

Remnant Life Church
January 8, 2018
Genesis: The Tower of Confusion
Genesis 11:1-9

- The tower of Babel is a well-known name but little talked about
- It is the final account within the first 11 chapters of Genesis representing the primeval history (12 – 50 the patriarchal history)
- The story presents us with the picture of what happens when man excludes God
 - The results can be seen repeated again and again
 - Prior to this time during the time of Noah (**Gen 6**)
 - The children of Israel during the exodus (**Ex 32**)
 - The nation of Israel during the time of the judges before the kings (**Judg 2**)
 - The nation of Israel during the time of the kings (**2 Sam 11**)
 - The sin nature of man is always attempting to become independent of God and always with the same result

READ – Genesis 11:1-9

- The time of the story is after the flood
 - **Gen 10** lists the descendants of Noah's sons called the Table of Nations
 - From one family must come all the peoples of the world
 - So how did the people scatter and end up all over the world?
 - Moses records this information, in chapter 10, so that the nation of Israel will know who the people are they will encounter and how to deal with them
 - Noah had three sons – Shem, Ham, and Japheth
 - Japhethites
 - The least is written about his descendants (**Gen 10:2-5**)
 - Generally speaking these people migrated to what would become Europe and Asia
 - The Romans, Greeks, and the English trace their lineage back to Japheth
 - The means that America (from England) is also of this group
 - From the Japhethites we receive the **intellectual** and **philosophical** foundations for man
 - Hamites
 - Generally speaking these people were in the areas of Africa, Egypt, and Canaan
 - It is from these people that much of the **technical** knowledge of man would spring
 - Because of their abilities to adapt and develop these people would become the pioneers of civilization

- The most powerful ancient people would come from this region – the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Sumerians, and the cities of Nineveh and Jericho
 - Ham's would have 4 sons
 - Cush who come to live in the area the Arabias and western Africa specifically Ethiopia (who directly trace their lineage back to Cush)
 - Mizrain who is also called Egypt and lived in the region of the great Nile delta and river – the Philistines
 - Phut settled the area of northern Africa
 - Canaan lived in and around the area of Palestine
 - Shemites
 - The general area of their ancestors was the middle east
 - From these people God gave the task of establishing the **spiritual** life of mankind
 - From this line the 3 major religions of the world came out – Christianity (Jesus), Judaism (Isaac), and Islam (Ishmael)
 - It is from the line of Shem that Abraham comes 9 generations later
 - From Shem's line is born Eber from which the word Hebrew is derived
 - Abraham would then be identified as a Hebrew even as the nation of Israel would come from his descendants
 - We see a pattern of God unfolding
 - God's plan at the outset is for all of humanity but that is quickly forfeited through sin
 - God narrows his attention to one man – Noah
 - The people multiply and God again spreads His attention to the entire world
 - But their self-centeredness and desire for independence from God brings His focus again to one man – Abraham
 - But it will be through Abraham's descendants that Jesus Christ would come bringing a message of love and salvation for, once again, all mankind
- **Genesis 11** brings us to a culmination of man's evil, self-centered heart resulting in another judgement by God
 - The people are moving from the east (**11:2**) (**PIC 1**)
 - Noah landed in Turkey; Mediterranean Sea to the west and south; Black Sea to the north; plains to the east
 - They will settle on the plain of Shinar in southern Mesopotamia which would become Babylon (Iraq)
 - The author states that brick and mortar, not stone, was used to build (**11:3**)
 - No stone in the region of the plains like there was in Egypt and Israel
 - Kiln fired or burnt brick were developed during that time
 - They plan specifies 2 things – a city and a tower (**11:4**)

- In that day the term city was different than today
- People did not cluster together in the early development of living dynamics – it was a public building where people would come
- Either administrative or granaries attached to a temple
- A city therefore, as referred here, was a temple complex
- It was in this city, then, that the people would build their tower
- The word tower in the original Hebrew language is very generic
 - In the OT we see it used primarily as a defensive structure such as a watchtower (*2 Kings, 1 Chron, Isa, Micah*)
 - But this is not an Israeli city it is Mesopotamian
 - The most prominent building in their temple complex was a structure called a ziggurat (**PIC 2**)
 - A pyramid looking structure but very different
 - Nothing hollow
 - Stairs for people to climb
 - Rooms or a dwelling at the top for the god it honored
 - Archeologists have discovered nearly 30 of these structures throughout that region
 - What was the purpose of the ziggurat?
 - It was not for worship – that took place in the adjoining temple
 - It was designed, because it reached to the heavens, to make it convenient for that god to come down to the people, receive their worship and sacrifices, and then bless them
 - Purely pagan polytheism in design and function – not the worship of the one true God
- The question then must be asked - what led from Noah building an altar to God when he and his family came out of the ark (*Gen 8:20*) to building the tallest structure ever in that time to a false god?
- As we move into 2018 we must see and recognize the importance of the lessons from their actions that are important for us today

1. (*11:4a*) *Come let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens...*

- a. Their action is born out of self-reliance apart from God (...*let us build ourselves...*)
- b. *Psalms 127:1 - Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.*
- c. To labor in vain is to do something foolishly – effort with no hope of results
- d. We see the connection then with what Jesus teaches in *Matt 7:24-27* with the parable of the wise and foolish builders
- e. Whatever we do in our lives apart from God will ultimately be in vain
 - i. Done in our own strength
 - ii. Self-serving motivation
 - iii. When we think we know better than God
 - iv. *John 15:5 - I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

- v. Yet we see man's contrary attitude continually demonstrated clearly even in our advertising
- vi. Nike logo (PIC 3)
 - 1. The Nike swoosh tag line – “Just Do It”
 - 2. The swoosh is said to be one of the wings of the goddess of victory Nike in Greek mythology
 - 3. Now the principle of action (just do it) and effort is a biblical one that we read in **Eccl 11:4** - *Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap*
 - 4. But this should be a secondary principle of our lives not the main one
 - 5. NIKE's philosophical statement is that we have within ourselves all the resources we need to succeed (same philosophy of the humanists and new-agers)
 - 6. Again, it is a desire for separation from God because “I am self-sufficient”
 - 7. In other words, my works will save me
 - 8. **Eph 2:8-9** - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*
 - 9. If you make your plans for this coming year apart from God they will not succeed!

- 2. (11:4b) *...so that we may make a name for ourselves*
 - a. To make a name is not merely to establish your identity but to distinguish yourself in prominence
 - i. Business goals are to make a name for yourself – set yourself apart
 - ii. It is most commonly understood that Nimrod, the great-grand son of Noah, was the leader of this land
 - iii. While Nimrod was said to be a great hunter before the Lord that is not to mean that he was a godly or God-fearing man
 - iv. He was the first man, of the new generation of man – after the flood, that fully and defiantly turned his back on God
 - 1. His efforts looked good to the human eye so that would not *...be scattered over the face of the whole earth. (11:4c)*
 - 2. One problem...God was not consulted or involved!
 - 3. Joshua and his defeat at Ai (**Josh 7**)
 - b. Nimrod's desire (the flesh) was to be in complete opposition to God's will (the Spirit)
 - i. What were the first words of God's covenant with Noah?
 - ii. **Gen 9:1a** - *Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.*
 - 1. Nimrod's design was to keep everyone together while God's command was to fill all the earth
 - 2. To come against the design of God in our lives will always bring about His judgment

3. For the people of the plain of Shinar God's intervention brought 2 consequences:
 - a. Confusion – the languages were changed so they could not communicate with each other
 - i. Nimrod was attempting to bring the people together in unity
 - ii. But their only option, then, was to go out with whoever spoke the same language they did and start their own communities
 - iii. **11:8a** – *So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth,*
 1. His will is always to be accomplished
 - iv. If you try to go it alone without God you will come to a place of great confusion
 - b. Failure – **11:8b** - *...and they stopped building the city*
 - i. Sin will not go on unpunished indefinitely
 - ii. There will be a season where God will give the opportunity to make it right
 - iii. But He will always bring justice and judgement

- Your plans in 2018 must be God's plans
- Your desires, no matter how many people may agree with you, must be brought before the Father so that you are, in essence saying, not my will but your will be done!

- What are your plans, hopes, and dreams for 2018?
- Give them over to God right now
- Seek His direction and will
 - Be patient
 - Be persistent in your prayers
 - Be content with where He leads
 - Be grateful