

The Table of Nations and the Tower of Babel

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Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0 : 00] Genesis 10, verse 1 through chapter 11, verse 9. If you do not have a Bible today, there are some Bibles on the back table, and we would love for you to take that as our gift to you.

This is our sermon text for today. These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Sons were born to them after the flood. The sons of Japheth, Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tyrus.

The sons of Gomer, Ashkenaz, Riphthath, Togamah. The sons of Javan, Elisha, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

From these, the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans in their nations. The sons of Ham.

[1 : 03] Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. The sons of Cush, Saba, Havilah, Sabta, Ramah, and Sabtica.

The sons of Ramah, Sheba, and Dedan. Cush father Nimrod. He was the first on the earth to be a mighty man. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord.

Therefore, it is said, like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord. The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Kalneh, in the land of Shinar.

From that land, he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-er, Kela, and Rezin. Between Nineveh and Kela, that is the great city.

Egypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtahim, Pathrusim, Kaslahim, from whom the Philistines came, and Kaphturim.

[2 : 07] Canaan fathered Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth. And the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemurites, and the Hamathites.

Afterward, the clans of the Canaanites dispersed. And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza. And in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Adma, and Zeboim, as for Lasha.

These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations. To Shem also, the father of the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born.

The sons of Shem, Elam, Asher, Arpaxad, Lud, and Aram. The sons of Aram, Uz, Hul, Geether, and Mash.

Arpaxad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. To Eber were born two sons. The name of one was Pelag. For on his days, the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan.

[3 : 24] Joktan fathered Almadad, Shelef, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadaram, Uzal, Diklah, Obol, Abimiel, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab.

All these were the sons of Joktan. The territory in which they lived extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the east. These are the sons of Shem by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

These are the clans of the sons of Noah according to their genealogies in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

And they said to one another, Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly. And they had bricks for stone and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top to the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.

[4 : 43] And the Lord came down to the city and the tower which the children of man had built. And the Lord said, Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do.

And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down there and confuse their language so that they may not understand one another's speech.

So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth, and from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Heavenly Father, I pray that the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts would be pleasing and acceptable in your sight.

O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. How many of you have played chess before? I know all the kids' hands should go up, because sometimes Ben leads you in playing chess over here.

[6 : 06] Now, how many of you have played chess against an opponent whose skill far exceeds yours, or exceeded yours? Lots of the same hands have gone up. Yeah. You know, somebody that is so good that it seems like every single move you make just plays right into their strategy.

That is sort of what it's like, only times a billion, if you choose to align yourself against the Creator God. So you will think that you're carrying out your strategy, only to find out you're really furthering His in the end.

And we see that reality today in this famous Tower of Babel episode, which follows on the heels of this big, giant, confusing genealogy that you were amazed we actually read every single word.

Brad did a fantastic job of that. Yeah. Give it up for Brad. I don't know where... Nice. I actually want to...

Before we continue, do we really believe that every word is inspired by God in this book? I mean, that's why we read every word as we go through it.

[7 : 19] God has breathed out this word to us, even the names in the Genesis 10 genealogy. Now, I'll admit that in my history of reading Scripture, and especially reading through the book of Genesis, I typically glaze over these names.

I mean, it's going to take work to understand what's going on there. And so I kind of just blitz right past these genealogies. But I want us to see today how linked, actually, this genealogy, which is referred to as the Table of Nations, and I think we understand why.

We'll see more why. The Table of Nations and the Tower of Babel are linked together intentionally by Moses in Genesis. And we're going to see their great and their timeless significance.

Now, my aim is to show you today from these two passages how from one man, God made every nation to find blessing in him, but proud, self-seeking Babylon will be destroyed.

That's what I think. That's what I'm trying to argue in today's sermon. From one man, God made every nation to find blessing in him, but proud, self-seeking Babylon will be destroyed.

[8 : 34] If you haven't already, please turn to Genesis 10. Last week, if you were here, we considered the post-fall, post-flood state of the world. And we saw that, sadly, even after God rescued righteous Noah and his family through the flood, that still sin and curse remain.

But we also saw God's gracious providence, his faithfulness that was crystallized in the sign of the rainbow. And how because of those things, he's going to ensure his saving purposes for humanity and for the world will ultimately be accomplished.

And we're going to keep seeing that thread all throughout the book of Genesis. And so the camera, you know, we keep referring to Genesis sort of like this video that's being played before us.

The camera had, you know, whizzed through hundreds of years of history in Genesis 5. And then it pans in and slows down on Noah for four whole chapters. And now we're going to accelerate back into light speed here in chapter 10, which again is referred to as the table of nations.

And sorry if that's hard to see, but we're going to see how humanity is one blood. We're going to see humanity is one blood under the creator God in this table of nations.

[9 : 50] And so look with me at verse 1 of chapter 10. These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood.

And so you remember, these are the generations. It indicates to us that we've started a new section in the Genesis narrative. It's basically like the chapter headings that Moses gives.

And so the account of Noah has concluded. And now the account of Noah's sons begin. And that sons were born to them after the flood is evidence that the creation mandate is being fulfilled.

Right? And remember, again, this is after the fall of man, after the flood, the global flood, God has, as we saw last week, he has reaffirmed the Imago Dei.

Right? That man is made in the image of God. Man continues to retain the imprint of the divine created in his image. And mankind's commission to be fruitful and multiply and, kids, fill the earth.

[10:57] And adults should know that. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. That commission, given to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1, given again to Noah and his sons in Genesis 9, right here, it's being fulfilled.

Right? And sons were born to them after the flood. This is a sign of God's blessing on humanity. This is a good thing. Okay, now don't worry. We're not going to progress verse by verse through this entire genealogy.

We don't need to become experts in the geopolitical state of the ancient Near East, but we do need to understand enough of what's going on in this genealogy to know why it's there.

What is its significance? And so with that, what I want to do right now is just make some key observations through Genesis 10. And the first one, as you might have noticed, this genealogy looks different from the last one that we saw in Genesis 5, right, that Brad led us through.

That genealogy is what is known as a linear genealogy because it's tracing one line of descendants, right? It traced from Adam to Noah. We're going to see another linear genealogy next week.

[12:08] And Brad used three different analogies to help us understand that genealogy. Does anyone remember any of those three analogies? A road trip, yes.

There's pit stops along the way, right? These pit stops, but there is a destination, but the pit stops helped make the story richer. That was one of them. Anybody else? Yes, the countdown.

A countdown to a launch, right? There's this growing anticipation as the countdown gets closer to blast off, to which Brad was referring to ultimately to Jesus Christ. And then there was also a third one, a telescope, right?

The telescope, it's zooming past a lot of history to focus on one person. This genealogy isn't like that, actually. This genealogy is what's known as a segmented genealogy.

So I wanted you to get those images in your mind because we're going to use them next week. But this genealogy is what's a segmented genealogy. So instead of being like a telescope, a road trip, or a countdown, it's more like a tree, right?

[13:13] We understand family trees. This is a big family tree. So it's like a tree. It's also a map. It is a map of the nations of the world, and we're going to see why that's important later.

So thinking of this segmented genealogy as a tree, as a map, will help us. But let's make some more observations first. So I want you guys, looking in your Bibles, we're first going to look at Japheth's line in verses 2 through 5.

The genealogy begins with Japheth's line, and it receives a pretty brief treatment, right? Excuse me. Pretty brief treatment. Only a few verses are given to it, and it's probably because the nation of Israel would have the least amount of overlap with these nations, right?

These nations, they spread abroad to the north, to what is modern Turkey, and even further north, further up into Asia. They also spread abroad to the west, so to the Mediterranean, to Europe, and largely, like I said last week, they are what we would typically think of as the Gentiles when we get to the New Testament.

Moses refers, look at verse 5, Moses refers to them collectively as the coastland peoples. The coastland peoples. Now that's a term that's used all throughout Scripture, especially in the prophets, to refer to the distant nations of the earth, which God ultimately calls, turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, Isaiah 45, 22.

[14:42] So that's a little bit about Japheth's line. And then we see Ham's line. Now Ham's line, in contrast, receives a considerable amount of attention. And what is perhaps the most striking is how Israel's greatest enemies come from the line of Ham.

We see the Egyptians who would enslave them. We see the Assyrians and the Babylonians who would ravage Israel and carry them off into exile.

We see the Philistines who were a longtime enemy. That's where Goliath comes from, like a longtime enemy of Israel. And then we see some really strange verses that grab our attention

about Nimrod.

Okay, what is the deal with Nimrod? Look at verses 8 and 9. Cush fathered Nimrod. He was the first on earth to be a mighty man.

He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Therefore it is said, like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord. So all the boys and all the men are like, yeah, Nimrod.

[15:49] The mighty hunter, my hero. At first glance, it really does seem like Moses is praising Nimrod. But I want to ask, who does Nimrod allude back to in the book of Genesis?

Who do we think of in the book of Genesis? In Genesis chapter 6, when Moses was describing the superlative corruption of humanity, he spoke of other mighty men of old, the men of renown, Genesis 6, 4.

And what we were seeing there is how unlike the godly line of Seth, the line that was known for worship of God, worship of Yahweh, the legacy of the mighty men was their fierceness, their violence on earth.

Just like Genesis 4, Lamech, from Cain's line, who took fierce revenge on those who crossed him. And so Nimrod is not actually being praised.

He's being exposed as the seed of the serpent. There's thick irony in these verses. God has a sense of humor. There's irony here. And that he was a mighty man, a mighty hunter before the Lord, said twice.

[17:01] It's actually just, it's underscoring his legacy. Even in God's eyes, he was this mighty hunter. And then we learn in verse 10 and 11, he established a number of cities in the land of Shinar.

That's Mesopotamia. Which include Babel. So there's a hint at what's to come. Another hint also of his character and legacy. And he founded Nineveh, right?

Nineveh is the, what would later become the center of pagan wickedness in Assyria. That's where God calls Jonah in the future. He didn't want to go to Nineveh because they were wicked.

He didn't want them to experience God's mercy. Okay, so that's Nimrod's legacy. And then we see Canaan. So Canaan received special attention. And you'll recall from last week how following Ham's sin against Noah, Noah pronounced a curse against Canaan, Ham's youngest son, right? And so Canaan is a cursed people group. Noah had said, cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers. From Canaan's line would come all those ites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Archites, the Sinites, the Arvidites, the Zemurites, and the Hamathites.

[18:15] And these are, by and large, these are the pre-Israelite inhabitants of the land of Canaan to eventually be conquered and subjugated by Israel during her conquest in the promised land.

And this is why, if you look in verse 19, it goes on to define the boundaries of the land. The land becomes really important. We're going to see. These are the boundaries of the land, which would become Israel's as promised to Abram, which we're going to get to in just a few chapters.

Now, one more thing to point out from Ham's line. You notice Sodom and Gomorrah. Right?

Sodom, Gomorrah, and then Adma and Zeboim, which were some of the surrounding cities.

In just a few chapters, we will learn of the wickedness of these cities, which God will ultimately destroy. He sends fire and sulfur to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.

And he preserves only Abraham's nephew Lot, right, and his two daughters. So what a line, the line of Ham is. This is what characterizes Ham.

[19:21] Okay, so after dealing now with Japheth and Ham, Moses saves the line of Shem for last. And so we're going to look now at the line of Shem. Now, similar, Moses did a similar thing in Genesis 4 and 5, where he kind of got the seed of the serpent, the line of Cain, out of the way so he could focus on the godly line of Seth.

And that's what's going to happen. We're going to move next week to trace the line of Shem to Abram. And then we're going to spend a lot of time with Abraham's story.

Now, I just want to mention two key details from this portion. Eber's prominence and the earth's division. And these two things are related.

Notice how Eber is given prominence. He's actually mentioned first in the line of Shem, even though he's actually, he's a great grandson of Shem.

Now, why would he be mentioned first? Eber is the last one. As we read these names, we see he's the last one in this line before a division occurs, mentioned in verse 25.

[20 : 26] Now, this division is foreshadowing the next chapter, the division we're going to see at Babel. And Eber's son, Peleg, which means division. And then Jokton, those two are going to be divided.

And we're going to see it's the line of Peleg that becomes the line of promise. And that starts, so Eber is the last one before that split. And it's for this reason we think that Eber's name, which actually, the word Hebrew comes from his name, it becomes a designation for the people of Israel. And so that's why he's given this prominent place. All right, so those are just a smattering of, I think, what are some of the key details of these three lines.

But I want us to pan out and now consider even a bigger picture. Did you notice how each of those three segmented genealogies conclude?

Look at verse 5. Look at verse 20.

[21 : 32] These are the sons of Ham by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations. Look at verse 31. These are the sons of Shem by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

And then the last verse of the chapter. These are the clans of the sons of Noah according to their genealogies in their nations. And from these, the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood. So we see this repetition of clans, languages, lands, nations. Clans, languages, lands, nations. Now one other key detail will help us understand this.

This genealogy contains, if you count, 70 nations. 70. Now 70 is a picture of, it's 10 sevens.

It's a picture of wholeness, of completeness. All of the nations of the earth are represented here. So let me ask you this. Where is Genesis 10 declaring every people group on earth, every clan, every language, every land, every nation, to come from?

[22 : 37] Where do they come from? Anybody? Noah. Right? They're all descended from Noah. More importantly, where do they come from?

From God. From the Lord. Okay, all the people groups on earth find their origin, humanly speaking, in Noah.

And friends, that means that all of humanity shares a common bloodline. All of humanity is therefore of one race. Like we are the race of men with one giant family tree.

And all of the nations of the earth, ultimately speaking, they find their origin in the one and only creator, God. This is what Paul preaches to the Athenians on the Oropagus when he says this. He says, this is Acts chapter 17, the God who made the world and everything in it being Lord of heaven and earth does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

[23 : 45] And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth.

You see the allusion to Genesis chapter 10. On all the face of the earth, heaven determined allotted periods in the boundaries of their dwelling place.

From the distant coastland peoples of Japheth who would spread north and west to the African and Middle Eastern descendants of Ham, including the cursed line of Canaan, to the blessed line of Shem from whom eventually would come the nation of Israel.

Every person, every family, every clan, every tribe, every language, ethnicity, land, nation, belongs to the Lord, derives its existence from Him.

And this has everything to do with us today, does it not? You know, first it reminds us that God is utterly sovereign over the rise and the fall of kings and kingdoms and of nations, and we're going to explore that more in the next episode.

But it also reminds us that church, we belong to the Lord. You belong to the Lord. And every person on earth, whether they think they do or not, belongs to the Lord.

[25 : 04] Every human being on this planet owes their existence to the grace and the power of Almighty God. Each of us belongs to Him. When God rescued Noah in the ark, He was preserving the entire race of men.

Right? All of us trace our lineage ultimately back to Noah, whom God graciously spared from the flood. Now, of course, God's ownership extends far beyond humanity.

Right? From the tiniest molecule to the distant galaxies. But our point here today is that we are His. We are His. As Abraham Kuyper famously expressed, you've probably heard this, there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine.

Now, that doesn't mean that we're going to live consistently with that, does it? With Christ's lordship over our lives. But it does mean that whether or not we acknowledge it, whether or not we live in light of it, it remains a fact.

He is Lord. He is owner of each and every one of us. And, as Paul gets at, which the book of Genesis is getting at, as Lord, owner, creator of our lives, He has actually made us and positioned us on this globe where He wants in order that we should seek God, Paul says, and perhaps feel our way toward Him and find Him.

[26 : 34] Let me read that again. That we should seek God and perhaps feel our way toward Him and find Him. Acts 17, 27. Friends, this is why you exist on this earth.

It's to live in proper relation to your maker, to your creator, to seek Him and then to submit to Him and in so doing to experience His blessing, His divine blessing.

Okay, another principle. So, principle one, we belong to the Lord. Okay, principle number two here that we see in Genesis 10 as we see God's beating heart for the nations.

God's beating heart for the nations. You know, the fledgling people of Israel, Moses' first audience of the book of Genesis, what they would see here, as I mentioned this before, they would see a map of all the nations that were positioned around them.

And God had told Israel that your purpose is to stand out as a light in the midst of darkness, as worshipers of Yahweh, in the midst of pagan idolaters so that Israel would attract, like a magnet, they would attract the nations in to become themselves worshipers of Yahweh and to find salvation and life and blessing in connection with God and His chosen people.

[28 : 01] And church, saints, that is our purpose today, is it not? it is to stand out as light in the midst of darkness that the nations of the earth would be drawn into the church of Jesus Christ and find salvation and life and blessing by faith in Him and in connection with His body.

The difference is that instead of remaining in this one small strip of land along the Mediterranean, God has sent out His people to the ends of the earth, right, that we might make disciples of all nations.

God's heart beats for the nations and so ours should as well. Now we're going to circle back to this at the end of this sermon. God's agenda for the world is that the nations of the earth would hear the gospel and believe and so be saved.

that's for His glory and for their joy, their everlasting joy. But this saving agenda of God, it only exists because of sin.

And so while we see in the table of nations humanity's one blood under the Creator God, we now turn to the next episode and we see in the Tower of Babel, we see humanism's vain attempt to defy the Creator God.

[29 : 25] Okay, humanism's vain attempt to defy the Creator God. Now the reason I put the word humanism is, well, let me define it for you first. Okay, humanism, this is from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centered on human interests or values.

Humanism is a rejection of the one true God and a pursuit of self-actualization through human autonomy. Now those are some big words, kids, and to help me understand what it really is.

It's seeking meaning, purpose, fulfillment, satisfaction, all those things. It's seeking all those things apart from God. That's what humanism is. It says that I'm going to achieve these things on my own. Don't need you, Lord. Now what's our mission here at Shoreline? It is to know Christ and make Him known. To know Christ and make Him known.

And you might say that the humanist mission of Babel is to defy Christ and make self-known. That's humanism. It's defying the Lord God, the Lord Jesus Christ, to make self-known.

[30 : 34] So let's see how this plays out. Look now in your Bibles at Genesis 11, chapter 1. Genesis 11, verse 1, that is.

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.

And they had brick for stone and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.

Now this episode is a flashback. Okay? We were just given this table of nations in chapter 10. We're told that the nations spread abroad to the face of the earth after the flood.

But now we're shown in chapter 11 what led to their spreading abroad and what led to their diversity of languages. And when the Babel episode begins, here, only one language exists.

[31 : 43] Now the ESV says as people migrated from the east, it's perhaps better translated in the east or eastward. And the reason I mention that is because, you'll remember, since Genesis 3, humanity has been east of Eden.

Right? Cain, you'll recall, went away from the presence of the Lord and settled east of Eden. So there is symbolism here in their eastward migration to the land of Shinar.

They're operating in separation from God, right? And outside of the blessing of God. Now this is further evidence by their decision to actually settle down there.

Right? what was God's command to mankind? To be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. What are they doing?

They're defiantly resisting God's decrees and they're settling in Shinar. And so God's agenda is not really their agenda, is it? Now we hear more about their agenda in their resolve.

[32 : 52] Come let us make. Come let us build. Now there's nothing wrong with making and building but the problem is what's the purpose of this project of theirs? Now as a kid I can still remember sitting in Sunday school class as a kid with the flannel graph that you kids know nothing about.

We can show you pictures later. Flannel graph figures of the Tower of Babel and I thought that they were like physically literally trying to get to heaven. Like that was their goal. I mean after all they say that they're trying to build a tower with its top in the heavens and the pictures showed the tower like in the clouds and the angels are there.

Right? Now in a way they are trying to get to heaven but not in the literal sense that I thought as a kid. They're trying to access the divine.

They're trying to access the heavenly realms by making their own version of it. Now this tower was likely an ancient Mesopotamian ziggurat. Now if you've seen a ziggurat it's this stage tower with a shrine at the top.

And the shrine at the top would be a shrine for the worship of the gods. Now who are these gods?

Okay? Noah came out of the ark as a worshiper of one god.

[34 : 07] The only god. And now some generations later we have people worshipping other gods. Who are these gods? They're gods of people's own making. Who are any gods? They're gods that humanity has contrived.

And so really they're worshipping themselves. That's what I want to point out. They're worshipping themselves. This project of theirs is an endeavor of human autonomy. Right?

It's in defiance against God. It's in defiance against God's authority. It's an expression of their desire for self-rule, for self-governance, for self-glory.

I mean they say let us make a name for ourselves. this project of theirs it's all about the glory of man, the glory of self over against the glory of the one and only living creator God.

And so they're not trying to build their way to heaven so much as they're trying to build their own version of heaven. And this is the epitome of human pride and human self-sufficiency.

[35 : 15] Okay, notice something else though. There's not just human pride, there's also human fear. Right? They say lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.

They don't want to be dispersed over the face of the whole earth. Right? They're seeking to achieve this security apart from God. And they're fearful, they're anxious that they might lose it.

Right? They're afraid that they might actually be dispersed throughout the earth which is what God had told them to go and do. And so we see human pride and human fear mixed together here. Then in verse 5 comes the pivot of the story.

Now we talked about chiasmic structures in the flood narrative. Right? But there's parallelism in a story. Well this story is also a chiasm. And the central access, the central turning point of the story is and the Lord came down.

And the Lord came down. Now this is more comedic irony at its best. Okay? Just the people of Babel are seeking to build their way up to heaven, but the Lord must condescend down, down, down to the frail children of man, right?

[36 : 28] To see their puny city and their puny little tower. Okay? Now Moses is speaking in human terms here, right? It's not as if God does not already know exactly what's going on.

Okay? He knows all, he sees all. The point is though, as Psalm 113 perfectly expresses here, the Lord is high above all nations and his glory above the heavens.

Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? No man of his own efforts could gain access to the throne room of Almighty God.

Right? So God comes down. He comes way down. And the Lord said, verse 6, Behold, they are one people and they have all one language and this is only the beginning of what they will do and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.

So again, my mind goes back to the flannel graph figures that I watched as a kid and I thought that God was getting all worried, like the alarms are going off, like intruder alert, intruder alert, and God's like, no, they're coming close to heaven, what are we going to do?

[37 : 40] And sends out the angels. How ridiculous is that? God is not concerned in terms of like, oh no, they're going to make it here.

God is concerned. But his concern, as Derek Kidner observes, is one of a creator and a father, not one of a rival. God has no rival.

instead, as a God who remains utterly sovereign, yet intimately involved in the affairs of the world he created.

He is again grieved. It doesn't say that here, but I think God is grieved like he was in Genesis 6 at the rebellion of humanity. And he's commenting here on mankind's corrupt ability, unless restrained, to achieve these greater and greater heights and degrees of evil.

And so God, in verse 7, makes his own resolve. What does God say? Come, let us go down. And they're confused their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.

[38 : 47] So God now declares his own come, let us. In contrast to the people of Babel. So who's come, let us is going to prevail?

Right? Will human ambition succeed over against the divine purposes of God? We know the answer. Look at verse 8. So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth, and from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth. Who's come, let us prevailed in the end?

The Lord's. The Lord's. Right? The people defy their creator God, and yet they find themselves fulfilling his purposes anyway.

The thing is, though, that rebellion has cost them. They're not now fulfilling his purposes under his divine blessing. Right? They have just forfeited his divine blessing. It was a blessing they were seeking, but on their own terms.

[39 : 54] Right? And so, they forfeit the blessing and still fulfill God's purposes anyway. But more than that, not only have they forfeited blessing, they have now incurred a curse.

Right? The confusion of languages. In Genesis 3, we saw how sin and curse resulted in alienation on every level.

Right? First and foremost, alienation between God and man, but then, alienation between man and self, and man and others, and man and nature. And now we see another step of alienation.

Right? Between nations, between people groups, between people of different languages. That's what sin always does.

Sin leads to alienation. Now, you may or may not have made this connection already. I presume you already have. but Babel is Babylon.

[40 : 55] Okay? Babel is Babylon, that ancient city that later becomes the center of the Babylonian empire. And what's fascinating, and I learned this this week, the name Babylon means gate of God.

It means gate of God. But with this brilliant little play on Hebrew words, Moses says, therefore its name was called Babel, which means confusion. And so, Francis Schaeffer writes, the Babylonians said, we are the gates of God.

And the Jews said, no, you are confusion. Babylon throughout scripture is far more than just the epicenter of an empire.

Right? Babylon comes to epitomize, to symbolize, to represent the godless nations of the earth.

Right? It is a citadel like Nineveh, a citadel of evil, opposed to God, opposed to his will and his ways.

But the thing is, Babylon, with all of her pomp, with all of her power, like every other king and kingdom and creature of this world, it ultimately remains accountable to almighty God.

[42 : 04] And this message is so clear here in Genesis 11, and it's confirmed over and over again in scripture. For example, in Isaiah, we see that God chooses to dispatch Babylon to fulfill his purposes, right, to discipline Israel, but what happens?

Babylon is still held accountable for their wickedness. In the book of Daniel, this is so clear, right? We see how God remains sovereign, totally in control over Babylon and its kings and its gods. And I want to mention this one example, because there's so many good stories in the book of Daniel. I had to tell you one of them, okay? In Daniel 4, King Nebuchadnezzar, just like this ancient people from Babel, Babylon.

He's walking on his palace roof, and he says, is not this great Babylon which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?

Proclaiming all that he's achieved, his power. The text says, while the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken, the kingdom has departed from you, and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.

[43 : 37] King Nebuchadnezzar, most powerful man on earth, driven into the fields like an ox, and when Nebuchadnezzar is restored to reason, what does he do?

He exalts God as the God Most High, as the one whose kingdom and whose dominion is everlasting, who does according to his will, and none can stay his hand.

God remains utterly in control over Babylon. Now Babylon is later conquered and eventually buried in the sands of time, Babylon.

But the thing is, Babylon would continue to retain the significance, the symbolic significance in scripture. Peter refers to Rome as Babylon, and then ultimately in John's vision in the book of Revelation, this declaration, fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.

It announces the crashing end of this God-defying kingdom. It's destroyed by the Lord never to rise again. Revelation 18, 21, so will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence and will be found no more.

[44 : 47] Friends, I want to ask you this morning, whose name are you living for? Whose name are you living for? Are you living like the people of Babel to make a name for yourself in defiance against the creator God?

Are you seeking to exalt your own name, to advance your own reputation, to fulfill your own agenda? Are you pursuing meaning and satisfaction on your own terms?

Attempting to construct your own version of heaven apart from the Lord? The spirit of humanism, the spirit to defy Christ and make self-known, that spirit takes on all kinds of forms, does it not?

See, maybe your Babel is one of money and wealth. Maybe it's one of safety and security. Maybe your Babel is one of comfort and of leisure or of sports and entertainment.

Maybe your Babel is your carefully curated reputation on social media. Maybe it's sensual indulgence and sexual promiscuity.

[46 : 01] All of these, friends, all of these are vain attempts to achieve something that can only be found in seeking God and submitting to God's ways.

And if your life is characterized by these kinds of humanistic pursuits, what you're doing is you're aligning yourself with proud, self-seeking Babylon, which in the end will be destroyed.

So I just urge you to turn this day to the Lord. Now I was speaking to unbelievers, but I could ask the same question to us saints, could I not?

Whose name are we living for today? Whose name are we living for? We have such a hard time abandoning our Babels, don't we? Look, I can tell when I've been working on my own Babel, when frustration rises up within me, or when stress rises up in my heart because I'm failing to meet my own expectations or others' expectations of me, when I feel the weight of my own inadequacy, my own inability to control the outcomes that I desire, in those moments, and God's shown me this week that in those moments I am a functional Babylonian, right?

I'm living for the kingdom of self, trying to build up my own tower of Babel. I'm seeking satisfaction and fulfillment apart from God.

[47 : 38] And those are just a couple examples from my own life. What is it for you, saints? What is it for you? What is your tower of Babel? Now this text helps us to see one way to discern the answer to that question is to ask a different question.

what do you fear losing? What do you fear losing? People of Babel feared being dispersed on the earth. What do you fear losing? Now there's a good chance that the thing that you fear losing is connected to your personal Babel.

Saints, instead of seeking self-glory, what we ought to be seeking is the glory of God. Our daily prayer ought to be with David. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.

Let your glory be over all the earth. Not to be what Jesus teaches us to pray. Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

In the end, it is the name, the kingdom, the will of almighty God that will endure long after Babylon has been laid waste. It is the holy city of God, the new Jerusalem that will remain when it comes down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband.

[48 : 59] Revelation 21, 2. And who's going to inhabit that glorious city? Who's going to inhabit?

Who's going to be there? Revelation 7, verse 9-10. John says, After this I looked and behold, a great multitude that no one could number.

From every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hand, and crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

And how is it that people from every tribe and language and people and nation, people who had been scattered abroad in judgment for sin, how is it that they could be found in the new Jerusalem, in God's presence in that day?

Because as the elders sing on bended knee before Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, you were slain. And by your blood, you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

[50 : 16] church, this is what our life-giving, promise-keeping God has done. He, we just sang this in Come Behold the Wonders Mystery, He has come down in the person of Jesus Christ, but not in judgment like He did in Babel.

He has come down to absorb the judgment that we deserved and there to detonate this nuclear bomb of mercy at the cross and its saving effects have been spreading out to the ends of the earth. The nations divided at Babel are right now, for the last 2,000 years, being reunited into the one body of Christ through the gospel of Christ.

And that's what Pentecost proclaimed. Do you remember what happened on the day of Pentecost? The Spirit of God is poured out on the disciples. They begin speaking in all kinds of languages. And it says that Jews who were gathered there from every nation under heaven, Acts 2, 6, could understand.

It's pointing right back to Babel. It's the undoing of the curse at Babel. Friends, do you see how the gospel of Jesus Christ is the answer to this curse in Genesis 11?

[51 : 37] The gospel tears down the barriers that divide us. The gospel brings people of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities and walks of life into one unified body.

Now, one day, all of those barriers, including language, is going to be eradicated. But today, we're called as a local church to demonstrate the power of the gospel to unite us in the love of Christ. Now, we do that, we're doing that right now. Every week, we gather together, and we come from all of our diverse backgrounds into this one body. And we do that also by moving towards one another in love, even and especially those who are different from us.

Welcoming people into our homes and into our lives. When we do that, we put the power of the gospel to unite the nations on display to the world.

So I want to ask, who are you going to move towards in love today, right after this service? Maybe somebody you've never talked to before. Maybe someone that's very different than you.

[52 : 46] Who are you going to move towards in love? Adults. Maybe it's one of the children here, the youth here. That's not your own. Move towards them. Talk to them.

Speak into their lives. Hey, Coasties. I don't know if there are any Coasties here today. Maybe it's the Navy guys. Hey, Navy, maybe it's the Coasties. Or maybe even someone in the Army. I don't know. We don't get those much. Friends, this is one of our core values as a church.

It's to be united in love. We seek to be a church that puts Christ on display by loving one another as he loved us and guarding the unity that he died to create.

As we drive to a close here, another of our core values is to be on gospel mission. We seek to be a church earnestly engaged in the great commission gospel work of evangelizing the lost to the ends of the earth.

We've seen today God's beating heart for the nations. We've also seen how we exist for the spread of his glory to the ends of the earth. Now, those two things are linked.

[53 : 53] His heart for the nations, the spread of his glory, those are linked because as we go bearing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the lost, we are at the same time spreading the fame and the glory of God to the ends of the earth.

That's his agenda, right? That's what it looks like to build up his kingdom and not our own. Now, the Lord might call some of you, the Lord might call some of you, and I pray that he does, some of us in this church to actually go to the nations with the gospel.

But all of us are called right here, right now, right where we are, to be gospel bearing missionaries here in New London, here in the surrounding towns in which God has sovereignly placed us in our neighborhoods and in our workplaces and in our schools and in our homes.

What are we doing? We're calling people to abandon Babylon, which will be destroyed, and to join in the kingdom of God, which is unshakable. We're calling people to enter into the ark of refuge, which is Christ, and be saved from the coming judgment.

And so, church, until Christ returns, let us be about that urgent work for the good of the nations that God has made and for the spread of his glory and fame.

[55 : 22] Please pray with me.