

Nations

Read Genesis 11.

Genesis neatly divides into two sections. The first eleven chapters detail four key events. Chapters 12-50 introduce readers to the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the patriarchs of God's chosen people, Israel.

So far, we have looked at Creation, the Fall, and the Flood. This week we are finishing our look at the four key events of Genesis 1-11. Our next subject is the beginning of the world's nations (Hebrew - *goyim*).

Talking Points

- God told Noah's family to multiply and spread out over the entire earth.
- The people stayed together and built a great city.
- Attempting to make a great name for themselves, they built a tall tower reaching up to heaven.
- At that time, everyone spoke the same language.
- God created new language groups among workers, forcing the people to separate and spread out.
- This is the beginning of the nations, the different world cultures, and governments.

Alternate Reality

There is an old saying. "Seeing is believing." This adage implies a negative truth. If you can't see something, there is no reason to believe it. Unfortunately, this implied negative impacts on how people read and attempt to understand the Bible. People can see, feel, hear, taste, and smell most of the physical world. But what about the spiritual world of angels, demons, Satan, and God?

In the account of the Fall, Satan appears as the oppositional Serpent in God's perfect Garden of Eden. How did he get there? What's his agenda? These questions are reasonable for any Bible student to ask.

Other Scripture

Revelation 12:7-9 reveals the identity of the Serpent. The Dragon, Serpent of old, Devil, and Satan are the same entity. In the ancient world, serpents represented kingdoms/ rulers of this world. The Bible informs its readers (Ephesians 2:1-3, 6:12-13, 1 Peter 5:8-10, Ezekiel 28:11-19) that Satan is the ruler of this world now.

How did Satan come to be the ruler of this world? Satan and a third of heaven's angels rebelled against God. They were thrown out of heaven. That is why Satan was in the Garden of Eden. His agenda? It was (and still is) to foment a rebellion against God on earth, just as he once did in heaven.

The spiritual war continuing to this day occurs behind the scenes in an unseen realm. However, this war's spiritual realm intersects with our physical world. It is the well-spring of all deception, disease, division, and death.

A Prophetic Word From Bob Dylan

*You're gonna have to serve somebody. Yes, you are.
You're gonna have to serve somebody.
Well, it may be the devil, or it may be the Lord.
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.*

Since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has had a choice to make. Serve the Lord or serve Satan. There is no in-between. From the Edenic exile to the flood, humanity almost exclusively chose to serve the ruler of this world rather than serve God. Mankind became so wicked God judged the world through the global flood. After the flood, nothing changed. People still had a choice to make. They had to serve somebody. Would it be the Lord or someone else?

Tower of Babel

Disobeying God's direct command (Genesis 9:1) to fill the entire earth, Noah's descendants decided to stay together and make a name for themselves, to make their name great. How? They conspired against God to build a tower extending into heaven and challenge His authority from the earth. Sound familiar?

A Mini-Application - Every successful endeavor among people requires three ingredients.

- A unifying purpose or objective
- A clear plan
- Strong communication

Look again at Genesis 11:1-9. Identify these ingredients in the passage. Noah's descendants were on the road to success. But something was wrong. What was it?

The missing ingredient that the objective of the people objective was not a God-honoring goal. By building the tower, mankind aligned itself with the ruler of this world, Satan. Humanity chose once again to serve the Serpent's purpose of building his kingdom on earth rather than making the Lord's name known everywhere.

Dig Deeper

Genesis is the first book of the Bible. It was written by Moses long after the events of Genesis occurred. Job's book is about a man who likely lived during Abraham's time, long before Moses—all of the imagery of Job points to the patriarchal period. Some speculate that Moses may have also written Job.

Job's writer three times speaks about the *bene Elohim*, the "sons of God" (Job 1:6, 2:1, and 38:7). The third passage tells us that the "sons of God" watched as God created this world and that they rejoiced in His labor. Who were these "sons of God?" They could only have been angels! If it is true that Moses wrote both Genesis and Job, what happened from Creation to the Tower of Babel, seen in the light of Genesis 6:1-4, takes on a whole new perspective.

As you continue to read and study the Bible, whatever you do, never forget that a real war is being fought just beyond your sight.

Bible Conversations Questions

- What command did God give Adam and Eve and Noah's family?
- Do a little research based on the *toldot* (genealogy) of Shem found in Genesis 11:10-26. How many years was it between the flood and the Tower of Babel?
- Which of Noah's sons carried the "seed of the woman" through the flood? How can you prove this?