

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2022: *Genesis*

Lesson 5 “All Nations *and* Babel”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 9:18–11:9; Luke 10:1; Matthew 1:1–17; Luke 1:26–33; Psalm 139:7–12; Genesis 1:28; Genesis 9:1.

Memory Text

“Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:9, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Curse of Ham
- III. The Genesis Genealogy
- IV. One Language
- V. “Let Us Go Down”
- VI. The Redemption of the Exile
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. After the Flood, the story of Genesis moves from Noah to his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. By highlighting Canaan so early on (Genesis 10:6, 15) Genesis prepares the reader for the identity and importance of the Promised Land, later in the story (Genesis 12:5). All the nations were descended from Noah, a righteous man. So the blessing on the nations promised to Abraham (Genesis 12:3) could have been universal from the beginning. But the Tower of Babel story makes it clear that the blessing was not going to be received by most nations right away. The list of seventy names in Genesis 10 enumerates the nations that would need the blessing of Abraham promised in 12:3, and the topic of next week’s lesson. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Genesis 9:18-27. What parallels do you see with the story of Adam in the Garden of Eden? Since Hebrew narrative is very sparse, why does Ham play such a

large role in the narrative? Many have used this passage to justify slavery. How would you respond to such a reading? How long do biblical curses last (see Exodus 34:6-7)? What does that tell us about God? How would the curse of Ham end up being a blessing to the nations? (Sunday's Lesson)

3. Notice how Genesis 9:28-29 links up this part of the book with the Adam genealogy of Genesis 5:28-32. What functions do biblical genealogies play in the larger story of the Bible? Read Genesis 10. How many "sons of Noah" are listed in the chapter? What is the significance of that number? Where does it appear in later accounts in the Bible? Which of Noah's three sons has the most descendants listed? Adding up the genealogies suggests the world is a lot younger than the standard assumptions of science today. Should we be intimidated by the disconnect between Genesis and "science." Why or why not? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Genesis 11:1-4. What is meant by the "whole earth" in this passage? Why did the people decide to build the tower? What statement by God in chapter 9 were they challenging? What is the significance of the word "Shinar" in the Bible as a whole? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Psalm 139:7-12. This verse makes clear that God is truly everywhere, what we call omniscience. In light of that, what does it tell us about God that He "came down" to see the city? Why would God do that? Read Luke 1:26-32. What more does this tell us about God coming down? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Genesis 11:8-9 and compare it with Genesis 9:1 and 1:28. What in this action of God proves to be redemptive? What does the word Babel mean and what does that tell us about the intention of those who built the tower? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. Can you think of any examples from history or personal experience that demonstrate the trouble that can come from trying to make a name for oneself? (Friday's Lesson)
8. Thinking about the church, what would be the ecclesiastical equivalent of building the Tower of Babel? Can you think of some equivalents at the personal level? (Friday's Lesson)
9. How one reads often determines the outcome of one's study of the Bible. What kind of interpretive cautions would you take from the fact that slavery, apartheid, the Salem Witch Trials, and the divine right of kings were all justified with sincere expositions of Scripture?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And for a dramatic illustration of how power can be misunderstood, look at the story in Genesis 9 and 11. You remember that after the Flood: "God said to Noah and his sons, 'I promise that never again will all living things be destroyed by a flood.'" What a demonstration of God's

power the Flood was. Did it win people? Was everyone so convinced by that display of power that no one ever distrusted him again? God said more Noah, “As a sign of this everlasting covenant which I am making with you and with all living things, I am putting my bow in the clouds.”

“At first, the people of the whole world had only one language. . . . And they said to one another . . . ‘Now let’s build a city with a tower that reaches the sky.’” (GNB) These inhabitants of Babel, did they believe in God? Did they believe in his power? Did they believe he had the power to drown the whole world in a flood? Did they believe his promise that he would never do it again? And so they built the tower. They didn’t build the tower because they didn’t believe in God, but because they did believe in God and it scared them that he has so much power. So perhaps we need not spend so much time discussing God’s power, unless we don’t believe that he has it. The Great Controversy is not over power, but over who is telling the truth. God has been accused of the abuse of power and of a failure to tell the truth. Such charges cannot be met by force. To resort to force would only worsen the matter, as if to suggest, “I don’t have evidence, so now I must intimidate you with power.” And so God chose the only way— the long and painful, and costly and apparently weak way as some regard it—of teaching, of explanation, of demonstration. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, “God’s Way of Restoring Trust” recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*
<http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy beings, all waiting to do His will. Through these messengers He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men. {MH 417.2}

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. . . . {CC 250.3}

Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. *He shared the*

lot of man; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was God in the flesh. His character is to be ours.—The Desire of Ages, p. 311. {7ABC 449.6}

Christ had been sent to earth to represent God in character. Jesus was the Life giver, the Teacher sent of God to provide salvation for a lost world, and to save men in spite of all Satan's temptations and lying deceptions. He himself was the gospel. In his teachings he clearly presented the great plan devised for the redemption of the race. Divinity had united with humanity for the purpose of uniting humanity with divinity, that through Christ man might become a partaker of the divine nature. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." {RH, July 7, 1896 par. 5}

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ's own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world. {6T 55.1}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Therefore he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. . . . {HP 8.2}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world's Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life. . . . {HP 8.3}

In word and in deed the Messiah, during His earthly ministry, was to reveal to mankind the glory of God the Father. Every act of His life, every word spoken, every miracle wrought, was to make known to fallen humanity the infinite love of God. {PK 696.3}