

WEEKLY REFLECTION

Unlike Genesis 10, which paints a picture of Noah's descendants as they spread in the lands, "each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations" (v.5), Genesis 11 tells us the whole earth "had one language and the same words." (v.1) Thus the Tower of Babel account serves as a flashback to tell us why and how the people were dispersed.

Where Noah built an altar to the Lord as soon as he went out from the ark (Gen. 8:20), the people in Genesis 11 sought only to glorify themselves. They feared being dispersed over the face of the whole earth and fought to leave a lasting legacy by building a city and a tower with its top in the heavens. (v.4) Ironically, their very actions are what caused their downfall: as soon as the Lord saw what they had done, He knew there would be no end to the evil their selfish ambition would bring about. (v.6) So He confused their language and scattered them over the face of the earth. The tower they were building came to be known as the Tower of Babel, meaning "confusion" or "to be mixed up." (v.9)

While the rest of Scripture zooms in on a particular group of Noah's descendants through his son Shem, there is nothing special about Abram and his family to merit God's favor to them. In fact, Abram likely belonged to a family of pagan moon-worshippers, and his wife Sarai was childless and barren. Yet it is through them that all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3), revealing God's heart for redemption and reconciliation of the nations even from the very beginning.

As we meditate on this account of dispersion and scattering, church, let us not forget the part we are commanded to play: that we, too, must go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded, because He alone is worthy of our worship. (Matt. 28:18-20; Rev. 5:9-10)

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

We touched on Sunday how God's design for His people is like a massive orchestra or band, where everyone brings a unique sound to create a rich harmony.

If your small group was a musical band or a chamber orchestra, what instrument do you think you would play, and what vibe would you bring to the dynamic? As you zoom out from your small group to the wider church body, how do you see your unique "sound" or gifts contributing to the Gathering community as a whole?

QUESTION TWO:

"We often understand the account of the Tower of Babel as God's punishment for the people's selfish ambition and their failure to look towards Him. However, we heard on Sunday how God redeemed the scattering of people and languages by using our diversity to highlight His multifaceted glory, as a single language or culture isn't enough to express it all.

Was there a time when God closed a door, frustrated your plans, or brought an end to your own selfish ambition—but as you look back, you are now able to recognize His grace and mercy to you?

QUESTION THREE:

What can you do this week to surrender your plans to God, instead of trying to build your life on your own? Where has He placed you, to scatter as His hands and feet as you go out and share the good news of Christ?