

Noah and the Dispersal From Babel

by John Whitcomb

The sermon explores the life of Noah, the uniqueness of his faith, and the purpose of the great flood, highlighting God's sovereignty and humanity's rebellion and depravity.

Duration: 55:17

Scripture: Genesis 6:1

Topics: "Noah"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the presence of violence and corruption on the earth as described in the book of Genesis. He highlights the influence of demonic forces and their ability to dominate individuals who are willing to be controlled by them. The preacher also mentions the concept of a legion, referring to a unit of the Roman army, to emphasize the vast number of demonic forces that can be at work. He then connects this idea to the biblical accounts of angels sinning and being cast down to Tartarus, suggesting a moral and spiritual crisis before the time of Noah's flood. The sermon concludes by raising questions about the longevity of human lifespan during that time period.

Transcript

Noah and the dispersion from Babel. Let us consider first Noah and his family. Genesis chapter 5 verse 32.

And Noah was 500 years old, and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Note three fascinating points that this passage brings out. First, Noah was 500 years old when his sons began to be born.

Immediately this raises questions in the minds of modern men concerning the dependability of this passage with regard to the longevity, the lifespan, of men at the dawn of human history. Could these numbers really be true? Some have suggested that in those days years must have been equivalent to our months and therefore these vast ages of men must be slashed by a factor of 10 or 12. But of course if we tried this we would destroy the entire genealogy because we find, for example, in Genesis 5:21 that Enoch lived 65 years and begat Methuselah.

Now if we divide his age by a factor of 10 or 12 at the time when he became a father, we find the absurdity of Enoch being six or six and a half years old at that time. Therefore it is obvious that the entire passage must be accepted at face value and we must analyze the problem from an entirely different perspective. We are told in Genesis chapter 11 that after the flood, for some unknown reason, these great ages began

to phase down to our present average of three score years and ten according to the prescription given by God in Psalm 90.

Why did this happen? The Bible gives no hint or indication but some have suggested that before the flood the genetic system of man was protected by the vapor canopy which shielded harmful cosmic radiation and thus prevented mutations and other defects that would cut down lifespan. This of course is a possibility but must remain simply that. One thing is for sure, the length of a man's life on this earth is not the crucial matter because as Psalm 90 verse 12 points out in a remarkable prayer by Moses, teach us to number our days that we may get us a heart of wisdom.

It's not how long men live but how well and in reference to the known will of God. One thing also is very clear and that is that the gradual cut down of lifespan is perfectly in harmony with the second law of thermodynamics which tells us that energy systems through the passing of time tend to decay and to be reduced to lower energy levels so that a reduction of the original vigor of man is in harmony not with evolutionary theories of gradual improvement and buildup of complexity and power but of the second law which is a universally observed law today. Another interesting point that we gain from this list of pre-flood patriarchs and their vast lifespans is the fact that the Sumerians have left to us a record of ten kings that lived before the flood and these kings are said to have reigned on an average of 30,000 years each.

Of course this is an absurdity but at the same time must not be totally dismissed. It is surely a reflection through the corruption of oral tradition of the fact that before the flood men were known to have lived vast ages and thus we find that this Genesis account is not only consistent with itself but also is consistent with the second law of thermodynamics and with oral and written tradition from the ancient Near East. This leads us to a second consideration namely the uniqueness of Noah's faith.

Consider Genesis 6 verses 8 and 9. But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man and perfect in his generations and Noah walked with God.

This emphasis upon Noah's relationship to God as being unique in the days before the flood is confirmed by several other passages in the Bible. For instance Genesis 7 verse 1. Just before the flood began God said to Noah, come thou and all thy house into the ark for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. He was unique as a believer in the Lord.

In fact in the book of Ezekiel chapter 14 verse 14 God compares Noah with Job and Daniel as a uniquely righteous man. And even in the New Testament this fact is confirmed. Hebrews 11 7. By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet moved with fear built an ark to the saving of his house whereby he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

In 2nd Peter 2 5 we read that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. As we shall see a little later this does not mean that Noah was sinlessly perfect. But in this context in Genesis chapter 6 and 7 it does mean that his faith was genuine and in total contrast to the fantastic depravity of his contemporaries.

Notice first of all the statement in Genesis chapter 6 verses 10 to 13. Noah begat three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And the earth was corrupt before God and the earth was filled with violence.

And God saw the earth and behold it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Notice also as we continue this analysis of the fantastic depravity of the pre-flood world. This very

mysterious passage in Genesis 6 verses 1 to 5. A passage concerning which theologians have struggled through the centuries for an adequate interpretation.

Perhaps we can say that God and his purpose for men today has partly veiled and obscured the true meaning of these words that we might not be alarmed and staggered by the depth of depravity to which men are capable under certain conditions. Genesis 6 verses 1 to 5. And it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the ground and daughters were born unto them that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair and they took them wives of all that they chose. And Jehovah said my spirit shall not strive with man forever for that he is also flesh yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years.

The Nephilim, giants, were in the earth in those days. And also after that when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men and they bear children to them the same were the mighty men that were of old and men of renown. And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

What do these words really mean? In Genesis 6 verse 1 and 2 and also in verse 4 when it tells us that in those days the sons of God saw the daughters of men. Everywhere else in the Old Testament that this particular expression sons of God bene Elohim is used. It means angelic beings.

Compare Job for instance chapter 1 verse 6 and chapter 2 verse 1 where Satan is depicted as one of the sons of God who came to report to God in the third heaven. Also in Job 38 7, sons of God were on hand to shout and to sing for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid. A very similar expression appears in Daniel 3 25 when Nebuchadnezzar saw the fourth person in the burning fiery furnace and said it is a son of the gods.

Jewish interpretation of this passage in the early centuries confirmed the idea that it was angels. The Greek Septuagint translation a couple of hundred years before Christ translates this in the terms of angels. And the book of Enoch chapter 6 verse 2, an apocryphal book, likewise reflects that interpretation.

In recent years especially, some theologians shocked at the idea that angels could somehow invade the human race on such a scale, have attempted to modify that interpretation and to suggest that sons of God simply means godly men of the Seth type, perhaps the remnant of true believers who abandoned their convictions and transgressed their God-given conscience and married evil unregenerate women. In other words, mixed marriages. But there is something about this passage that does not lend itself to that interpretation.

We are certainly not prepared, for example, to find in Genesis 6-2 that daughters of men simply means the daughters of Cain and not human women in general. Furthermore, that type of sin of mixed marriages has characterized all of human history in the times of Israel as well as in the church age. And there would be nothing about that that would cause God to wipe out the human race and to make the statements he does in this passage climaxing in verse 5. It's true that in the book of Hosea chapter 1 verse 10, a somewhat similar expression is applied to believing Israelites, namely sons of the living God, but it is not identical to this technical phrase, bene Elohim, that appears in Genesis 6 and in the other passages mentioned.

Personally, I believe that we are confronting here an invasion of the human race by fallen angels under the impetus and direction of Satan himself, who attempted doubtless to wreck God's purpose for man, perhaps to destroy the messianic line that would bring the seed of the woman into the world for his own

ultimate destruction. The book of Jude tells us in verses 6 and 7 that there were angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation. And Sodomites, who in like manner with these angels, gave themselves over to fornication and went after strange flesh and therefore are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

In other words, Jude compares the acts of Sodomites who transgress God-given boundary lines, especially in physical relationships, with the type of sin that was carried out by certain types of angels. This is, I think, confirmed by 2 Peter chapter 2, where we are told at verse 4 that certain angels sinned and were therefore cast down to Tartarus, to a special compartment, apparently, in the lower regions of the dead, where they are kept in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day. But Peter places this event at the time of Noah's flood.

Therefore, when we compare Jude with 2 Peter 2, I believe we have an inspired New Testament commentary on the enormity of this moral and spiritual crisis, just before the days of the flood. We, of course, must remember the statement of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 22:30, that the angels of heaven do not marry. But in my opinion, this is not an account of angels marrying human women.

I believe that it is an account of fallen angels who possessed wicked men, who then married, entered into physical union with equally depraved women. In the New Testament, in the gospel account of Jesus and his confrontation with demons, we find something that I think sheds important light on the character of the events described in Genesis 6. In the gospel of Mark chapter 5, verses 1 to 20, we are told that Jesus, on one occasion, confronted a demoniac at Gadara, a man who was totally possessed by fallen angels or demons, who so completely dominated his personality, that when Jesus appeared on the scene, it was they, not he, who entered into conversation with the Son of God. The demon said, we know who you are, you Son of God, you have come to torment us before the time.

And there was this demoniac as a vehicle, a mere tool of demonic power, naked in the tombs, in the cemeteries, completely untamable, breaking chains, cutting himself, a pitiful example of the depths to which Satan and his hosts can drag a man who is willing, thus, to be dominated by the spiritual enemies of the living God. Yes, it was the demons who did the talking. Jesus said, what is your name? The demon said, we are legion, for we are many.

A legion was a unit of the Roman army with six thousand soldiers. The fantastic capacity of men to be used by satanic forces, that perhaps we don't even care to think about, but concerning which the Bible does give us hints, not only here in Genesis 6, and in the gospel records of Jesus' confrontation with Satan on earth, but also, as hinted at in the book of Revelation and elsewhere, concerning the final opposition of Satan at the end of world history, to the purposes of our God. You'll notice in Genesis chapter 6, then, that this supreme act of rebellion by men who allowed demons to possess and dominate their personalities, provoked this unique response from God in verse 3, my spirit shall not strive with man forever, for that he is also flesh, yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years, a final probationary period, during which the ark was being built, 1 Peter chapter 3, in which God's long-suffering and patience through the unique faith and obedience and preaching of Noah, gave men one last opportunity to turn from their diabolical rebellions.

God determined not to continue forever dealing with such depraved men. We are told also in verse 4 that Nephilim were in the earth in those days. Nephilim translated giants in the Greek septuagint, and I believe rightfully so, because in Numbers 13:33, where the same Hebrew word appears, Nephilim, we find that the

context demands the translation giants.

The Israelites who came to Canaan saw giant men, genetic giants, not glandular freaks, and said immediately, these are the giants spoken of to us by Moses in his description of pre-flood conditions. I believe they were mistaken. I do not believe that they were direct descendants of these Nephilim, giants before the flood, because of course they were all wiped out by the global deluge, and only Noah's family survived.

But of course within the gene pool of Noah's family were genes for giantism, which through geographical selection, once again long after the Tower of Babel dispersion, came forth in that race of giants that became extinct a thousand years before Christ in Palestine. But there was at least this similarity, enormous physical stature, and in Genesis 6 their enormous size was matched by the enormity of their depravity as they took advantage of this physical enormity to perpetrate crimes upon their fellowmen, which made them absolutely notorious men of renown. I think it is fascinating to recognize that we have found in recent years footprints of giant human beings contemporaneous with the footprints of dinosaurs, that confirms this account of giant human beings before the flood.

For a remarkable group of pictures of these, I refer to the book that I have co-authored with Dr. Henry Morris entitled *The Genesis Flood*, page 175, at the Paluxy Riverbed in Texas. Footprints which are being carefully analyzed by scientists of various specialties, which of course is a staggering blow to the evolutionary concept that dinosaurs became extinct at least 60 million years before men appeared on this earth. This leads us to an analysis of the purpose of the great flood.

In the light of this enormous depravity and Noah's unique faith, why did this flood actually come upon the earth? I believe the answer is found in the statement of verse 5 in Genesis 6, Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And Jehovah said, I will destroy man whom I've created from the face of the ground, both man and beast and creeping thing and birds of the heavens, for it repented me that I have made them.

God's holiness was outraged by this unique global rebellion of men against his gracious and revealed will. Personally I believe that verse 5 describes universal demon possession. Men created in the image and likeness of God can't be this bad without satanic help.

Men could not possibly experience a situation when every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And thus the domination of men through their own willful rebellion against God by satanic forces brought about a condition that demanded a unique intervention by God in his mercy to spare the human race total moral collapse by a new fresh beginning in the family of Noah. Not only was it to vindicate God's outraged holiness and to save the human race from worse conditions, but it also provided a unique illustration of the coming final judgment of the world.

As Jesus explained in Matthew 24 37, as it was in the days of Noah, so also shall it be when the Son of Man comes again. But one thing is crystal clear, the flood, even the universal flood could not solve man's basic problem. God states this in a remarkable passage in Genesis 8 verse 21 and 22.

Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground anymore for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I again smite anymore every thing living as I have done. Even a thousand universal floods coming at thousand-year intervals could not deal with man's

sin nature.

Well then why did God bring that one? It was not to wipe out man's sin nature because that was definitely preserved on Noah's Ark to be perpetuated into our present post-flood world. But it was to be a unique once-for-all demonstration that God and God alone is sovereign and men have no right to continue their existence on this earth apart from God's long-suffering and patient permission. What can deal with man's basic sin nature? Only the precious blood of Christ the God-man shed on the cross of Calvary as God's unique provision for man's depravity.

As we come to Jesus Christ by genuine faith, we find that his blood is sufficient to cleanse us from all iniquity, all guilt, and thus only in Christ, the seed of the woman, the Messiah, the Savior, can the ultimate mystery and problem of sin be dealt with. Notice this remarkable statement in verse 22. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Eight characteristics of the guaranteed uniformity of the post-flood world until God's purpose for the human race has been accomplished through Jesus Christ, through the Church, through the nation of Israel in history. We reject total uniformitarianism, but let us also notice that this does not suggest for one moment completely arbitrary, capricious dealings by God with his world. No, the God-created natural world system, with its laws and processes, is guaranteed by God to continue uninterrupted on a global scale until his purpose for this earth has been accomplished at the end of history.

Limited uniformitarianism is the key to unlock the mysteries of the past and of the future, because our present world, the heavens and earth that now are, are sandwiched in between the global catastrophe of the flood that separated the world that then was from our present world, and the coming catastrophes at the climax of history which will usher in the kingdom age, and then the eternal state, so that our present world is not the key to unlock the past and future, but is a unique hiatus between God's global dealings in terms of judgment with the human race. We have considered the lifespan of Noah, the unique faith of Noah, and the purpose of the flood through which Noah and his family were spared by God. Let us now turn to Genesis chapter 9 and consider the remarkable covenant that God made with the human race through Noah after the flood, and then the prophecy of the nations at the end of Genesis 9 that God uttered through the lips of this great patriarch of old.

Genesis chapter 9 verses 1 to 7 give us the five basic aspects of the Noahic covenant, confirmed of course by the sign of the rainbow. Notice the first point, verses 1 and 7, and God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, be fruitful and multiply and replenish or fill the earth. Verse 7, and you be fruitful, multiply, bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply therein.

God commanded the human race to fill the earth, a command of course which because of the recurrence of human rebellion in the days of the Tower of Babel, man refused to do. Secondly, verse 2, the negative dominion over the animal kingdom. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, with all wherewith the ground teemeth and all the fishes of the sea into your hand they are delivered.

This of course is quite different from the dominion which Adam and Eve exercised, a positive dominion. After the Edenic curse, doubtless animals in many cases violently attacked men, but here God modifies that initial aspect of the Edenic curse by putting the fear and dread of men upon the animal kingdom so that they would not generally speaking deliberately attack men but would flee in terror from them. Notice point 3, the first official God-given permission to men to eat animal flesh.

Verse 3, every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you as the green herb have I given you all. God now officially amplifies the permission that he gave to Adam and Eve to eat fruits and vegetables. Now even flesh is available for men to eat.

We know of course from the story of Israel that God later imposed certain food restrictions upon that nation as a unique covenant sign, but in the New Testament that restriction was removed. Acts chapter 10 verses 11 to 16, as God through a unique vision to the Apostle Peter showed him that the food restrictions were now gone for the church age, a point confirmed by the Apostle Paul in 1st Timothy 4 verses 3 to 5. However there was one restriction that God gave in the Noahic covenant. Notice verse 4, but flesh with the life thereof is a blood thereof shall ye not eat.

Leviticus 17 11 gives us an indication why, namely the life of the flesh is in the blood. God was here preparing men to recognize the sanctity of blood as a symbol of life itself, especially the importance of human life which the sacrifice of animals upon altars was to symbolize. We do believe that after the Lamb of God came to this earth in the person of Jesus Christ to take away the sin of the world through his own sacrifice, that this limitation has been removed from the human race.

God no longer accepts animal sacrifices since Christ came to pay the penalty for our sins. The fifth provision of the Noahic covenant has become exceedingly controversial in the Western world in recent years, namely the provision for human government including the right, the necessity of capital punishment. Verses 5 and 6, And surely your blood, the blood of your lives, will I require.

At the hand of every beast will I require it. And at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

For in the image of God made he man. Interestingly enough, in verse 5, even animals would be executed for killing men. Compare Exodus 21-28, where an ox which gores a man to death is to be stoned, not because the animal is guilty, but to emphasize through this symbolic act the fantastic importance of human life in the sight of God.

Yes, men who deliberately murder other men must forfeit their own lives. You say, well that may have been true in the semi-barbarous primitive eras that preceded the church age, but surely the love of God and the Christian message would not tolerate capital punishment today. Yes, but the New Testament itself confirms and perpetuates the right of capital punishment for human government, even in the church age.

Notice Paul's important statement on this in Romans 13-1. Let every soul be subject to the higher powers which are ordained of God. Verse 4, if you do that which is evil, be afraid.

For he, that is the agent of the government, beareth not the sword in vain. For he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Paul himself said to a Roman official in Acts 25-11, if I have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die.

The question comes, why? Why capital punishment? Is it a mere deterrent for evil? No. The book of Genesis gives the basic reason, namely, striking a man to death is striking a blow at God himself in whose image and likeness man has been created. It's true that men have fallen and that the image of God in man has been marred, warped, but it has not been obliterated.

It is definitely there. Compare 1 Corinthians 11 verse 7 and James 3-9. Man still possesses God's image and this law still pertains.

Notice now the remarkable prophecy that God gave concerning the future of the human race after the dispersion through the lips of Noah, verses 20 to 27 of Genesis 9. And Noah began to be a husband when and planted a vineyard and he drank of the wine and was drunken and was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon their shoulders, went backward, covered the nakedness of their father and their faces were backward.

They saw not their father's nakedness. What does this passage tell us concerning Noah? It tells us that the statements in Genesis 6-9, that he was a perfect man in his generation, must be understood in the light of a biblical meaning of perfection for men. This completely destroys any idea that Noah was a sinless man.

He was perfect but he was not sinless. Job 1-1. Job was a perfect and upright man but before the book of Job has ended, Job himself says, I abhor myself in dust and ashes.

David was perfect with Jehovah his God. 1 Kings 15-3. But read of the enormous sins of which he was capable under certain conditions.

No, the Bible does not tolerate for one moment the idea that men are sinlessly perfect ever. 1 John 1-8. If any man says I have no sin, if I have no sin nature, he deceives himself.

The truth is not in him. 1 John 1-10. If any man says I have not sinned, I have never committed acts of sin, he makes God a liar.

His word is not in him. No, perfect, when applied to men like Noah and Job and David, means that they were men who were perfect in their standing before God through his grace and grace is unmerited favor upon men who deserve judgment. He was a man who knew how to believe in God's provision through sacrifice, ultimately through Christ, and thus could confess sin, repent of sin genuinely, and thus walk with God.

So sinful human nature, even in Noah himself, survived the flood and flowers quickly after the deluge. What was the exact nature of this crime on the part of Ham and Canaan? The passage somewhat obscures the actual nature of the crime, which I believe is hinted at in the book of Habakkuk chapter 2 verse 15. Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, in order that he may see him uncovered, see his nakedness.

Some kind of a diabolical sin, doubtless accomplished through Canaan the grandson, and tolerated by his father Ham, is alluded to in this passage. I believe that when Noah awoke from his wine, verse 24, and knew what his youngest son had done to him, it refers not to Ham, but to the grandson. That is, literally, knew what his son, the little one, his grandson in other words, had done.

That is why Canaan is cursed. But Ham is responsible as a father for the depravity of this boy, and instead of rebuking him and dealing with him, he not only tolerates it, but somehow takes advantage of the situation, and ridicules his own father in the presence of his two brothers. At any rate, the prophecy that comes from the lips of Noah certainly does not come from Noah himself.

We are told in the New Testament, in the book of 2nd Peter chapter 1, that no prophecy was ever given by the will of man, but holy men of God, men set apart by God for this purpose, spake as they were by the Holy Spirit, and this is no exception. Notice the three aspects of this remarkable prophecy, Genesis 9, 25

to 27. Point one, cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.

What does this mean? Does this mean that all descendants of Canaan would be under God's wrath and judgment? No. It simply is an advanced picture of the moral corruption of this branch of the human race as a people, and we know that that was fulfilled. God said later to Abraham in Genesis 15, 16, the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full, the Amorite being a descendant of Canaan.

But when hundreds of years later Joshua led the Israelites into Canaan, the enormous depravity of the Canaanites utterly shocked them, and God said in the book of Leviticus that the earth vomits out its inhabitants, a sampler being the condition in the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, and thus they became a servant of servants. They were subjected by the Israelites, Joshua 9, 23, later confirmed in the days of Solomon, 1 Kings 9, 21. The Phoenicians were a branch of the Canaanite people who settled in North Africa, the great colony of Carthage, which was dominated by the Romans, the Japhetic people, who were shocked when they saw the level of depravity of that people, that colony of Canaanites in North Africa.

But as to individuals within this family, note carefully that Rahab the Canaanite believed the message of the spies, and even in the New Testament the Lord Jesus Christ found a Canaanite woman whose faith was incomparably great, Matthew 15, 22 to 28. And as for the cream of the descendants of Shem, namely the Jewish leaders in the days of Christ, note the blistering denunciations that Jesus heaped upon these proud self-righteous Pharisees in John chapter 8 and Matthew 23 to show that privilege of ancestry in no case provides position before God. Men are saved by grace, whatever their ancestry may be, but this prophecy depicts thousands of years in advance the general patterns of the sons of Noah.

Notice in the second place the blessing upon Shem, verse 26, he said, blessed be Jehovah the God of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant. The emphasis here obviously is upon not material things, but upon spiritual privilege. His blessing, of his descendants, would be holy in their God.

This, of course, suggests that Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman, would come to the line of Shem, which he did. And thus through Shem, and thus through Christ, would come blessing for all mankind. Yes, even for the enlarged branch, which we notice in the third place, verse 27, God shall enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be a servant.

In other words, Japheth, with all of his geographical possessions and wide distribution, doubtless including the Asiatic, the Caucasian groups, even the African groups, which in my opinion did not even necessarily come from Ham, and certainly not from Canaan, are to find their blessing in Shem, obviously an allusion to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Thus in Ephesians 3, 6, we learn that Gentiles are fellow heirs with Israelites in Jesus Christ by faith. And thus, in this remarkable prophecy, we find that the same God, who somehow makes the mighty oak from an acorn to grow, has planted within his living word the tiny seeds of prophecy, whose branches reach upward to heaven.

This leads us to an analysis of the remarkable account of the dispersion of the human race from the tower of Babel. I believe that Genesis chapter 10 actually follows the account of the judgment of Babel in chapter 11. Notice chapter 11, verses 1 to 9. First, the material used by men in their deliberate defiance of God's command to scatter abroad across the earth.

Let us make brick and burn them thoroughly. Fairly permanent, but totally inadequate for their intended work. Doubtless Israelites wondered why they couldn't use stone, which Jews in the days of Moses were

so familiar with in Egypt as building materials, and even in Palestine later.

But of course there was no stone available in Mesopotamia. Burnt brick was the material used. Their purpose was to build a tower whose top, literally, unto heaven.

I believe that we find all over Mesopotamia evidences of this particular type of project, namely the ziggurat temple tower. In the remarkable Atlas of Mesopotamia published in 1962 by Nelson, we find 32 such ziggurats outlined on a map of Mesopotamia, and in each case it seems that the top section of these gigantic temple towers was for the purpose not of reaching to heaven, but of representing heaven, in which the image of the deity, usually in solid gold, was enshrined. And thus they were attempting to bind together, in a political religious system, the group of men under their jurisdiction, and thus to defy the living God.

In Babylon later, we find a great temple called Et Tamananchi, house of the foundations of heaven and earth, a unique representation, I believe, of the original tower of Babel, built by men in defiance of God. Note the judgment that God brought upon this project. Verse 6, God's mercy.

Jehovah said, Behold, they are one people, they have one language, and this is what they begin to do, and now nothing will be withholden from them which they purpose to do. God once again intervenes and prevents worse situations from developing. Why? Because unity and peace are not ultimate goods in God's purpose.

Far better is division than collective apostasy. Even as Jesus stated in Luke 12 51, Think ye that I have come to give peace on this earth? I have not come to bring peace, but division. For apostasy dominates, division is essential for the survival of God's testimony through men.

Later on, after the dispersion from Babel, this very center became Babylon. As Derek Kidner points out in his commentary on Genesis, Babylon later called itself Babili, Gate of God. But by a play of words, the scriptures originally presented the truer label of Balaal, he confused.

And thus, throughout the Bible, this city increasingly came to symbolize godless society with its pretensions, Genesis 11, its persecutions, Daniel 3, its pleasures, sins and superstitions, Isaiah 47, its riches and eventual doom, Revelation 17 and 18. Thus, the tower of Babel never did reach heaven, but the sins of its builders did, and brought the original judgment of God, which ultimately will be repeated, and for similar reasons. What happened in this judgment? I believe not only were languages created by God, but whole thought patterns, which language differences express, were created supernaturally and suddenly by God's intervention, to create mutual suspicion, and in order that men might then flee from each other in small isolated units throughout the earth.

The day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2, brought a sampler of God's power to overcome the curse of Babel, which will be fulfilled, I believe, in the millennial age, possibly suggested by a verse in Zephaniah 3.9, that God will change the speech of the peoples again to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord, primarily as spiritual reference, but of course, including perhaps also a linguistic unity again. Now, remarkably, this accomplished a transformation of the human race genetically. Why? Because this scattering of small family groups into isolated geographical areas was an ideal condition for the rapid formation of distinct racial types as recessive gene factors that had been smothered by the intermarrying population at the Babel Center, now had opportunity for physical expression again.

A remarkable article on this subject, found in the Creation Research Society quarterly of September 1972, by R.D. Shaw, is entitled, Why Genetic Variation Between New Guinea Communities? Many such studies have suggested that geographical isolation is the key to bring about racial physical distinctions. Thus, the Tower of Babel and its judgment provides for the great table of nations described in Genesis 10, which refers basically to bloodlines and not to cultures. In fact, the very antiquity of this record is part of our problem in understanding the exact identity of the different groups referred to.

It refers to nations as well as individuals, as you see, for example, in Genesis 10, 16, Canaan begat the Jebusite, the Amorite, and so on. In other words, it intentionally broadens beyond mere individual relationships, so that the sons of Noah, perhaps many hundreds of years, perhaps even a thousand years after the flood, here begin to spread out into the national groups that we see in the world today, in the racial types. It also, of course, suggests the sudden rise of wickedness and rebellion again, even after the Babel judgment, within the Hemitic family, as Nimrod, a mighty hunter before Jehovah, defied God in his establishment of Babel and other Mesopotamian cities as his center of godless activity and murderous program.

So, in the days of Peleg, we are told, God divided the earth. Genesis 10, 25, not a reference to continental drift or splitting of continents, I believe, but a reference to the division of men at the tower of Babel judgment, as we read in Genesis 10, 5, of these were the islands of the nations divided in their lands, everyone after his tongue, after their family, in their nations. Thus, the fantastic story of God's provision for mankind through the great judgment of the flood, to the divine intervention at the tower of Babel, only proves once again that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, Romans 5, 20.

And in fact, God's eternal purposes for mankind cannot fail, and will be gloriously realized in those sons of men who put their full trust in the promised Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. This remarkable segment of the book of Genesis is intended to impress upon us again and again, the fact that all have sinned, even under ideal conditions, and have come short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death, judgment, but the gift of God, through his grace, through Jesus Christ his Son, the seed of the woman, the descendant of Shem, is eternal life for those who put their trust completely in him.

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