

Genesis 047

Blessed Obstacles

Genesis 11:6-7

August 15, 2021

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All right. Well, good morning everybody. Let's take our Bibles and open them to Genesis 11:6. The title of our message this morning is "Blessed Obstacles." Probably one of the worst things that God can do to somebody is to give them exactly what they want. Here in Genesis 11:6, we see a bunch of people wanting something very badly, and yet God disrupted their project and did not give them what they wanted.

We are continuing on here with our verse-by-verse study through the Book of Genesis. The first part of the book features four events. Number I—Creation, Genesis 1 and 2—we get a clear description of what the world was like before sin entered the picture. Number II is the Fall (Genesis 3-5). What went wrong?

I love the way the Bible is set up. It does not just dwell on the problem. God moves very fast into the solution, and you do not have to get far into the Bible to see the solution. The solution is a coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. You see that as early as Genesis 3:15, and the rest of the Bible, the Book of Genesis included, is unpacking that promise. In fact, the Book of Genesis largely is going to trace that promise, as does the bulk of the Old Testament, for that matter.

Then we move to our third major event, which is the Flood (we studied that)—Genesis 6-9. Then the fourth event is National Dispersion—Genesis 10-11. That is the section we find ourselves in today. That is the section we have been giving ourselves to the last few Sundays, and we will continue to do so.

The section begins with a Table of Nations. Genesis 10 is a record of where Noah's descendants settled after the Flood—descendants of Ham, descendants of Shem, and descendants of Japheth. From these three sons and their respective wives, the earth was repopulated after the Flood.

But at the same time, Genesis 10 leaves us with a lot of unanswered questions. Where did these nations come from? Why are they dispersed? What does it mean when it says that in the days of Peleg the earth was divided (Genesis 10:25). How did Nimrod, the builder of an empire in Mesopotamia, get pushed up north into Assyria? We have all of these questions when we leave Genesis 10.

Fortunately, we have an answer in Genesis 11. The Tower of Babel story is the answer to those questions. Genesis 11:1-9 is the cause. Genesis 10 is the results. So it is rather tricky. We expect Genesis 10 and Genesis 11 to be in exact order, and they are

not. We believe that Genesis 11 occurred first, and the results are recorded in Genesis 10.

We have seen, as we look at an outline of the Tower of Babel, Genesis 11:1-9, the former world, Genesis 11:1-2—what was the world like before God confounded the language? You see Genesis 11:3-4, the rebellion, how humanity did exactly the opposite of what God said. God said, 'Spread out,' and they said, 'No. After the Flood, we are going to come together and build a tower to make a name for ourselves.'

Then last time we saw, in Genesis 11:5, God's condescension. God actually has to come down to see what these people are doing. God takes a look at their little sandcastle that they were so proud of. (More on that a little bit later.) We come today to Genesis 11:6, and Genesis 11:6 records God's observations. When God comes down to see what the builders were constructing, He makes three observations. Number one was their universality, number two was their beginning, and number three was their potential. God comments on all three.

We pick it up here with Genesis 11:6, which says,

"The LORD said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them'" (Genesis 11:6).

The first observation that God makes at this project, which was in rebellion against Him, is the fact that they are universal—they are connected. The reason that they are connected or bound together is that they have (it says it right there in Genesis 11:6) one language. They are of one nation. That in and of itself is going to create two problems. The first problem is described in Genesis 11:6b, and the second problem is described in Genesis 11:6c. The first problem with having only one language and one nation over the face of the earth is the fact that it is the beginning of a major problem.

When you look very carefully at Genesis 11:6, it says,

"...And this is what they began to do,..." (Genesis 11:6)

In other words, more steps of rebellion are going to quickly follow this one. This step that they are taking, this collective rebellion against God, is just the beginning of the problem.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum, in his Genesis commentary, says this:

"The first problem was: This is what they begin to do, meaning this is only the first act of rebellion in this one place; if left to themselves, more acts will follow in this one place."¹

So we are going to see here that God does not give these people what they wanted, because this is just the beginning of rebellion, and the rebellion that is taking place here is going to be replicated. So God takes active steps to put an obstacle, or a hindrance, on these people.

The third observation that God makes (the most important), is of the builders' potential. Here it is not speaking of their potential for good. It is speaking of their potential for wickedness. You will notice that at the end of Genesis 11:6 it says,

"...now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them"
(Genesis 11:6).

A lot of people read that and they say, "Well, this is talking about their potential to do good," but that is not what your Bible teaches. This is not speaking of their potential for good. This is speaking of their potential for wickedness. If only one government exists on Planet Earth, and that government falls into the wrong hands, then man's potential for wickedness is unprecedented. Why does God say this? He says this because he understands human nature.

Modern psychology and humanism may not understand human nature, but God understands it very well. He understands what people are capable of if there is no restraint on their sin nature. After all, it was God who stated in Genesis 8:21, immediately after the Flood,

"...the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth;..." (Genesis 8:21).

Jeremiah 17:9 makes a tremendous statement concerning man's potential for evil. Jeremiah says,

*"The heart is more deceitful than all else
And is desperately sick;
Who can understand it?"* (Jeremiah 17:9).

That is the assessment of God as He looks at fallen humanity. We are by nature sick because of a sin nature that we have inherited from Adam. A lot of people have this idea that, 'Well, my sin makes me a sinner,' and that is not true. You were a sinner

¹ Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, 244.

before you committed a single sin, as was I. I am not a sinner because I sin. Rather, I sin because I am already a sinner. I am just fulfilling my job description.

It is interesting that when you have small children—and do not get too hard on your small children, because we were the same way when we were their age—our parents never had to sit us down and say, "Okay, we are going to give you a lesson today on self-centeredness. Here is how you throw a tantrum. Ready? Here is how you do it, because we got to teach you how to do it."

My parents never had to teach me how to hoard my toys. Rather, they had to teach me the exact opposite. They had to teach me how to share with other people, because I did not want to share. I still do not want to share, to a very large extent. They had to teach me how to control my emotions because my emotions were out of control. I am convinced that most kids today, if they could act out what they want to do, would probably qualify as serial killers. The only reason the serial killing does not happen is that you are a little bit bigger than they are and a little bit stronger than they are.

The goal of parenting is always to take kids and to teach them to go counter to their sin nature, because the sin nature is natural to all of us. That is what Jeremiah 17:9 says. Jesus spoke of this in Mark 7:20-23:

"... 'That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within,...' " (Mark 7:20-21).

That is our sin nature. That is our hearts at work.

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23).

We cannot be like Flip Wilson who says, "The devil made me do it." We are like this in our natural sin nature, without Satan's influence on us at all. Of course, Satan takes advantage of our sin nature. He knows where we are weak and he puts temptations in front of us. But the truth of the matter is that all of us are like this inherently, innately, because of a nature that we have inherited, which is hostile to God.

Now, I hope you believe that this is true, because if you do not believe this is true, you will not see your need for Jesus Christ. You will not see your need for an internal transformation through the spiritual birth that only God can provide. The whole message of being born spiritually, having your sins cleansed, and having Jesus via the Holy Spirit living inside of us—that whole message will make no sense to you, if you do not accept what the Bible teaches concerning the reality of the sin nature.

If you believe this, it forms (in a nanosecond) your very political philosophy. Why is that? Because, as Lord Acton said, "All power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." This is why God, in Genesis 11:6, confounds the language so that the builders at the Tower of Babel could not cooperate with each other. Essentially what they were building was a one-world government, a new world order.

Now, a one-world government works fine if the person orchestrating it does not have a sin nature. Of course, that is what Jesus Christ will orchestrate one day in the thousand-year reign of Christ. That is the only new world order I want to be part of, because He will be unrestrained by a sin nature. But before that time in history comes, if there is only one government on the face of the earth and that government falls into the wrong hands, or maybe into someone's hands who seems very noble and sincere at first, eventually what happens is that position of absolute power will absolutely corrupt them, and they will end up abusing their position of power. Then the world itself will move very quickly into tyranny.

So because of this reality of the sin nature, those running the government are corrupted by the exact sin nature that others who are under the influence of a government are corrupted by. God, at the beginning of human history, made a decision, given man's corruptibility, to decentralize power. He dispersed power here in Genesis 11. And God, as we will see, did that by creating, from one language, multiple languages.

There were now multiple languages on the face of the earth. The builders could not cooperate with each other, and everybody went into their own similar linguistic speaking group, and individual nations (plural) developed in the place of world government. As you go through the Bible, what you will discover is that ever since the Tower of Babel, God's order of things in our fallen world is through individual nations, having political power in a decentralized sense.

God does not want political power coalesced into one person's hands, so He decentralized political power. This is the origin of the beginning of the nation-state, which is something that God Himself is creating right here in Genesis 11. What is happening here in Genesis 11 is assumed or presupposed in the rest of the Bible.

For example, in Deuteronomy 32:8, it says,

*"When the Most High gave the nations [plural] their inheritance,
When He separated the sons of man,
He set the boundaries..." (Deuteronomy 32:8).*

Now, don't boundaries kind of sound like borders? Hello?

*"...He set the boundaries of the people
According to the number of the sons of Israel" (Deuteronomy 32:8).*

God says, 'I want nations. I want borders. I want boundaries. I do not want political power coalesced into a single person like Nimrod, because if political power is coalesced into a single person, like Nimrod, who has a corrupted nature, it will not be long until he abuses that power, since power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Then the government of the earth will move very quickly into tyranny.'

Paul the Apostle, in his speech on Mars Hill in Acts 17:26, says,

"and He made from one man [Adam], every nation of mankind, to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation," (Acts 17:26).

There is that word again that sounds like "borders."

What did God do here in Genesis 11? He created a check and balance system. As long as the different nations are fighting with each other, it is impossible for one person to get control over the entire planet. That is not a bad thing. God says that is a good thing because the last thing you want is for power to be coalesced into a single person, because they have a corrupted nature, whether they graduated from Harvard Law School or not. Human nature is human nature. If you give a human being too much power, ultimately what that human being will do (other than Jesus Christ Himself), is abuse his position of power.

Now, if you can understand this, you can understand the longevity of the United States of America. A lot of people are very upset over the expression "American exceptionalism." They think when you use the expression "American exceptionalism," then somehow you are teaching racial superiority, or racial supremacy, or something of that nature.

Let me tell you what "American exceptionalism" actually means. "Exceptional" means outside of the norm, outside of the rule, an exception to what is normal. The fact of the matter is that we here in the United States of America are living under the exact same system that was handed to us back in the eighteenth century. That is an abnormality.

Most nations of the earth, like France, for example, have had multiple revolutions and multiple constitutions during the same amount of time (ca. two hundred years). In the United States we are living under the exact same system that we were started under. That does not necessarily make America racially superior. What it means is that what we are experiencing in the United States is the exception to the rule. Most countries of the world know nothing of this because America is unique.

Why is it that America is exceptional in this regard? Because when our Founding Fathers put together our system of government, whether it was the Declaration of Independence, America's birth certificate; or, later on, our Constitution; they understood very well what the Bible teaches about human nature.

In fact, the Bible was the source that our Founding Fathers quoted from most frequently. According to this study by Donald Lutz in a book called, "The Origins of American Constitutionalism," thirty-four percent of their original citations came from the Bible and stories like Genesis 11:1-9.² The next source that the Founding Fathers quoted from most, a much smaller source, was Baron Montesquieu, and then William Blackstone. Then, last on the list, just three percent of their quotes, was John Locke. When you get into the background of Montesquieu and Blackstone and Locke, what you will discover is that those men were steeped in the Bible also.

This was the beginning of American exceptionalism. This was the beginning of American constitutionalism. This is why the American system works and has stood the test of time, whereas other nations have not stood the test of time. America was started on the right foundation, having a biblical view of human nature. And this is why America's Founding Fathers, no doubt having looked at historical accounts like the Tower of Babel, said, 'The last thing we need to do in this country is coalesce political power into a king. We need to decentralize power.'

You see this in *The Federalist Papers*. *The Federalist Papers* were written to the citizens of New York, explaining to them why they should accept and adopt the American Constitution when it was being formed. You will notice what James Madison, the "father of our Constitution," says in "Federalist No. 51":

"...what is government but the greatest of all reflections on human nature?"³

See, if you understand human nature, you can understand the wisdom of the American system. If you understand human nature, you will understand exactly what God is doing here by decentralizing political power away from global government into nations. If you do not understand human nature, you do not understand human depravity—you do not understand that power corrupts and that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Then America will make no sense to you, and the Tower of Babel story will make no sense to you either.

Madison says,

"But what is government but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels [and they are not], no government would be necessary."⁴

² Donald S. Lutz, *The Origins of American Constitutionalism*, 141.

³ Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, trans. Clinton Rossiter, 322.

⁴ Ibid.

See, if Nimrod had some sort of perfect nature, what was the problem in him wielding global power? But the problem was that he had a sin nature.

"If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself."⁵

America's Founding Fathers, quoting the Bible, say, 'We have a big problem here, and the problem is sin—the problem is the sin nature. The people under the government have a sin nature, and the people running the government have a sin nature. So we have to make government strong enough to control the sinful impulses of the masses. But at the same time, we have to make government weak enough so that it does not coalesce into tyranny, because the people running the government have the exact same sin nature as those who are being governed. It does not matter how many PhDs they have after their name.'

The solution, according to the American system—the solution, as far as God is concerned back in Genesis 11—is to decentralize power, to disperse political power.

Now, political power only comes in three ways. You see those expressed in Isaiah 33:22, which says,

"For the LORD is our judge,..." (Isaiah 33:22).

That is judicial power. That is the power to interpret a law.

*"For the LORD is our judge,
The LORD is our lawgiver,..." (Isaiah 33:22).*

That is legislative power. That is the capacity to create law.

*"For the LORD is our judge,
The LORD is our lawgiver,
The LORD is our king;..." (Isaiah 33:22).*

'King' is executive power or the ability to enforce law.

You are either exercising political power by interpreting a law, creating a law, or enforcing a law. The only person our Founding Fathers observed who can do this correctly is someone untainted by a sin nature. When Jesus returns and establishes His

⁵ Ibid.

Kingdom on Earth, He will be Judge, He will be Lawgiver, and He will be King. The problem is that, until that day arises, we have a lot of political leaders who are not very Christ-like. Can I get an amen to that? Why are they un-Christ-like? Because they have a corrupted, imperfect nature.

"So therefore," America's Founding Fathers said, "let's disperse political power. Let's give legislative power to the legislative branch of government; let's give judicial power to the judicial branch of government; and let's give executive power to the executive branch of government. As long as we have all three branches, power is not being coalesced into one person or one group." This is the whole logic behind the separation of powers in the United States. This is why America and its system has lasted, whereas other systems have failed.

"With legislative power, let's not give that to too many people either. Let's divide it in what is called bicameralism between the Senate and the House of Representatives. And let's create a system where these three branches are always fighting amongst themselves, because as long as they are fighting amongst themselves, they cannot engage in tyranny against the people that they are governing."

Do you see the logic here? Now, if you think that human beings are basically good at heart, the system will make no sense to you. But if you understand the biblical doctrine of the sin nature and Total Depravity, then all of a sudden this system makes perfect sense. It is rather humorous listening to people today complaining that there is nothing getting done in Washington, D.C. I say to myself, 'Well, thank God for that.'

If you want to live in a country where things get done quickly, I would recommend Saudi Arabia. I would recommend Iran, where elections are just a nuisance anyway. "Let's just go ahead and have a fake election." We are starting to see some of that in the United States, aren't we? "The people are an encumbrance, and we went to Harvard and we understand better than you how things should be." What is happening is that people are bypassing the separation of powers idea. Yet that is the very idea that has made America different and exceptional and given her longevity.

James Madison, in "Federalist No. 47," says, interestingly,

"The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, into the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, selfappointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny."⁶

Do you have in your mind a working definition of tyranny to share with your children and your grandchildren? What is tyranny? Tyranny involves taking two of the three branches, whether it is legislative and executive or executive and judicial or legislative

⁶ James Madison, *Federalist No. 47* (Jan 30, 1788)

and judicial, into one person's hands, and coalescing that power into the hands of a single individual. That becomes the seed of tyranny and despotism.

You see, these are all principles and concepts that have largely been forgotten today, and they have largely been forgotten because of this idea that man is inherently good at his core. This is what people think. This is what people believe. This is what people are being taught. So therefore, what is the harm of merging political power, two branches into the hands of one individual or person?

I might as well just lay it out on the line here. When the President of the United States, as the current President, towards the beginning of his term, signs executive order after executive order after executive order most of which he probably has not even read, he is taking legislative power and bringing it into the hands of the executive—when the executive branch of government really has no ability, according to our Founding Fathers design, to make law. When he signs executive order after executive order after executive order, that is the very thing that Madison warned about in "Federalist No. 47."

This separation of powers was the beginning of the American system. The truth of the matter is that America's political governance was divided. Now, watch this very carefully: it was divided horizontally. America's Founding Fathers were so afraid of tyranny and despotism that they divided political power horizontally. But then they did something else: they divided it vertically. So in the United States of America, we do not just have one layer of government. We have two layers of government operating over the same geographic expanse.

Those layers of government are the federal government (the national government, in other words) and then the individual state governments. So every day of your life, you should wake up and you should praise the Lord that you live in this kind of system with all of its encumbrances and all of its hassles, because this is the very system that is keeping you free.

If one branch of government, like the federal government, for example, becomes totalitarian—'Hey, we need critical race theory taught in the schools.'—other branches of government at the state level—let's say, for example, Florida or Texas—can stand up and say, 'You know, that is not so hot an idea. Let's have a debate and let's have a discussion about this.' They are not having this kind of discussion in Saudi Arabia. They are not having this kind of discussion in Iran. But they are having it in the United States because the United States, in its biblical wisdom, decided at its onset to divide political power up.

So one branch of government says, 'You know what, we need mandatory masks and we need mandatory vaccines.' Another branch of government at the state level—let's say, hypothetically, Florida or Texas—can turn around and say, 'You know, that is not such a hot idea. Let's have a debate or let's have a discussion about this.' So this becomes the very thing that God himself put into effect at the Tower of Babel, as a matter of political philosophy.

What I am trying to describe here is another institution which God Himself created for the purpose of preserving humanity in its fallenness. We have actually studied all of these divine institutions here in the Book of Genesis. There are certain institutions or certain things that God has done, or given to humanity, for the purpose of controlling our sin nature so that culture can be preserved.

One of those institutions is the fact that we are all made in God's image. Another institution is the fact that we have marriage and the family. Another institution is the fact that we have human conscience. Another institution is the institution of labor. Another institution is the institution of government. Here we are seeing another institution come into effect: nationalism. God is pro-nationalism. He is pro-patriotism. There are a lot of people who will make you feel guilty for being patriotic. But the truth of the matter is that God here is establishing patriotism. He wants patriotism to exist because He is the author of the nation-state.

So here is a pretty basic question to ask yourselves as we are talking about the origin of the nation-state: "What do you have to have for a nation?" Have you ever thought about that? "I am going to set up a nation. What do I need? What are the bare basics or the bare minimum that you need to have a nation?" Here are the four things you need: number one, you need a common currency; number two, you need a common language; number three, you need a common culture; and number four, you need enforceable borders.

Now, as I tick through that list, would you not concur that every single one of those is under vile attack today here in the United States? The idea of a common currency is being attacked. The idea of a common language is being attacked. The idea of a common culture is being attacked. Of course, here in Texas, we feel it quite a bit with the porous border mentality. Yet the truth of the matter is that these are things that God ordained in Genesis 11. To not enforce the borders of a nation means that you really do not have a nation anymore. God is pro-nation because God established nations at the Tower of Babel since He wanted to disrupt political power.

We move away from God's three observations: the universality of the human race, the beginning of sin, and the potential for wickedness. We move now into God's intervention. What does God do to rectify the problem? You see that in Genesis 11:7-8. Notice what Genesis 11:7 says:

"Come, let Us..." (Genesis 11:7).

Did you catch that? You should highlight, circle, or put a star around *"Us"* in that verse.

"Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech" (Genesis 11:7).

Then you move into Genesis 11:8 where it says,

"So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth;..." (Genesis 11:8).

So now we see God intervening, and as God intervenes, He intends to do two things. They are right there in Genesis 11:7. Number one, He goes down. Number two, He confounds. Then His intention is going to be followed by a disruption that He is going to perform in Genesis 11:8.

First of all, notice God going down. Did you notice that God has to go down to see what humanity is doing? If you go back to Genesis 11:4, it talks about a tower whose top is going to reach into heaven. The Tower of Babel was one of the greatest achievements man had ever done in their spirit of self-sufficiency and pride. And yet God actually had to descend. God had to go down. God had to look just to see the sandcastle they were building.

This shows us something about the nature of God: no matter how powerful man becomes or no matter how powerful he thinks he is, he is no measure for God. God has to come down. He has to take a look. He has to get out His microscope. He has to get out His magnifying glass just to see what the little insects down there are doing. You will notice that He goes down. Then I drew your attention to the fact that He says,

"Come, let Us go down..." (Genesis 11:7).

We have seen the, "let Us" language many times in the Book of Genesis. Genesis 1:26 says,

"...Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;..." (Genesis 1:26).

Who is the "Us"? Well, "Us" is a reference to the plurality of the Godhead. As Christians, we are monotheistic. We worship one God. Yet God has expressed Himself in three personages: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We worship one God. Yet God has expressed Himself in three separate personages. The Son is God, just as the Holy Spirit is God, just as the Father is God. But it is very interesting that the Spirit is unique in His Spirit-ness. The Father is unique in His Fatherhood. The Son is unique in His Sonship.

You say, "Well, Pastor, can you explain this more?" I really cannot. It is a great mystery. It is far beyond my pay grade—let's just put it that way. But it is a reality that the Bible teaches. We call this "the mystery of the Trinity." When God says, *"...let Us go down..." (Genesis 11:7)*, it is one of your very early references in the Bible to the triunity of God.

Now, it is true that you are going to have to get to the New Testament before you get a full-fledged explanation. Jesus is called God in John 8:58. The Father is called God in

Ephesians 4:6. The Spirit is called God in Acts 5:3-4. And yet somehow they are part of a singular Godhead—monotheism.

Deuteronomy 6:4 says,

"...The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

The Muslims make fun of us because they call us "the three-God Christians." They do not believe that we are monotheistic because of this doctrine of the Trinity. Yet we are monotheistic. We worship only one God. That God has expressed Himself in three separate personages.

Here is the beginning of the "let Us" language in Genesis 3:22:

"...Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil;..." (Genesis 3:22).

You remember what Isaiah 6:8 says, in the account of when Isaiah was called into the ministry:

"...Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?..." (Isaiah 6:8).

Why does it keep saying over and over again, 'Us,' 'Us,' 'Us'? It is an infant, or early, description of the plurality that exists within the Godhead because of the doctrine of the Trinity. When you go back to Genesis 1:26, it says,

"...Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;..." (Genesis 1:26).

The Jewish rabbis want nothing to do with this doctrine of the Trinity in Hebrew Bible, and they make a statement that this really has nothing to do with the Trinity. 'This is just God having a discussion with the angels.' Well, as my professor Dr. Toussaint used to say, 'That dog will not hunt.' The reason is that the angels are not made in God's image. So when God says in Genesis 1:26, *"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness"* (Genesis 1:26), that is a discussion—a conversation that is taking place amongst the separate personages of the Trinity.

The Son is unique in His Son-ness, yet He shares the same essence of deity with the Father. The Spirit is unique in His Spirit-ness, yet He shares the same essence of deity with the Son and the Father. The Father is unique in His Father-ness, yet He shares the same essence of deity with the other members of the Trinity, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. You will spend your whole life as a Christian trying to wrap your mind around this. It is one of those truths that could only have come from above. There is no human being that could have ever come up with such an idea.

It is interesting that God wants government to take place in these kinds of conversations. You are in a church right now that believes in the elder-led model. A lot of the decisions that we make in this church stem from a conversation between the elders. God has patterned it this way. God has designed it this way. In fact, this is how God Himself operates when He is making decisions: a discussion, a conversation.

Now, it is true that the Son submits to the will of the Father, but the Son, when He submits to the will of the Father, does not relinquish one iota of His deity. He retains His deity. It is a submission in function and role only, but not in what we would call ontology, or value, or worth.

My wife submits to my authority as her husband, but when she submits to my authority as her husband, she does not relinquish by one iota the fact that she is also an image-bearer of God as I am. She is also a joint heir to salvation as I am. Her submission is not in value, it is in function and role. And when we make decisions in our home, it generally is a conversation that takes place first.

Foolish is the man who rules in a tyrannical fashion in his home and does not consult his wife's perspective or opinion. The Trinity itself does not even do that. That is what is bound up here in this expression: "let Us."

Arnold Fruchtenbaum puts it this way in his commentary on the Book of Genesis:

"Once again, the word us, the plural pronoun, is used, implying a plurality in the Godhead."⁷

Jonathan Sarfati, in his commentary on the Book of Genesis says,

"Here we see another example of plurality in the Godhead, because YHWH [Yahweh] says, 'let us...'"⁸

So God now comes down. His first intention is to come down. His second intention is to confound. You see the confounding that God does in Genesis 11. Notice Genesis 11:7:

"Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not [be able to] understand one another's speech" (Genesis 11:7).

A literal translation from the Hebrew would read as follows: "So that they will not hear a man in the language of his friend." "Let's not let these builders cooperate with each other, because if they cooperate with each other, they are going to be successful in their project towards one world government—and given the imperfect ability of the sin nature,

⁷ Dr Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, 224.

⁸ Jonathan D. Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1–11*, 661.

it will become very tyrannical very, very fast. So let's disperse power. Let's decentralize power amongst the various nations."

It is interesting that when you get to the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:5-8, God restores to some extent what was lost here. In fact, there is coming upon the earth a government of Jesus Christ, and that government is going to be established as having one language that will once again exist over the face of the earth. We find that in Zephaniah 3:9, where it says,

"For then I will give to the peoples purified lips,..." (Zephaniah 3:9).

It is interesting that on the Day of Pentecost, all of a sudden, the apostles could be heard in known dialects that the apostles themselves did not speak. You find that in Acts 2:5-8, and it is interesting that when the Millennial Kingdom comes upon the earth one day, there once again will be one language on the face of the earth. In other words, what got broken here in Genesis 11 is going to be restored one day. There are hints of it in Acts 2, but ultimately it is going to be restored in the Millennial Kingdom.

This reveals the nature of God: this is what God does—God fixes what God broke. We in our fallen state are in a very broken state. Yet, when we trust Christ as Savior and we yield to Him by way of discipleship, what we discover is that a lot of the things that we messed up as fallen human beings God will start to put back into shape. He will restore a person's finances to some extent. He can restore a person's health. He can restore a person's marriage. He can restore a broken friendship, a strained relationship, because that is the nature of God. This is why Jesus came into the world, according to Luke 19:10:

"...to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Jesus is not interested in helping people who think they have everything figured out. What He is interested in is helping people who realize that they are lost. We trust Christ as Savior in our lost state, and the Holy Spirit begins to work in our lives, and suddenly He is restoring what got broken and He is fixing what was in need of repair.

So we see God confounding. We also see, in addition to God's intention, His disruption of things there in Genesis 11:8. Notice what it says there:

"So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth;..." (Genesis 11:8).

This explains an awful lot, does it not? As you look back at Genesis 11:1, it says,

"Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words" (Genesis 11:1).

Well, that does not fit with Genesis 10, does it? If you look back at Genesis 10:5 it says,

"...every one according to his language,..." (Genesis 10:5).

Genesis 10:20 says,

"...according to their families, according to their languages,..." (Genesis 10:20).

Genesis 10:31 says,

"...according to their languages,..." (Genesis 10:31).

So how is it that we move from a language, Genesis 11:1, to references to 'languages,' plural, in Genesis 10? The answer is what God did at Babel. To prevent these builders from cooperating with each other so that political power could be dispersed, God created multiple languages. You will notice the reference here a couple of times in Genesis 11:9, but also in Genesis 11:8. It keeps talking about the whole creation. Look at Genesis 11:8.

"So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth;..." (Genesis 11:8).

In Genesis 11:9, you will see the reference to, *"the whole earth."* Genesis 11:9, towards the very end, says, *"the whole earth."* What happened here at the Tower of Babel affected the entire world. The best way I could think about it is how if you take a stone or a rock, and you throw that stone into a calm, placid pond, the wake reverberates in all directions outward. That is what happened at the Tower of Babel. There was a decision that the triune God made to confound the language, and it has had a reverberating effect on the nations of the earth ever since.

This, by the way, is how Nimrod got pushed north into Assyria in Genesis 10. We learn about his kingdom in Shinar and later about his kingdom in Assyria, which is further north. How did Nimrod get pushed up north? It had to do with this confusion of the languages that took place here at the Tower of Babel.

I like very much what Clarence Larkin says in his commentary on the Book of Revelation. He says this concerning the Tower of Babel. He says,

"The river Euphrates, on which the city of Babylon was built, was one of the four branches into which the river that flowed through the Garden of Eden was divided, and Satan doubtless chose the site of Babylon as his headquarters from which to sally forth to tempt Adam and Eve. It was doubtless here that the Antediluvian apostasy had its source that ended in the flood. To this centre the 'forces of Evil' gravitated after the Flood, and

'Babel' was the result. This was the origin of the nations, but the nations were not scattered abroad over the face of the earth until Satan had implanted in them the 'Virus' of a doctrine that has been the source of every false religion the world has ever known."⁹

Why can't God use the Assyrians? Because they have been corrupted by the Tower of Babel. Why can't He use the Phoenicians? They have been corrupted by the Tower of Babel. Why can't He use the Egyptians? Why can't He use Greece, or Rome, or Asia, or India to fulfill His purposes? Because every nation owes its origin to the Tower of Babel. Every nation has been corrupted by what happened here. So what does God have to do in Genesis 12? He has to start a new nation.

That becomes the significance of the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel is the only nation that came into existence subsequent to the Tower of Babel—after the Tower of Babel. God has to create that special nation through which to channel His Messianic blessings to the entire earth. You come to the very end here of Genesis 11:8-9 and you see the lasting results.

Let's take a look very fast at Genesis 11:8-9. It says,

"So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:8-9).

Essentially, there are three things that happened of lasting fashion because of what God did. Number one, the builders abandoned the project (Genesis 11:8). Number two, God gave them a name. Do you see that in Genesis 11:9? There is a lot of sarcasm here. They wanted a name for themselves. God said, "You are not going to have a name for yourself. I will give you the name." Then number three, they were scattered. Originally, they came together against God's plan to spread out, and they thought they had one up on God. God said, "No. Whether you are going to obey My command through volition or you are going to obey My command through the force of My decrees, the scattering will take place." We will look at those three results next time.

If you are here today for the very first time and you do not know Christ personally—or perhaps you are listening online or maybe you are listening after the fact—our exhortation is the same here, week after week after week. The Son of Man has come into the world to seek and save that which is lost (Luke 19:10). All of us are in a broken state because of original sin. Yet Jesus came into the world to restore that broken state. He stepped out of eternity into time to bridge a gap between lost humanity and a holy

⁹ Larkin, *The Book of Revelation*, 151

God that we could not bridge. He simply asks us to receive as a gift what He has done in our place, rather than what we do for ourselves.

We do not fix our situation by making ourselves right before God. We fix our situation by allowing God to make us right. The story of the Bible is not man reaching up to God. It is God reaching down to man in the person of Jesus Christ. We trust in what He has done, and we receive that as a free gift. The moment you receive that as a free gift by way of faith is the moment that suddenly you are in a relationship with God that you did not have before.

As we work our way through the Bible, our exhortation to people is to trust in what Jesus has done for them. Becoming a Christian is not a twelve-step process. There is a single step where you trust in what Jesus has done in your place. And the moment a person does, that is the moment they are made right with God. We call that "by way of faith."

Another way of saying "faith" is saying "reliance, or dependance on, for my eternity and the safekeeping of my soul—I am trusting or relying upon what Jesus did in my place." That is the best understanding of the gospel that I know how to give. You can trust Christ right now, even where you are seated. It is not something you have to walk an aisle to do, or join a church to do. It is a matter of privacy between you and the Lord, where the Spirit convicts you of your need to do this, and you trust in Him and Him alone for salvation.