

Genesis 10-11

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Date: 10 January 2021

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[0 : 00] Good morning to those who are here and also to those who are watching online. It's good for us again to come together and to worship God on his day.

Intimation is just one or two things. One to remind you that the evening service will be online just before 6 o'clock tonight. And so be encouraged to tune into that.

We'll be in Psalm 140. And in the course of the week we have the prayer meeting at half past 7 on Wednesday evening on Zoom. And also the YF meet this evening on Zoom at half past 7.

And for the YF, just for your information, it's the MSP Kate Forbes who's a Christian who will be sharing testimony this evening at the YF.

So we can be praying for that in advance of it too. These, I think, are all the intimations. So let's begin this time of worship. And we will sing to God's praise.

[1 : 06] Or Farrakhan will lead us as he sings to God's praise from the hymn that's familiar to us. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart. Not be all else to me, save that thou art.

Thou my best thought, by day or by night. Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light. And the whole of this hymn, Farrakhan will lead us in as he sings to God's praise.

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart.

Not be all else to thee, save that thou art. Thou my best thought, by day or by night.

Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

[2 : 18] Be thou my wisdom, O Lord of my true word. I am ever with thee, thou with me, Lord.

Thou my great father, I thy true son. Thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight.

Be thou my dignity, thou my delight. Thou my soul, sheltered, thou my high tower.

Raise thou me heavenward, O brother of my power. Riches I hate not, nor man's empty praise.

[3 : 41] Thou mine inheritance now and always. Thou and the only first in my heart.

High King of heaven. High King of heaven. My treasure thou art. High King of heaven.

After victory won. May I reach heaven's joy, so bright heaven's sun.

Heart of my own heart, whatever befall. Still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray. Let's pray.

[5 : 02] Lord, Lord. Lord, we thank you for this new day. This day which has been given to us, gifted to us.

Lord, we thank you for this new year. There's a day that's set aside from all other days. The Lord's Day. A day where we have the instruction and we have the opportunity made for us to be still and know that you are God.

and we pray that as we meet together in this place some of us and in our homes others we pray that we would know in the stillness that you are not just the God but you are our God the one who is with us we thank you that you are the living God and each Lord's day that we gather we have that reminder that this is the first day of the week the day on which Jesus rose from the dead and we thank you with that resurrection there is the clear teaching that the work of salvation is done Jesus came into this world to be our rescuer and we thank you that as he went to the cross he went to war with sin and Satan and death and hell we thank you that he died so that we might live we thank you that he took our guilt so that we might be made righteous and we thank you that his death satisfied all that was necessary for divine wrath to be met we thank you that the the punishment that he endured was enough to make it possible for all who believe in him to be saved and we thank you that we are saved into everlasting life we see on the third day Jesus rise from the dead and we thank you that that resurrection life is something that he shares with all who believe in him so give to us faith Lord we pray that we would be those who believe and who know the assurance and the comfort of of resurrection life and even this week as we think back over past days as we are conscious of of death amongst us as a community once more we pray Lord we pray for the comfort of the gospel and for the hope of the resurrection to be our portion we pray for the island of scalpe especially that have suffered loss and in past days and we pray for the families and for the friends of those who have passed from time into eternity we ask Lord that you would be their comfort that you would be their peace and we pray for the families and we pray for the families and we pray for the families and we pray for those who are grieving we pray for those who are sick we're conscious of some of our number who are struggling with illness and as they come to our mind's eyes we pray for them those who are at home who are going through treatments of antibiotics just now we think of Elaine in particular we ask that she would know your healing hand upon her and for those who have had tests and scans and who await results we pray for them also we think of Ian Davidson in particular but our minds go to others as well and Lord as we name them in the quietness of our own hearts we ask Lord that you would meet them at the point of their need we pray Father for those who struggle with addictions and at this time of year we're aware of some who are struggling in a particular way and we we continue to pray for them these are prayers that we bring week by week but we are conscious of need that is constant and we thank you that you're the God who who hears our prayers as we repeatedly cry to you for ourselves and for those who are struggling in these ways and for those who may feel stressed for those who may feel anxious

at the prospect of another period of of restrictions with the prospect of schooling at home and these kind of constraints Lord we ask that all those who are anxious that we would cast our cares upon you knowing that you are the God who cares for us so hear our prayers help us Lord as a as a people help us as a community of of your people in this place we ask Lord that your hand would be upon us as a nation also as we think of Kate Forbes we think of all those that you have been allowed to to be put in positions of power and as we are called to we we pray for them and we ask that you would guide them and that you would lead them that we would live lives here which are peaceful and that we would have the freedom to worship you we pray for countries where there is no such freedom we pray for countries where it is not possible to to worship in in an open gathering such as we do here where your people are persecuted Lord we think of Nigeria where we're aware of Christians being executed even on Christmas Day and we ask Lord that you would comfort those who grieve and that you would give strength to those who profess faith in Christ so hear our prayers for ourselves for our nation for all nations we ask that many people even today across this world would be found looking to Jesus hear our prayers take away our sin as we confess it fill us with your spirit Lord because we know that apart from you we are unable to do anything so draw near to us Lord we pray and help us for we ask these things in Jesus name

Amen Boys and girls it's good to see some of you here it's good to know some are on the screen or behind the screen there as well and I want today to tell you a story well I want actually to tell you about a mystery do you know what a mystery is it's a mystery tell me what a mystery is something that's hard to understand isn't it when we have a mystery we're not quite sure what the answer is and I'm going to tell you about a wee mystery it was the 23rd of December and I had to go to Stornoway to buy Christmas dinner I didn't expect to be eating Christmas dinner here but because the rules changed and all that I had to go to Stornoway on the 23rd of December of all days to go to the big shops and get Christmas dinner so I did the shop and got all stressed out in Stornoway with people rushing around fighting over the same turkeys and then I came back home and I was going to show you what was waiting for me but I don't know if we can see it can we see it?

[13 : 09] well you can see it on the live stream at home boys and girls can you see that on the screen? kind of you can sneak around a little bit if you can't see that very well but what is that?

it's fudge and it's fudge it's not actually candles but it looks a bit like candles if you're far away from it it's fudge and it's mince pies remember I was telling you how I hadn't had mince pies well some mince pies came quite a few mince pies came and some of the mince pies I know where they came from but see these mince pies and that amazing fudge and I can tell you it was amazing I don't know where it came from even today I still have no clue where that stuff came from I'd like to be able to write a wee note to say thank you very much for the fudge and the mince pies but I don't know the name of the person who made it that's the mystery now in the passage that we're going to be reading in Genesis in a few minutes we're reading about a story in the Bible and you could call it the Tower of Babel have you heard of the story of the Tower of Babel?

tell me tell me in your own words when the language goes wrong the language the language goes the language the language the way they talk yeah the way they talked it all went a bit funny didn't it it all went a bit haywire now what were the people doing because they were very busy doing a job weren't they?

they were all understanding each other for a while John will you tell me what were they trying to do? they were trying to build you're right they were trying to build a huge big tower and they thought with a huge big tower they could go all the way up and they could meet God they actually wanted to show everybody including God how great they were because what they said in the reading because we'll come to it in a minute is they said let's build a city let's build a tower let's make a name for ourselves and everyone will know how great we are and everyone will notice us because we'll be the builders of the highest tower that ever was their chests were out like that what do you think God thought about that?

do you think God was happy when he heard that kind of thing Lewis? no what's that called when we speak like that it's called being what?

[16 : 13] Emily? proud that's right and they were very very proud and we could hear how proud they were from the the way they were speaking and we could see how proud they were from the thing they were doing and God had to look all the way down they were nowhere near God God had to look all the way down at their tiny little silly tower and he wasn't very happy with them because of their pride and he wasn't very happy with them when when they said we're going to make a name for ourselves because their job and our job is not to make a name for ourselves is it?

but our job is to lift up the name of who? Jesus we would see Jesus we don't want people to look at us we don't want people to be listening to us because we haven't got very much wisdom not in ourselves none but we want people to see and hear and we want to be those who lift up the name of Jesus now Jesus one day he was teaching and he was teaching about what we're to do and how we're to give you know sometimes we might do things that are good we want to do good things we want to give people things and Jesus was talking about that and he said in Matthew chapter 6 he says when you give to the needy do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that your giving may be in secret then your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you that's what Jesus said now let me say boys and girls when it comes to mince pies

I don't think I'm in the needy category in fact I think if anything in my life I've had a bit too many mince pies because my suit is a little bit tight today but I'm thankful for what I was given and even though I don't know even still who gave me these mince pies and that fudge God knows and boys and girls every kind thing that you do and every kind word that you speak and every good work that you do for other people other people might not see it but God sees it and when we're doing things in Jesus name when we're doing things not to make a name for ourselves but because we want to make God happy we want to lift up the name of Jesus we're promised that we'll be rewarded for all that we do so this year boys and girls let's learn from the mystery mince pies

I'll probably never find out who gave them now let's learn from the mystery mince pies let's not make a name for ourselves in the things that we do but let's trust the name of Jesus and let's try in the things that we do and the things that we say to tell other people about the greatness of the name of Jesus let's pray about that now Lord God we thank you for today and we thank you for how great you are we thank you that the name of Jesus is the name that's above all names and we thank you that Jesus is the one who is our saviour Jesus is the one who is the Lord he is the one who is the king of kings and yet we thank you that when we're trusting in Jesus we can say he's our friend and he's the one who sticks closer than even a brother he's the one who helps us when we're in need he's the one who hears us when we pray he's the one who's close to us always so help us we pray to be trusting in the name of Jesus and to be trusting in all that

Jesus has done not trusting in the things that we do we know that our good works don't save us but all that Jesus did on the cross saves us but we thank you that you have told us that you give us good works to do and these good works are things that make you happy and point other people to who you are and how great you are so help us we pray not to be proud but to be trusting in Jesus and to use our lives whether we are very young or whether we're very old to tell other people about Jesus we pray these things in Jesus name amen thank you boys and girls for listening and I think some of you are going to head through next door to have a wee time together if you could turn down your Bibles please to

[22 : 01] Genesis chapter 10 go go and go Genesis chapter 10 and we'll read from Genesis chapter 10 through into Genesis chapter 11 this is God's word the table of nations is the title for Genesis chapter 10 and it says this is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons who themselves had sons after the flood and first of all we have there from verses 2 to verse 5 the Japhethites the sons of Japheth, Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan,

Tubal, Meshach and Tiraz the sons of Gomer, Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah the sons of Javan, Elishash, Tarshish the Kittim and the Rodanim from these the maritime people spread out into their territories by their clans within their nations each with its own language and if you just allow your eyes to scan over this chapter I'm not going to go through every name here and try and mispronounce every name that's here but you see the structure of the passage we have the table of nations the introduction of verse 1 and then we have the Japhethites from verse 2 to verse 5 and then we have details there of the Hamites from verses 6 through to verse 20 and then we have the Semites from verses 21 through to verse 31 and then we have the summary statement in verse 32 these are the clans of Noah's sons according to their lines of descent within their nations from these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood in chapter 11 and verse 1 the title of Babel now the whole world had one language and a common speech as men moved eastward they find a plain in Shinar and settled there they said to each other come let's make bricks bricks and bake them thoroughly they used brick instead of stone and bitumen for mortar then they said come let us build ourselves a city with a tower that reaches to heaven so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth but the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building the Lord said it if as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them come let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other so the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth and they stopped building the city that is why it was called Babel because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world from there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth then from verse 10 through to the end of the chapter we have the line of Shem given to us and in some details this is the account of Shem two years after the flood when Shem was a hundred years old he became the father of Arphaxad and after he became the father of Arphaxad Shem lived 500 years and had other sons and daughters when Arphaxad had lived 35 years he became the father of Shelah and after he became the father of Shelah Arphaxad lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters we have that pattern that structure repeated throughout the next few verses and that takes us through then to the end of the chapter so we see the line of Shem there and I'll allow you to read through all these names yourselves as we're given the detail of this particular line so let's before we come to study this passage again just pause for a moment and let's pray and ask for God's help our heavenly father we thank you for this your word we pray that you would meet with us now in your word you have said to us that all scripture is God breathed and every chapter is useful for teaching and for correction and for encouragement and for training and righteousness and so we pray

Lord that as we come to a passage that we may not often go to we pray that you would help us that you would teach us that you would train us that you would guide us that you would discipline us that you would deal with us Lord in the way that you know that we need to be dealt with we ask that we would know the help of the Holy Spirit in speaking and listening and responding and what we pray for ourselves here we pray for the young ones as they they meet next door and go through the the gospel message simply we pray for other congregations around us that meet online and perhaps in buildings and we pray for all your people who meet across the world and we ask Lord Jesus that you would fulfill the promise that you have given us that you would build your church and we know that the gates of hell will not prevail against it so we pray that we would see the church of Christ being expanded we pray that we would see people going from darkness to light going from that place of being far from you to close to you we ask Lord that you would meet with us and speak to us touch our hearts we pray for we ask these things in the name of Jesus amen well if you could have uh these chapters 10 and 11 open in front of you that would be helpful I hope to to try and stick quite close to the text as we go through it this morning one thing that we tend to to get a wee bit more time to do over Christmas and New Year is uh read books and watch the odd program on the television and over the course of the Christmas holidays I watched a couple of detective programs and it's always interesting with these different kind of detective programs to uh to see how how scenes and people and situations that on first glance in the opening scene uh they seem to have nothing much to do with each other but as the program goes on we start to see how they all fit together and it's in understanding how they fit together uh that we have the key to unlocking uh the mystery to to cracking the case

I think there's something of that same kind of way of thinking that can be applied to to Genesis chapter 10 and and 11 if we rewind to the earlier chapters of Genesis I think we could perhaps say that they're easier for us to follow in some sense uh uh we see in the opening uh chapters chapters one and two that that God is is our maker we have the creation account we understand we're being taught there that God is the one who made us and then when we go to Genesis three we see the fall that helps us to understand that we are sinners and then when we move from there uh to to Genesis six through to eight we see the flood and that helps us to understand that that the sin that's within us when it's not dealt with it accelerates and as it accelerates it attracts a punishment which is right and which God which God gives and then when we come to Genesis chapter nine we see the ark and we see the rainbow and that gives us an insight into the fact uh that the God we worship is the God yes who is just and who punishes sin but also who is gracious and who is merciful and who wants to save those who will believe in him and that takes us up to Genesis nine but then we reach Genesis 10 and we have this table that seems to come from nowhere and we have this catalogue of of names and places and then when we step from Genesis 10 into Genesis 11 uh we see this tower and then we see a whole list of of more names that we largely don't recognize and we might be kind of uh left scratching our heads like we do at the opening scene of a of a mystery program wondering to ourselves how do how do all these things fit together what's this table doing here what's this tower all about and these names why do we need to know these names how do they all fit together what are the lessons that we're being taught uh through this that's what i want to give some thought to uh this morning and the time that we have uh we'll look at the table first of all we'll look at the tower secondly and we'll just uh as a closing glance uh have a look at what we could describe as the family tree of uh Shem so first of all the table and that's uh Genesis 10 so if you've got Genesis 10 in front of you you'll find it helpful just to scan uh through these verses

Genesis 10 verse 1 this is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons who themselves had sons after the flood and then as you scan the chapter uh we see this long list of names and firstly we have uh uh the Japhethites the the the family of of Japheth uh who was Noah's youngest son and we see this family and we see the the family moving in a certain direction and much of what we would recognize as eastern Europe today uh was founded by the family of Japheth that's uh verses 1 to 5 and then from verses 6 to 20 uh we read about uh the Hamites and Ham was Noah's middle son and his family are the ancestors of the people uh that we would uh see in in North Africa in the Middle East today and then from verses 21 to to verse 31 we read about the Semites and Shem who was Noah's oldest son he settled in the Middle East so nations like um Iran and Iraq and Saudi Arabia uh were founded by the family of uh Shem and within Shem's family just as a little side note here we we see the word in verse 21 or the name Eber and the name Eber is the name from which the word

[34 : 14] Hebrew comes so we're given an indication here uh of uh the the people uh from which Jesus would come the Hebrews and then the chapter closes uh with verse 32 uh where Moses says the writer here says these are the clans of Noah's sons according to their lines of descent within the nations from these nations uh spread out from these nations from these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood so that's Genesis 10 and you're probably relieved I haven't spent very much time going through the details of Genesis chapter 10 and you might be asking the question why do we need to know this it's not a chapter that we we tend to to gravitate towards it's not a chapter that we go to on our darkest hour and pour over and spend some time meditating upon

Genesis 10 is just not one of these chapters that we often go to so we we we ask the question why do we need to know this it's about like a a page out of a foreign phone book it's alien to us so what does this table with all these names actually have to teach us and I can answer that question by saying three things this table at this table it teaches us three things the first thing it teaches us is that God made us and that is something that's clear from the beginning of Genesis Genesis 1 and 2 we see that God is our creator we're not some sophisticated mutation from the ape that's what we're taught largely today in the in the sphere of education but God says from the beginning right through scripture that he is our maker we were made by God we were made in the image of God and actually in this chapter here Genesis 10

God gives us a little more of the detail so we're able to trace our line back to Noah and we go go from Noah further back to Adam and Eve so we learn from this table number one God made us the second thing that we learn from this table is that God made us equal watching a few minutes of the football last night and before every game kicks off we see people taking the knee and part of that act is a statement whereby players are saying God made us equal or they're not saying God made us equal but they're saying we are equal but that's not something which is new to our culture that we need to learn for the first time that's something that God has made very clear to us from the very beginning of creation God made us equal we don't go through this list in Genesis chapter 10 and find there are classifications and hierarchies of people there are different races there is diversity but there is a clear equality among all these people they're all on the same level we're all made in the image of God and if we accepted that and if that truth was held onto through generations so much heartache so much trouble so much death we'd have been avoided this table tells us

God made us this table tells us God made us equal all on the same level doesn't matter what shade doesn't matter what colour doesn't matter what background we're made by God in the image of God equal Kidner the commentator says not every nation known to the Old Testament is enrolled here it's not an exhaustive list but enough are present to make the point that mankind is one for all its diversity under one creator so God made us God made us equal and the final thing that we learn under this this table is that God loves us you could say that's a very obvious thing but it's something that we need to keep on hearing because we are so prone to doubt it God loves us all of us everywhere he is interested he cares for every nation every people group every person think about John 3.16 it says for God so loved the world now we tend to to get out maps and books and we can we can pore over maps out of the islands we can look at all the details out of the the maps of the places that we live because that's what our interest is and we are interested in the names of the people in our community

I always remember as a as a wee boy listening to the adults in the room talking about names and names and names and people and all trying to connect the different people in the island to each other because that's what our interest is these are our people these are the ones that we care about and we may look at Genesis chapter 10 and not be overly interested in the names of the people on this table but what we learn here is that God is he's interested in all these names he gives us all the details of these people and the message that comes to us by way of application is that God is interested still in all his people God loves you that's the message God loves you he cares about your life he'll never refuse your call as you pray we sometimes phone people we can imagine them perhaps looking at the call and going no I'm not taking that one

[41 : 06] God never does that he never refuses our call he never blanks us he never blocks us he never pretends he's listening to us when he's actually intent on listening to somebody else and just as he knew all the names of the descendants of Noah he knows your name Jesus said in John 10 3 he calls his own sheep by name now we're people who tend to follow other people aren't we we have phones and with these phones we're following celebrities and we're following sports heroes on different social platforms and yet they don't know our names they have no care for us they don't love us I think the invitation that we're given even through this table is an invitation to follow

Jesus to follow the God who loves us if you're hearing this message then he's calling you by name and if we are people who have already begun to follow Jesus let's remember that the commission that he's given us God calls us to come to him for salvation and then as those who have come to him for salvation he sends us out with this commission and he says to us in Matthew 28 19 go and make disciples of all nations so we see at the beginning as we look at this table of nations that God is the God of all nations his interest is not narrow yes he's interested in you but he's interested in everyone he's the

God of all nations we see that in Genesis we can fast forward to the end of the Bible to Revelation and we see John the Apostle he gets a vision of heaven and he says in John in Revelation 7 9 after this I looked and there before me he's seen into heaven there before me was a great multitude that no one could count from every nation tribe people and language standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb every nation the table of nations all those that we see here and every spread from here across the whole world they're there so this table of nations that we might be tempted to bypass shows us that God made us whoever we are wherever we're from God made us and he made us equal and it shows us that God cares about us he loves us

God so loved the world that he sent his son but sadly the world did not love him love him and that takes us from the table to the tower now you might have noticed in Genesis 10 if you were scanning through these names that there's one name that actually stands out more than all the other names and it's the name of Nimrod we read his name in verses 8 and verse 9 of chapter 10 the name Nimrod means rebel his reputation was that of being a hunter and the word that's used in the Hebrew indicates that he wasn't a hunter of animals but he was a hunter of men he was a power hungry blood thirsty dictator the first one he was the founder of the

Babylonian empire this empire that was symbolic of rebellion against God and what we see in this next section here at the Tower of Babel we see the first bricks of the Babylonian empire being laid so look at verse 1 through to verse 4 first of all now the whole world had one language and a common speech as men moved eastward they found a plain in China and settled there they said to each other come let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly they used brick instead of stone and tar for mortar then they said come let us build ourselves a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the earth now the question I want to consider as we look at this city that's been built and this tower that is ascending it's the question of why we have the facts of this here we see this building project as it begins and as it continues but the question is why why did the people set out on this project and there's at least two answers the people wanted their lives to have a purpose that's answer one and the second thing is that the people wanted to know a sense of peace they were restless they were insecure they wanted to know peace and we'll look at these two things in the next few minutes so as this tower goes up the people they're doing this because they're looking for purpose they said verse 4 come let us build ourselves a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens so that we may make a name for ourselves and that's a significant thing there they want to make a name for themselves they want their lives to mean something they want to leave their mark on this earth they want to be known and to be remembered and you might ask the question well is that really wrong to have purpose the answer is no to have purpose is not wrong we all need purpose we all need to know why we're here or we'll never get up any morning but God remember if we look back to the earlier part of Genesis had already made clear to Adam and Eve that they were here to be in relationship with him they were here on this planet to glorify him that was their purpose we have our purpose actually summarized very clearly in the first catechism man's chief end man's first purpose is to glorify

[48 : 32] God and to enjoy him forever our purpose is to glorify God's name but the people back then they were intent on making a name for themselves that's our purpose they said they were going to glorify their own names and the way they would do this they determined was by building this tower of Babel just to get a picture of the tower the NIV study notes that some of you have gives us a picture of this tower the typical Mesopotamian temple tower known as a ziggurat was square at the base and had sloping step sides that led upward to a small shrine at the top reaching to the heavens it's what Michael said they were building this tower because they were in their own strength trying to reach to the heavens Mesopotamian ziggurats were given names demonstrating that they were meant to serve us staircases from earth to heaven so through this tower

Nimrod this notorious character he was expressing the pride of his own heart and man at large at this time was seeking to swagger his way up to heaven to confront God with the awesomeness of who man is that's what they were doing and we can stand back from this and shake our heads at such audacity but the reality is we're still doing that today maybe not through building towers but there are many ways through which we try to make a name for ourselves we may try to build our own we personal empire at work to make a name for self we may try to make a name for ourselves in the way that we look the way we present ourselves we may try to make a name for ourselves through the way we use the gifts that

God has given us we may try to make a name for ourselves through our social media profiles we try to project an image to draw attention to self even through pulpits people can try to make a name for self there are many ways that we try to make a name for ourselves we want to be noticed we want to stand out we want people to be impressed with who we are and what we've done one commentator Strasner says this let us make for ourselves a name isn't that the mantra of our age it's why we wear what we wear why we drive what we drive why pastors long for bigger and better churches it's why the

Pharisees like some of us love to do their religious deeds to be noticed by men self promotion is simply the air we breathe in the western world so we need to be constantly asking ourselves am I purchasing this item seeking this promotion performing this service so that I might feel better about myself attract attention to myself live more comfortably for myself or am I doing it for the glory of God that's our purpose not to make a name for self but to lift up the name of Jesus and so in Babel we see their purpose was a wrong purpose they were trying to make a name for themselves and as they persevered with this project they thought that through it they could gain peace that's the second reason for this city and this tower they wanted purpose they wanted their lives to mean something they wanted to be noticed and they also wanted peace because there was a lack of peace verse four still they said come let us build ourselves a city with a tower that reaches to heavens so that we will make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth there's a fear as they're scattered over the face of the earth they're vulnerable so they feel uneasy about this if we remind again to

Genesis chapter two and we think about the picture that we have in Genesis chapter two we see Adam and Eve before they fell and they're in the garden of Eden and they're on perfect terms with God there is a sense of perfect peace there is a sense of abiding contentment there's no worry no trace of it there's no restlessness because they're in this secure and unspoiled relationship with God but when sin came in all that shattered sin always brings with it a sense of insecurity sin always brings with it that lack of peace so we look back to the garden in Genesis 3 it was insecurity that caused Adam and Eve to hide in the trees to escape from God and as we look at this chapter here

[55 : 08] Genesis 11 it's insecurity that's causing the people to cluster together and try and hide in this city that they're building because God had made clear that his will his desire was that the people should go out he wants his people to be explorers he wants his people to be brave fearless so he says go out fill the earth that's Genesis 9 verse 1 the sinful man is first reluctant to do what God said and then he is rebellious against God's clear will and so what they said knowing what God had already commanded them what they said was contrary to that they said we won't listen to what God has said about going out and filling the earth let's come up with a different plan so as a unit we see this group of people making a short journey to

Shinar chapter 11 verse 2 and once they arrive at Shinar which was a comfortable kind of place they said we'll stay here we've come far enough we're not going any further we'll stay here in this comfortable place we'll unite as a human race and we will be powerful and through our own human power we will be secure we will have peace so we see this group of people who are united together in rebellion against God now just as a side point here we place a high value on unity and it's right that we do but unity is not always the right thing because in this scenario we see the whole human race united sticking together but they're departing from God and they're going against

God's clear word one commentator Stuart Olliot he calls this scene here a scene of collective apostasy and he goes on to make a comment about churches and he says this division is better than collective apostasy it is not a sin to be divided if being divided is the only way to remain true to God so we see there in Babel a sinful unity as they stand against God's word and we see also there in Babel the roots of humanism we think humanism is a new thing but we see the roots of it here in Babel as the people said we'll do it our way we don't need God we'll have a secular society we'll build a city in that city we'll make our own peace and our own security and yet we know that cities were not and are not still places of peace and security in fact most of us know that cities usually are places of great danger and unrest so this city that they're seeking to build and this tower that they are trying to erect these human efforts to find purpose in life and to find peace were never going to deliver because peace and security and purpose cannot be found apart from God but the people are slow learners they're not getting that yet so God has to come down to press that point in verse five the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that men were building there's a kind of dark irony there the people say let's build all the way up to God and they have in their minds eye this picture of God suddenly being surprised and dismayed at their power as they break into this place where God is and yet

God says we're gonna have to go all the way down to look at this wee tower God has to stoop right down to examine this pitiful project the Lord said verse six if it's one people speaking the same language they've begun to do this then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them come let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other and that's quite a confusing statement when we think about it at first you almost get a sense is this is this worrying God the man is getting too powerful but that's actually not what's been said here at all this is not a project that was worrying God for his own sake God's concern here is not that they will be so powerful as a people that they'll become difficult to control what God says here in this statement of verse 6 he's saying essentially within the Trinity in terms of evil as God looks down on man as he examines what man is doing he's saying in terms of evil nothing is impossible for sinful man there's no depths to the limit to which this people can sink that's what God is saying when he's saying come let's let's go down nothing is impossible for them in terms of sin they're capable of horrendous things you know we don't believe that about ourselves do we we think we are people who will always set sensible limits on our sin but we've got that wrong nothing is impossible for us in terms of the darkness of our own hearts who would have ever have thought that sane people would build concentration camps where men and women and children would be gassed to death in their millions simply because they were considered to be an inferior race see we don't understand this about ourselves but God knows that the heart of man is desperately wicked and God knows as he looks at this people in Babel that they are on the same destructive trajectory that they were on before the flood which is a staggering thing these are

Noah's sons only a hundred years ago they've seen the flood they've been in the ark and yet here they're on the same track that things were on before God had to step in with the flood and so God in an act of mercy he intervenes so verse 8 the Lord scattered them from where they were from there over all the earth and they stopped building the city that's why it's called Babel because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world from there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth weerspe says this was really an act of mercy as well as of judgment for had they persisted in their plan a more terrible judgment would have followed and I wonder how many times God has done that in our lives he's intervened in an act of mercy he's exercised his restraining grace there's likely many times many situations that we can look back on where we were headed for disaster we were intent on going there and yet

[64 : 52] God in his mercy in his restraining grace he intervenes and so with one stroke God scrambles our lunch and the whole project falls one commentator says what an ironic reversal they had wanted to make a name for themselves and now they couldn't pronounce one another's names because God steps in and says enough and this is biblical history just what happened in Babel on that day but it's also a parable for us to import into our lives there are lessons for us today if our life's purpose is to make a name for ourselves if we make our lives purpose to lift up ourselves our lives will be lived in vain that's one lesson if we seek to build our own peace apart from

God we'll never know peace that's another lesson we can't climb up to God through the towers of our own good works or religious efforts that's another lesson see for us to be saved for us to be reconciled with God as we heard of last week we don't climb up God had to come down he came down to us in Christ eternal security eternal salvation is not found through cities that we build with our own religious works our own human efforts that's another lesson eternal security is found only in the new

Jerusalem the city that God made heaven and the only way in is through faith in Jesus see this is such a key point for us to grasp we have the foundations of the gospel here we don't ascend up to God God has to descend down to us our salvation is not about what we do by our human efforts it's about what God has already done done for us in and through Christ so we see Babel Genesis 11 we see that as man is lifted up there's total confusion of language because

God steps in to judge but if we fast forward to Acts chapter 2 we see Pentecost and in Pentecost it probably came to your mind already we have a reversal of Babel because as Christ is lifted up everyone can understand in his own native tongue the good news about Jesus because God the Holy Spirit steps in to save so as we leave Babel we see a half built tower we see a tower going nowhere and it was a monument to the failure of proud man and it's a picture for us of a life that is lived apart from

Jesus which is the table of nations we see the tower of Babel and we finish by looking at the tree I haven't got any time to look at it but if you allow your eye to scan after the service from chapter 11 verse 10 to 32 we see a family tree it's what we see it's the family line of Seth and why are we being allowed to see the family line of Seth well because through the line of Seth we see the name Abraham and why do we need to see the name Abraham because if we follow the line of Abraham forward it leads us to Jesus and it's Jesus who brings all this together he is the one who would bring the hope of salvation to the table of nations he is the one who would bring the peace and purpose that the people of

[70 : 48] Babel were looking for but could not find he is the one that we see as we follow the line of Shem forward until we arrive at the Saviour the Son of God so as we sang let's make him our vision this year and let's determine that our lives here will not be about making a name for ourselves but rather will be lived out in such a way as to lift up the name of Jesus because his name forever shall endure and the blessing the salvation that we need is found only in him so may God bless these thoughts to us and may

God enable us to fix our eyes upon Jesus we'll sing to conclude the last three stanzas of Psalm 72 his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call so Faracher will sing as we bring the service to a conclusion Psalm 72 verses 17 to verse 19 his name his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call now blessed be the

Lord our God the God of Israel for he alone doth wondrous works in glory that excel and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity the whole earth let his glory fill amen so let be and now may the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forever more amen