# Unseen Realm

Creation Corruption Continued

## Introduction

In our last lesson we discussed the corrupting influences of the evil spiritual forces on the creation in the Fall of Genesis 3 and the Flood of Genesis 6. Before the narrative shift of Genesis 12 takes place, there is one more occasion where evil spiritual influences worked to lead people astray: The Tower of Babel in Genesis 11.

Q: What are some of the dangers of our own creative efforts?

Q: What spiritual influence can you see in the account of the Tower of Babel?

## The Tower (Genesis 11)

In Genesis 11 the stage that is set for us is this:

> Whole earth had **one** language and the same words.
>
> People **settled** into an area.
>
> They began to **build** things.

<u>One Language</u>

The Hebrew here is very interesting. At first read it appears to be rather redundant, but it's not, at least not entirely.

> "words" – This word means speech, and is also translated as "saying" or "commandment" throughout its many uses (~1500 times) in the Old Testament.
>
> "language" – this word shows us multiple times in the account (11:1, 6, 7 (2x). It is a word that communicates speech ("language" is a good translation), but it is also translated/used in this way: "shore, bank, brink, brim, side, edge, border, binding".

In a sense, Gen. 11:1 is telegraphing part of the issue taking place here. Because the people have one shared language, they all share a border together as one people. This isn't inherently bad, in fact this is God's desire when properly done, but it is bad here because the people are united in rebellion against God.

<u>Settling Down</u>

Up to this point, God has given only a few commands, but there's one He's given on a few occasions to his creation: "fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28; Gen. 9:1, 7)

God's expectation for His creation is mobility.

We will see this type of behavior in Abram in Genesis 12.

Note as well, that we've already seen this settling down idea arise before, with Cain (Gen. 4:16)
NOTE: this will not be the only time Cain arises in this section.

Here we are seeing blatant disobedience to remain in one place instead of fulfilling God's command to move about the earth (as well as the desire to make a name for themselves).

Building Up

Earlier in Genesis we are given the lineage of Cain, a line that is shown to be rebellious in murder, settling down, and in creating things of his own (and likely for his own glory). This building for their own glory is exactly what is taking place here.
NOTE: Cain's name means "acquired". Ultimately, Cain believed in acquiring by his own hand, a behavior that characterized his family line (Gen. 4:17-21)

We should also note that the founder of Babel here is from the line of Ham, the one who was cursed after the flood (Gen. 10:6-20). Also from his lineage come the Philistines, Egypt, Nineveh, and the occupants of Canaan's land that Israel will war with much later on. The inhabitants of this land are those who are part of easily corruptible lines.

Jewish thought at this time (as we read in the last lesson) is that spiritual beings were responsible for introducing tools, drugs (plants), astrology, etc. to mankind. This puts Nephilim potentially at the building of Babel. Here's some more addition to this belief from 1 Enoch 69 (see additional page).

In addition, it needs to be noted that "mountains" are regarded as sacred spaces:

God frequently met with people on mountains.

Altars were representative of "mountains" for sacrifice to God

Mountains are used as places of divine occurrence in other cultures/mythologies
(Greek – Mount Olympus; Egypt – pyramids; China – temple of heaven)

It is said that the angels who rebelled against God came together and made a covenant together against God on a mountain (1 Enoch 6)

"1. And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. 2. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: 'Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children.' 3. And Semjâzâ, who was their leader, said unto them: 'I fear ye will not indeed agree to do this deed, and I alone shall have to pay the penalty of a great sin.' 4. And they all answered him and said: 'Let us all swear an oath, and all bind ourselves by mutual imprecations not to abandon this plan but to do this thing.' 5. Then sware they all together and bound themselves by

mutual imprecations upon it. 6. And they were in all two hundred; who descended [in the days] of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon, and they called it Mount Hermon, because they had sworn and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it."

The idea here is that these beings are seeking to build their own "mountain". They are seeking to "become gods" and God puts a stop to this by scattering the people.

## Disinheriting the Nations (Deuteronomy 32; Psalm 82)

Deuteronomy 32 speaks to the time God scattered the nations at Babel saying:

"When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
when he divided mankind,
he fixed the borders of the peoples
according to the number of the sons of God.
**9** But the LORD's portion is his people,
Jacob his allotted heritage."

Notice "borders" here. This is not the same word as before, but does describe the events of the Tower of Babel. The people are divided, and new borders are given to the new people groups that now existed. Notice as well that these people are divided according to the number of the "sons of God". This phrasing ties these divine beings to these physical people biblically.

Psalm 82 adds to this idea by giving us a glimpse at what is going on in these others nations, while God interacts specifically with Abram and the eventual nation of Israel.

"God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:
**2** "How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked? *Selah*
**3** Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.
**4** Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked."
**5** They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
**6** I said, "You are gods,
sons of the Most High, all of you;
**7** nevertheless, like men you shall die,
and fall like any prince."

**8** Arise, O God, judge the earth;
for you shall inherit all the nations!"

Notice again the mention of the "gods" being in places of judgment over people groups/nations. They are failing at exercising the justice of God, which leads to their ultimate downfall. This Psalm ends with the reversal of Dt. 32:8, God inheriting the nations that have been disinherited.

## Summary

We can summarize in this way: when God scattered the nations to their own devices, He moved to focus and guide a specific people group from Abraham (because of his willingness to "go"), but God did not leave the nations completely alone. He placed beings to watch over them. Some of those beings would fulfill God's expectations, others would fail and succumb to seeking their own power by becoming worshipped and leading nations astray.

The hope is that the LORD would eventually inherit all the nations again. This would come/is coming to pass through the actions of Jesus (Acts 2).

## Take Home

Q: What are some parallels, comparisons, and contrasts you see between the Tower of Babel event and Acts 2?

Q: What are some special events that take place on mountains in the Bible?