

The Fall Part 8

God's Plan For The Nations

Genesis 11

Memory Verses:

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Last week we noticed a shift from a focus on the pre-flood sinfulness of humanity to God's plan for the nations after the flood. We saw this plan start to unfold through the seemingly unfair and unexplained curse of Ham's descendants. Noah got drunk, but it's Ham who, from a glance at the text, seems to have mistakenly seen Noah naked in his drunken stupor and is cursed. It doesn't make much sense to us. But through this incident we see God sovereignly choosing the enemies of Israel and providentially choosing the greatest battlefield in the war for the souls of men. The Canaanites weren't cursed as much as they were sovereignly chosen for God's purposes and plans. Canaan land wasn't a cursed place of war and destruction as much as it was the promised land for God's chosen people and the place where Christ would return to fulfill the prophecies and end the war on sin. The fall ends in Canaan land!

Today we will end our series on the Fall by looking at Genesis 11 and we will see that God doesn't just have a plan for our enemies and battlefields. He actually has a plan for the nations. What I mean is this. There is a reason we have 10,000 different ethnic people groups spread out across the globe, who have a different culture and unique language. There is a reason we have 195 different sovereign countries. There is a reason why we have borders and different cultural idiosyncrasies and different languages and dialects. It didn't just happen... It happened according to the plan of God. It is all a part of God's plan for the nations. Let's look at our passage today, starting in **Genesis 11:1-9**.

Just as with the story of Noah, this story could lead us to believe that God is reactionary. But let me assure you, God knew this would happen before he created the world, and he chose to let it play out this way. This is on purpose. And this is where I want you to sit in the tension of God's sovereignty. Yes he allows mankind to sin. We are sinful and we will never stop trying to become like God. We will always take the fruit. We will always try to build towers to heaven. And, yes, there will be consequences to that sin. But God takes our sinful decisions, often directly against Him, and switches it up and uses them for his own purposes. Yes, **our sin separates us from God's holiness, but our sin will always be used by God to complete his purposes for humanity and ultimately his glory!** Think about it. Your sin is so awful it

cost Jesus his life, yet God is taking your sinful choices and is weaving them into a tapestry of design to redeem humanity. He's been doing it from the beginning and he will one day complete his work for the nations through a chosen nation, a chosen people, and the finished mission of Christ. The agents of the mission have changed from time to time, but the mission has never changed. And it stands the same today. If you get nothing else today, get this... **God made the nations to bless the nations through missions.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see here is that... **God's Plan For The Nations Is To Fill The Earth With His Glory.** Look again at **Genesis 11:1**. 300 to 700 years after the flood, people had begun to migrate. This is good because God had commanded Noah and his descendants, just as he commanded Adam and Eve, to multiply and fill the earth. But before we can even finish the verse we see this... they found a plain and settled there. This wasn't a time to settle... but settle they did. Already, the cycle of sinfulness and rebellion has begun again. They settled for a purpose; to build a city dedicated to the achievements of mankind. The population of Babel or Babylon as it would later be known, would've been like that of our modern day cities. If the world population had grown to over 1 million people, Babel, consisting of the majority of the people could have easily been over 500,000 people. That may not seem like a lot but that's the size of Washington D.C., Raleigh, Indianapolis... This was a massive people led by a very ambitious man; Nimrod. Look back to **Genesis 10:8-12**. Nimrod was a mighty hunter who built the kingdoms of Babylon and Assyria. Consequently, the two kingdoms that would eventually lead Israel into captivity. Again, God has a plan for the evil kingdoms of the world.

Notice the mission of the kingdom of Babylon; come let us build ourselves a city and make a name for ourselves. Come let us. This was an endeavor void of God. They didn't want God's help. Come let us make a name for ourselves. This was an endeavor for man's glory and not God's. This was a rebellion against God's glory and sovereignty. God has always had a knack for naming people according to their purpose. Noah, one who would bring peace. Moses, one who was drawn from water. David, one who was loved by God. But Nimrod didn't want a name from God... he wanted to make his own name. Consequently, his name, Nimrod, means "we will rebel." Don't tell me God doesn't have a sense of humor.

Their mission was to make a religion dedicated to the worship of humanity. Notice they said, come let us build a tower to heaven. James Boice notes, and many other theologians, that this doesn't mean they were trying to actually reach a specific height in the sky, although a large tower would give them bragging rights. Rather, they were building a tower of religious significance. A tower to represent heaven. Not God's heaven, but

a heaven of their own making. Notice that the Bible on more than one occasion points to Babylon as the epicenter of false religion in the world. The makings of Buddhism, Hinduism, Greek Mythology, and all forms of paganism have their roots in the religion of the tower of Babel. All false religion claims to worship a god, but in reality is a worship of humanity's desires. This was the goal of Nimrod and Babylon.

So God said, go fill the earth with my glory. But Nimrod and the people of Babylon said, no. We will stay here and make our glory known to the earth. Humanity's mission is always in opposition to God's. God says go, we say stay. God says fill the earth, we say we will build our own kingdoms. God says worship me alone, we say we will worship everything but you. We are Babylon. We are Nimrods. And so God must step in. And he does. Nimrod said come let us build a tower to heaven and make a name for ourselves.... Now look at **verse 7**. God says, come let us go down and judge them. In the end they are dispersed and God's plan continues. I love how there are two comes... Man says, lets come together and rebel, God says, lets come together and judge. As Boice says, **"the first come was spoken by man to man against God. The second was spoken by God to God against man.** The point is simple... God's mission, God's plan to fill the earth with his glory would not be thwarted. Not by any man or any nation. **Though humanity's mission is always in opposition to God's, for the sake of humanity God's mission will always prevail. God made the nations to bless the nations through missions.** In this case... his mission.

The second thing we need to notice here is that... **God's Plan For The Nations Involves Israel.** If you are like me you are probably a little frustrated with the whole Israel Gaza thing. Everyday we hear people from both sides of the aisle saying the same things... Israel is evil. The Palestinians are evil. Both want genocide. Who's right and who's wrong. It gets exhausting doesn't it? You may even be tempted, like I have, to throw your hands up and say, to heck with both of them. But that's not really an option is it? Why? Because God has a plan for the nations and that plan has always been centered around the nation of Israel.

Look with me at **Genesis 11:10-25**. From Noah we get Shem, from Shem; Aprachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, and Terah. Now look at **Genesis 11:26**. Now thats a familiar name. Abram.Let's see what else is said here about Abram. Continue in **Genesis 11:27-32**. Abram was from the land of the Chaldeans, which is just another name for the Babylonians. Abram grew up in pagan Babylon, in the country of pagan religion. He may have even been there when God scattered the nations. And that makes sense, because it as this point that Abram and his family go on a journey to a new land. And what land is that? The land of Canaan! I don't know about you, but I love how

this thread seems to flow by the providential hand of God! God truly has a plan for the nations. And one of the main nations his plan will come through is the nation that Abram will begin; the nation of Israel. Are you getting this? God had to scatter the people at Babel, to get Terah and Abram moving to Canaan, the land that God had ordained for his chosen people; Israel. Its all part of his plan for the nations.

So God wants to fill the earth with nations that will bring him glory. Check. But how does Israel help with that? I'm glad you asked. As we will see in the book of Genesis this year, as we observe 4 men, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, we will see that God has ordained Israel to be the nation through which all other nations will be blessed. This blessing will come in two ways. First, Israel will bless the other nations by being a beacon of light to the world through their righteous devotion to God. Look at **Isaiah 42:6-7, 49:6, 60:3**, Israel had the words of God, the blessings of God, the love of God. If the world would look to the God of Israel and follow him, they too would have these blessings! **Israel was a mission nation. They showed the world the way to God.** Secondly, Israel will bless the other nations through the one who would be born through them; Jesus Christ. All the world was waiting for the Messiah. This Messiah, foretold of in Genesis 3:15 would come through the lineage of Adam and Eve, the lineage of Seth, the lineage of Noah, the lineage of Shem, and now the lineage of Abraham and the nation of Israel. **Unfortunately, though many parts of the world have found salvation in Christ, Israel has rejected him.** Still, God's mission goes on. His plan for the nations is to fill the world with his glory and bless them through salvation in Christ. **God made the nations to bless the nations through missions.** In this case, the mission of Israel.

The last thing we need to see is that... **God's Plan For The Nations Includes You.** God has filled the Earth with nations capable of bringing him glory. God has used Israel as a beacon of righteousness to the world and given his Son to the nations for their salvation. God's mission will prevail and Israel, though they have rejected Christ, has been faithful to the mission. They were a vehicle for God's mission for a thousand years. But now that vehicle is in the shop. It's not that God doesn't have a use for Israel anymore... He does. In the end Israel will wake up from their stupor and be redeemed. I believe this. But for now we can not count on them to be missionaries of God's glory to the nations. So who's mission is it now? It's ours. It's the church of Jesus Christ who is the vehicle for God's glory in the world today. Israel was plan A. The were number 1. But in the words of Top Gun, they turned in their wings. Now we are number 1. We are plan A and there is no plan B! **God's plan for the nations is a church filled with missionaries who will spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth.** Look at **Acts 1:8**, Look at **Matthew 24:14**. It's our mission now! **God made the nations to bless the nations through missions.** The mission now resides

in our hands. It's our job to fill the earth with God's glory by sharing the offer of salvation in Christ.

Application

God has a plan for the nations. Those plans include enemy nations to test our faith. Those plans include specific battlefields to trust in his strength. Those plans include many diverse nations filled with God's glory. Those plans include Israel as a beacon of light to the world. And now those plans include us as missionaries to the ends of the world.

God made the nations to bless the nations through missions.

Conclusion

But we must not forget the biggest plan for the nations is Jesus Christ. None of this works without Him. And so we return to the story of Babel. They said, let us come and build a tower to heaven and make a name for ourselves. An invitation from man to man to rebel against god. Then God said, let us come and disperse them to the ends of the earth. An invitation from God to God to judge man. But there is one more "come" we need to focus on. It is found in a couple of verses. Look at **Isaiah 1:18, Matthew 11:28, and Revelation 22:17**. This is an invitation from God to Man for mankind's blessing! Come to Jesus! Don't try to build a name for yourself. Don't neglect to see the Messiah. Instead, recognize the plan of God staring you right in the face. It's Jesus. Come!