



## Reestablishment of the Created Order Genesis 8:1-11:26

### Introduction

In the last lesson, we saw mankind's moral, degenerate wickedness and God's great sorrow in destroying every living thing on earth. He was sorry He had made humankind because they were utterly depraved and did not want a relationship with Him. Only righteous Noah, his family, and selected animals and birds were saved from the Great Flood. The beginning of a new civilization would come from Noah and the living creatures aboard the ark.

### OUTLINE OF GENESIS 8-11

#### I. Aftermath of the Flood - Genesis 8:1-22

#### II. God's Covenant With Noah - Genesis 9:1-17

#### III. Descendants of Noah - Genesis 9:18-10:32

#### IV. The Event at Babel - Genesis 11:1-9

#### V. Shem to Terah - Genesis 11:10-26

#### I. Aftermath of the Flood - Genesis 8:1-22

##### A. Receding of Flood Waters - Genesis 8:1-5

The phrase, "*God remembered Noah and every living thing*", means that God extended mercy and grace to all on board the ark by delivering them from death. God "*remembered*" does not mean that God had forgotten. (See Genesis 19:29).

God stopped the torrential downpour after forty days and nights and caused the flood waters to begin receding. One hundred and ten days later, the ark came to rest on a high mountain of Ararat. The earth continued to dry seventy four days until the tops of the mountains were seen. Mount Ararat is on the border between Turkey and Armenia, not far from Iraq. From this general area, Noah's descendants spread across the earth.

##### B. Noah Searches for a Place to Disembark - Genesis 8:6-14

After another forty days, Noah opened the window near the top of the ark. He sent out a raven which is a scavenger bird that apparently flew back and forth but brought no evidence of dry land. He also sent a dove, a bird that eats dry and clean vegetation and seeds, and returns to its home when it can find no place to land. After several attempts, the dove returned with a freshly plucked olive leaf. Noah waited another seven days and sent the dove out again. This time the bird did not return. Noah removed the covering of the ark

and saw that the ground was dry. Altogether, Noah, his family, the animals and birds had been in the ark three hundred and seventy eight days.

##### C. God's Instructions - Genesis 8:15-19

God told Noah to take his family, leave the ark and release all of the animals and birds. Like the instructions He had given to Adam, God told Noah, "*Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth*"(1:28). Noah faced a new world and new challenges. Severe weather and natural disasters were now a part of the environment. The longevity of men began to decrease.

##### D. Noah Worships God - Genesis 8:20-22

Noah's first action in the new world was to build an altar and worship God. He made a burnt offering of "*every clean animal*" and "*every clean bird*" in gratitude to God for sparing himself and his family. His unwavering faith and personal devotion were pleasing to God. Noah's burnt offering was "*a smell of satisfaction*" - "*a soothing savor*" and God promised never again to curse the ground or destroy every living thing.

#### II. God's Covenant with Noah - Genesis 9:1- 17

##### A. New Beginnings - Genesis 9:1-2

God blessed Noah and commanded him to refill the earth. Noah was now the head of the new family of humanity. His three sons and their wives were to start repopulating of the whole earth. God reaffirmed His blessing and faithfulness to mankind by establishing a covenant with Noah. In this manner, all the human race hereafter would know that the principles God had given Adam were in effect with one significant addition: the provision of human government to suppress the outbreak of sin and violence.

##### B. Provisions of the Noahic Covenant - Genesis 9:3-11

God clearly established His covenant with Noah, his descendants and every living creature (9:9,11). His instructions and promises were:

- Multiply, grow and populate the earth.
- Take dominion over and govern the animal kingdom.

- Eat the flesh of animals but refrain from eating blood. Symbolically, blood represents life (Leviticus 3:17; 17:11; Acts 15:19-20, 28-29).
- Honor the sanctity of human life.
- Prohibit murder by putting offenders to death.
- God promised never again to destroy the earth by water.

Many commentators believe that verses 5 and 6 lay the foundation for all future civil government and have a bearing on capital punishment. The fact that human life is sacred, in the image of God, and that murder is evil, imposes death on those who plan or impulsively take the life of another. In the matter of abortion, it is well for “pro choice” advocates to understand that killing requires divine authorization. Man is responsible to God for protecting the sanctity of human life. With respect to war time killing, the shedding of another person’s blood is condoned by God against murderous, destructive evil, whether they be nations or organizations.

#### C. God’s Sign of the Covenant - Genesis 9:12-17

God gave Noah and every living creature with him a symbolic, perpetual reminder of His covenant instructions and promise: a rainbow. Never again will God cut off all flesh by waters and never again will He destroy the earth by flood. The rainbow appears during and after rain storms and brings to mind the sovereignty and power of Almighty God. Franz Delitzsch writes in A New Commentary on Genesis, “Shining upon a dark cloud, the rainbow represents the victory of the light of love over the fiery darkness of wrath. Originating from the effect of the sun upon a dark cloud, it typifies the willingness of the heavenly to penetrate the earthy ... as a bond of peace between both, and spanning the horizon, it points to the all-embracing universality of the Divine mercy.”

This covenant rainbow is a verification and guarantee of God’s everlasting promise.

### III. Descendants of Noah - 9:18-24

#### A. Three Sons - Genesis 9:18-20

An unknown amount of time lapsed between Noah’s departure from the ark and the events of this section. God had given the world a new start. The whole earth was to be populated, starting with his three sons – Shem, Ham and Japheth. Noah also had a grandson, Canaan, who was the son of Ham.

#### B. Ham’s Sin - Genesis 9:21-24

Mankind’s mistakes of the past soon reappeared and launched humanity again on a downward course. Noah

became a farmer and had a vineyard, the source of the wine that made him drunk. In his drunkenness, Noah “*became uncovered in his tent*”. We should note that privacy and modesty were different in Old Testament days. Nakedness before others was shameful and undignified. Ham disgraced himself by gazing on his father’s shameful condition with wrongful thoughts. Habbakuk’s observation in 2:15 is appropriate: “*Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, pressing him to your bottle, even to make him drunk, that you may look on his nakedness*”.

Ham told his two brothers, Shem and Japheth, what he had seen. They backed into the room with a blanket across their shoulders to cover their father’s nakedness. Some expositors suggest that the Hebrew language, “{Ham} *told his two brothers*”, means “he told them with delight”. Noah “*knew what his younger son had done to him*.”

#### Application

Noah’s behavior should be a warning to all that drunkenness is potentially harmful not only to the drinker but to his family. By New Testament times, drunkenness was considered a sin (Ephesians 5:18). Scripture does not prohibit the restrained drinking of wine, but states that it is not good to drink wine if it causes a brother to stumble, be offended or made weak. Scripture also states that “*whatever is not from faith is sin*” (Romans 14:23). See also Proverbs 31:4-5 and Ephesians 5:18.

#### C. The Curse on Canaan - Genesis - 9:25

Noah’s act of becoming drunk, losing self-control and uncovering himself brought shame and disgrace on himself and Ham. Noah’s grandson, Canaan, may have been involved in the debauchery, but no details are given. Noah cursed Canaan rather than Ham for two reasons: (1) Noah could not curse Ham since he had been blessed earlier by God (9:1) and no one would dare to reverse a blessing from God with a curse; (2) Noah must have seen Ham’s tendencies to moral perversion also evident in his son.

Noah pronounced prophetic judgment on Canaan and his descendants for their sin that had its seed in Ham’s disgraceful act. Later historical records indicate that all the Canaanites were notoriously deviant in their sexual behavior.

#### D. Shem and Japheth - Genesis 9:26-27

Noah then blessed Shem and Japheth. The blessing on Shem implied that his descendants would be blessed only as long as they faithfully honored the Lord their God. The blessing on Japheth seems to be conditioned on

him and his descendants following the spiritual footsteps of Shem. Shem's progeny would be the continuation of the seed line of the promised Messiah.

#### E. A Trophy of God's Grace - Genesis 9:28-29

Noah's life has been called "a trophy of God's grace". Like Enoch and Abel before him, Noah walked by faith and pleased God. After the flood, he faltered in sin and suffered the consequences. However, God graciously favored Noah in his life and preserved the chosen line of Shem from which Jesus would come. Noah died at the age of 950 years.

What lesson do we learn from Noah's life? Those who behave obediently and righteously are blessed, but those who abandon moral restraint are cursed.

#### F. Genealogy of Noah's Sons - Genesis 10:1-32

Chapter 10 deals with Noah's descendants and their distribution after the destructive flood. This is not a comprehensive genealogy, but a selective list of individuals and their families that would settle near Ararat at first, and later, start the dispersion to the whole earth. Keep in mind that Biblical genealogies are not intended to construct an absolute chronology of time. This genealogy is representative rather than complete and traces selected individuals to show how the geographic setting of peoples, languages, and nations came about.

One commentator points out that approximately 70 nations descended from Shem, Ham and Japheth: 26 from Shem, 30 from Ham and 14 from Japheth. In the last 150 years, archeologists have discovered most of the names listed in this chapter.

##### 1. Japheth's Descendants - 10:2-5

At first, the families of Japheth lived near the descendants of Ham and Shem. They all spoke the same language and migrated to the plain of Shinar where they built the city of Babel. They progressed rapidly, became proud and arrogantly disobedient. After God interceded at Babel (Genesis 11), Japheth and his descendants migrated to the coastland and inland areas of the Mediterranean Sea and Europe. Today, these Mediterranean/European shore areas extend from Turkey to Spain to Germany.

##### 2. Ham's Descendants - 10:6-20

###### a. Nimrod - verses 6-14

After the confusion of tongues, the descendants of Ham moved south, southwest and east of Babel into areas

that are known today as Egypt, Africa and Mesopotamia. Nimrod, Ham's grandson, became a great hunter and a strong and powerful leader. Nimrod's kingdoms in the land of Shinar and Assyria included the cities of Babel and Nineveh. He apparently was the force behind the building of Babel which later became Babylon.

###### b. Canaanites - verses 15-20

We have already been introduced to Ham's son, Canaan, and the curse put upon him by Noah. The curse on Canaan carried through to many of his descendants. The Canaanite clans settled into the areas known today as Israel, Syria, eastern Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. Some of them grew into nations that the Israelites later would displace or conquer in taking the land which had been promised to them by God.

##### 3. Shem's Descendants - 10:21-32.

The genealogy of Shem represents the continuing progression of the "seed line" (Genesis 3:15). Significantly, this passage included the name, Eber, thought by many to be the progenitor of Israel and the source of the name, Hebrew. Eber was the father of Peleg and Joktan. Peleg means "divided". For this reason, and because the event occurred during his lifetime, it is believed that the phrase, "*for in his days the earth was divided*" (10:25) refers to God's intervention and dispersal of peoples at Babel.

There is a notable difference between the families of Peleg and Joktan. According to H.C. Leupold's Exposition of Genesis, "Joktan was the father of numerous offspring, all of whom appear to be founders of Arabic tribes." Peleg's descendants, on the other hand, kept the seed line continuing through to Abram.

#### IV. The Event at Babel - Genesis 11:1-9

##### A. Desire to Build a Tower - Genesis 11:1-4

For about 100 years after the flood the descendants of Shem, Japheth, Ham and Canaan lived in close proximity to Ararat. They all spoke the same language and dialect. Their common language and independence motivated them to journey eastward to the plain of Shinar and build a city and a tower, saying, "*let us make a name for ourselves.*" Their ungodly plan to stay together and become famous was in direct defiance of God's injunction to scatter abroad and "*fill the earth*" (Genesis 9:1.) Their oneness of purpose, defiant spirit and high-handed arrogance inspired them to work long and hard on a city-tower that would bring them fame, reputation and glory.

## 1. Building the tower - 11:1-4

They constructed a tower using brick and asphalt, *"whose top [was] in the heavens"* (11:4), that would last a long time.

## 2. Meaning of the Tower

Although this was probably the first structure of its kind on earth, the tower became known in Mesopotamia as a ziggurat – a temple-tower. Such towers had religious implications. To the ungodly, the Tower at Babel represented (1) mankind's desire for human autonomy and (2) a guardian shield to deflect divine punishment from their actions. In reality, the Tower displayed mankind's depraved nature, arrogant pride and refusal to obey God's directives.

## B. Judgment on the People - Genesis 11:5-6

God saw the tower as a symbol of defiance. The rebellious nature of the people was exacerbated by their sinful pride and evil desires. Their common language had been central in giving them unity of purpose and facilitated their consolidation against God's instruction to replenish the earth.

## C. God's Intervention - Genesis 11:7-8

God said, *"Let us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."* And He *"scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth."* Waltke writes in Genesis, "Depraved humanity are united in their spiritual endeavor to find, through technology, existential meaning apart from God and the means to transgress its boundaries. Unless God intervenes and divides them by confusing their speech, nothing can stop human beings in their overweening pride and their desire for autonomy."

## D. Confusion and Dispersion - Genesis 11:9

The original name, Babel, came from the Hebrew verb "to confuse". The city was located on the Euphrates River about fifty miles south of modern Baghdad. Babel claimed to be the center of civilization with a tower reaching to the gate of heaven. Actually, in all history, it was probably the most rebellious city against God's sovereignty.

Babel became known as Babylon in the Old Testament, and was the symbol of confusion and organized rebellion against God. After confusing their language, God dispersed the peoples "over the face of all the earth" (10:8). God did not allow human rebellion to reach the level it had before the flood.

**Application**

What actions in your life signify rebellion against God? Would you examine your life for evidences of pride and desire for autonomy, confess them before almighty God and ask His help in replacing them with a wholehearted commitment and obedience to Him?

**V. Shem to Terah - Genesis 11:10-26**

Moses, the author of Genesis, continues to describe the genealogy of Shem by listing the "faithful" line of men down to Terah, Abram's father. This passage indicates that God's "seed" promise to Eve and Adam could not be thwarted by the confusion and dispersion of nations at Babel. When observed alongside Genesis 10:21-32, this passage contrasts the unfaithful line of Joktan with the faithful line of Shem, Eber and Peleg. After the scattering of peoples from Babel, Shem's descendants occupied areas northeast and southeast of the Canaanites – areas that are called Israel and Arabia today.

**Application**

Some casual readers consider the genealogies in the Bible tedious to read. However, these genealogies are an integral part of God's word and should be valued as such. They show us how carefully God works through all generations to keep His promises to mankind. They also show that each person in a family line is known to God and significant to God. What have you learned personally through studying these genealogies? How have they revealed God's love for you as an individual?

## QUESTIONS

All questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

### **DAY ONE: Read Notes and References.**

1. Describe Noah's unwavering faith and personal devotion.
2. In destroying the earth with a devastating flood, did God imply that He would stop judging individuals or nations? Explain.
3. Does Scripture prohibit the restrained drinking of wine? Explain.
4. What motivated the people to work long and hard building a city and tower at Babel?
5. Explain God's actions at Babel?

### **DAY TWO: Read Genesis 11:27-12:3, 22:17, 24:35, 28:4; Acts 7:2-3, and Galatians 3:8.**

6. a. What was Terah's native land? Where did he move his family?  
b. What family members did he take with him?
7. What verbal instruction did God give Abram before His promises would be instituted?
8. What four principle elements are guaranteed in God's compact of promises?
9. Besides the personal pronouns, I and you, what word is used five times in God's covenant?
10. What is the ultimate purpose of God's covenant with Abram? (See last phrase of Genesis 12:3.)

### **DAY THREE: Read Genesis 12:4-9; and Hebrews 11:8.**

11. a. How old was Abram when he left Haran?  
b. Whom did he take with him to the land of Canaan?
12. After the Lord appeared and spoke to him at Shechem, what did Abram do?



**DAY FOUR: Read Genesis 12:10-20 and Proverbs 6:16-19, 21:1.**

13. a. Why did Abram go to Egypt?  
  
b. Is there any indication that he consulted with God about going to Egypt? Explain.
14. What agreement did Abram have with Sarai about their relationship?
15. What did the Egyptians do when they saw that Sarai was very beautiful?
16. How did Pharaoh deal with Abram and Sarai after taking Sarai into his house?
17. a. What happened to Pharaoh because of Sarai?  
  
b. What did Pharaoh do as a result?

**DAY FIVE: Read Genesis 13:1-13.**

18. ? (Thought Question). Do you think Abram was repentant at the Altar in Bethel when he called upon the name of the Lord? Explain.
19. a. What was the problem between Abram and Lot?  
  
b. Describe Abram's way of handling the situation?

**DAY SIX: Read Genesis 13:14-18, 28:14.**

20. How did the Lord describe the land he gave to Abram and his descendants?
21. a. In reiterating His covenant for the third time, what things did the Lord further emphasize to Abram?  
  
b. What did He direct Abram to do?