

Community Bible Church

The Book of Genesis

Chapter 11

*He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them. Psalm 2:4*

Four great events are recorded in **Genesis 1-11**: the creation of the universe, the fall of man, the flood, and the attempted construction of the tower of Babel. These chapters reveal that when mankind disobeys God, the Lord judges sin, and then, in His grace, makes a new beginning. Adam and Eve sinned, but God clothed them and promised to send the world a Redeemer. Cain killed Abel but God sent Seth to carry on the godly line. The Sethites intermarried with the godless Cainites, and God had to wipe the earth clean with a flood, but Noah and his family believed God's Word and were spared. After the flood, the descendants of Noah's eventually led to one of the most arrogant revolts against God recorded anywhere in Scripture, and that will be our study this week.

Chapter 11 can be outlined as follows and entitled "**The Pride and Arrogance of Man.**"

God Stops a Revolt 11:1-9

The Sin and Rebellion 11:1-4

The Sentence and Response 11:5-9

God Sustains a Family 11:10-26

God Starts a Nation 11:27-32

It is likely that the events of **chapter 11** occurs prior to those in **chapter 10**. The scattering and dispersion described in **chapter 10** may have been the response to, and consequence of, God's judgment of Babel in **chapter 11**. The chapter arrangement may have been more literary than chronological.

1. From **11:1**, what is the status of civilization in the early post diluvian (after the flood) days?
2. The sin and rebellion of man is described in **11:2-4**. As a backdrop to this narrative, turn back to **chapter 10** and write a brief biographical sketch of a man named **Nimrod** from **10:6-12**.

Much of the geography and many of the events of **chapters 10** and **11** take place in modern day Iraq, a middle eastern country through which the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers flow. In ancient times, this was the area of Mesopotamia as well as the Land of Shinar and location of Babylon and Babel.

3. From **11:2-4**, describe the types of rebellion, pride, arrogance and self-sufficiency that you see in the text. What are ways these same attitudes are displayed in society today. Has any of this changed since the time of Nimrod?

4. From **11:5-9**, what was God's dramatic response to these attitudes? Are there aspects of this narrative that are reminiscent of Satan's lie in **Genesis 3:5** that "*You will be like God.*"

5. The word **Babel** means literally the "*gate of the gods.*" However, the word sounds like the Hebrew word **balel** which means "confusion." The "*gate of the gods*" became the "*door to confusion.*" Instead of making a name for themselves, God confused the languages to humble and disperse the rebellious people. In later Biblical time, Babylon came to symbolize worldly pride, moral corruption and defiance against God. There is a vast difference between the ungodly world view that "***we will make our name great!***" and the godly pursuit that "***we will make God's name great!***" That is the theme of **chapter 11**. In what ways might this apply to your life today?

As you are aware, **Shem** was one of Noah's three sons. His genealogy is recorded in two places—**10:20-31** and **11:10-26**. However, the second list in **chapter 11** appears to have the specific purpose of identifying **Shem** in the lineage of **Abraham**. This would fulfill Noah's prophesy in **9:26-27** that God would use **Shem** as a blessing. It would serve as a bridge to the story of **Abraham** in **chapter 12**. It can also be noted from **10:21** and **11:16** that **Shem** was the ancestor of the **sons of Eber**, and it is likely that the name **Hebrew** was derived from the name **Eber**.

6. The last paragraph of **chapter 11** serves as an introduction to the next main section of **Genesis** in **chapters 12-50** regarding the Patriarchs. Read **11:27-32** and write a brief summary of this passage, as we prepare for next week's study of the life of Abraham.