

First Southern Baptist Church Bible Study - August 28, 2019

Tower of Babel - Gen. 10-11 / 11:1-9

Introduction

1. Situated -Within the Table of Nations (NIV calls it such - 10:1)
 - 10:2-5 - Japheth/ Japhethites
 - 10:6-20 - Ham/ Hamites
 - 10:21-31 - Shem/ Semites
 - 11:1-9 - The Tower of Babel**
 - 11:10-32 - from Shem to Abram
 - 12:1 - The call of Abram
 - Gen. 10:18 - tells of a “scattering” but that is the genealogy of Shem
2. Nimrod is not mentioned (in chapter 11), but from Chapter 10 (verses 8-10) we might understand him to be the chief
3. The promise of God prevails... through all these type interruptions
4. Chapter 10 - multiplication and spread of peoples
 - Chapter 11 - narrowing down to one line/ family - Shem - Abraham

Verses 1-2 - Unity

1. Begins with unity - ends in chaos
 - unity is located in their speech/ language is identified from the beginning
2. Begins opposed to God, ends carrying out the will of God
3. The promised blessing
 - They had moved outside the place of blessing
4. Urban life - is it wrong?
 - Sodom and Gomorrah
 - Cain

Verses 3-4

1. Cooperative spirit - “come let us make bricks”
2. Literary refrain - catch the irony
 - “Come let us make bricks”
 - “Come let us build ourselves”
 - “Come, let us go down and confuse”
3. Bricks:
 - A. Conventional and baked (fired) bricks were used in monumental structures - like the ancient ziggurat (a ziggurat is built similar to a pyramid, but the steps are recessed so you could climb them to the top)
 - B. Bricks for foundation walls and courts were set in asphalt
 - C. Usually some of the bricks were inscribed with the name of the benefactor
4. Build us a tower, and make us a name
5. A tower that “reaches to heaven”
 - ambition of autonomy?
 - a stairway that would give them access to the God?
 - build a skyscraper?
6. The purpose -
 - A. Make a “name for ourselves”

B. To avoid being scattered

7. If heaven is the place of God,... then are they invading the “place of God?”
8. They do make a “name for themselves” - “balal” or “muddle!”
Want to gain a “name” -end in a name - “babelites”
9. What is their sin?
 - not the building itself... but the purpose for the building
 - Nimrod wants to not be scattered - God says - replenish the earth
 - make a name - an inordinate desire for fame. At Gen. 12:2 God promised Abraham that He would make his name great
 - calls into question, just who is in charge
 - human autonomy in pride
 - so... to make a name and build a city...without God
10. Babylon is a symbol of:
 - self-seeking and self-securing
 - another type city
 - a false unity - unity of purpose or unity of person
 - *Babylon -Read Jeremiah 50-51 and Rev. 17-19 to contrast the city of God - Jerusalem and the city of the World - Babylon. Babylon represents the world system that opposes God. Jerusalem is the city of the saints (Heb. 12:18ff).
11. Two types of unity
 - A. God’s unity encourages this type scattering... unified... by being tied to Him
 - B. Unity by being tied to one another - the Babelites problem

Verse 5 - God Came Down

1. But the Lord - the story turns here
2. God “descended” to their great tower ... that was ascending - God has to descend to any
of our efforts
The one enthroned in heaven “laughs at them” - He “scoffs” - Ps. 2:4

Verses 6-7 - God’s Opinion

1. God speaks His mind on the matter
2. Why stop them? - “nothing they attempt will be impossible to them”
-reminds us of the garden punishment - if God does not hinder them, they will gain access to the tree of life - Gen. 3:22
3. God withholds from us - He restrains our efforts - especially those that are not good for us
4. By hindering us/ them - God furthers His own will - the scattering
-the judgment of God, carrying out the will of God

Verses 8-9 - Scattered

1. A heavenly disgust
2. “Babel” is babel
-sounds like “confused” (babel)
3. They sought to make a “name” - they found one... “babel”
4. God may have judged the works - but He judged the people themselves

Acts 2

1. The problem is one of hearing, not languages
 - although their languages are different, they speak the same thing - Abba, Father
2. Unity and diversity in the New Testament
3. The New Testament church begins with a new language