

## One Nation, Over God

**GENESIS 11:1-9 | PASTOR JAKE LIEDKIE**

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Thank you so much, musicians. All right, well, I invite you this morning to take your Bibles and turn with me to Genesis chapter 11. That is good to say that, to turn in Genesis.

It's been a nice break in some ways over the past few weeks being in other parts of the Bible, but it is truly good to be back this morning with you in Genesis. And today we're in the familiar count of the Tower of Babel. If you grew up in the church, you grew up learning about this story.

It's kind of one of those epic Old Testament tales. But in these events, we're going to have some phenomenal lessons that we learn about the nature of the human heart, and in particular, the character of God. And what I want you to be prepared for as we work through this this morning is to recognize that the spiritual issues that plagued this generation are the same fundamental base idolatries, the same fundamental spiritual issues that plague the human race today.

In particular, the pride of life that manifests itself in self-exaltation and in the desire to control one's own destiny. Okay, so if you've ever had this struggle, if you've ever felt the struggle at any point in your life with self-exaltation or the desire to control the outcome of your life, then you are in good company with the rest of humanity. And really, there's only on this earth those who are walking in a state of unrepentance and bondage to those idols.

Those who've been set free from the tyranny of idolatry, they're new in Christ, and now they spend the rest of their life doing what? Battling the flesh by the power of the Spirit. So, that being said, let's read our passage this morning. Genesis chapter 11 beginning in verse 1. Now the whole earth had the same language and the same words.

What happened is they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. Then they said to one another, come let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone and they had tar for mortar.

And they said, come let us build for ourselves a city and a tower whose top will reach into heaven. Let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered over the face of the whole

earth. Then Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.

And Yahweh said, behold, they are one people and they all have the same language. And this is what they have begun to do. So now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.

Come, let us go down and there confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's language. So Yahweh scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth and they stopped building the city. Therefore, its name was called Babel because there Yahweh confused the language of the whole earth and from there Yahweh scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

I titled this morning's message, One Nation Over God. One Nation Over God. It's really what is taking place here at Babel is humanity uniting themselves against God, above God.

If you're keeping an outline this morning, the title for the outline is this, God disperses mankind like it or not. God disperses mankind like it or not. And the first point in the passage this morning that we see in the opening verses is the rebellion.

Okay, the rebellion. This takes place in verses one through four. And what we find here is that innate human desire for self-preservation, the desire to secure the destiny that I believe I need and to prevent anything that would possibly threaten my future joy, the outcome as I would like it.

It's really selfish ambition at the heart. So we're going to see man scheming to protect and to preserve exactly what he wants and really to throw off then the yoke of being a creature who is constrained to being dependent and wants to throw off that yoke. He doesn't want to be dependent.

He doesn't want to be constrained by weakness. And in particular, as we see here, he doesn't want to submit himself to a creator. And so this rebellion, of course, is the classic exchange of the truth of God for a lie, where the true worship and submission that God is due is thrown off in the name of independence and autonomy and self-will.

And so Moses begins in verse one, and he says, now the whole earth had the same language in the same words. Now you might be reading that and you think, well, hold on, last week, actually it wasn't last week, a couple months ago, whenever we were in chapter 10, we saw the nations being dispersed by their tongues. Okay, Moses knows exactly what he's doing here.

This isn't anachronistic. He's taking these two accounts and putting them side by side. He's telling us in verse 10, here's where everybody went.

Now in chapter 12, here's why everyone dispersed. So he's explaining now in chapter 11, how it is that all the nations came into being. And so it all started with everyone of the same lip using the same words.

And this of course makes sense because we don't know the exact timing, but we know it was probably somewhere between 150 and maybe at most 350 years or so after the flood. So Noah gets off the ark with his three sons and their wives. They're all speaking the same language.

Even if it was 300 years later, it makes sense. There's one lip, one vocabulary. Everybody's speaking the same language.

Everyone understands each other. We don't know the exact time, but we do have a little clue that comes to us back in chapter 10. If you look back in chapter 10, we read in verse 21 of Shem, who of course was Noah's son, then has a bear that becomes his next son.

Excuse me, the sons of Shem, verse 22, were Elam and Asher and Arpachshod and Lud and Aram. And from Arpachshod, according to verse 24, he's the father of Shelah. Shelah, the father of a bear.

Verse 25, a bear, the father of Peleg. And it is in Peleg's days, according to verse 25, that the earth was divided. So at some point in Peleg's lifetime, Babel took place.

And whether Peleg was just a toddler at the time or whether he was an old man, we don't know exactly, but it kind of gives us the general boundary that this happened somewhere within five-ish generations post-flood. We cannot estimate with a high degree of certainty, but some estimates would say there could be 30,000 people on the earth at this time. So you've got to multiply the children and the birth dates and the birth rates and what it would have looked like to procreate.

So somewhere in the low tens of thousands are on the earth at this time and the earth had one language and the same words. It's interesting today there's an estimated 7,000 languages on the planet. And people who study languages would classify those language families into groups and depends on your exact criteria for the classification.

But depending on your classification, there's roughly 150 to 200 language families on earth. Just as a side note for the biblical account, evolutionists can't explain how it is that there's different language families. It doesn't make sense.

If man just kind of evolved along and slowly began to spread out from one language, really the only way that we can explain those diverse language families throughout the world is exactly what we will read about here today. So right now the whole earth, some kinds of

tens of thousands of people are together. And we do find that there is at least one named leader among the people at this time.

If you go back to chapter 10, verse 9, you read about Cush who is the father of Nimrod. And this is coming down out of Ham's line, which as you remember, Ham's line is rebellious. Right? So the flood wiped out the great wickedness on the earth, but what was the problem? You still had corruption on the boat, didn't you? And so that family gets off the boat and they bring their corruption with them.

Now, Ham's corrupt line is on the earth. Cush gives birth to Nimrod and Nimrod, according to verse 8 and chapter 10, becomes a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before Yahweh.

Therefore, it is said that like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before Yahweh. Verse 10, the beginning of his kingdom was Babel. Eric, the cod, and Keln in the land of Shinar.

So Nimrod is a key figure here in the tower of Babel. This is a very powerful ruler. If you're to think kind of throughout human history, there's names that come to mind of despots and tyrants and powerful wicked rulers.

Nimrod needs to be on that list. So Nimrod is building there in the land of Shinar an empire. And the center of this empire will have a tower.

Verse 2 says, it happened as they journeyed east that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. So already a couple of times in Genesis, we've kind of seen this clue of heading east. Remember Adam and Eve sin and what happens? They go east of Eden.

Cain sins. He goes east. And this region is what would one day become Babylon.

So maybe some of you school-aged children, you're learning world geography, if you've ever heard of Mesopotamia or the Crescent Valley or the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, this is the area that we're talking about. So under Nimrod's leadership, people begin to settle down in a plain in an area that would one day become Babylon. Just by starters, we say, well, is that what's so bad about that? Can we not go start a city? Can we not go build things? I mean, God said to rule over the creation, to Adam, it's part of his vice regency, the delegated responsibility, demand to go forth and conquer and to produce and to rule.

Well, the problem is because God gave a particular instruction to Noah when he got off the boat. It's being violated right now. Turn back to chapter 9, verse 1. When Noah and his family got off the boat, God blessed Noah and his sons, according to verse 1, and said to them, be fruitful and multiply and huddle up in one place.

No, fill the earth. He gave Noah's family a task. You're responsible to go fill the earth.

Certainly being fruitful and multiplying, procreate, have kids. But then send those kids out. The earth was designed to be inhabited and brought in submission and harnessed and utilized.

And so this group journeys east, they find a plain and they decide, you know what? Rather than spread out, we have a better plan. According to verse 3, they said to one another, come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone and they had tar for mortar.

And they said, come, let us build for ourselves a city and a tower whose top will reach into heaven. And let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered over the face of the whole earth. Begin to see the motivation here.

Verse 4, let us make it for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered over the face, over the whole earth. This building project had a very clear intent. It was designed to both exalt man and protect what he deemed most important.

And it's fascinating the amount of energy that was required to accomplish this. Verse 3, come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone and they had tar for mortar.

So typically in that region, bricks would be made by just taking the clay. I have some of this clay in my yard, unfortunately. You put it together while it's wet, you let it dry, and then what happens? You cannot get it off your boots, get it off your tires, sticks to everything, becomes very hard.

Well, that wasn't going to be enough for this building project. Rather, they decided to produce a kiln so that they could bake the bricks. They wanted extra strong bricks.

You want to be able to build a very significant structure. And when you read about the tar, just think kind of crude oil here. This would have been that viscous kind of sticky black liquid.

It's actually what's used in asphalt today. It's kind of a binder, if you will. So when they undertook this project, they didn't really do it the easy way of just making sun-baked bricks.

They said, we're going to create a very stout building material, and then we're going to cement it together here with asphalt. You begin to realize how much effort is being expended on the part of man when he's motivated by his lusts. You see, idolatry is a very powerful motivation in the human heart.

There was an ancient poet that said, man rashly daring, full of pride, most covets what is most denied. And then he went on to say, he counts nothing arduous and tries insanely to possess the skies. In other words, there's no mountain too high to climb if you have the proper motivation.

And part of the motivation to sin, frankly, is the desire for that which is forbidden. Part of the human inclination towards sin is, I want to do it because I've been told not to do it. Wait, I can't have it? Okay, well now I want it.

Let me just think about this. If God had said, I mean, it's in my little imagination here. If God had said to Nimrod and the rest, hey guys, here's what I want you to do.

I want you to make some bricks, but rather than the sun-baked kind, I want you to make a kiln so that you can fire the bricks. And by the way, I want you to get tar and put it together. I want you to build a very tall building.

What do you think the response would have been? Oh, oh my goodness, this is going to be such a pain. Why do I have to go through all these steps? Why can't we just use the cheap bricks? And is that not so true? I mean, any of you parents know this? This happens with my kids, right? They're running around like crazy people. And they say, hey, by the way, I have a way I want to take that energy.

I've got a chore over here. Oh, my legs are so tired, Dad. Oh, you don't even understand.

Man is a great deal of energy when he's motivated by self-interest. And the human will does not like to be imposed upon. Understand that the natural man resists the will of God.

And so God says, hey, go fill the earth. Man says, no, we have a different idea now. We want to plant our feet right here and do the opposite.

And so they wanted to build a city. And in the middle of the city, they wanted to build a tower that would have had the best of the best engineers. And we're not far after the fall here.

The mind has not had all the effects of sin yet to deteriorate. So you'd have had brilliant engineers working together to design this building. It was probably a ziggurat or similar.

We don't know for sure where you can add that stair step as it was built up. All of it under the leadership in the direction of Nimrod. So how did he motivate these people? Well, he motivated them by, I mean, certainly probably some of them by violence.

He was known as a mighty warrior. But it would have been the promise of their own glory and their own renown. The idea that we're going to build a legacy that future generations will look to.

And they will be impressed with our prowess and what we've accomplished. It will attest to our greatness, to our achievements. This is the way of rebellion.

It's interesting. The Lord would describe rebellion in Isaiah 65 too. And he said that when people are rebelling, they're following their own thoughts.

They're following their own thoughts. I mean, that's a truth to take to heart. That's a dangerous place to be to be following our own thoughts.

My thoughts need to be crushed and replaced. I need to be led by truth. I need to be led by new thoughts.

And so natural man led by his own thoughts rebels. That's what the flesh does. If you remember, God had said in Genesis 8 21, the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth.

From the earliest days, rebellion is in the human heart. And if you look at how self-focused this is, just read the verses. They're in chapter 11.

They said to one another, come let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly. Verse four, they said, come let us build for ourselves a city. And a tower's top will reach in heaven and let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered over the face of the whole earth.

You understand how different this is than if they came together and said, hey guys, God has blessed us with an opportunity. We're going to build a city. We think it'd be prudent to have a building here.

We want to construct it for God's glory. We want to be a testament to his honor and his reputation. Let's dedicate it to prayer.

We can't do it in our own strength. We need his help. It's vain if we try to build it apart from him.

This is the pride of self-reliance. There's a haughtiness. And so professing to be wise, they became fools.

They exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the likeness of corruptible man. That's what's happening. Just think about this.

Pride, man, it is like a drug. I mean, really and truly the things that fuel our pride. I was thinking back and just reflecting.

I haven't accomplished a whole lot, so it's not like I could compare myself to some great achievement. But I was thinking back to my career early in those days in trying to grow a business and just the thrill of landing a big contract, getting a project over the finish line, of seeing that target and that goal reached. I mean, it is at times euphoric.

The things that that cause us to feel exalted. And it's not always when we achieve it, of course. Sometimes we're not achieving it, but we're watching someone else achieve it.

And in our hearts, it's a struggle. Why? Because we want glory. Vain glory.

And so here they are and they're building this building. When you read the text, it sounds almost like they're trying to get into heaven. And that's certainly, I remember learning it as a kid.

The philanthrographs always had the clouds and then the tower like going way up into the like where there's no more oxygen kind of thing. That's not what was happening, okay, for several reasons. Number one, I think that they would have understood it's impossible to build a building that would allow us access into another realm.

I just, I don't think that's a very tenable concept. Secondly, the grammar and the preposition doesn't necessarily mean they're reaching to heaven, but just reaching into the heavens. And so I think that that's just a better idea, is understanding they're going up into the sky.

And then the third reason, I don't think they were even conceiving of reaching heaven with a tower, is look at their starting point. The text says in verse two that it was a plane in the land of Shinar. If you're going to try to reach heaven, at least start on a mountain.

You have a several thousand foot head start here. Just doesn't make sense they're trying to get into heaven starting out on a plane. Rather the point was that this would be a sign of man's exaltation.

This was the pride of life. This was the pride of life. What is our heart? What is the proper disposition of a creature to be in light of our creator? Psalm 115.

Not unto us, O Lord. Not unto us, but unto your name be the glory. This is the heart of a believer.



As the apostle Paul would tell the church in 2 Corinthians 10.17, he who boasts is to boast in the Lord. See Nimrod is a fool right now. And all he can think about building projects going well.

We have the engineers on the brick making. We've got that dialed in. We've built the kiln.

We're getting the tar set up. The kingdom is in order. We're conquering the enemies.

We're coalescing. We've got the plan. And he's not aware that every morning when he wakes up and takes a breath, it's only by the sovereign grace of God.

He's forgetting that the only reason why he's a mighty hunter is because God has given him that ability and that strength and he could take it away in a moment. Desire for glory can affect any and every calling. Let me just cause us to stop and even ask, what is my motivation in life? And I gotta be honest with you.

I get concerned sometimes when I just reflect on what the apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians about our work being tested by fire. And what he says there is that all of our work gets tested by fire and anything that's not done on the foundation of Christ for his glory gets what? Gets incinerated. You reflect on that.

You understand that. I mean, what does that look like in real time? I'm just reflecting. There are names and faces on my heart this week.

What about a pastor that has a seemingly significant ministry for decades and then gets exposed that it was all for his own glory? It's meaningless. Or a mother who is pouring into her children because she was primarily concerned about what other people would think of her parenting and her reputation. I mean, we can take the lust for vain glory and a plight in any arena of life and what it does is it destroys the work itself.

And so here man wants to make a name for himself and he's at direct odds with God. So you to make a name for yourself is to be concerned about your own reputation. It's called vain glory to be concerned about what you think about yourself and what you think other people think about you.

That's all it is. And the reason why this is such a problem is because God is the one who makes a great name for himself. Remember when God delivered Israel out of Egypt? It was certainly for their benefit.

It was for their well-being. It was so that they might enjoy the freedom from having Egypt off their back. But there was another purpose as well.

Isaiah 63 says that it was to make a glorious name for himself. God was showcasing his own glory, his own renown. And so you and I are to be concerned about the name of Christ, the name of God being exalted.

Even the Apostle Paul, talking about his own salvation in Romans chapter one, said that we received grace. What? For the sake of his name. We received grace to make much of him.

So these people are committing great evil. What are they doing? Well, I think Jeremiah 2 summarizes it well. The first evil is that they're forsaking God, and the second is that they're pursuing self-exaltation.

And so we have to understand that the absence of trusting and worshiping God is not merely neglecting to trust and worship, but rather replacing that with trusting and worshiping something else. And so Nimrod is deeply religious. Deeply religious.

But he's trusting in himself, and he's worshiping himself. One theologian writes this, this is the perpetual infatuation of the world to neglect heaven and to seek immortality on earth, where everything is fading and transient. And so we don't know exactly what they were going to do with this building, with this tower.

I think it's reasonable to conclude that there was probably some kind of worship or promise of worship that was taking place. Man is inherently religious by nature. The Babylonians who had come after were dedicated to astrology, so there may have been a lookout on top of this tower by which they could look into the heavens and stargaze and imagine all their deities.

But in all of this, there was a lie that these people were believing. I just want you to reflect on this for a moment. The lie was that we know better than God what will bring us blessing and satisfaction.

See, when God told Noah, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, it wasn't a curse, it was a blessing. It was a good command, it was a good instruction. It was for the benefit of the earth and the benefit of the families.

God was wise in his instruction and then man hears it and thinks, hold on, we got to make a name for ourselves and we got to make sure to what? Not be scattered. I mean, that's the end of verse four, lest we be scattered over the face of the whole earth. They're afraid of obedience.

And I say, I get it. I mean, I'm an amazing individual. Okay, here's what's amazing about me.

Don't take that the wrong way. Here's what's amazing about me. I believe that obedience is best, but guess what? Sometimes I don't.

I know that God's commands are not to harm me, but sometimes I think maybe there's just a better way. And so these people are not yet free in the spirit. They don't understand that obedience brings blessing.

They're trusting in their own hearts. And I would just encourage you, if you're in Christ, to learn lessons by faith and not through failure. Learn lessons by faith and not through failure.

Do you understand? These people are about to learn a lesson. But rather than understanding that obedience brings blessing by the experience of faith, they're going to do it their own way and they're going to learn the lesson the hard way. So it brings us to our second point, the reckoning.

God disperses mankind, like it or not. First, we saw the rebellion and now we see the reckoning. Verse 5, then Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.

And so we come to our anthropomorphisms. All right, the big word that just means that we're attributing human-like characteristics to God's behavior and actions, it's not to be understood literally, but analogically, okay? This is to help us grasp something about God by way of analogy. So, do not picture the Father sitting on a throne in heaven, Jesus at His right hand, saying to the other, rock, paper, scissors, like who's going to be the one to go down this time? God doesn't leave heaven to come to earth.

He doesn't need to go down to earth in order to see what is taking place. Psalm 94.11 says that Yahweh knows the thoughts of men. Proverbs 5.21, the ways of man are before the eyes of Yahweh and He watches all His tracks.

Job 34.21, His eyes are upon the ways of man and He sees all His steps. There is no darkness, or shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. So God has watched the whole thing go down.

He knew what was going to happen before it happened. He knew exactly what was in the heart. And so here you have Nimrod scheming with everyone else around him, thinking that they're so wise and so powerful.

And meanwhile, the Lord's watching the whole thing. The idea here that He saw is to say this, at this moment God determined, now it's time to intervene. He was seeing it the whole time, but now He's choosing to act.

So He was kind of letting this thing play out for a little bit, if you will. Let Him build the kiln. Let Him consolidate the power.

Let Him harness the crude oil. Let Him start the building construction project. Let Him get the buildings going in the different communities around that area.

We saw them listed out in chapter 10. There were multiple that Nimrod was over. Let Him consolidate the kingdom.

And then what's conjured up in our imagination is He stoops down to see the little city and the little tower which the sons of men had built. We just think about the perspective for a moment, right? When I'm in my driveway, and it's a time of year where the gutters have stuff in them, and I'm always trying to figure out like, how did stuff get in the second story gutters? Like, it just seems like we only be on the first floor, but it's in the second story. And I'm looking up at it, and what's happening? I'm getting like a feeling in my stomach just looking at it, before I even get on a ladder, right? It feels very high.

And then what happens? Well, you get in an airplane, you look out an airplane window, and suddenly a second story doesn't really seem that high anymore. And so you have humanity coming together, they're building this tower, they're thinking that it's this impressive structure that's going to attest to how brilliant their ingenuity is, and their prowess. And the Lord comes down, and it's like a little mud pile.

It's like a little sandcastle. And so the Lord decides that He is going to rise to action. The irony, of course, is they're building a building up into the heavens, and God comes down.

And here's what I want to just take away from this moment, this intervention, is to recognize this. Did these people want God to come and intervene at that moment when He came down? Absolutely not. And did He does anyway? And certainly He's going to judge, but I also want you to see this.

There is mercy in God coming to them. I would just say this, praise God for His intervention. If you remember, Adam and Eve did not want intervention after they sinned.

Cain did not want intervention after he sinned. Look, as humans, we don't want divine intervention when we're in our rebellion, but guess what? That doesn't stop God from intervening. And so God comes graciously into their darkness.

He doesn't let them have their own way. He doesn't let them have their own way. He's going to disperse them, like it or not, because that's His sovereign will.

And I was just kind of thinking about this. It's kind of a timeless takeaway. When I was growing up, I can hear my dad saying to me, Jacob, we can do this one of two ways.

You know where I'm going. We can do it the easy way, or we can do it the hard way. It's your choice.

And I remember thinking, that doesn't really feel like a choice, because like either way, it's kind of your way. It's just like, how much do I comply? But do you understand if God wants to see man spread out on earth, then man will spread out on earth. God is not deterred by human opposition.

He's not weakened by it. All that He wills comes to pass. And frankly, the path of maximum blessing in this life and the life to come is always obedience.

It's always God's design. And so even in the midst of what will be judgment here, God is still blessing humanity, even in the dispersion. And so Yahweh says to Himself, so this is kind of us overhearing the mind of God, if you will.

Verse 6, Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they've begun to do. So now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.

Now again, I get I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but as a kid, I'm always thinking like, man, God had to get to the building project early to stop it, because if He didn't, they would have actually somehow reached heaven with this building. It's the wrong conclusion. That's not at all what is being stated here.

It's not that man would reach heaven with the building, and if God just kind of lets them go, they would be unstoppable. You need to understand this from a moral component. Allow me to read what one commentator wrote.

I can't improve upon this. If we think it sounds as though God were actually impressed by the puny tower of Babel, we are mistaken. God was not threatened by the baked mud that man piled into a mound.

Rather, the Lord notes the significance of the unity of the human race in pursuit of rebellion and false religion. When God said nothing that they purpose to do will be impossible for them, He was not admiring the greatness of their works, but rather noting the perversity of their unbelief. Far from admiring their advanced technology, God was lamenting their depraved spirituality.

But this was how the human race acted after the mercy of God had shown through Noah's Ark, and their hardness of heart would know no limit. God understood that the tower of Babel was only the beginning of what they would do, and His concern was not what man would achieve against God, but what man would do to himself in blind folly and unbelief.

You see, this is a gracious intervention for God to come and say, I'm going to come and restrain the evil that's taking place right now.

This is the mercy of God to come and restrain evil. Listen, you and I sometimes get overwhelmed by the evil in the world and how dark the world is. Do you understand how much darker it could be, save the restraining grace of God? And so in this marvelous imagery, Moses takes this very expression that man had in verse 3 and 4 that they had boasted, come let us do this, come let us build a city, come let us make bricks.

We read in the divine counsel verse 7, come let us go down, and they're confused their language so that they will not understand one another's language. There's a mirrored reflection here, and the heart of this passage is verse 5 where Yahweh sees and begins to intervene, and now we start to see the undoing, the unraveling, the opposite happen in verses 6 through 9 of what man intended in the previous verses. So according to verse 8, or excuse me, so God now comes and he intervenes, and this in fact is the reckoning.

God will have his counsel and his will will prevail, and I'm postulating as we'll see this is ultimately even for man's benefit. It brings us to our third and final point. God disperses mankind like it or not.

First we saw the rebellion, then we saw the reckoning, and now we see the result. Verses 8 and 9, the result. So Yahweh scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth, and they stopped building the city.

Therefore its name was called Babel because there Yahweh confused the language of the whole earth, and from there Yahweh scattered them. This is a great reset. This is the great reset 2.0. The first reset was to wipe out humanity and reduce the population down to one family, and now God rather than destroying the whole earth except for one family says, I'm going to let them live, but now I'm going to disperse them.

So as Richard Phillips writes, thus what they would not do in obedience, i.e. scatter over the earth, he did for them in judgment. Thus what they would not do in obedience, he did for them in judgment. And this is rich.

The one thing that they didn't want to have happen was to be scattered over the earth, and next thing you know that's what happens. It's called Babel. It's just a transliteration.

It's Babel in Hebrew. It's where we get our word for babbling like a baby, gibberish. We can't really discern the sounds.

They're unintelligible to us. And so this is the very picture. God miraculously intervenes such that suddenly the tongue uttered different utterances, and the brains of other people were unable to comprehend what was being heard, and there was confusion instantly.

Confusion instantly. I mean, the Lord always has his way, and in a sense he always has the last laugh. There's a tremendous irony here.

It's a biblical principle. Proverbs 10.24, what the wicked dreads will come upon him. Man, please learn that lesson by faith and not by failure.

It's so often what idolatry promises, and not only doesn't provide, but it gives you the very opposite. And I have no idea how it all went down. There's no indication that God came to them and said, okay guys, listen, it's about to get really freaky.

I just want to give you a heads up. Here's where I want you to find each other in groups, and then we're kind of going to spread out. Pictures he just went down, and he confused their language.

I mean, and everybody came here from one family just a few generations ago. So suddenly, can you imagine? Friends, family members, you have zero ability to communicate, and you can't overcome the language barrier because God has closed off your mind to it. I don't know if you've traveled internationally.

I haven't done it much, but my favorite is always when there's an American talking to someone who doesn't speak English, and they think if I say it louder or slower, I can maybe get my point across. And what happens? Nothing, obviously. It's unintelligible.

Everyone's suddenly confused. They can only understand one language, and they're divided up into language families, and they are scattered across the earth. I'm going to spend a long time unpacking the emotional distress that this must have caused, but this would have been alienating.

It would have caused separation and pain, even grief. I mean, imagine your very best friend now speaks a different language, and whatever the last conversation you had was it. You're never going to see him again.

It would be like a death. And so the entire earth is dispersed, and for the Lord, this was not a challenge at all. One commentator writes, with astounding ease, God has wrought the confusion of his enemies and made them desist from their purpose.

Not only that, they must even obey his command, though they certainly never intended to do so. The irony, of course, is that Nimrod and his group imagined that they would build a tower that would attest to their own greatness and stand the test of time. And what does it stand as a monument? Human folly.

In one sense, he got what he wanted, but not in the way that he wanted it. Rather, forever, he has no honor, and he's a monument of the folly of human effort. God here, of course, is being merciful and restraining evil.

He did not destroy the earth again with a flood. He did not destroy the earth with fire. But at the same time, we come to the end of verse nine, and it doesn't end on a high note.

Therefore, its name was called Babel, because there Yahweh confused the language of the whole earth. And from there, Yahweh scattered them over the face of the whole earth. This doesn't end happily ever after.

It doesn't end with a bright, cheery note. In fact, there's not even anything hopeful in verse nine, and that's strategic. It's preparedness for what's about to come when God calls a man to make into a nation, namely, Abram, which he's going to bring about redemption and hope.

But right now, this is a reminder of the lasting consequences of sin. The languages play a very important role in the Bible and in life. This, of course, is the origin of how languages came about on earth.

On the one hand, it's a very dark and sad circumstance by which languages were produced. It wasn't people creatively thinking about how to invent new ways to communicate for the glory of God. It was, in a sense, a judgment.

And yet, in that, there was a purpose that couldn't be fully understood or appreciated in the moment. That, of course, is the ultimate redemptive work of God. Two passages I'm just going to reference.

I'm not going to read. The first is in Acts chapter two. Acts chapter two at Pentecost, the Spirit comes and what happens? The Spirit is poured out.

The message of good news is proclaimed among the nations. Right there, an epicenter of nations gathered together, and they all hear, was the undoing reversal of Babel. And then, ultimately, one day when we stand before the throne, there will be a great multitude which no one can count, according to Revelation 7. And there will be those there from every nation and all tribes and peoples, tongues, every language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, all in unison, saying, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

Will you pray with me? God, thank you for not leaving us in our sin. Thank you for intervening and invading even rebellious lives. Lord, any of us who've repented and



believed in the Lord Jesus Christ can attest to you seeking us out when we were in our rebellion, and we praise you for that grace and mercy.

Father, I pray that the lessons that we're seeing here would be etched on our hearts. Lord, we confess, excuse me, as your people, that we are often, often tempted by sin and find unbelief in our hearts. Lord, we fear man.

We want to exalt ourselves. We want to control the future. We get anxious and concerned.

Father, I pray that this would be a testament in our hearts that helps strengthen our convictions to trust you and to humble ourselves before you. Lord, I thank you that you draw near to those who draw near to you, that you are near to those who are in humble and heart, that you look to those who tremble at your word. Lord God, may that be true us.

I pray that we would delight in you being glorified. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.