

Pray**God is opposed to the proud.**

So, in this story we will learn about God... and we will learn about ourselves.

First, we will learn about nations of which we are a part. For you and I came from Adam through Noah... even Norwegians.

I. The Table of Nations Gen. 10:1-32

In Gen. 10:1 we read, "these are the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth." = what came from them

So, as before we are going to discover what happened in the world as the story progresses... a next step.

First we read of the sons of Japheth, the youngest, and the nations that came from them. **Gen. 10:2-5**

These are the peoples who came to populate Europe and Russia and India.

Next we read of the sons of Ham and the nations that came from them. **Gen. 10:6-20**

These are possibly the peoples who would eventually settle the Far East and Africa. We actually don't know.

And, we are told at length of the territory of the Canaanites because this would be immediately important to Israel.

Last we read of the sons of Shem, the oldest, and the nations that came from them. **Gen. 10:21-31**

These peoples would mostly settle in the Middle East.

II. Hubris Gen. 11:1-4

The word means "extreme pride and arrogance."

Quote, "Hubris often indicates a loss of contact with reality and an overestimation of one's own competence or capabilities."

The word perfectly describes the attitudes of people on earth as described in Genesis 11.

It also describes the attitude of people ever since, especially today.

In fact, it probably sometimes describes you or me.

In chapter 11:1-2 after the table of nations in chapter 10, we have a description of the state of affairs...

But, it is important to realize that this description is a description of the situation involving the people in chapter 10.

If chapter 10 describes a genealogical tree...

Now, in chapter 11, we get to look at one moment in the life of that tree... and, in fact, early in the life of the tree.

For the events around Babel happen early on in the development of these nations, their scattering, and languages.

Consider **10:5, 20, 31-32**

And, **10:8-10** gives us an idea of just when the events at Babel began. Babel was the beginning of Nimrod's rule.

You see? And, 11:1-9 tells us how the separation happened. And it was not a result of their obedience to God.

A few months ago Linda Glanzer wrote me a little note...

explaining how the command of God helps us to understand what is going on in Genesis 11.

Remember what God had said previously?

Gen. 1:26-28 Man in God's image was to spread His rule and the glory of God over all the earth.

It is a command with a blessing... in fact it is a command that is a blessing.

Gen. 9:1, 7 Now it is after God's new creation, a new beginning...

The command that is a blessing is twice repeated... people are supposed to fill the earth, rule it, and enjoy it.

And, you might think that the people on the earth in Gen. 10 are doing this out of obedience to God.

But, this is not so.

We do find out where they went first. **Gen. 11:1-2**

Then we discover what they wanted to do... and began to do. We don't know how far they got.

But, this is typical of human beings. God tells us what to do and we think we know better.

We do something else. We do what we want, not what God wants. Hubris... and, well, it doesn't go well for us.

There are three things that we discover here that the people want. **Gen. 11:3-4**

1. They want to build a city with a tower whose top will reach into heaven.
2. They want to make a name for themselves.
3. They do not want to be scattered... to obey God.

Let us consider each desire in turn.

First: The building

It must have been quite a time... filled with ingenuity and technological advancement.

We read of the newfound making of hard bricks... a material still used today for building.

I imagine that they were saying to one another, "Things are changing now like never before! Look what we can do!

This is certainly what we are saying to one another today.

So, their ingenuity and advancement feeds their ambition.

They want to build a city and a tower... something BIG! Something for themselves.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that the tower had a religious meaning as well.

The tower will go up to where God is... maybe they are attempting to reach God's place without God.

And, the city they built will have a religious meaning as well... this city called Babylon.

Second: They want a name for themselves

Who's name should they have been interested in making great? God.

But, they are not interested in making a name for God, they want it for themselves.

The same desire lurks in us still.

Who do we want people to notice? Me. Who's name do we work so hard to make great? Mine. (not me, pastor)

And, we naturally get upset when people don't notice me, when people don't recognize what I have done.

I want to make a name for me! And it leads to disaster.

They actually did make a name for themselves... the name is Babylon.

This name has been often associated with hugely powerful empires that opposed God.

Eventually, this name will describe the virtual rule of Satan on the earth. **Rev. 18:9-10** It is not a good name.

Third: Fear of being scattered

They didn't want to obey God. They didn't want to fill the earth. They were scared.

We often miss this aspect of this story. This is not simply about people and their awesome power and ability of people.

This is about very capable, confident and arrogant people who are scared... they are ultimately scared of God.

They know that they are not doing what He wants them to do... though they are probably trying not to think about Him.

They didn't want to step out in faith and see how God would bless them.

These people are much like us... people have not changed much in 4000 years.

Next we read of how God reacts to their plans.

What will God do about all this? He humbles them. This is always what God does to the proud.

III. Humiliation **Gen. 11:5-9**

Now we have a very interesting and humorous picture. Until now we have been imagining this great city and tower being built.

Gen. 11:5 "The Lord came down to see..."

So now the Lord speaks... and He speaks to Himself... as He did in Genesis 1:26. **Gen. 11:6-7**

God speaks of one concern: Because of their cooperation and communication "nothing they desire will be impossible for them."

Now this is no suggestion that people might become omnipotent or like God.

No, it is "nothing which they purpose" that is the operative concept.

What might they purpose? Disobedience and sin.

Cooperation and unity among sinners often leads to bigger, more creative, and more horrible sin.

We certainly see this today.

Why was Hitler's Germany so terrible? Because Hitler got all those industrious Germans to work together.

In the 1930s the Manhattan Project resulted in the most horrible weapon ever built in the history of the world.

Why? Because the American Government and a huge team of industrialists and scientists worked together.

Small sins become great sins when people get together.

But, the problem is not the getting together... it is the getting together without God.

This is why our nation is in so much trouble today... we are doing just this.

Make no mistake cooperation without God is terrible. Peace without God is a disaster.

So, God carries out His solution. It is not to make them all think of Him and obey Him. That is not God's way with rebellious hearts.

He confuses their languages. He breaks up their unity. He makes life more difficult for them.

As a result they spread all over the earth. **Gen. 11:8-9**

God gets what He commanded. God plans always turn out. He never fails. He always has the last word.

Ultimately God will unite people from every nation and they will no longer be unable to communicate.

Ultimately God will bring us all together in a city that He will build for us.

Ultimately God's name will be great to the ends of the earth.

He will accomplish all of this, not us... and if you seek Him in obedience you get to be a part of it.

Here's the great lesson from this first great human accomplishment that comes to nothing.

You can choose to disobey God, to do it your way, to build your own empire, to make your own name great.

It is human nature to think you know better than God, to blame others, to make excuses, to do your own thing.

You can do that for a while... maybe for your whole life. But, it's a dead end. It will come to nothing.

And, it won't even set God back any. No matter what you do or think, God will accomplish His purpose.

If He chooses He can make you obey Him even when you thought you wouldn't.

So, you might as well trust Him and obey Him the first time around.

It is so much better for you, and it honors God, to choose to be a part of His plan and make His name great.

When you think you know better than God say, "I think this, but I know I'm wrong. God help me to simply obey."

But, you cannot just decide to obey. You need help because naturally you'll go your own way. You need Jesus.

When you trust in Jesus Christ, He give you the power and will to obey, even when you first don't want to. **John 3:36**