A Tale of Two Cities — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 10:1–11:9 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, June 25, 2023 · *Living Right*

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This morning we're going to be in the book of Genesis, and so it's actually our last Sunday in the book of Genesis for a little while because next week will be my last Sunday before my sabbatical. And I'll be taking a little bit of a break, and Taylor will be teaching our church. During that time, he'll be leading our church through two different sermon series. One on the parables of Jesus and one more of a topical series on the human heart. I'm very excited for our church to get to hear from him.

He's done a lot of training and education in the realm of biblical counseling and navigating the issues of the heart. I think we'll be able to provide a ton of value to our congregation and then on the parables of Jesus. It's just—you can't ever go wrong with the parables of Jesus. And so this will be our last Sunday in this book until I get back from sabbatical. And we've been in a series entitled "Living Right in a World Gone Wrong," which is really drilling into that section in the book of Genesis from Genesis chapter 4 all the way to Genesis chapter 11.

And it's telling the afterstory of what happened when sin entered the world. And basically the world broke bad. And so the question is how do you live righteous in a world that is broken bad? And it was a question for them and it's as much of a question for us because the world has not changed. If anything, it's just gotten a little more complicated. And so this morning we're going to kind of see a dynamic climax that has been building all the way back from Genesis chapter 4. Throughout the book of Genesis, you kind of see this contrast between good and evil, between the Lord who creates and creates things that are good and wonderful and life-giving.

And then the opposite of that, evil, and in Genesis it's represented as the serpent or Satan, he comes in and undermines the good creation that God has made. And so you see God creating and Satan, you might say counterfeiting. God creates, Satan counterfeits. And you see this happen at individual level with Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. You see it happen at

a family level after a kind of temptation enters in and the seed of the serpent causes Cain to kill his brother Abel. You see this happen at a generational level in Genesis chapter 6[1] when the sons of God and the daughters of men begin to commingle and you see this corruption of the seed of the promise that was established in Genesis 3.

And then today we're going to see it at what I'm just going to say a national or a global level where this cosmic battle between good and evil manifests itself as a war between two worlds. And that contrast is really fascinating. The second contrast that I want to set up before we dive into the text is this contrast between two seeds. You don't just have God creating and Satan counterfeiting in Genesis chapters 1 to 11. You have these two bloodlines. In Genesis chapter 3, after sin entered into the world, God made a promise to Adam and Eve that from the seed of the woman was going to come a deliverer or a serpent crusher who was going to reverse the curse and deliver them from their bondage to sin.

The other contrast of that is what you might call a counterfeit spirit or the spirit of the Antichrist, and that is the seed of the serpent. So you see the seed of Christ. And the seed of the Antichrist as early as Genesis chapter 3 and at every point along the way in Genesis chapters 1 to 11. You see the seed of Christ there in Genesis 3:15; you see the seed of the Antichrist in the temptation that says, "Does God really say?" You see the seed of Christ in the sacrifice that is made so that Adam and Eve could have a covering for their nakedness.

And you see the seed of the serpent in the corruption of the sons of God and the daughters of men and the Nephilim and the kind of nonsense and craziness that went on in that world. You see the seed of Christ in the sacrifice of Noah giving praise to God for delivering him from the flood. You see the seed of Christ in the ark itself, delivering Noah and his family from the catastrophe that they endured during the flood, and then you see the seed of the serpent in the corruption of Noah becoming a drunk, passed out in his tent, and the curse of Canaan, because of the terrible things that his dad Ham did to his mother and his father.

So at every level, on both sides, you see the contrast between the seed of Christ and the seed of the Antichrist. And what happens in our text today in Genesis chapter 10 and 11 is it plays itself out at this very big cosmic scale. You think of it as a war between two worlds, a war between two cities. You've got the city of God and the city of man. And Genesis chapter 11 talks about what's called the tower of Babel. Maybe you've heard of it before. It was the original Babylon, the kind of the godless city of man.

And it's at war against the purposes of God in creation, which we'll call the city of God. A great book written on this topic by an old school church father named Saint Augustine. I would commend it to you if you've got a lot of time on your hands. Because this is a big big book, but I'll give you the CliffsNotes version today. Alright, so Genesis chapter 10, we'll pick it up in verse 1. All of Genesis 10 is a genealogy. And I know it's hard to even say the word genealogy without yawning, so I'm going to try to make it interesting for you.

But the genealogy sets up the after-effect of what happens in Genesis chapter 11, which is the sin of Babylon. Genesis chapter 10, verse 1 talks about the generations of the sons of Noah. He's got three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and it says sons were born to them after the flood. So what we're about to see in Genesis 10 is 70 names of the children of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And they're actually going to be listed in order from least important to most important from the viewpoint of the original audience, which is the nation of Israel.

Israel stems from the line of Shem. And so Shem is going to be last, Ham is going to be in the middle, and Japheth is going to be listed first. Not because of the order of their birth, but because of the relative importance to the original audience. I need to say up front, one, these names are hard to pronounce. It's not just because I'm from Roby that I'm going to butcher them. Number two, they are not comprehensive. Okay, there will be names that are not mentioned that did exist. And then three, I've got them listed as charts because it's like your eyes will glaze over if you're just reading the name.

So if you have a copy of God's word, please read it. If not, I'll have a little chart that kind of shows you the family tree. It's kind of like the 23andMe of the whole world because everybody who exists even today is stemming from these descendants, these three sons. And what Moses is doing is he is helping these Jewish people, these Israelites who are coming out of slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt, and they're coming into this promised land. Moses is trying to help them establish who they are. He's giving them what you might say is the backstory of how they came to be, who they are, and how these other nations that they're about to fight in the promised land came to be what they are.

And it's an explanatory passage of why I am who I am, why God's asked me to do what he's asking me to do, and the people that I'm coming up against, why they are who they are, and God's relation to them. So with that in mind, let's read the genealogy. Or here's the first chart: the sons of Japheth. You've got Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. Then come down here to Gomer. You've got Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah; the sons of Javan, which is Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. And then, "From these the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations."

So if you go to that next graphic, it's essentially as if Noah took his firstborn son Japheth and said, "I want you to go north, northwest, northeast," but he's right here in the Fertile Crescent area and he sends them up. And they basically become who are now the Indo-European countries. You can go as far east as Russia with Magog and his descendants, or you can go as far west as Tarshish and Greece or Rome and the European types of peoples. That's who Japheth and his descendants represent. Now if you go down to the next name, that's the son of Noah who is Ham.

He's the son we looked at last week that sinned against his father in a terrible way, and he has all of these descendants that come from his line as well. You've got Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. So those are the big four up there. And then underneath them you've got the sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. And then the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. Verses 8 to 12 talk about another guy named Nimrod. We're going to look at him a little bit later, but skip down to verse 13.

You'll see Egypt, who fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, Casluhim, from whom the Philistines came, and Caphtorim. Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Those are just fun to say. You notice this little *-im* at the end of all of these words—this is totally nerding out—but that's a Hebrew way of saying y'all; it's more than one. And so these are not actually people, these are like cultures or tribes. It's, you know, it's like saying y'all in Hebrew.

So you can just see all of these peoples coming from Ham and then of course from Canaan who's Ham's descendant. He fathered all of those Girgashites, Hivites; you see them later in the Old Testament, who are fighting against the people of God. "Afterward the clans of the Canaanites dispersed. And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations."

So if you put the map back up there, it's as if he said to him, "I want you to go south and I want you to go west." And he did. And this is like modern-day Egypt, and then all of these people are coming along the coastlines, just like they were on those coastlines, and you've got the Canaanites, the people who are descended from Canaan who was cursed because of what Ham did to Noah, and they're right here on this kind of edge of the promised land, and we're going to see later in the Old Testament how Israel fights against these tribes that are listed right here from this area.

Then finally you've got the last descendant, which went to Shem. He's the one from whom Abraham comes, the line of Jesus himself comes from the line of Shem. You've got the father Shem, who's the father of all these listed here, and he says in that first verse that he's the father of all the children of Eber.[2] This is where the word Hebrew comes from. Hebrew, Eber. You can even hear the kind of commonality there. And so all of the Middle Eastern Hebrew people come from the line of Shem. You've got Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram; from Aram, you've got Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

From Arpachshad, you've got Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. Eber had Peleg because the days were divided during his time, and then his brother Joktan, which to me sounds like a Star Wars name. Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal—

you get the point. The territory in which they live extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the east. And so again, if you throw the map back up there, it's as if he said to Shem, "I want you to go south and east." And this is the Arabian peninsula.

You've got the Persian Gulf over here, the Red Sea, this is the Mediterranean Sea. And all of these Middle Easterners get established in that arena. You've got Iraq over here, and Iran. And still today you can see these descendants that came from these three names. It really is very fascinating. You got to ask the question, why does he list all of these names? Well, one thing he's listing these names because they were scattered from what happens in Genesis chapter 11, which we're about to look at. So I think it's a way of saying God is not just reacting to the sin of Babylon or the sin of the tower of Babel, but that it was his design to scatter the people, because from that scattered people he's going to make a new people for himself from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

The other thing that I think is important to note is that the focus on these differences are not necessarily on race or ethnicity, but rather their culture. And geography. I think it's interesting that the list is selective and not exhaustive. There are only 70 names. The number seven in the Bible is symbolic for—it oftentimes means completeness or kind of God's number. And so he's not trying to be comprehensive, he's trying to be selective for a reason. And you also see the sins of the father get passed on to the third and fourth generation with the sin of Ham cursing his grandson—or cursing his son Canaan— you see that they're always warring against the people of God because of that curse that was on the father.

Just some takeaways from this very quickly. God creates and celebrates ethnic diversity. I think there were some who will use the Bible to kind of articulate ethno-supremacism or some kind of nationalism and I don't think you can make that case from the scripture. These people are God's people regardless of where they are at on the map. It is by God's design that you have these different peoples, different tribes, different languages, different cultures, and it's a good and beautiful thing that is from the Lord. And if you've ever traveled abroad, you know how amazing it is to see these different cultures and different languages and their food is so awesome and you think, why didn't I think of this?

You know, maybe not curry, but some of the other things that you get in the world. It's just like, wow, that's really amazing. And that's a gift from the Lord. That diversity is wonderful. I think he celebrates diversity. He's sovereign over every nation. And he desires to save people from every nation, which is what we're going to see later on in this story. These people are going to be scattered, but from these scattered people, God is going to save individuals. Until you get to the point of the book of Revelation where there is people from literally every tribe, tongue, and nation gathered around the throne singing, "Worthy is the Lamb," and "Salvation belongs to our God."

It is God's plan A, has been his plan A from the very beginning to form a counterculture, a city within the city, a city of God that is going to counteract and resist the city of man. And you're going to see those two worlds war against one another now that they've been set up in Genesis chapter 10. What is the city of man? It's the city of Babylon, the original OG Babylon in Genesis chapter 11. You might think of Babylon as a counterfeit city, animated by the spirit of a counterfeit Christ.

The counterfeit Christ, you might think of him as a kind of like proto-Antichrist figure, is a guy by the name of Nimrod. We skipped over him earlier in the genealogy, but let's read about him now in Genesis chapter 10, verses 8 to 12. It says that Cush, who was one of Ham's sons, he fathered Nimrod, and Nimrod was the first on the earth to be a mighty man. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord, and therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord." The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. One more map. I know you are mapped out, but this is modern day Iraq. You've got Baghdad who would be right around here. This is the Persian Gulf, Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea. This is where his reign would have started, Nimrod. But it mentions here that he goes up towards Nineveh and Calneh. So he's taking over this whole area, which is basically modern-day Iraq, a little bit of Iran. And notice the words that the text uses to describe him.

It says that he is a mighty hunter. And it says that he is a mighty man. And it could just mean that he was, like, you know, a he-man. I don't think that's what it means though. The phrase mighty man is elsewhere used to sometimes communicate a tyrant, a ruthless, authoritarian, strongman, someone who once he's in power, you're wishing, "I wish I wouldn't have put him in power," because he's just ruthless and cold. The phrase mighty hunter, it could mean that he was good at hunting and he like killed all the hogs to clear out the property and all the lions and tigers and bears, oh my.

You know, the king cleared out the bush, if you will. But that's not always what it means. A lot of times it means a human hunter, a human trafficker. A slaver who built his kingdom on the backs of human slaves, which is very likely what Nimrod would have done as a ruthless authoritarian tyrant, he would have put into bondage and forced labor. These people who are living in the land of Shinar, who are the descendants of what are today the Jewish people, he enslaved them way, way, way back then. And then it says he does this before the Lord, which could mean like God could see him—but obviously God can see him.

It's more likely the idea of doing this against the Lord. Like he was intentionally disobeying God, spitting in God's face. The very name Nimrod means let us rebel. And so this is a guy who hates God, hates authority, that wants nothing to do with any kind of submission,

unless it's other people submitting to him, and he has built a massive kingdom for himself, and at the center of that kingdom is this city called Babel or Babylon the original. So let's read about the city. Genesis chapter 11, verse 1. The whole earth had one language and the same words.

And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone and bitumen for mortar." Have any of you guys ever been to Las Vegas or Nevada? You know the adobe style of architecture where it's kind of like mud bricks? That's essentially what they would have used for their architecture. And it says that they come from the east, which could mean that they came from that mountainous region there east of the Persian Gulf.

Or it could be a theological point that they are east as in east of Eden, because when Adam and Eve are cast out of the garden they are driven east of Eden. It's kind of code in the Bible for far from God. If you're in the east, it's away from God. These are godless people who are kind of on board with this godless agenda to build this city that wants nothing to do with God and is in rebellion against God. And you can see that explicitly in verse 4, when it says that they said to one another, "Come, let us build ourselves a city with a tower, and that tower have its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

And so they want to build a city that is the city of man. They want to exalt man. They want to be like God, not submitted to God, but they themselves become like gods. And that's the kind of the spirit of the age in this city of Babylon. And they were probably doing that on the backs of these human slaves. Let's make much of ourselves at the expense of these human slaves. And so you can imagine this was a wicked place. This was Sin City. This was if you were living in this place, you probably had no recourse.

There was probably not a lot of justice, not a lot of court system. It was just the strong man in charge doing his thing, who hated God and anyone who was submitted to God's design or God's law. It was a godless city. It had a globalist agenda. And it existed for the sake of self-glorification. Let's make a name for ourselves. And that's the heartbeat behind every Babylon in the Bible. Now what did it look like? I put a little graphic up here of an ancient ziggurat, which you know the Egyptians built their pyramids and Egypt was on the other end of the Persian Gulf.

So pyramids are one thing. If you go across the water to the Mesopotamian region, they built what are called ziggurats, and you had the bottom foundation and stairs going up and then another foundation and then another foundation and all the way up to you get up to this top and there would be a temple. Sometimes built to a god, sometimes built to a king who

thought himself to be God, and seated on that temple throne would be the king, and he would come and receive worship and accolades and submission of the peoples.

It is a counterfeit of God's temple. Remember, God creates and Satan what? He counterfeits. And so you see here a counterfeit of Jesus, who is the supreme, highly exalted leader, who sits on the throne and rules and reigns. With this now human king taking his place. And so you have the true Christ versus the Antichrist, the design of God versus the counterfeit of Satan. That's what you have going on in this city of Babel, this godless city with this globalist agenda. God responds in verse 5 with judgment. It says that the Lord came down to see the great city and the tower which the children of man had built.

Notice that phrase, children of man, as opposed to the sons of God. These are godless people who built this godless city, and so the Lord comes down and says, "Look at this. They are one people. They have one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. Nothing that they purpose or nothing that they propose will now be impossible for them. And so let us come down there, confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." And so the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of the earth," and they left off building the city.

And therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth. That's why when you talk about people babbling today, it comes from Babel. It's just you're speaking nonsense. I don't know what you're talking about, because the Lord comes down and judges the people of Babylon with confusing their languages. I think it's interesting what the Lord acknowledges, right? He says they're unstoppable. If I don't stop them, there's nothing that they cannot do because they have one language and they are socially aligned.

They were socially aligned. They were technologically advanced. You think about their social alignment. They had maybe like a one-world government—you might consider, maybe not the entire world, but a unified government. And they had a common language. I don't think that just means they spoke the same language, although that's true. You know what's interesting is linguists have done studies on human language. And they actually argue that there was an ancient common tongue shared by all the Indo-European peoples. And like the very beginning stages of the human experiment, they call it PIE, which stands for Proto-Indo-European.

It was not a written language, it was a spoken language, but they're actually trying to resurrect it, to bring it back. It's really interesting. They had one language, but it doesn't just mean that they spoke the same words. It's that they believed the same narrative. That's how I would phrase it. You know today we have narratives. You've got—a narrative is like the way you view the world, the lens through which you interpret all the data. So people talk about

like the people who watch MSNBC have one narrative and the people who watch Fox News have a different narrative.

That'd be maybe overstating things a little bit, but the basic idea is that your narrative is how you interpret the facts. There's the facts and there's how you interpret the facts. That's your narrative. They had a singular narrative. They had a strong man who said, "I control the words, I control what people think, I control what people feel, I control what people see." That's dangerous. Because if you can control what people think and see and feel, then you have a mob at your disposal to twist and turn however you want.

And that's what Nimrod had in Babel. They were socially aligned. I'm not saying it was a good thing. He was an authoritarian dictator, but it was a powerful thing. And you see the Lord recognize that. And then he says that they are technologically advanced, there's nothing that they cannot do. And so you ask the question, well, if the Lord recognizes they were onto something, why does he stop them? And I think the reason he stops them is because the thing unto which they were pursuing was a bad thing. Because they were committed not to the city of God, not to advancing righteousness and advancing God's design, but advancing the spirit of the Antichrist.

And if you let that spirit run wild, it is horrific. It unleashes hell on earth. If you don't believe me, just read the book of Revelation. And you see, God essentially lets man do what he wants to do. He lets the Antichrist rise to power, he lets the whole one-world thing happen, and it unleashes absolute catastrophe over the face of the entire earth. So God's decision here to thwart their plans, to confuse their language is actually an act of mercy. Because he's keeping them from feeling the full brunt of their foolishness.

They were technologically advanced, they were socially aligned, but they were morally bankrupt. It's just like when the Lord drove Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. You guys remember this in Genesis 3? He says, "We need to drive them from the garden." Why? Lest they eat of the tree of life and live forever. It wasn't just that God didn't want them to live forever. Obviously, God wants us to live forever because we have eternal life in Jesus Christ. He doesn't want us to live forever in a certain state. A state of sin, a state of brokenness, a state of decay.

And the same thing is happening here with the Lord. "I don't want you—it's not that I'm opposed to a great city. It's not that I'm opposed to alignment and technological advances. I'm all for that, but not in this state of moral decay. And so I will confuse you, I will disperse you, and it will be for your good." And so that's what he does. Now what does this mean for us today? Like most things in the book of Genesis, as Shakespeare eloquently said, the past is prologue. So what you see happen in Genesis happens over and over and over again throughout history.

It really is fascinating how insightful the book of Genesis is into the human condition and the human experiment. You see this pattern play itself out over and over and over again throughout human history. Where a godless group of people elect a godless leader who becomes an authoritarian who uses his lust and thirst for power to make a name for himself and to make a kind of a resistance against the Lord and then God brings judgment on that nation and on that ruler. It's the same demons. New days, old demons: it's the demonic spirit that inspired Nimrod, that kind of motivated the city of Babylon.

That same demonic spirit is at work in our world today. And it may not be as strong as it was in Genesis chapter 11, but it is still present. It's the spirit that says we don't need God, we don't need the Bible, we don't need submission to God's authority, we can have all of the perks without any of the submission. We can have all of the blessings without any of the humility. We can have it our way. We can have our cake and eat it too. We don't need God's system.

We want this counterfeit system because it's going to be better. The spirit of Babylon is the spirit that says we can fix these big, big problems if we just give enough important people enough power. They have enough wisdom if we'll just let them run things. This is the spirit of the elites, the spirit that says I have all the money, therefore I must be the smartest person in the room. "If you just let me have the tools and let me have the power and let me have the control, I can fix it.

I can fix global warming. I can fix the economic problems. I can fix the political unrest." That's the spirit of Babylon. It is this kind of globalistic, one-world, proud, arrogant, egotistical spirit that says we don't need God to come down and help us. We need to build ourselves up and become like God. It elevates pride over humility, self over God, law over gospel, government over God, censorship over truth, and consensus over integrity. And it has happened throughout history a lot, and it is in the headlines every single day. The spirit of Babel looms large in our world today.

And it's incumbent upon, I think, God's people to recognize these are not new demons. These are old demons that are playing out in a new world. It was the spirit of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was the culture of Nazi Germany. It's in the culture of North Korea and Iran. It's the spirit behind human trafficking. Social media censorship, pornography, and the cultural decadence of the West. It's in the world as we speak with globalist institutions. I'm not saying everything in the World Economic Forum is a conspiracy theory. But there would be some who are motivated by the spirit of Babylon.

"Just give me the power and I can fix it." It's what is behind the centralization fetish that we have in our world today. Let's just centralize all the power, centralize all the resources. That's the spirit of Babylon. You see it in the whole cryptocurrency craze. At least the centralized cryptocurrencies, one-world government, one-world economic: "We make the decisions

what you can and cannot do." It's Babylon all over again. So how should Christians respond? Well, on the one hand, you can be thankful for the technological advances. They are really nice. A lot of the technology today is undoing the dispersion of Genesis 10.

When we were in Israel, I did not know you could do this. I downloaded Google Translate and I like held my phone up to the signs and it was like, "Toilet right here." Woo! Thank you, Jesus. You're undoing the curse. I should be able to speak Hebrew, but, you know, I'm a little rusty on my Hebrew. So I just pulled out Google Translate as a wonderful gift. You can be thankful for the technology, but beware of the spirit. Beware of that draw towards centralization and domination and the rejection of God.

And it's a reminder for Christian people to not lose hope because God made a promise in Genesis chapter 3, from the seed of the woman will come a serpent crusher; from the seed of the woman will come a spirit that is going to counteract and overcome the spirit of the Antichrist. He will prevail. The city of man will not prevail against the city of God. The city of God will prevail against the city of man. And we live for that city. We live for the city that is to come, knowing that the city of God will ultimately triumph.

Today in the city of man we have fences. We have locks, we have prisons, we have gates, we have to separate humanity from one another because of the sin in the world and because of the tendency of the human heart, but the Messiah, Jesus Christ, promised that he was bringing a new city in which there were no more fences, there are no more walls, there are no more prisons, because there is no more sin, there is no more death, there is no decay. And so we live for that city which is to come.

We don't want to get the cart before the horse, but we wait on the Lord to bring that city. Our sin is covered by God's grace, forgiven by the blood of Jesus, and we are united in Christ as one family, knowing that there's a day when the Lord Jesus will take all of us who've been scattered among the nations and bring us back together in a new heavens and a new earth. Where he rules and reigns from Jerusalem forevermore. That's the city that is to come. That's the city for which we're living.

And Genesis chapter 11 is a fresh reminder for us to not get bogged down in the city of man, but to live for the city that is to come. What's so fascinating is if you finish Genesis chapter 11 and you keep reading, you get to Genesis chapter 12. Who shows up in Genesis chapter 12? None other than an old man named Abram. And God says to Abram, after he's scattered all of these nations, he picks one dude, Abram, not because he was wise, not because he was great, just because God chose him, and says, "I'm going to choose you, I'm going to bless you, and through blessing you, I'm going to bless the nations."

He says, "I know you're old and you don't got no babies, but I'm going to make your descendants as multiple as the stars in the sky." And God began a project with Abraham to

bring about this new city. And if you read the rest of the story, it has got its valleys, lows, and its complex web of series of events, but God makes good on his promise. You got the birth of Isaac, you got the birth of Jacob, you got these fathers of the faith, of the Jewish religion, the Judeo-Christian heritage, and from them come a Messiah that we recognize as Jesus of Nazareth.

He was the Messiah who fulfilled all of the Old Testament prophecies. All of the Old Testament covenants are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. And when you see Jesus show up in the Gospels, He takes the scattering of Genesis chapter 10 and he brings it back together. In the book of Hebrews it talks about Abraham living for the city that is to come. And in Luke chapter 10, Jesus calls his disciples and he sends—get this—72. Of the 70 names there in Genesis 10, he sends 72 disciples to go out to the far regions and to preach the gospel of the kingdom.

The scattering is coming back gathered. Not for the city of man, but for the city of God. And so they go out proclaiming and teaching the kingdom. When Jesus dies, he's buried. God raises him from the dead three days later. He calls his disciples together in Matthew 28, and he says, "I want you to go and make disciples of"—how many nations? Every nation. Every nation. This is not just a Jewish thing. This is a worldwide thing. And so what God began through Abraham and the people of Israel, he now continues today through the church.

What he initiated in the person of Jesus Christ who proclaimed the kingdom of God and who died for our sins and God raised him from the dead. It now continues through the church. And Jesus, right before he ascended into heaven, he got his disciples together. This is actually Acts chapter 1, verse 8. He said, "When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you are going to receive power and you are going to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth." And that's exactly what they did.

It took them a while, Acts chapter 3 and 4. It took them a little. He had to send persecution. He had to push them out. But then they start making disciples of every nation. Paul, Barnabas, the Antioch church sends out to the Gentiles. That's why you and I are even welcomed in because of the missionary heart of God to build a new city that's going to triumph over the city of man. And when you get to Genesis—or I'm sorry, when you get to Revelation chapter 7, you see this beautiful picture of Jesus seated on the throne, the only one who is worthy, and you have people from every tribe, tongue, and language standing around the throne, and they are singing with all of their might, with palm branches in their hands, giving allegiance to Jesus Christ.

"Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb." That's our city. That's our king. And that's the heart that we should share. And so as we close, I'd like to challenge you to examine your heart and ask yourself, "Whose city am I living for? Am I committed to the city of man? Have I got wrapped up into Babylon? It's easy to do, trust me.

"Or am I living for the city of God, the city that is to come, giving myself for God's heart to reach people from every tribe, tongue, and nation?"

How can we say we are filled with the Holy Spirit if we don't share the heart of God? How can we say we are committed to the city that is to come if we never share the gospel? Never give to missions, have no desire to really do anything other than satisfy ourselves. We go to church for ourselves. We do everything that we do for ourselves. Get more money, build a bigger life for this world that is fading away. How you live your life indicates where you've put your heart, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

As we get ready to take the Lord's Supper, I would just invite you to ask the Lord to examine what's in here and determine, "Am I living for the city of God or am I living for the city of man?" And then if the Lord exposes some sin in your life, would you just offer that up to the Lord: "Would you forgive me for getting distracted, for getting caught up in a system that is ultimately fading away. And would you help me to live for the city that is to come."

If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian and the Lord's calling you to himself to put your faith in Jesus for salvation, you don't want to put your hope in this world. You want to put your hope in the Lord Jesus Christ who died for your sins and was raised from the dead. Then you can come down while we take the Lord's Supper and I'd be happy to talk with you about that decision. I'm going to ask our ushers if they would come to the front as we get ready to disperse our elements.

And then right there where you're seated you can respond to the Lord however the Lord leads. Father in heaven, we thank you for this passage and for this fresh reminder that you are the true King of kings, the true Lord of lords. At the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. So help us now to get on the right end of that equation. Not rejecting submission, but welcoming it, because we know it is an invitation to freedom and to life and to abundance and blessing.

As we take the Lord's Supper, would you open our eyes so we can see, open our ears so that we can hear what the Holy Spirit wants to say? And we pray it in Jesus' name.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Genesis chapter 4 and 5"; the sons of God and the daughters of men appear in Genesis 6:1–4 (chapters 4–5 are the genealogies of Cain and Seth). Source: Genesis 6:1–4 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "he's the son of Eber"; Genesis 10:21 calls Shem "the father of all the children of Eber" (Eber is Shem's great-grandson, 10:22–24). Source: Genesis 10:21–24 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩