizations with cities at their center.

While it is true, that our advancements have been rapid in the last 100 years compared to the previous, say, 500 years, it is a mistake to assume that technological capabilities are restricted to us **"moderns"**. No doubt, Noah would have brought a library of information with him into the ark as evidenced by the fact that it only took 4 generations, for a people who had, for all intent, landed on the moon, to build great cities and have the capability to think up and execute the building of a tower that **"reached to heaven."**

God had gone looking for Adam and Eve in **Genesis 3:9** and saw the extent of man's sin in **Genesis 6:5**. Now He went to see what humans were up to on the Plain of Shinar and came to an interesting conclusion: **"They all speak the same language and if this is what they are capable of now, nothing will be impossible for them in the future."**

God knew that He must, once again intervene. This time He disrupted their plans in a single step. One language became many.

Today there are over **7,117 languages world-wide** {studyanylanguage.com}:

- Asia – 2,294 languages
- Africa – 2144 languages
- America – 1061 languages
- Pacific – 1313 languages
- Europe – 287 languages

It was a genius move. Construction stopped and the project abandoned as the people went in a desperate search to find anyone with whom they could communicate.

The result:

- By default, the people would do what God had wanted them to do all along - fill the earth.
- Global unity was broken - slowing the spread of sin.

Some went North. Some went South. Some went East. Some went West and they took their knowledge with them - effectively forcing every community to start over from scratch and contend with knowledge inequality. Now hunter/gatherers would live next door to tillers of the soil and builders of cities.

This is an important story.

It shows us how quickly sin and rebellion infiltrate and how deceitful the human heart really is - including yours and mine.

It shows us that even though we make grand plans and often, deliberately, step outside of the Will of God, He has the final say.

It shows us where the development of all future cultures begins. While we may have different skin colors and speak different languages and come from different cultures, our origins are the same. Deep within all our collective DNA is one post-flood father = NOAH.

That's it..... The story of the Tower of Babel.

What are your thoughts on this story?

Next week..... Abraham.