

Let's Start at the Beginning: Genesis 1-11

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Two Ways to Get Two Things That Everyone Wants – Genesis 10:1-12:3

1. Security:

"Come, let us build ourselves a city...lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

(Genesis 11:4)

"Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." (Genesis 12:1)

2. Significance:

"Come, let us build ourselves...a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves...." (Genesis 11:4)

"And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing." (Genesis 12:2)

For Further Thought and Discussion:

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?

Going Deeper:

2. Genesis 10:1-32 is often called the Table of Nations, because it provides a list of the nations and peoples that descended from Noah's sons (Shem, Ham, and Japheth). How is this list unique in the ancient world? Why would this list have been significant to the Israelites? What background information does chapter 10 provide regarding the incident at Babel (Genesis 11:1-9; see 10:5, 8-12, 18, 25)?
3. What does God command Noah and his descendants to do in Genesis 9:1? How does humanity defy this command at Babel (see Genesis 11:1, 4)? Why wouldn't the people want to be dispersed? How does God thwart their plans (see 11:8-9)?
4. Why do the people gathered at Babel want to build a tower (see 11:4)? How is this an act of defiance against God (see Genesis 3:22; see also Isaiah 14:1-3)? Why does God thwart their plans (v. 6)? What does, "*Babel*" mean (v. 9)? Why is this ironic? Why is God's judgment against the people of Babel ultimately an act of mercy (see also Genesis 12:1-3)?

Application:

5. What lessons about cultural diversity and harmony can we glean from the story of Babel? Why are human attempts to create unity doomed to failure? How does God begin to reverse the effects of the Tower of Babel at Pentecost (see Acts 2:5-11)? According to Acts 2, what is the ultimate basis for unity and harmony between the peoples and cultures of the world?
6. Compare and contrast the people of Babel and Abraham. How do the people of Babel pursue security? How might we pursue security in the same ways? By contrast, what must Abraham do to find security (see Genesis 11:27-12:3; see also Hebrews 11:8-10)?
7. Compare and contrast the people of Babel and Abraham. How do the people of Babel pursue significance? How might we pursue significance in the same ways? By contrast, how does Abraham find significance (see Genesis 12:1-3)?
8. What's one thing from this week's sermon that you can apply to your life?

Genesis 11:1-9, 27-32; 12:1-3

"Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ² And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ 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. ⁴ 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."⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶ 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. ⁷ Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech."⁸ So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:1-9)

"Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. ²⁸ Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. ²⁹ And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰ Now Sarai was barren; she had no child. ³¹ Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. ³² The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran. ^{ESV} Genesis 12:1: Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 11:27-12:3)