

Sessions 16-17- The Tower of Babel Rebellion (Genesis 11; Deuteronomy 32) Parts 1 and 2

*All Bible references are from NASB unless noted otherwise.

The ancient 2nd Temple period (NT period also) answer to the question:

“Why is the world as wicked as it is today?” We noted that there were three rebellions:

- 1) Satan prior to Genesis 3 and Genesis 3 rebellion God’s earthly imagers, Adam and Eve.
- 2) The sons of God (fallen elohim and members of the divine council) who rebelled in Genesis 6.
- 3) The division and abandonment of the nations by God in Genesis 11 and Deuteronomy 32:7-9.

Theology of God’s Abandonment and/or Distancing Himself

1. **Genesis 3:24** So **He drove the man out**; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.
2. **Exodus 33:3** "*Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey; **for I will not go up in your midst**, because you are an obstinate people, and I might destroy you on the way." (cf. Exod. 33:1-6).
3. **Exodus 28, 40-** God chose Aaron and his descendants only to be High Priests instead of the wickedness of the whole nation which God originally desired (Exodus 19:6).
4. **Psalm 81:12** “So I **gave them over** to the stubbornness of their heart, To walk in their own devices.”
5. **Romans 1:24-28**

²⁴ Therefore God **gave them over** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵ For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. ²⁶ For this reason God **gave them over** to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. ²⁸ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God **gave them over** to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

6. **The New Covenant-** Under the New Covenant, all believers are priests (Rom 15:16; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). Eventually, God’s distance from humanity will be completely removed and His direct presence will be with us once again! (Rev 21:3).
7. **Unbelievers** choosing to reject God will be in outer darkness forever (Matt 8:12; Rev 21:8; 22:14-15).

Genesis 10:32 to 11:1-10

³² These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, **in their nations**, and from these the **nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.**

11:1 ¶ Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.

² And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

³ And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.

⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, **and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.**"

⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built.

⁶ And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.

⁷ **Come, let us go down** and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech."

⁸ So the **LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth**, and they left off building the city.

⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the **LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth**.

1. Moses is writing to the Israelites close to 2000 years after the flood (date of flood ca. 3298 B.C.) Date of Exodus (1446 B.C.)
2. The tower of Babel incident is hard to pin down precisely, but the range is 300-700 years after the flood.
3. The focus is explaining to the Israelites how the nations developed into separate nations/groups from the three sons of Noah (Shem, Ham, and Japheth)- Gen 10:32.
4. It also explains how tenacious sin was in the hearts of the post flood people (Gen 6:5; 8:21; 11:4).
5. God invites His divine council ("Let us"- similar to Gen 1:26; 3:22) to join Him in confusing their language and scattering humanity into nations. As in Gen 1:27, God alone is the one doing the action (11:8, 9), but it is done in such a way as to convey participation by the whole divine council.
6. Similar to Genesis 6:1-4, we are not given the full details of the Tower of Babel incident. It is only later Scripture that provides further insights into this historical event.
7. We will be introduced to some of the background to why we rarely see Yahweh reaching out to gentile nations (non-Jews) in the OT. Rare examples include Jonah the prophet, but this was more for a corrective to Jonah's bad attitude (according to the argument of the book of Jonah).

Theology of God's Allotment or Portion (assignment)

Deuteronomy 4:19 And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that **the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven**.

²⁰ **But** the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own **inheritance**, as you are this day. (ESV)

Deuteronomy 17:2 "If there is found among you, within any of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, a man or woman who does what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing his covenant, ³ and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or the moon **or any of the host of heaven, which I have forbidden,**

⁴ and it is told you and you hear of it, then you shall inquire diligently, and if it is true and certain that such an abomination has been done in Israel,

⁵ then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has done this evil thing, and you shall stone that man or woman to death with stones. (ESV)

Deut 29:23 the whole land burned out with brimstone and salt, nothing sown and nothing growing, where no plant can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger and wrath--

²⁴ all the nations will say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land? What caused the heat of this great anger?'

²⁵ Then people will say, 'It is because they abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt,

²⁶ and went and served other gods and worshiped them, **gods whom they had not known** and whom he had not **allotted** to them. (did not **assign** to them). (ESV)

Deuteronomy 32:7-9

32:7 Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you.

⁸ 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.

1. At the time of the division of mankind (Gen 11; Tower of Babel), God fixed the boundaries/borders of the peoples/nations according to sons of God (*elohim* or angels of the divine council).
2. God allotted (assigned) various *elohim* to the nations (Deut 4:19-20).
3. God allotted (assigned) the various nations to certain sons of God (*elohim*- 32:8).
4. God abandoned the rebellious nations at the tower of Babel to lesser *elohim*, but chose to create for Himself a new people/nation by choosing one man (Abraham- Gen 12) and devoting Himself to this new nation as their ONLY God. He was their only God and they were His only people (32:9).

Deuteronomy 4:7 "For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him?" ⁸ "Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? (cf. 4:32-40).

2 Samuel 7:23 "And what one nation on the earth is like Your people Israel, whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people and to make a name for Himself, and to do a great thing for You and awesome things for Your land, before Your people whom You have redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, *from* nations and their gods?" ²⁴ "For You have established for Yourself Your people Israel as Your own people forever, and You, O LORD, have become their God.

Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 14:2 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 32:10 "He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

¹¹ Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions,

¹² the LORD alone guided him, no foreign god was with him.

¹³ He made him ride on the high places of the land, and he ate the produce of the field, and he suckled him with honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.

¹⁴ Curds from the herd, and milk from the flock, with fat of lambs, rams of Bashan and goats, with the very finest of the wheat-- and you drank foaming wine made from the blood of the grape.

¹⁵ "But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek; then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.

¹⁶ They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger.

¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, **to gods they had never known**, to **new gods that had come recently**, whom **your fathers had never dreaded**.

¹⁸ You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth.

Other OT Allusions to the Holiness of the Land of Israel (Cosmic Geography)¹

David's Predicament

1 Samuel 26:17-20

¹⁷ Then Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And David said, "It is my voice, my lord the king." ¹⁸ He also said, "Why then is my lord pursuing his servant? For what have I done? Or what evil is in my hand?" ¹⁹ "Now therefore, please let my lord the king listen to the words of his servant. If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering; but if it is men, cursed are they before the LORD, for they have driven me out today so that I would have no attachment with the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.'" ²⁰ "Now then, do not let my blood fall to the ground away from the presence of the LORD; for the king of Israel has come out to search for a single flea, just as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

Philistine god Dagon's Impotence

1 Samuel 5:1-5

¹ Now the Philistines had captured the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

² The Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the temple of Dagon, where they positioned it beside Dagon. ³ When the residents of Ashdod got up early the next day, Dagon was lying on the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set him back in his place.

⁴ But when they got up early the following day, Dagon was again lying on the ground before the ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and his two hands were sheared off and were lying at the threshold. Only Dagon's body was left intact. ⁵ (For this reason, to this very day, neither Dagon's priests nor anyone else who enters Dagon's temple step on Dagon's threshold in Ashdod.) (NET)

Naaman Asks for Dirt

2 Kings 5:15-19

¹⁵ ¶ He and his entire entourage returned to the prophet. Naaman came and stood before him. He said, "For sure I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel! Now, please accept a gift from your servant."

¹⁶ But Elisha replied, "As certainly as the LORD lives (whom I serve), I will take nothing from you." Naaman insisted that he take it, but he refused.

¹⁷ Naaman said, "If not, then please give your servant a load of dirt, enough for a pair of mules to carry, for your servant will never again offer a burnt offering or sacrifice to a god other than the LORD.

¹⁸ May the LORD forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to worship, and he leans on my arm and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD forgive your servant for this." ¹⁹ ¶ Elisha said to him, "Go in peace." (NET)

Daniel 10:12-14, 20-21

Daniel 10:13 "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.

Daniel 10:20 Then he said, "Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.

¹ *Unseen Realm*- Pages 117-122. *Demons* by Michael Heiser, p. 115.