

GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Chapter 10 & 11 Study Guide

April 25, 2004

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Genesis 10

1. THEME & AUTHORSHIP

Themes

A couple predominate themes are found in Genesis. First is fact that this is a Book of Beginnings, the great introduction to the drama of redemption.

Second, we see God preparing a people – here we have God choosing and then testing. Whether it is Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or Noah for that matter God chooses and then begins to winnow and purge. Remember the goal is to create a people who would fulfill Genesis 3:15. It will be here that the initial step will be taken for man's redemption by a divine covenant made with a chosen race whose early history is here portrayed.

Author – Moses / **Date** - 1450 – 1410 BC

2. ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

God is a God of detail-

The whole chapter.

God deals with families, languages, lands, and nations. He is concerned about us as individuals, as well as groups. -

Genesis 10:20

*These were the sons of Ham, according to their **families**, according to their **languages**, in their **lands** and in their **nations**.*

3. WORD STUDIES

Small Group Question

1. What is the significance of the table of nations?
2. Is this an accurate account of where all people came from?
3. Show map of where the descendants settled.
4. How does this show humanity that we are all cut from the same cloth and there really should not be any racial discrimination.
5. What did Noah's family look like? What shade were they?
6. Where son of Noah did each of us come from?

Soul Winner, So What

1. The Table of Nations is the oldest known and yet strikingly correct graph, through modern research, identifying location, language, or descent the tribal groups that became the people of the world known in ancient times.



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a. An intelligent look at the Table of Nations should bring one to realize how actually close all of humanity is related to one another and totally erase the misleading and damaging self-destructive error that sets race, tribe or people group above another.

b. How do you view people or groups of people who seem slightly or even extremely different than yourself?

c. Check yourself: Is there a group that you discriminate against?

4. Geographical Component

The Table of Nations (Chapter 10 of Genesis)

Chapter ten is commonly referred to as the “Table of Nations” since it represents the world of the future Israelites, and all future nations stem from these family lines. The descendents of Japheth (vs. 2-5) were located in Asia Minor which is now present day Turkey. The descendents of Ham lived in the Northern Egypt realm (vs. 8-15), including some of modern day Saudi Arabia. Sidon according to the Oxford Study Bible represents the Phoenician coastal cities (modern day Israel). The rest were found in ancient Babylonia and ancient Assyria (modern day Iran and Iraq). The Jebusites were centered in Jerusalem, while Amorites and Hivites can be traced to central Palestine. Shem is considered to be the father of the Semitic people including Israel.

SOUL WINNER SO WHAT: *We cannot make sense of the newspaper, the world, or society, if we don't know our own origins or the origins of others.*

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Genesis 11

I. BACKGROUND, CULTURE & EXEGESIS

Scholars align the plain of Shinar with modern day Iraq. So it is here where this narrative begins. Notice that because there is a shortage of stone that they are baking bricks. Also, it is noteworthy that there is asphalt there and where there is asphalt there is oil! Oil in Iraq ... huh!

Now let's take a look at the tower. Why would this be such an affront to God? Quite possibly this was to be an Astrological Temple. It may have been at this time that the original mnemonic that Adam, Seth, et. al, used to teach their children the plan of God was corrupted into the Zodiac as we know it today. This would explain why God went to such drastic measures.

Notice in verse 7 we have the Trinity alluded to once more. The result is Babel – soon to become known as Babylon. Remember Dickens – the Tale of Two Cities - this is where that title takes on new meaning, for throughout the rest of Scripture we will now have Babylon representing the City of Man and Jerusalem the City of God.

And so it begins

If you are interested in more information about Babylon in Prophecy then check out the following passages: Isaiah 13,14; Jeremiah 50,51; and Revelation 17,18.

The rest of this chapter is given to the story of Abraham, which begins a new section of this great book.

2. THEME & AUTHORSHIP

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Second, we see God preparing a people – here we have God choosing and then testing. Whether it is Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or Noah for that matter God chooses and then begins to winnow and purge. Remember the goal is to create a people who would fulfill Genesis 3:15. It will be here that the initial step will be taken for man's redemption by a divine covenant made with a chosen race whose early history is here portrayed.

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3. Theology

Chapter eleven tells the story of the Tower of Babel. We see that all the people of the earth spoke the same language and so they had amazing ability to work together and communicate with each other. God saw that they had the ability to do anything they put their mind to and so struck them with different languages and scattered them all across the earth. A couple things are really interesting in this section, first God says that the people “are one” in verse six. What does this mean exactly? Were they a community in a way that we don’t have the capacity for anymore? This really illustrates how important communication is, not only between people but also between us and God. The people’s ability to communicate through a single language allowed them to do whatever they wanted to. Now you may say that we all now speak English, so why are we not able to do the same? Think, though, about how mixed our culture is even here at our church. Think about the vast array of experiences that each person brings to a conversation. Social experiences like location and the culture someone is brought up in effects the way they talk and the definitions they have for different words. Slang is a perfect example of this; words like sick, bad, gay, or hot all have different connotations depending on age, geographical location, or sometimes even socio-economic status. The people in chapter eleven had lived together all of their lives, had all shared experiences, and spoke not only the same basic language but all shared the connotations of that language. This extremely homogenous language system allowed them to communicate in a way that few since ever could.

Small Group Question

How have communication problems affected relationships in your life or your relationship with God?

“How to’s” to help you fix that:

Pray through the Lord's Prayer meditating on each line and praying through what God reveals to you. Pray through Psalm 51 asking specifically for God to reveal any unknown sin. Pick one scripture read it several times taking time in between to listen as your mind starts to wonder read it again.

Soul Winner, So What

One of Satan’s primary goals is to disrupt your ability to communicate with God, this week really concentrate on hearing from God and not allowing Satan to manipulate His words.

4. ATTRIBUTES OF GOD



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God has the power to overturn man's plans-

V.6- *And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now **nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."***

God is plural (3 persons, one God)-

V.7- *Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."*

God is able to change the way our brain works-

V.9- *Therefore its name is called Babel, because there **the LORD confused the language of all the earth**; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.*

God hates pride-

V.4 & 7- *And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and 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."*

7- ***Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."***

God divides man's plans if they aren't of Him-

V.8- *So **the LORD scattered them abroad** from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.*

God is detailed-

V.10-32- every name listed.

Small Group Question-

What are some examples in today's society that God has split up groups of people as a result of us doing what we will?

(Answer- high divorce rate, racism, sexism, economic class divides, overall idea that truth is relevant.)

Soul Winner So What

The people built a tower so they could make a name for themselves. As we look at this, we have to ask ourselves, is it our name or status that we should be worried about...or the name of our Lord and Savior that works through us? Which are you striving for?

5. WORD STUDIES



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Babel (Hebrew) means Babylon; so that "the tower" should be designated "the tower of Babel." Capital of the country Shinar (Genesis), Chaldea (later Scriptures). The name as given by Nimrod (Gen 10:10), the founder, means (Bab-il), "the gate of the god Il," or simply "of God." Afterward the name was attached to it in another sense (Providence having ordered it so that a name should be given originally, susceptible of another sense, signifying the subsequent divine judgment), Gen 11:9; Babel from baalal, "to confound; ... because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth," in order to counteract their attempt by a central city and tower to defeat God's purpose of the several tribes of mankind being "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth," and to constrain them, as no longer "understanding one another's speech," to disperse.

The Talmud says, the site of tower of Babel is Borsippa, the Birs Nimrud, 7 1/2 miles from Hillah, and 11 from the northern ruins of Babylon. The French expedition found at Borsippa a clay cake, dated the 30 th day of the 6 th month of the 16 th year of Nabonid. Borsippa (the Tongue Tower) was a suburb of Babylon, when the old Babylon was restricted to the northern ruins. Nebuchadnezzar included it in the great circumvallation of 480 stadia. When the outer wall was destroyed by Darius Borsippa became independent of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar's temple or tower of Nebo stood on the basement of the old tower of Babel. He says in the inscription, "the house of the earth's base (the basement substructure), the most ancient monument of Babylon I built and finished; I exalted its head with bricks covered with copper ... the house of the seven lights (the seven planets); a former king 42 ages ago built, but did not complete its head. Since a remote time people had abandoned it, without order expressing their words; the earthquake and thunder had split and dispersed its sun-dried clay." The substructure had a temple sacred to Sin, god of the mouth (Oppert). (from Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1998 by Biblesoft)

Small Group Question

Who do we praise or give glory to when we have accomplished something in our lives? Do we give praise and glory to God for everything as we should or are we being selective?

Soul Winner, So What

The tower of Babel represents man building a monument to himself and praising himself for his or her accomplishments rather than praising God for what He has done through us. We must always remember that it is God who allows us to do what we do.

6. PROPHECIES OF CHRIST – GOSPEL COMPONENT

Genesis 11:7

When sinful human beings were attempting to erect the Tower of Babel, God said: *Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one*



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another's speech" (**Genesis 11:7**). Here we see plurality within the Godhead just as we saw in Genesis 1:26. God has revealed Himself throughout scripture as being a Triune God.

Centuries later, Isaiah had a vision in the Temple where he was commissioned to serve. God asked Isaiah, "*Whom shall I send? And who will go for Us?*" and Isaiah said, "*Here am I. Send me!*" (Isaiah 6:8).

We later find in the NT three persons of the Trinity manifested when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist: *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

Three years later, just before His crucifixion, Jesus spoke of the Trinity in the upper room, when He said: *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17).* Jesus also said: *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name*" (John 14:26). Still again, Jesus said, "*But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*" (John 15:26).

After Jesus resurrected from the dead, he again referred to all three persons of the Trinity. Jesus instructed the disciples "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*" Amen. (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus does not say here "into the names (plural) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," but "into the name (singular) of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," first stating the unity of the three by joining them within the limits of the single name.

We see also through the writings of the other NT writers that they felt no uneasiness between the doctrine of the Trinity and the OT conception of God...The God of the OT was their God, and their God was a Trinity. Jesus is God who had no beginning.

Yet, in John 14:28 Jesus said: *for the Father is greater than I.*

Even though the second person of the Trinity is of the same essence (very God of very God, eternal in His being) there is a distinction among the persons of the Godhead. There is a reason that Christian theology has a doctrine about the subordination of Christ. What is it?

Soul Winner, So What:



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How equipped are you to be able to point out the works of Jesus Christ throughout the OT? Are you willing to put in the labor to do so?

7. BIBLE DIFFICULTIES / PROBLEM PASSAGES

1) What was wrong all the people working together to accomplish a common goal?

It was a monument to the people themselves, rather than God. No matter what it is, nothing should ever be put before God.

Soul Winner, So What:

Anytime we put something before God it's dangerous. Even though the actual item or accomplishment may not be wrong, when we use them to give us self worth, we set ourselves up for failure. Things will give you temporary fixes but nothing can permanently replace God.

What towers have you built in your life?