

Genesis 11:1-9

Background to Consider...

We are all familiar with the story of Noah and the Ark. In Genesis 6, we are told that “the wickedness of man was great in the earth,” and so God was “grieved” in “His heart” (Gen 6:6). As a result of Him being the just God that He is, we are told that the Lord sent a great flood as judgment against the people of the earth. But God, in His absolute grace, saved some. Whereas the peoples of the earth died in the waters, Noah and his family was saved by way of the ark.

Much more can be said about this story, but what we want to note is that, once Noah and his family got off the ark, God gave him an assignment: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen 9:1). And so they did. We are told in chapter 10 that the nations of the world came from Noah and his family. The very next recorded event is the infamous story of Babel and the tower man was building there. In chapter 11, we are told that the people said to themselves, “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” (Gen 11:4).

In defiance to the command to “fill the earth,” the nations of people wanted to “stay put” so that they, as one united people, could “make a name” for themselves. God, as a result once more, dispersed them by confusing their language “so that they may not understand one another’s speech” (Gen 11:7).

Questions about Genesis 11:1-9

1. Why did God want the people to “fill the earth”? Does this have anything to do with God’s similar command to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1?
 - a. Adam and Eve are the “image of God.” Does this truth have anything to do with why God wanted them to “fill the earth”? Why or why not?
2. What is meant by the people at Babel wanting to “make a name” for themselves?
3. God stops the people’s attempt to make a name for themselves by confusing their language. One might say this curse of confusion, as a result of man’s disobedience, is being reversed in the mission of the church.
 - a. How does Acts 2:1-13 act as the reversal of this curse?

Your Thoughts/Questions?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____