

## Genesis 10-11:1-32

“Scattered To Seek; Driven To Be Drawn”

Ch’s 10 & 11 give to us the account of the separation of the nations. If you’ve ever wondered, “Well, if we all came from Adam, & then God destroyed the earth in a flood w/the exception of Noah & his family, & then the earth was repopulated from Noah’s 3 sons & their wives than how did different people groups arise & why don’t we all speak the same language?” It’s in these Ch’s that you’ll find the solution to that seeming dilemma.

It’s in these Ch’s that we find the people groups scattered across the face of the earth; separated into lands, everyone according to their own language/family & nation. God had told them to be fruitful & multiply & fill the earth. But what we’ll discover is that rather than respond in obedience they rebelled (there’s a real shocker, huh?). There’s just something in man that if God says, “Go right” we wanna go left, if He says, “of every tree in the garden you may freely eat w/the exception of just 1, the tree of the knowledge of good & evil, avoid *that* tree”, than you can count on finding us under *that* tree. There’s a phrase something to the effect of “Curiosity killed the cat.”

Why is it that we’re always questioning the *word* of God, always resisting the *ways* of God & (to get to the bottom line) rebelling *against* God? You would think that by now we’d have learned that the best thing to do is respond in obedience *to* God! The bible doesn’t tell us to make sure we understand every rationale of God before we obey it, or that we need to get it for ourselves before we’re to act on it. Quite to the contrary the bible says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.”<sup>1</sup>

Translation? Don’t do it your way, do it His way! You can either lean on the unlimited, all knowing, infinite God, or you can trust in your highly limited, definitely finite self. “Well, I don’t always understand why God says what He says, or wants me to do what He tells me to do...” Good! If you understood it all, you’d be God. The proverbs tell us, “A man’s steps are of the Lord; How then can a man understand his own way?”<sup>2</sup> As you follow the Lord there will be times when you don’t understand it all; & that’s because His ways are higher than ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so His ways are higher than our ways & His thoughts than our thoughts (Is 55:8-9).

Mankind was to scatter & fill the earth, but instead they sought to congregate in one place, make a name for themselves...

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). Prov (3:5-6) Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). Prov (20:24) Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

How many of you realize that whenever we seek to go against the grain of God's word it never yields a fruitful resolve? How is it we think that we can disobey God & yet something good will come of it? But we do all the time. *We think we can get drunk, or get high & it's ok, we can have pre-marital or extra marital relationships & it'll be different; it'll be a good thing. We buy the lie rather than submit to the truth of the word of God, crucify the flesh & lead our lives willfully subject to the power & Person of the Holy Spirit. Invariably it brings more pain, more problems, greater difficulties into our lives.*

There was a reason that God wanted them to scatter across the face of the earth; He could see the big picture (He always can). We can't see too far down the road but God sees the end from the beginning (so why do we always question Him).

They were scattered & separated to seek, driven out & divided to be drawn in. Sounds kinda "riddle-esque" doesn't it? Paul the apostle said it like this, *"And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him,"*<sup>3</sup> *"What does that mean?" It means that God loves you so much that He determined before hand your preappointed times (the era in which you'd live) & the boundaries of your dwellings (what nation, state, city you'd be born in & live) because He wanted you to be in the most ideal place that would lead to you meeting J.C. & being born again by the Spirit of God... Doesn't that blow your mind? That's why you don't live in Australia, it's why you weren't born in the 1600's. Because God knew that by you being placed right here, right now you would have the best possible opportunity to encounter Him, be forgiven of your sin & receive everlasting life by His grace through faith in J.C.*

*Initially God was going to draw the nations through a single nation, the nation of Israel. We'll see that beginning in Ch 12. Ultimately Israel failed to be the light God called them to be. So God chose another nation, a spiritual nation... the church.* The apostle Peter wrote, *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"*<sup>4</sup> Jesus said we're to go into all the world & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in in the name of the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe (obey) all things that He's commanded us...

<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ac 17:26-27). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Pe 2:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We're to be the light that draws men out of darkness, shines upon the path of life that's found in Christ...

Now God isn't through w/Israel; He will fulfill His promises *to* them, the plans He has *for* them. In the book of Romans Paul speaks of this, He says (in essence) "think about this; if God accomplished so much through Israel's rebellion, just imagine what He's going to do when Israel repents." He said, "If their fall is riches for the world, how much more their fullness! If their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead!"

So the nations were scattered to seek, driven & divided to be drawn. Ch 10 is what's become known as the "Table of nations." These Ch's (10-11) aren't chronological, Ch 10 speaks of the separation of nations & then Ch 11 backs up to tell us what led up to the scattering, why the language groups came into being & all that. (Now that we've had the study I can basically just read these 2 Ch's ☺).

#### Vs 1-5

Now if you're interested in what people groups are represented by these men & where they settled on the planet, you can consult the insert that was placed into your bulletin... Beyond that you're free to do your research. Basically, the descendants of Japheth became the Indo-European nations. Gomer fathered the Germanic peoples. Magog, Tubal, Meshech (you're looking here at Russian peoples). We also have the Medes (who populated Iran/Iraq & India) coming from Madai; & Javan fathered the Greeks.

Now in Vs 4 you see a fella named "Tarshish", that might be ringing a bell because of a certain man by the name of Jonah whom God sent to the Ninevites opted to flee the other way & get on a ship headed to Tarshish; he wound up having a whale of time doin it to☺! Another case in thinking you can go against the clear cut word of God & think it's gonna work out, it never does.

#### Vs 6-14

The descendants of Ham wound up populating Africa & the regions of the far-east. Again we see "Sheba" here which might ring a bell because it was the queen of Sheba who sought the wisdom of Solomon.

Mizraim is also called "Egypt" in the bible, "Put" refers to Lybia & Canaan we'll see again in a minute, they settled in the land that God gave to Israel.

Now in Vs 8 the narrative takes a moment to single out a happening here.

The lifting out of 1 man in particular, “Nimrod”. We read that, “he began to be a mighty one on the earth.” Meaning that he began to exalt himself amongst the people; he had it in his heart to be the dictator of a one-world empire. The word “Nimrod” means “rebellion” or “the rebel”. The idea being that he didn’t want to do things God’s way, he didn’t want the rule of God in his life *or* the people’s lives, *he* wanted to rule the people. So he began to dominate & dictate. When we read here that he was a mighty hunter before the Lord. The idea isn’t that he hunted big game; but that he hunted men’s souls. He sought to steal men’s hearts & souls from the Lord.

Campaigning on the premise that they didn’t need to do things God’s way, they could do things their own way, the point being that he became a tyrant, a might hunter (more literally) “in the face” of the Lord; *against* the Lord. He ruled over the people, bringing them into submission by his ability to fight, to kill, (a mighty hunter). He subdued people bringing them under his rule as opposed to God’s rule. & We read that he established an empire (a confederacy of 8 cities, 4 cities in Shinar (Babylonia) & 4 more in Assyria of which Nineveh was the capital (that wicked city to which Jonah was commissioned to go).

Nimrod (Ham’s lineage) was responsible for both Babylon & Assyria. Interestingly enough it would be the Assyrians who would carry away the 10 northern tribes of Israel into captivity & it would be Babylon who would destroy Jerusalem & take into captivity the remaining southern tribes of Judah a little over a century later.

But Nimrod was responsible for the Tower of Babel, he was the man who 1<sup>st</sup> sought to rule the world as one united Empire (against God) & in so doing he becomes a picture or a type of another man who will one day rule a one world empire against God whom the bible refers to as the lawless one &/or the A.C. ...

God has set His plan in motion from the beginning & Satan has always sought to counter & counterfeit God’s plan. As you study about Nimrod, his mother Semiramis, her claims of him being virgin born, the claim of his death & resurrection, how he (& she) became the objects of worship... she became known as the “queen of heaven”, it’s all there. Some of the traditions surrounding Christmas/Easter; the truth is that they have their roots in ancient Babylon. & It stems from this man’s desire to rebel *against* God & be the ruler of a 1 world empire in the place *of* God... Again when we set out to do things *our* way as opposed to *God’s* way all we make is a mess, both of our lives & we do damage in the lives of everyone around us...

In Vs 14 we see that the Philistines (another avowed enemy of Israel) were also descendants of Ham.

Now in Vs 15-19 we see the sons of Canaan, they'll sound familiar because if you've read the book of Joshua you've heard of a lot of these peoples as they were dispossessing them from the land... "Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites etc. In Vs 19 we see the borders of Canaan which God gave to Israel.

### Vs 19-20

Last week we took note of the perversion of Ham's sin & the resulting curse on the Canaanites. We don't find ourselves overly shocked to learn that the cities of Sodom & Gomorrah (places known for their perversity/depravity) came also from Canaan.

### Vs 20-25

Few names of interest here. In Vs 23 we see "Uz", his name sticks out because when you read Job Ch 1 you discover that Job lived in the land of Uz (not Oz☺). **Eber is of interest because believe that this is where the name "Hebrew" comes from meaning that from Arphaxad to Salah, from Salah to Eber so that the Hebrew nation stems from Eber, the son of Salah, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, going down the line (we'll see in the next Ch) that from Eber we'll wind up ultimately at Abraham.**

Something else interest in Vs 25 is the mention of Peleg. We read that it was in his day that the earth was divided. Now there are some who would say that the land masses split apart in his day making the continents as we see them today. **That's plausible, but more probable is that the tower of babel took place in his day & his dad "Eber" named him after that event (his name means "division"). So it would seem that the dividing of the peoples (caused by the confusion of languages) took place in Peleg's day.**

One more quick mention. In Vs 29 you see the name "Jobab" & though we don't know conclusively it's thought that possibly this is the same Job of whom we read of in the scriptures.

### Vs 31-32

Ch 10 ends w/the nations divided; the reason (we're told) is that they separated according to their own languages. The question therefore is when did different languages come into the equation? ...

That brings us to Ch 11; as we'll see it wasn't the result of God's favor, but it was his judgment. He'd told man to fill the earth, man sought to stick together; their pride became their downfall & what they feared the most came upon them.

There's a saying that goes, "Man does what he can, God does what He will." Meaning that God will accomplish His plan, His purpose in spite of the plans/purposes & projects of man. Solomon said it like this, "*There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the Lord's counsel—that will stand.*"<sup>5</sup> One way or another man will *fill* the earth, if they won't *comply*, they'll be *compelled*.

## Ch 11

### Vs 1-2

The word "journeyed" means to "pick up stakes", in other words, they began well. They were living in tents, temporary dwellings going out toward the west (from the east, presumably away from the ark) as they were populating the earth.

But somewhere along the way (Shinar specifically) rather than continuing to scatter, they began to settle. They *began* well, they just didn't *finish* well. How many times have we took note of the fact that Jesus never said, "Well begun, good & faithful servant" but rather He said what? "Well *done*," How many people start strong, they *begin* well, but then somewhere along the way they begin to settle in, get comfortable & forsake the Lord???

Listen, how we *begin* isn't nearly as important as how we *end*, shaky start & solid ending is much better than a solid start w/a shaky ending. Yes, it's important how we begin, but it's much more important how we *end*. Don't grow weary, don't get too comfortable & begin to settle in to the things of this world.

Don't come to a place where you say in your heart, "Well, I know that God said to do *this*, but it'll prolly be ok if I do *that*." God told us to *scatter* but it'll be ok if we *settle*. Don't do what seems *convenient* over what's *commanded*, "I know we're to keep our relationship pure but lets go ahead & live together before we're married. Dual income, pay our bills..." We rationalize & justify rather than simply comply w/God's word & trust that God will honor our commitment to Him 1<sup>st</sup>, to seek 1<sup>st</sup> the Kingdom of God... We submit to our own futile wisdom rather than the inerrant/infallible word of God... So we can point the finger at the people of ancient Babel, but are we all that different? The root of the issue remains the same, disobedience to the word of God, the *fruit* of it may surface in different ways; but the *root* of it is all the same.

### Vs 3-4

There are all kinds of problems w/this, not the least of which is that which we've been highlighting, direct disobedience to God's Word.

<sup>5</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Pr 19:21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

God told them to fill the earth, they defiantly decide to stick together & think that somehow that's going to work out well. Check this out, "Come, *let us*, build *ourselves* a city, & a tower whose top is in the heavens; *let us* make a name *for ourselves*, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." Seems to be a whole lot of self serving represented in there, huh?

This is what we call open rebellion & an open declaration of independence from God. They build a city, establish foundations, a place to settle in. Now Abraham (as we'll discover) had more money & more of the wealth of this world than you & I could ever dream of, yet he lived in a tent his whole life. The bible says that he looked for the city which has foundations whose builder & maker is God. In other words, he wasn't looking to settle in to this world; he realized he was just passing through. & That's what God desires for us, to realize that when it comes to this world, it's not home, we're just passing through. Don't anchor yourself to the things of this world which are only passing away. Find your foundation in the Person of J.C. He's to be our life's chief cornerstone. Our lives are built upon Him, not the passing pleasures of this world.

This is man's effort to do things his way, apart from God. They say, "Let's build a tower, whose top is in the heavens." They weren't building a stairway to heaven, but a ziggurat which they could climb & worship the heavens, the stars & constellations. It's religion, man's attempt to reach up to God (or in this case gods).

That's the difference between religion & Christianity. Every religion of the world is man's effort to reach up to God, or to in some way become a god through works or efforts of my own. Christianity on the other hand isn't man reaching up to God, it's God condescending, reaching down to man. Christianity declares that man *can't* reach out to God, because man is dead in sin & trespasses, unable to do anything to in anyway help himself eternally. So God in His mercy by His love through His great grace reaches down to man, lifts him up & gives him life in Christ. Christianity is never about what *I* do, it's only about what God has *done* through J.C.

The tower of Babel is all about the pride of man. Humility is equated w/trust & obedience, pride is related to independence & disobedience (I don't need you, I can do this myself).

Notice, "Let us make a name *for ourselves*". Rather than glorifying the name of God, they seek to spread the fame of their own name.

But there's only 1 name truly worthy of fame, only 1 name that will truly make a difference in your life both now & forever... Acts 4:12 right? Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved... Phil 2:10-11, Yes? *"...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*<sup>6</sup>

Who cares about my name, about "our name", the name of Jesus is the only one that matters. They're building a tower. Yet the bible says, *"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe."*<sup>7</sup>

You see, every bit of this is the antithesis of what God desires for man, but man desires to leave God out.

There's no shortage of historical information that exists documenting the Babylonian religion that was established at the tower of Babel. Dr. Henry Morris summarizes it like this, *"It was a monstrous system of evolutionary, polytheistic, pantheistic, spiritistic, astrological idolatry."* Forget the name of God, let's magnify ourselves...

### Vs 5-9

Don't be confused here & think that God was threatened by man's accomplishment here. The essence of this is that God is saying, "They've all come together & *this is what they begin to do.*" They take their collective intelligence & use it to plumb the depths of depravity, idolatry, corruption & immorality. *When He says, "Nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them" He's not referencing the heights of their potential accomplishments, but rather the depths of sin to which they will fall. In other words, "left unchecked no rebellion, no depth of sin will be too great for them..."*

That's the truth of who we are, apart from the mercy of God there's no limit to the depths of sin & perversion that we will plumb. The reason you/I haven't gone off the deep end isn't due to our moral superiority; it's due to God's restraining grace... period.

If God doesn't restrain the natural bent of my heart, nothing will be impossible for me. No depth of depravity would be too great for me, so far beyond me that I'd never go there, if left unchecked by the restraining grace of God's Spirit, nothing would be impossible; anything is on the table.

<sup>6</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Php 2:10-11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>7</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Pr 18:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.



So God put an end to the building project. In a single instant man went from a unified language to hundreds of languages. They didn't develop over many generations, instantly, miraculously they were unable to communicate. "Hand me a brick" "... "Hey I'm not playin around" "... So naturally people gravitated toward peoples of their own language & separated from their. Now as opposed to coming together to rebel against the Lord, God will begin to form a nation whose purpose will be to lead people *to* the Lord, that they might call upon the *name* of the Lord once again.

The word "Babel" means "gateway to God" but it came to associated w/confusion. That's why when you can't understand someone you say they're "Babbling".

Satan says settle down, exalt yourself, you can do it. God says, "This place isn't your home, draw near to Me, don't worry about *your* name, exalt the name of *Jesus*."

Pride leaves God out... Jesus said, "apart from Me, you can do nothing" nothing of eternal value. How important is it to you that your life count for eternity? If so Christ needs to be in the center of it... not on the outskirts of it.

Ok, Vs 10 is another mention of Shem's lineage, when you get to Vs 18 you'll find Peleg & it will follow his line... leading ultimately to Abe whom God covenanted to bring the Savior J.C. through.

### Vs 18-32

We'll develop some of these things in the coming studies. For now just realize that God didn't call Abe due to any merit of his own. He was a citizen of an idolatrous city. The entire work of salvation will never be about a worthy man, but about the grace of God. God reaches out to man in the person of J.C. Wise is the one who will humble himself/herself, turn from their sin & receive God's grace, keep J.C. *not* on the outskirts, but in the center of your life...

### Prayer Points:

God forgive us for our pride, our stiff necked & stubborn ways; for trying to do things apart from You when we need so desperately to abide *in* You. Lord, help us to humble our hearts before You, we confess our utter dependence upon You & realize that *apart* from You we can do nothing. Nothing but damage both to ourselves & to others; have Your way in us. & Having saved us help us to reach out, to be the light that draws others to the saving knowledge of who You are, use us for Your glory.

If God is drawing you to Himself today, don't resist His Spirit. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord; God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Turn from your sin, believe on the Lord J.C. who has loved you & given Himself for you. You're here because He loves you, you could be anywhere, at anytime in history but God has placed you here... that you might seek for Him & find Him having sought for Him w/all your heart.