

Genesis in Biblical Perspective: The Gospel of Christ from Genesis – From Babel to Babble

Genesis 11:1-11

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This is the word of God. Genesis 11:1-11.

1 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. 10 These are the generations of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood. 11 And Shem lived after he fathered Arpachshad 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

The grass withers. The flower fades. The Word of God abides forever. By His grace and mercy may this Word be preached for you.

Would you, in your mind, kind of transport back with me? I just got back from a Christian character discipleship tour, where we go to some historical sites and while we're standing there, we try to put our mind back in that context. What happened there and how did it happen? What did it look like? Can you do that just for a moment with me? Go all the way back to when this book is written. It is written by Moses, moved by the Holy Spirit, while the people of God, God's covenant people Israel, have come out of Egypt, they are being taken into the

Promised Land. In the time from their exodus to the time that they arrive, they are under the discipline of the Lord in the wilderness. While there, God gives His Word, and the first five books of the Bible are given to us: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In that giving of the Word of God, the very first thing that God makes clear is that the heavens and the earth are not self-developing, not self-sustaining, not self-created but on the contrary, God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and man was made in His image, male and female.

Then, the Book of Genesis has ten books. It's like one book with ten volumes, or one work with ten books within it. Each book is introduced by the phrase "These are the generations of..." The first book is given in Genesis 2:4. That first book says, "These are the generations of the earth and heaven." What comes out of the earth and heaven? It is man, male and female. What comes out of the earth and heaven? It is a garden. What comes out of the earth and the heavens? It is a marriage. What comes out of the earth and the heavens? Sin originates, and God brings His message of grace.

Then you have a second book, and that second book is, in fact, beginning in Genesis 5:1. It is the book of the generations of Adam. What happens in the line of Adam, through his three sons? First, there is Cain, then, Abel. Cain slew Abel. Then Seth, the Godly line, replaces the line of Abel. Then two kingdoms begin to develop: the kingdoms of this world through the line of Cain in rebellion against God, and then the Kingdom of our God begin to manifest itself in the line of Seth. But even then, both lines devolve into a death spiral, and God sees that man is evil only, always, continually.

So then comes a third book, and the third book is the book of Noah, and how God brings grace to Noah and then uses Noah and his family as He takes the world and He cleanses it, and as He de-creates the world. Then Noah and the Ark become a type of God's redemption in Jesus Christ. Noah is deposited into this refurbished heavens and earth to fill it and to move forward. So constantly, there's this message that's there. I have to stop there to tell you, of course, the Ark is glorious, but look to that which the Ark pointed to, Jesus Christ. If you're in Christ one day when God brings His judgment and rolls up the heavens and the earth, He will deposit you in the new heavens and the new earth for all of eternity. So now, here is Noah and his three sons and their families.

Here is the fourth book. It begins in Genesis 10:1. In Genesis 10:1, we have the very statement of what happens to the sons of Noah, Ham, and Japheth. Why is it important to go back into context? It is because of what Israel is. Israel is there because He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel is there because He says, "I am the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." God has rescued them from 430 years of slavery and bondage, and He is bringing them out. He is bringing them to what He had promised, the Promised Land. But on the way, He gives His Word, He reveals who He is, He reveals what He's done.

Right here in this fourth book, this book of the sons of Noah, this book of God's gracious work among the sons of Noah, He is telling them something unmistakably. "I am not just your God; I am the God of all creation. I am the sovereign God of all the nations of the earth."

In the last study of Genesis 10, we saw how God revealed to us how He placed the nations through Japheth, then Ham, then Shem and then around all of the earth. It's called the Table of the Nations. Seventy nations come forth from these three lines. As Paul says in the Book of Acts 17, "God has made all of humanity from one man, one race, made in the image of God, and He has put them in nations, and He has determined their epics, their times, their boundaries, and He has placed them throughout all of the earth. He has determined their very existence and deployed them throughout all of the earth." The nations are not there by social evolution or geographical inclination. On the contrary, while God uses many means, the nations are there because God is the Builder of nations, and God has put the nations all over the earth, and God is the Lord of the nations.

So with Shem and Ham and Japheth I just want to refer you to this one phrase that is given time after time after time in Genesis 10. It says, "The sons of Japheth were put out." Remember many of you reading this are from the line of Japheth. Japheth's sons went to the outer part, and so it goes out to the maritime peoples. The sons of Japheth go to North Turkey, Russia, Northern Europe, and there, they begin to establish. He says this, "The sons of Japheth went forth, their clans, their language, and their lands, to have their nations." In that, God is giving us an insight into nation- building. There are a lot of phrases out today about nation-building. God is a nation- builder. God built nations. How does He build nations? A nation has to have a language. Nations have to have, at its core, the family and the extended family. Five times He says that in Genesis 10 that, "The nation must have the family." The sacred structure of creation must be at the core of every nation.

If I may just stop here for a moment, it's not the purpose of the sermon, but it's something that cannot be walked by. We are in the midst of an onslaught, a deconstruction of the family, a redefining of family, through all methods of redefining and restating the family, at our peril. Whenever the family is removed from the structure of a society, a nation, it will soon wither away. It will soon be on the trash heap of history, a language, a land, and the family. Here is the divine nation-building that takes place in the text.

Now, after Genesis 10 is Genesis 11 and our chronological flow stops. It comes to a screeching halt. Stop right here. In Genesis 11, he goes back into Genesis 10, at a particular time in Genesis 10. How did these nations get to their lands and get their languages? This family speaks a language. How did all these languages develop? How did they get to the lands? How did they get to be nations? How did that happen? The clue had been given to us in Genesis 10.

Let's look at Genesis 10, just for a moment. The clue is found in Genesis 10:25. "To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided." When was the earth divided into the nations? When was the earth divided into the nations in their own lands with their own language? When that happened, the description of when that happened is now given to you in Genesis 11. So let's look at Genesis 11. In Genesis 11, we find the unfolding of this moment in the life of Peleg, the son of Eber. This is what happened. Genesis 11:1-2 says "1 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." God's command was not to migrate. God's command was to emigrate. God's command was not to migrate to one place together. God's command was to emigrate and fill the earth. Here, we are told that the people begin to move east and instead of emigrate to fill the earth, they migrated to one place on the earth, the plain of Shinar which would've been Old Babylon and there, they began to establish a culture.

Look at the next part. What begins to happen at that place? Genesis 11:3-4 says 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." So instead of being dispersed, they said, "No, we want to be together." Now, you have this amazing advancement in technology, in how to develop the building materials. You have engineering, manufacturing, and building materials being put together. You have the development of a way to make the bricks hold together. Here in this early history of humanity is this revelation of increasing, growing technology that is then used to build.

It's not only used to build, it's used to build a city. Let's build a city for ourselves, and this city will be used so that we will gather here, instead of migrate there, lest we be dispersed throughout the earth. Genesis 11:5-6 says 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. So now, we find that they're not only building the city and advanced in technology, but they're building a city for themselves. They have built a city that they would not be dispersed and that they could make a name for themselves.

Then it says that they not only built a city, they built a ziggurat, a tower. Those are interesting things. You will find them not only referred to here, but you can find them in archeology. The ziggurat was an early tower that was built with a large base, and it would begin to ascend and narrow. It always had a staircase. Its very existence was man will ascend to heaven. We will ascend to heaven by our industry, by our initiative, by our endeavor. The ziggurat was religious. The

ziggurat was idolatry. The ziggurat was a statement of man of his ability to ascend into heaven.

God comes down. That's God telling us in good, human language that God never moves without affirming truth. God comes down. He investigates and diagnoses the issue. Man is in rebellion against God. The sin nature that had been so manifested before the flood, that had been manifested after the flood with the sin of Ham in ridiculing his father and his drunkenness, that that sin is beginning to multiply again, and that man is now taking those things which are good, those things which are there in us because we're made in the image of God, but instead of the glory of God being there, it is the glory of man.

Now, man is proposing that he be the center of all existence, and God says "Let's go down. Let us" – there's that wonderful accommodation of the insight of the doctrine of the trinity, the divine council of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. "Let us go down and see. Let us go down and confuse." Man is taking something – language, skills, engineering, building, and is now in utter resistance and rebellion against God. Man would propose to be like God. God says, "Left unchecked, man will continue to do what he proposes of sin." Now, this isn't saying that man can do anything. This is saying that in his proposal to rebel against God, if unchecked by the intervention of God, man, in his sin nature, will always take himself, his city, his culture, his family, into a death spiral if left unchecked. And so God then says, "Let us confuse their language." And so then you have God's intervention in Genesis 11:7-9;

7 Come, let us go down there and 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.

So the language is changed. The people cannot communicate. As soon as they can't communicate, all of their endeavors stop. The city halts, the tower halts, the people leave, and they're dispersed throughout all of the world.

This is a unique historical and supernatural event, in which the sovereign God of all the nations is now letting you know in Genesis 11 how Genesis 10 was fulfilled. How did they get to their lands? How did they get to their lands for a nation? How did the families move out and how did they get their own languages? So this flashback in Genesis 11, in the days of Peleg, shows you how God divided them throughout all of the earth. What is it being declared? What is it God is saying? The messages are coming through very loudly, very clearly. There are three, though, very unmistakable declarations of the Almighty. I want to mention them and then go back and walk through them with you. One clear statement that the Almighty is giving is the profile of sin and its

heinousness. In this text, He's opening the door to let us see the profile and heart of sin. Secondly, He is allowing us to see His everlasting, ever-present graciousness, even toward rebellious men and women. The third thing that He is showing is, again, affirming His sovereignty over humanity, over the nations, even over the sin of men against Him, to accomplish His purpose.

Let's walk our way back through those. Here's the first one. Here, this text opens the door so that we can look in and see sin. This is a very difficult thing for me to address, because we live in an age today where the church, in its effort to be acceptable, relevant and making an impact, says, "No, we can't talk about sin." The fact of the matter is, you can't talk about the Gospel if you don't talk about sin, because the Gospel is good news and you don't know the good news 'til you know the bad news. Here, God is allowing us, in His Word, and allowing His people to see the heinousness of sin. Now, one way that He does it is He shows us, again, just the stark definition of sin. What is the definition of sin? Sin is the transgression of or the want of conformity unto the Law of God, the Word of God, the Will of God. God has given an order to all of humanity.

On the plains of Shinar, they said, "No, God, we will not fulfill Your command. We will not fill Your order. We will congregate. We will not disperse." That was the order. Let me show you what I mean. Look in Genesis 9, where, after the flood, God has deposited Noah and his family. God blessed them for what purpose? Genesis 9:1 says "And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." Not one spot of the earth. Fill the earth. Genesis 9:7 says "And you, be fruitful and multiply, teem (fill up, overflow) on the earth and multiply in it." So what you have in Genesis 11 is very clear – we will not fill the earth. We will fill this spot on the earth. We will stay right here, we will build a city, and we will use that city to assemble us here, rather than to disassemble throughout all of the earth.

What is sin? It is the transgression of God's Word, but more than that. You're also given the opportunity to see the heinousness of sin and its pollution. Heinous is not a word we use much. Let me just say it means horrible. It is just the horribleness of sin, the sinfulness of sin, the stench of sin. You not only see it in its stark definition at work. God's Word is abandoned and instead of obeying God's Word, there's a transgression of God's Word, and instead of conforming to God's Word, there is the disconnecting from God's Word. Instead of being obedient, there's disobedience and resistance and rebellion. Man is guilty in sin of cosmic treason against the Almighty. But it goes further than that. It shows you the pollution of sin. There is no problem with having a city. There is no problem in technology. Technology is not sin. Bricks are not sin. Bitumen for mortar is not sin. Building a city is not sin. We know it's not a sin because there is a city whose builder and maker is God, and God commanded Jerusalem to be there. It is not city that's sin. It is not the building blocks that are sin. It's not even the fact of a tower with its blocks that are sin.

When man sins, it pollutes even the good things, or the things that could be done well. Sin pollutes. I like the illustration we use in Evangelism Explosion. You make an omelet. You have five eggs to make an omelet. You're hungry that day. One of the eggs is rotten. You ever been around a rotten egg? You ever smelled a rotten egg? You crack four eggs, you put it in there. You crack the fifth one, and it's rotten, and you begin to smell it, but "I have to have five eggs. I don't have anymore." So you take the one rotten egg and put it in the four good eggs. What happens to the four good eggs? It's ruined. Sin pollutes. Sin does not isolate itself. It pollutes everything it touches. It polluted the technology, which was not sinful in and of itself, the building, which was not sinful in and of itself, the city, which is not sinful in and of itself. Even the fact of gathering together is not sinful. God tells us to do what? Don't forsake what? Don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together. But when those things are done in sin, they're polluted by the sin.

More than that, let's look at the heart of sin. What is the heart of sin? It is when we say, we will build a city for ourselves, the city of man, in rebellion against God, and the city of God being spurned. We will build a city for ourselves. We will build a tower for ourselves, and we will ascend to heaven. Here's the key. We will make a name for ourselves. We will make a name for ourselves with this tower, with our building, with this city. So the glory of God is shed like an old coat, and the glory of man is embraced in rebellion against the glory of God. So that man now says, "I will do this for my own glory. I will make a name for myself. Instead of dispersing at God's command and taking His glory to all the earth, we'll go to this one spot on the earth and we'll raise a standard, but the standard is glory to us. The standard is we will exalt ourselves. The standard is we'll make a name for ourselves right here."

A second unmistakable message though in the face of all of this, is the heinousness of sin is the continued, almost unfathomable, unending, glorious, overflowing expressions of God's grace continually. God comes down. God gets the facts. God sees what man is doing. When God could have brought a judgment of annihilation, when God could have brought a judgment of catastrophe because of the sinfulness of man, He did not. He brought a judgment of mercy. He kept man from being as sinful as he would be. He could have brought a judgment of annihilation, of eternal judgment, because of the sinfulness of man against him. The wages of sin is death. But He did not. On the contrary, He comes down and He says, "Here is what man proposes to do in rebellion. If he's left alone and unchecked, he will continue to do it. Now, man proposes to be rebellious. Let's stop him. Let's restrain him."

This is what we call the doctrine of common grace, where God restrains, not simply His people that He changes with redeeming grace, but all of humanity, where He restrains man from being as sinful as he would be if left alone. So God doesn't leave him alone. He confuses his language, so that he cannot congregate; he has to disperse. He cannot continue this building project of

rebellion against God, and he cannot continue to take counsel among themselves, to make a name for themselves in opposition to God. God restrains them with a judgment of mercy, when it could've been a judgment of annihilation.

Thirdly, God is sovereign, and God's Will, will be done. Many times, I have heard sermons and I remember specifically one sermon. I was away on a vacation and we invited a young man to come and preach because of our relationship with their mission agency. I called back to the office to say, "Did he turn in his title, and is he going to preach on missions?" She said, "Yes, he is going to preach on missions, and he turned in his title." I said, "Well, what was the title?" And the title was, "Five things God can't do."

I said, "Oh, no. That means when I get back, I've got at least four sermons, because there's only one thing God can't do. God can't quit being God. That's it." Of course, I knew where the sermon would go. "If you don't give to missions, God's not going to get the mission done. If you don't do this, God can't do that."

If you, individually, or me, personally, abandon the call of grace in my life to obedience, or if we, as a church, abandon God's call to us, God will get His purposes done. Believe me. We'll miss out on the blessing of being involved. God will not be stopped in the heavens or upon the earth by man's obedience or disobedience. God is sovereign, and He will accomplish His purposes through His people, in spite of His people, around His people, and over His people. God's purposes will go through our obedience. God's purposes will not be stopped by our disobedience. God will work with us, He'll work through us, He'll work over us, and He'll work around us. When the world rises up to rebel against God, God will still get His purposes done. A man plans his way, but God directs his steps (Proverbs 16:9). That's a fact. God's purposes will be done.

I received a letter the other day saying, "Would you give to our organization?" Did you know that we have kicked God out of our schools? Now, I am very concerned about the public school system. I am very grateful for a lot of the believers that are in it, but I'm very concerned for the public system. I want to be very clear about it. We don't kick God out of anything. You never kick God out of anything. Now, God may not bless something because of our disobedience. God may withdraw His hand because of it. But man does not kick God out of anything. Our obedience is not necessary for God to get His work done. Our obedience is our privilege to participate in God's work. Our disobedience will not stop the hand of God. God's hand will still go forward to another church, another family, another preacher, another person.

God will get His purposes done. What was His purpose, according to Genesis 9? It was to fill the earth. The people said, "No, we're going to go to one spot on the earth." God says, "No, fill the earth for My glory." "No, we're going to go to one spot on the earth for our glory." So what happens? God sovereignly intervenes, in a unique supernatural event. What's the result? Look with me in Genesis 11.

What's the end result of all of this? In Genesis 11, the end result becomes very clear. Their purpose is "We're not going to do what God says." Genesis 11:4 says 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." They said, "We're going to stop this. We're not going to be dispersed."

God intervenes. God confuses the languages. Now you're going to get nations with lands and their own language and their own place. And, therefore, Genesis 11:8-9 says 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 (meaning confusion), 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. God still gets His purposes done and accomplished.

I'd like to close with a couple of thoughts and some practical life takeaways. In fact, I want to give you three of them, very briefly. Here's the first one. The first one is this. Now that we know that God's purposes will be established and that sin will never triumph and it's from sin that we've been redeemed, my heart cries out to me, "Harry, go after the heart of sin in your life. Declare war on it. Go after the heart of sin. And, Harry, what is the heart of sin in your life? It's me. Make a name for myself. Build a city for myself." I like the way one Baptist preacher said it very simply. He said, "You can't have the word "sin" or the fact of sin without the middle letter, I." What I need to do every day of my life is I need to die to myself, so that it's no longer I who lives, but Christ that lives in me.

I have got to say "no" to me, and I must resist the continual attempt, with a culture that is absolutely absorbed with self. Look at the titles of our magazines: Me, We, Self. It's amazing. We're absolutely absorbed with ourselves. But I cannot be conformed to that and turn the Gospel into something that exalts self. What the Gospel does is enable me to exalt Christ and die to myself, so that it is no longer I who live, but Christ that lives in me. How do I die to myself? I die to myself by emptying my heart of myself and filling my heart with Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters, know Him. To know Him is to love Him, and to love Him will destroy the world's definition of self-exaltation.

When you love Him, you and I will then flee to the mantra of John the Baptist. Here is greatness. Jesus Himself said, "The greatest man that has ever lived is John the Baptist. No man has been born among women, was greater." What was the mantra, the life, the motto, the directive that John the Baptist embraced? You know it as well as I do. He must increase. I must decrease. For Him to increase, I need to what? I need to decrease. For me to decrease, I've got a purpose. I want Him to increase. I want to empty myself and fill my heart. I want to empty my heart, just grab it at the roots and pull me out of it and put Jesus Christ in it. It has to be done every day. If we don't, even the good things get polluted.

We start building our families for ourselves, for our name. We build houses for our name. We raise our children for our name. We have a church for our name. We preach sermons for our name. Whenever those good things of an effective church, families that are honored, children that are raised, whenever those good things become motivated for me, my name and my exaltation, then those good things are immediately polluted and become destructive in the lives of others around me, including my own family and my own church. God has called me to be a pastor, but it's not for my name. God's called us to be a church, but it's not for our name. It's for the name of Christ, that He alone would be seen and loved and embraced and preeminent and prominent. Christ in us, the hope of glory.

The second thing that I would just ask you very practically to consider is not only to grab the heart of sin and pull it out, but secondly, do realize no matter what it looks like to you, that the kingdoms of this world will all rise and fall. It is only the Kingdom of God that will stand. Babel's a wonderful example for you. Here's Old Babylon rising up. Look at this. Can't you imagine living there? Look at this tower. Look at our technology. Look at our engineers. Look how high we're going. Look at our city. Look at all the people that are going here. Now, Babylon, Old Babylon's just a trash heap. In fact, that's what history is.

One time when I went to Israel, I had the privilege to go with an archeologist, and the archeologist took me to what I thought was just a basic hill, and he said, "No, Harry, that's not a hill. That's a till." I said, "Well, how do you know a till from a hill?" He said,

"Well, a hill's a hill. A till's a till." I said, "Well, explain to me what a till is." He said, "Here's what a till is. A till is a manmade hill, in that God has brought the sands of time upon the layers of civilization and when we start at the top, we just dig our way down." He actually took me to a till that looked like a hill, but it was a till. When he showed me around the side where the archeologist had worked, there were 14 civilizations. Basically, what archeology is, is sorting through the trash. If Jesus Christ tarries, very likely, this country will be on a trash heap, if it continues on this current existence.

Do you know why this country's been blessed? It is because the Kingdom of God has been welcome in this kingdom. When it is no longer welcome, then this country stands on the verge of judgment. "This country's been great," as Tolstoy said, "because her churches are great. Her churches are great because this country welcomed them." The country is not a church, it's a country. It's a government. But it's welcomed the church, and it has honored her work and stayed out of her way, and as long as it does that, then you'll see God's hand of blessing. What we need to see today is God's hand of blessing, again, but where will it come from? Believe me, brothers and sisters. I labor for good legislation. I want it. I labor for Christian politicians. I will labor for them, if they know what they're doing and they're doing what they're doing well. But no culture has ever been changed from politics to the people. Politics has always been downstream.

It's always happened when the people of God, in truth and love, live the truth with love, and share and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I long for that in this nation, because I don't want this nation on the trash heap. I want it to have even greater days. I want her sins to be cured, and I want them repented of. But I know that judgment must begin with the household of God. Not with the world, but with us. I know that out there is history. History is a till of the layers of civilizations that once, people stood in awe of. Now, they're on the trash heap. But there is a Kingdom that is unshakable. There is a City who's Builder and Maker is God. How I desperately want you in that City and in that Kingdom, through the King who is also the Savior of sinners.

Here's a final thought. The blessing of Christianity comes when the people of God avoid the sins of Genesis 11. Did you know that in every one of us is a tendency to be like the people of Babel? God places us. God gives us His Word. God gives us His blessings and the tendency is to make it all about us. It's constantly there. I want to show you one instance in Acts 2. The reversal of Genesis 11 is in Acts 2. Jesus had said, "Make disciples" – of what? Make disciples of all the nations." That's what Jesus said to do. So to enable that, He gives the Holy Spirit, and when He gives the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of the prophecies of God's Word, He also affirms His purposes to reach the nations in the very way He gives the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:5-12 says 5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound (the sound of the giving of the Holy Spirit) the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." 12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

I'll tell you what it means. It means the Holy Spirit has come for the Gospel to go to the nations, and the Holy Spirit is given in such a way that you know it's to go to the nations. What you've got in Acts 2 is a reversal of Genesis 11. Babel is reversed and now, with the Gospel, the nations are reached in their language, and that's what God calls us to do. So after that tremendous blessing, the next thing that the church of Jerusalem did was say, "Let's go to the nations." Right? Wrong. They stayed in Jerusalem for seven chapters. They stayed with the blessings of gathering and refused to disperse to the nations. But God is sovereign, remember? God came down, just like He did at Babel.

Now let's look at Acts 8. Stephen is killed. Saul approves it. Acts 8:1 says "And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." God says, "You won't go? I'll send you." Acts 8:4 says "Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word." Where? In Samaria and around the world. Brothers and sisters, one of the greatest blessings of Christianity is to be together. I love the Lord's Day. I love to be with God's people. I love fellowship. God doesn't call us to give up gathering but we don't gather for our name, we gather for His name and we don't gather to stay here, we gather to go there. I am not just speaking about missions now, I am speaking about scattering to your workplace, to your athletic teams, to your classrooms, to go there. Right now, the church is absolutely bent on thinking that what we'll do is take gathering, lay off true worship, lay off discipleship, and we'll ask the world to come in when we gather. No. It won't happen.

I'm glad for those moments when people that don't know the Lord are brought with God's people, but if we are going to touch this world, it won't be through politics, ultimately. It won't be through economics. It'll be through the Gospel of the Kingdom and for the glory of God and the way that will happen are God's people going out there. Come worship the Lord. Go to all the nations. And the nations begin as soon as you walk out this door, your home, your family, your office. Take the Name of the Lord. Lord, we will not build something here for our name. We will gather and we will enjoy Your name when we gather, and then we will take that name to all the earth, beginning in that parking lot. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for the time we could be together. Thank You for the privilege to look into this, Your Word. O Father, how I thank You for its truth, its glory, its majesty. How I thank You for revealing, at least in my heart, how quickly I would move against Your Word for my name's sake instead of with Your Word for Your name's sake. Thank You for Your graciousness and Your kindness, not only to all the people, but to us, in that You don't bring judgments of annihilation, but You have been so gracious to bring judgments of mercy to correct us. Lord, we would not be as those who would congregate for their name; we would be those who would gather to praise Your name, and then scatter with Your name to all the nations. Looking for that glorious day when, from all the nations, tribes, and languages, You will finally gather all Your people together in a new heavens and a new earth, and we will praise You then, even as we ask You to allow us to praise You now, that Thy name would be glorious, and Jesus shall reign throughout all of the nations. Through this glorious Gospel of grace, I pray in His Name. Amen.

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