

# GENESIS: THE BEGINNING IS NOT THE END

## Highway to Tragedy, Path to Triumph

TEXT: Genesis 10-11, Acts 17:26, Romans 1:18-23

INTRODUCTION: The early chapters of Genesis explain so much of what we see around us in the world today.

Chapters	Message	Explains
1 and 2	God Created everything in the universe	Order, complexity, design in DNA, living systems, quantum mechanics
3	Fall of man into sin	Why sin is so prevalent
4 to 6	Pervasive wickedness of mankind	All have sinned
6 and 7	The Great Flood	Reality of God's Judgment
8 and 9	Noah's Deliverance	Blessing of grace through faith
10 and 11	Tower of Babel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Origin of races and people groups</li> <li>2. Origin of languages</li> <li>3. Understanding of cave men and societal development</li> </ol>

When Noah led his family off of the ark, the first thing they did was to worship the Lord. The Scripture says that God blessed them, and God renewed the command He had given to Adam and Eve. He told them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

God desired the earth to be filled with people who were living in fellowship with Himself, and He had provided that by blood offerings, their sin could be covered until the One Offering He would send would take away the sin of the world.

Genesis 11 opens with a statement that should be obvious, but because of its importance is stated plainly so our understanding will be clear.

**Genesis 11:1** Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.

Of course they did. They were all descended from Adam and Eve.

However, they were not necessarily all one color. As Adam and Eve had, they had the genetic potential for their physical appearance to have had any of what we would call ethnic distinctives today.

So, what happened? Genesis 10 shows us that for about the next century after the flood, that Noah, his children, and his grandchildren obeyed the commandment of the Lord. If Mt. Ararat, upon which the ark landed, is the same Mt. Ararat we know today in eastern Turkey, then they migrated southeast, probably to the eastern edge of the Fertile Crescent in Mesopotamia.

Around the time that the great grandchildren were being born and raised, all or most of this very large family moved westward to a large fertile plain between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, known as the Plain of Shinar. The region later becomes known as Babylonia. We know the area as Iraq.

This portion of their migration proved to be the

## I. THE HIGHWAY TO TRAGEDY

Why was this a highway to tragedy?

### A. Men followed the rebel Nimrod. (Gen. 10:8-10)

The name Nimrod meant rebel. He was known not only as a hunter, but as a hunter or killer of men. He effectively became the king and built the cities that would be established in the plain of Shinar.

What we read happened next was done by the people under the leadership of Nimrod the rebel.

Genesis 11:1–4 1 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

In following Nimrod,

### B. They disobeyed the Word of the Lord.

God said, “Fill the earth.” Nimrod and the people said, “Let’s stay here.”

So they built a tower, a ziggurat.

Building a tower with its top in the heavens did not mean they thought they could build past the stars and invade the residence of God. These were not primitive men and women. Noah and his sons are still alive, and they

built the ark, although we can be confident that neither Noah nor Seth participated in the construction of this tower, because the purpose of the ziggurat was worship, not for the worship of the One True and Living God who created heaven and earth and who had commanded them to multiply and fill the earth for His glory.

The top in the heavens meant that the top of the ziggurat was for the worship of the false gods of the land.

In response,

### **C. God confused their language to prevent a One World Government opposed to God.**

Genesis 11:5–9 5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the LORD said, “Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 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.

Here are 19 of the 94 recognized language families of the world.

- **Indo-European (Northern India/Europe)**
- **Sino-Tibetan (Northern & Eastern Asia)**
- **Afro-Asiatic (Northern Africa/Middle East/Southwestern Asia)**
- **Kartvelian (Caucasus Mountains/Southern Russia)**
- **Uralic (Northern Europe/Central Siberia/Eurasia)**
- **Altaic (Eastern Europe/Central Asia)**
- **Dravidian (Central & Southern India)**
- **Malayo-Polynesian (Southeastern Asia/Pacific Islands)**
- **Austro-Asiatic (Eastern India/Southwestern Asia)**
- **Niger-Congo (Western & Central Africa)**
- **Nilo-Saharan (Northeastern Africa)**
- **Khoisan (Southern Africa)**
- **Eskimo-Aleut (Northeastern Siberia/Alaska/Aleutians)**
- **Algonkian, Athapascan, Iroquoian, & Mosan (North America)**
- **Uto-Aztecan-Tanoan, Oto-Manguean, Mayan, & Macro-Chibchan (Central America)**
- **Carib, Andean-Equatorial (South America)**
- **Toricelli, West Papuan & Sepik-Ramu (New Guinea)**
- **Bunaban, Ngaran & Yiwaidjan (Northern Australia)**
- **Pama-Nyungan (Central & Southern Australia)**

Linguists used to think that all languages could ultimately be traced to a single language which was the prototype for them all. Many have recognized that this is not possible, because the differences in sounds and structure between each of the families of languages are so dramatically large as to make a common prototype impossible.

What was the result of confusing the languages so that each family had its own?

**D. The result was the scattering of families across the face of the earth.**

1. This is the beginning of the forming of the people groups of the world. Geneticists can now trace both the Y-DNA from the father and Mitochondrial DNA from the mother from every people group. These studies show conclusively that we all share a common original father and mother. They often call them Adam and Eve.
2. As families were isolated by language barriers, dominant characteristics in that particular family's gene pool began to express themselves in what we would call ethnic characteristics today. However, as we see today, these characteristics lessen and sometimes disappear entirely when a person of one people group marries someone of another group.
3. All of this tells us two things.
  - a. **The biblical account is the very best explanation of exactly what we observe in the world regarding ethnicity and language.** As always, when the evidence comes in, the Bible proves to be true.
  - b. **All of humanity is really one family – literally!**

**There is no biblical, genetic, or biological support for racism.**  
This is exactly what Paul said when preaching in Athens.

**Acts 17:26** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

**What happened at Babel also explains the discovery of remains of so-called primitive men** who were hunter/gatherers and lived in **caves** or other very basic dwellings and have few if any tools or sophistication.

Let me ask you something. What if all of a sudden you and your immediate family were forced into isolation from all other people and you had to flee with only the things you could carry. If a satellite took a photo of your family ever so often, do you think it might find that you had moved very near a river or stream which was a fresh water source? Do you think it might find you eating

things you could gather from what grows naturally around you or the meat of animals you somehow were able to kill? Don't you hope you would learn how to make fire so you didn't have to eat the meat raw? If you were lucky enough to find a cave without a resident bear, might it snap a picture of your going in and out? Across the years, might there be evidence of the development of tools, made first from wood and stone. Later, if you are one of the really smart ones and you lived in an area with surface ores, there might be evidence of your developing some skills in learning to work with bronze or iron.

In fact, if your family lasted for at least several generations, your family would go through a stone age, a bronze age, and an iron age before becoming what people today would call civilized.

That's what happened to the descendants of Noah. They weren't primitive people. They had great skills and capabilities. They built the tower, the ziggurat. But when they were isolated by families, nobody had all the skills and all the knowledge. Nobody had all the tools just for themselves, plus a lot of tools couldn't be carried and still carry the babies.

But skills of civilization is not all they lost.

When each family left Babel, they departed with the knowledge of the One True and Living God. They were grandchildren and great grandchildren of Noah, and he was still alive! They knew the testimony of creation. Noah would have known the grandsons of Adam himself. These families had the testimony of Noah himself and God's judgment of sin in the Great Flood. They had the knowledge of the One True God, but many of them had hearts that were willing to turn to the worship of false gods of their own making.

In the Book of Romans, the Holy Spirit explains what happened.

**Romans 1:18–23** 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Most of these families that spread out over the earth, forming the people groups of the world, willfully lost the knowledge of God. That is why many people groups retain some form of the story of the Great Flood in their culture. A lot of the facts

are wrong, because they did not have a written record to keep the details straight. But it was so fresh in their minds it was a common story to be passed along to their children and grandchildren in their new language.

Now as clearly as the Bible explains to us this highway to tragedy, the focus of the Scripture really is the opposite. It reveals the

## II. THE PATH TO TRIUMPH

### A. That path would be only one man wide.

**As many as would desire to walk the path could come, but only one at a time.**

1. The path would be through one descendant of Abraham. (Gen. 12)
2. He would be a humble suffering-servant such as Isaiah described.
3. He would be the one and only Son of God, named Jesus of Nazareth.

### B. He would open the path to triumph by being obedient to God, His Father, and giving His life upon the cross.

**C. By His death and resurrection, Jesus would offer forgiveness of sin and eternal life to people of every tribe, tongue, and nation.** Indeed, one day, some from every people group and language will gather around the throne of God, worshipping the Lord Jesus, as a part of the family and Kingdom of God.

### D. And through Jesus, all who trust Him can have a true knowledge, not just about God, but of God, to know Him personally.

CONCLUSION – That’s what it means to be saved.

- A. For us who are saved: Do you know God better today than you did when 2017 began?

**Three things will really help you grow in your knowledge of God** (not just in information about Him but knowing Him personally).

#### 1. Reading your Bible regularly – at least 4 times a week

Any plan is good.

If you are new at this, start in the New Testament

Here is a plan that has been helpful to me in the past.

**Gospel then Acts**

**Another Gospel then Romans**

**Another Gospel then 1 Corinthians through Jude**

**Another Gospel then Revelation**

**In less than 30 minutes a day, you can finish the NT in 3 months.**

**Then, do it again, until you are starting to feel like you are really getting to know the New Testament.**

**Then, read Genesis and a Gospel**

**Exodus then a Gospel**

**Leviticus then 2 Gospels, no just kidding, a Gospel**

**Numbers then a Gospel**

**Deuteronomy then Acts**

**Several OT books, several NT books**

And so on.

**2. Pray after you read**

**3. Go to church and learn, fellowship, pray, and grow with others.**

B. For those who have not yet trusted Jesus, remember He too described two ways.

**Matthew 7:13–14** 13 “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Everybody is on a road to somewhere, either the Highway to Tragedy or the Path to Triumph.

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.