

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Week 2 - Day 3: Humans Take the Throne

Genesis 11:1-9 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. From there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

As we continue to better understand God's Kingdom and its basic definition -- God's rule over God's family of people in God's space -- it is impossible to imagine alignment and clarity without a common language.

Language is the connection of letters into words and words into sentences to convey thought, concepts, ideas, and direction (that is not a dictionary definition, but I think you understand). Sometimes language is so clear – the written or spoken words so concise you know exactly what they mean, and when followed you get the exact results you were expecting. Pour 2 cups of water into the pot, add 1 cup of rice, heat until boiling, then turn down until the water is evaporated. Turn off, fluff, serve. A basic rice recipe.

Genesis 11:1 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words

In the beginning, and even through banishment from the garden of Eden, there was one language amongst all the people of the land. Imagine, everyone spoke one language. All the words meant exactly what they meant, everyone understood what was being said, and all mankind shared the same experiences with each other.

Now, there was one more common experience introduced to humanity: sin.

When the people came up with the idea to build a city and a tower that would take them to the Heavens, they simply said let's do it and all work began to do it. The people were all executing against that specific vision.

Genesis 11:5-6 And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.

Then the Lord came down to assess the situation. The Lord saw that what the people with one language had begun would only be the beginning of what they could do; and in fact, they would be able to do anything they proposed.

Have you ever wondered why this would be a pivotal moment in the story? These people, just a few generations away from the Garden but with clarity in one language, used the latest technology (the brick) and did everything they could to get back to that perfect space with God. Isn't that what we all want? What's missing from the story? Why wouldn't God allow this and where is God in this story?

The truth in the language of the Bible is that there was no mention of the people looking to return to God's kingdom, only the people wanting to get to the Heavens and make a name for their own human kingdom. Common language plus sin led to the complete elevation of mankind and their rebellion against Him. Could that be true for many of us or many of our neighbors today?

Genesis 11: 7-8 Come, let us go down and confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.” So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

God's rule over God's people in God's space makes it clear that God is in charge. He sets the rules, we are His people, and we are occupying His territory. Up until this point God had banished us for disobedience but allowed us to still have free will and **the perfect language** of the Garden.

But at this moment, as we tried to get back to the Heavens on our own, the Spirit, the Word and God the Father came down to protect us from ourselves. Just like God prevented Adam and Eve from eating of the tree of life in their sinful state, God keeps us from doing anything and everything that we want apart from **Him** knowing that our knowledge of good and evil will lead to disaster.

I love that a major project underway in the world today is to translate the bible, **the word**, back into the common languages of all people groups on earth. We are trying to get back to that one common language, so we will all be clear on the good news of the Gospel found in the word of God. In Genesis 3-11, we see the Word of God shouting to us that we have all inherited the sinful nature of Adam and Eve and that the kingdom of Satan has a grip on our hearts! But we have also seen that there is hope that God would be merciful upon us. There is hope in the one who is coming to defeat sin and death.

I can't help but reflect on the fact that God's word does not always translate into my actions. Genesis 11 shows us how we need a posture of humility in order to love our enemies as much as we love ourselves, and to put God's agenda ahead of our own.

There is a common saying today that is typically applied to disagreements among 2 people – which is guidance to remind us not to pass judgement: remember there's Person A's story, Person B's story, and the truth. We take it for granted now, that language, and things which color language – like emotion, and time, can make words have different meanings; can make situations appear differently, can somehow blur the facts in any disagreement. In these times – between my story, another's story, and the truth, I am comforted by the grace of HIS love and grateful **He** is merciful towards me because **He** is crystal clear on the language of love through **His** word.

So far, we have explored the true nature of sin that begins with a small choice to eat a piece of fruit and ends in an attempt to build our own kingdom in the heavens. Humans had their shot!

Now, it's God's turn!

The end of chapter 11 focuses on how the descendants of Noah's son Shem, lead to a man named Abram. Genealogies are always complex and sometimes tedious to read – but this one shows God's hand in the plan and I encourage you all to read it. As you see how Shem lived 500 years, and fathered children who fathered children and on and on, it brings to life how even in humanity's sin, God is still weaving together His **kingdom purposes** since the beginning!

-Liza Landrum

Share the Gospel: Genesis 11 is the culmination of sin and its effects. Human sin, at its core, is an attempt to replace God's rule, God's people, and God's space in favor of our own rule, our own people, and our own space. Humanity has decided to take the throne.

Personal Observations, Reflections, and Prayers: