

THE GREAT POWER

Genesis 11:1-9

INTRODUCTION:

The last several Sunday evenings we've been talking about the Great Flood, the Great Giant, the Great Wall. Tonight, I want to challenge you concerning the Great Power.

There are three things in this outline that I would like for you to remember.

- First, centralization. 1-5
- Second, confusion. 6-8
- Third, consequences. 9

Since the flood, which we discovered was brought on by the great downward course of humanity -- sin did not really stop with the flood and the destruction of the world. But it took on the form of drunkenness, and disregard for parental authority.

The tenth chapter of Genesis locates the nations scattered upon the face of the earth. The 11th chapter tells how they happened to be so widely disbursed, from their quiet settlement.

I. CENTRALIZATION - V. 1-6

They had a purpose, in building a tower that would establish and fix a center around which a perfect organization would hold them together from

wandering over the face of the earth.

The people had noted the experience in the erection of towers by the Babylonians, who built towers and temples to attract and to hold their people - to impress them with the (mercy and protective) character of their gods.

Hammurabi says that the temple tower of Uruk was the protector of the land. The one who gathered together the scattered populations.

The same idea is expressed many times in the inscriptions that describe the tower which stood in the central point in the temple complex of each Babylonian city.

The prosperous people in Shinar had observed this tower in the cities of Babylon and they were built in steps or stories.

The methods they used for constructing and building were with stones or brick. And they wanted to duplicate what the Babylonians had done.

Some had been built from 3-7 stories in stages - each with steps to the next story above. Or spiral winding steps around to the top. *light house -*

The tower of Pisa in Italy is a mild representative of this type of reaching the top.

In the time of Nebuchadnezzar, they had temples with seven stage towers - in the center of the temple where it was located. The ruins have been located of some. And they have found that the remains of different colors



in the ruins, which some have taken to mean that originally each story was decorated with a different color. On the top of these towers were constructed the shrines of the Gods, from whose temple the tower rose.

In the history of the Old Testament by George Adams Smith, he gives descriptions of the buildings. These towers by kings and their loyal subjects. He states that each of the great cities almost revolve around the temple or it's chief God which had a tower as the pride and the center of all of their activities. It has been even inferred that these were no less the forerunners of the towers or steeples of the Christian Church which we see today, on our buildings.

V. 1 - The whole earth was of one language and of one speech. Now keep in mind that this was immediately following the flood.

Ch. 10 - Japheth 7 sons  
Ham 4 + 24 sons  
Shem 5 + one son had 14 sons

There oneness of speech is expressed - and the whole land was of one lip and one stock of words.

Stock of words means the materials of languages.

Lip means one of the organs - it denotes a manner of speaking. The material used - family ties and common speech hold them together. Here, as they multiplied, and began to move out of the homes, and the trend of the movement was toward the rising of the setting sun. And the years rolled by and the population rapidly increases. Different Community - Area - South - North - west -

The closing of the foregoing chapters tell about the sons of Noah - how the earth was divided up after the flood, into several tribes and colonies. And the places they were to live agreed upon by the spirit or appointed by Noah. And this could well have been a matter of 100 years after the flood.

And they were beginning to think the more the merrier - the safer they would be. And so they began to think about how they could stay together.

They were wiser than Noah - wiser than their forefathers. Joshua 23:3.  
And wiser than God.

They were all of one language. If there were any different languages before the flood, we do not know about them. But now while they all understood one another, they would be more likely to love one another. And they found a very convenient and acceptable place to settle.

V. 2 - Tells us they (journeyed to a plain.) The land of Shinar. This seemed to be a fruitful place that would support them, had room, had living accommodations.

V. 3 - We note how true the Proverb 4:23 - out of the heart are the issues of life. Here is a revelation of the human ambition. And the wind blows a straw and indicates the direction of the wind.

The objective in view comes into play. Let us make some brick, and burn them. This gives an idea of what is taking place in the minds of these people. Instead of coveting to enlarge their borders, instead of going out fulfilling the command which God gave to Noah.

Gen. 9:1 - God said to Noah, and his sons - "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." They forgot all about this command.

V. 3 - Tells us that they got excited and began to encourage one another and they set about a special work. They resolved to make some brick and we discover here how one can provoke another. By love and by good works - instead



of using stones, they were going to make their own brick.

What a (difference) there is between men's building and God's. When men build their babel, brick and slime are the best materials. But when (God) builds his Jerusalem, he lays the foundation with sapphire and precious stones. Rev. 21:19.

(For) what ends do they build. (What) is the object. Now (some) people would say, maybe they are thinking about another flood coming, and they want to build something that will give them security. But if they had had their eyes upon that, they would have chosen to build upon a mountain - rather than down on the plain.

1 / (First), they were building - taking over God's place. They wanted this building to reach the Heavens. It was in defiance of God. It was like the serpent said to the woman in the garden. You eat of this fruit, and you will become like God. So they would be like the most high - if they could build this tower from earth and reach Heaven - they would be like God.

2 - (Second), they hoped to make a name for themselves. They wanted to be talked about. They wanted something of pride. They had affection that their name be honored among all people.

"Let us make a name." (Name-making) is a very common and popular business - although it may not pay very much in the end.

You can see the failures of three name-makers in the book of Numbers 16.

(Did) you know that it is even possible in doing Christian work - with the

same thing in view.

V. 4- Beloved of glory, to make themselves a name. To indulge in the passion of fame at all cost. And to go at great labor. We can hardly imagine to build in order to avoid a flood. Or just to build a temple. But they are undertaking this for their own name. This is the cry of ambitious men.

Now it is a healthy form of ambition when men have a noble purpose dominating their conscience. But with the ordinary human nature, ambition takes the worst forms. Men make their own greatness and fame their principle concern of life. They are in a pursuit in a passion for self. They defy the supreme ruler. They had a thirst for universal dominion. This has infected all nations from the earliest times, and I might state - still rages throughout the world. To this may be traced many of the ills and the wars that come.

You will notice the bold scheme is the ambition and work of a few. Maybe even one man. But these influences leave people in the process. They originate an idea, and they adopt it for others. And such an ambition involved the slavery of other people.

Now this popular movement meant rebellion against God and the ruin of the race. But these people were not concerned with this, as men are unconcerned today.

3 / In the next place, they did it to prevent their dispersion. Less we be scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth. Now God orders them to disperse. To replennish the earth. Gen. 9:1.



They say to God, no, we are not going to do this. We want to live together here and we want to die together. And we want to unite one glorious empire.

Here is (bold opposition) to God. You will be scattered, says God. But we will not, they say. And whoe is the man that strives with the maker.

V<sub>15</sub> - Next we see the divine inspection of their work. V. 5. No work of man can hope to escape the eye of God. God will be acquainted with your thoughts, your work, and your words on this earth. Prov. 15:3. Heb. 4:13.

There is a day coming - there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed.  
Matt. 10:26.

Every work of man shall be judged at the bar of God. Ecc. 12:14. I Cor. 3:13.

The Bible says the Lord came down to cease the city and the tower which the children of men built. This is a very solemn truth - the eyes of Jehovah coming down to test what is going on.

We ought to take note here before he gave judgement upon their cause, he inquired about it. Well, it is somewhat of a condensation on God's part. It is said that the tower which the children of men built, shows their weakness and their frailty of men as though they were stronger than he. Their sinfulness - they were sons of Adam. And this distinguishes them from the children of God - professors of religion.

Now God came down not merely as a spectator but as a judge.

He suffered them to proceed a good ways in their enterprize before he stopped it. God is wise in permitting his enemies to carry on in their glory

for a great way. When they had much toil and care, and made some progress in their building - then God determined to break them and to measure and disperse them.

No work of man can hope to escape the eye of God. His words, his thoughts, and his works - Prov. 15:3, Heb. 4:13. There is nothing covered that will not be revealed. Matt. 10:26. Every work of man will be judged at the bar of God. Ecc. 11:14.

## II. CONFUSION - V. 6-8

V. 6 - When the Lord beheld the people, they have all one language and he was looking at what they had done. He said, there is nothing that will restrain them from which they have imagination to do in their hearts. The righteousness of God appears.

Now there is their oneness as a reason why they must be scattered. If they continue as one, much of the earth will be left uninhabited and what is populated will be populated with wickedness. And if they are scattered, there will be at least a remnant of God's children.

The next thing God said about this thing - nothing will be restrained from them. That is the reason why he must come and change their design. God had tried by his commandments to get them to leave the project but it was in vain. Therefore, he must take another course for them.

Here, this tells us something of the sinfulness of sin. And the willfulness of sinners. Every since Adam would not be restrained from the forbidden tree. This has been the case of man in his rebellion against God.



We see that this was necessary for God's judgement to keep this world in some kind of order And to tie the hands of those in some way that would not be checked.

The false idea of the unity of the race - now God's idea and purpose was that man should spread over the world and become influential and conquer and subdue all things to his use. The divine idea of the unity of the human race was for a different reason. He intended that the true unity should be for a spiritual invisible tie.

They thought that it was external - hence they built a city and a tower. They were going to provide for them to dwell together - bound by the tie of common interest.

This was a political form in which the pursuit of it trampled upon the dearest interests of men. Ancient Rome sought to make mankind one by the power of the sword.

There have been ecclesiastical forms in the history of Christianity that have attempted to magnify the church at the expense of the individual. There has been an effort to set up the church in a central place and make it as these people - which is in direct contradiction to the teachings of Christ. For the church is to be governed by the Holy Spirit, guiding believers as a community. Church & State -

V. 7 - The sudden confusion. Let us go down and there confound their language that they might not understand one another's speech. Now this was the wisdom and mercy of God, that was defeating their enterprise. God speaks it himself. Father to the Son and Holy Spirit. They said, let us go and make brick.

Let us build a tower. Now God said, go too, let us confound their language. The mercy of God in moderating the penalty here - they deserved death. But they are only banished and transported to other places.

The mercy of God here was effectual in staying the proceedings. It was a proper method for stopping the building. Now God has various methods and means to baffle and defeat the projects of the crowd today.

This experience was first unchallengeable - they could not understand one another, so they could not doubt that a change of some kind had passed over them.

Second, they could not even talk to each other about it. It was mysterious.

It was supernatural. It came as an agency of God. Believers in a God who made the tongue of man should have no difficulty in believing in a God who changed the tongue of man.

This was judgement of persons building the building.

It was unexpected in its coming as is all judgements. Like the flood, and like the coming of the Son of Man.

It was deserved by its subjects. They were caught as it were in the very act, of guilty treason - against the God of Heaven.

And it was appropriate and very fitting. Because it separated and scattered them abroad.

The Lord did there confound - so they left off to build. What a change when God comes. When the Spirit of God comes upon the self-righteous, he makes



them leave off their vain and presumptuous works.

The presence of God means confusion to the religious person who is trying to make a name for himself.

What may be very pleasing in the eyes of men may be suddenly turned into babel at the approach of God.

I Peter 2:6 - He that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

V. 8 - The execution of the counsels of God brought defeat to the counsel of men.

Their language was confounded. God, who when he made man, taught him to speak, and put words into his mouth - fit to express the concepts of his mind.

This was a great miracle and the proof of the power which God has put on the minds and the tongues of men.

This came of great judgement upon these builders. We derive from this that much was lost.

Did you know that we all suffer by it even until this day. In all the inconveniencies we sustained by the adversity of languages and all the pains and troubles - we are at to learn the languages. This is part of the rebellion of our ancestors at Babel. Because of this, we have misunderstanding with nations.

The project has been undertaken many times to get a universal language.

But this has been a vain attempt - because it is against divine sentence. And we lament the loss of the universal use of the Hebrew tongue. Which from this time was changed.

The confounding of tongues divided the children of men and scattered them abroad - so the gifts of tongues bestowed upon the Apostles - Acts 2 - contributed greatly to the gathering together the children of God who were scattered abroad. And uniting them in Christ.

The only oneness that men will ever know again in this world is by being united in Christ with one mind, one mouth - that they may glorify God. Rom. 15:6.

Their building was stopped - they left off to build a city. It was wisdom to leave this off and not go on fighting against God. They had wanted to cast off the rule of God and pierce the very Heavens. To acknowledge nothing above themselves. When God is shut out of the direction of human affairs - then there is no limit to which men will go.

### III. CONSEQUENCES - V. 9

I have already mentioned some of the consequences. From thence did the Lord scatter them abroad. The very thing they were laboring to prevent was the thing that came upon them. They departed in companies after their families and after their tongues and after their countries.

It resulted in the opposite effect which men has desired. He had a fear that he was trying to evade by an act of rebellion. But this happened.



It was God's work - the Lord scattered them and God acknowledged that he did this. And maybe sometimes God scatters people in churches - it is the Lord's doing. Those who are firmly in lead one with another. And not with God - he may scatter them. And God may take vengeance upon them. Never forget that one of the consequences resulted when they made the object themselves - in their attempt to secure by an improper means - that which God had forbidden.

Socialism today has made an effort to bring about this state of things - but the time is unright. And such systems for the improvement of mankind are just layed on fragments of truth.

Remember this, there is a unity possible for humanity but it is inward and not outward. It is something out of sight. It's purely spiritual. Christianity alone can secure this blessing for mankind. One faith, one love, one hope, one Lord.

This is exceedingly expressive - the name of Babel. Is the very name of foolish builders who had a foolish aim.

It is (a monument) to folly.

It speaks of men with (corrupt mind) and with corrupt concern. And it publishes their own folly.

This has been long endured. It has been continued to be known as Babel. From way back to the days of the flood. And it will be an emblem of shame throughout even the ages to come.

We should learn the sinfulness of ambition.

We should learn the folly of attempting to resist God.

We should never ignore God's power in carrying out his purposes.

We should never forget that it was the mercy of God that divided these nations.

And do not overlook, it will be the ability of God to re-gather the nations of the earth at the end of time.

*Nancy Reagan*

*Crooked Man*

*Deeked, ~~with~~ in*

*Said " — Cat*

*camp " — out*

*all lived together in a house -*

*cat was (how she started out)*

*Started out crooked.*

Recently I visited a woman about moving her membership to our church. She was very hard and bitter. She said that she and her husband had been to church very little since they were married. She explained that they had quit the church over the way they were treated in one of the organizations. She and her husband had been asked to teach in Sunday School and evidently did a good job of teaching, visiting, attending the Wednesday night meetings, and other meetings helpful in their work with Juniors. When time came for the election of new teachers, they were not asked to teach. I listened sympathetically and then asked, "Who was hurt most of all by their quitting the church?" She paused and with face red and eyes revealing bitterness she said, "I will tell you who was hurt most of all. Our son was hurt. He was a small boy at the time. He is now engaged in the war, if he is alive. And, if he is alive he is saying, that there is no God. He says that he hates preachers and churches. Yes, we hurt him most of all." PARENTP, YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO DO THAT TO YOUR CHILD. IF YOU MUST FIND FAULT WITH THE CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS. DO NOT EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS BEFORE YOUR CHILDREN. YOU WILL GET OVER YOUR ANGER BUT YOUR CHILDREN MAY NOT.