

Genesis 3:8-11:26

- But back to the text here in Genesis 3. The image of God is tarnished and that leads us into verse 8 where God enters into the picture.
- The man and woman hear the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden. The form of the verb for walking shows that this was a habitual thing that God did with them. So they had this relationship where they walked in the garden but now this relationship is severed because they are now hiding. But what else does it say here? It says that this occurred in the “cool of the day,” which people point to maybe the afternoon or something. But there is also the possibility that this phrase could be translated the “wind of the day” or even the “wind of the storm.” Therefore carrying the idea of a more intense moment, which would also explain the reaction of the man and woman as they try to hide themselves from this.
- God then calls out to them asking where they are. Do you really think that God doesn’t know where they are? No. Why does he do this then? To get them to realize that they are hiding from him and to confront them. So the man explains why he was hiding and the Lord responds asking if Adam has done what he commanded him not to do. Now let’s look at Adam’s response.
- How does Adam respond? First, he points the finger at who? The woman. But then notice how he describes this woman. The woman “whom you gave to be with me.” Who is he essentially blaming here? God. He went that far and you can see how all the relationships established in the previous chapters are now falling apart. But then don’t miss the last part of Adam’s answer. What does he say? And I ate. Adam confesses that he did in fact eat of the fruit. He acknowledges the wrong that he did. The Lord then turns to the woman and she responds, “the serpent deceived me, and I ate.” So the woman kind of points the finger at the serpent now but at the same time she is also just telling the truth. She was deceived and she ate. So she also confesses to the wrong that she has done.
- And so this now sets the stage for some of the most important verses in Scripture that will set the stage for essentially the rest of the Bible.
- **The Blessings and Curses**
- The Lord gives a series of what we normally view as solely curses but there are actually some blessings in the midst of these curses as we will see. But the Lord will address these three parties in the reverse order of what he just did in his questioning.
- So he starts with the serpent and we have to remember that it was not only the serpent who was involved here but who else? Satan. And so in these two verses the Lord is going to deal with the serpent but also since he is in association with Satan in some way, Satan will also be dealt with here as well.

- In verse 14 you have the serpent cursed and what is the result? The serpent is forced to go about on its belly forever. Keep that in mind for something that comes a little later.
- Verse 15. This verse is one of the most significant passages of Scripture because it really starts to show God's agenda for the rest of redemptive history. So notice first of all that God will put enmity between the serpent and the woman and between the serpent's offspring and the woman's offspring. This is showing a reversal in the sense that Satan and the serpent thought that they could deceive the woman in order to go against man with the final purpose of going against God and usurping his authority. But what the Lord states here is that that is over. There will forever be enmity between the two and in fact this will carry on into the future to include offspring as well. This shows that there will always be at least a remnant of people who will be opposed to Satan, which we see all throughout the rest of the Bible and even today.
- But then the last part of this verse is very crucial for us to catch and to understand. Notice the first phrase there. "He shall bruise (or crush) your head." There is a sudden switch here talking about offspring in general to a specific offspring or seed. Based on what was just said previously in the verse you would expect it to be "they" rather than "he." But this is purposeful because the Lord is zooming in on a specific individual. There will be a particular seed from the line of the woman and what will he do? Crush the serpent's head, which remember who is associated with this serpent? Satan. And so who else is being crushed here? Satan. And so God will preserve a line and a man will come out of that line who will defeat the leader of the opposing line forever. Satan thought that he could use man in order to usurp the authority of God but what we have here is an ironic twist where God declares that he is going to use a man to crush Satan and defeat him forever. God is showing that Satan did not even win a little bit but rather God wins in all areas. So Scripture from this point forward is continually looking forward to this individual, this seed, who will defeat Satan. This why this passage is referred to as the protoevangelium, which means the "first gospel." This is the first mentioning of what we later come to know as the Gospel. Where there will be an individual who comes to forever defeat Satan.
- Also, on a side note, do you remember how the serpent was cursed in verse 14? He will go about on his belly, why based on what we just talked about here in verse 15? So that his head can be crushed. And so the serpent going about on his belly is a continual reminder to Satan that the seed will crush his head.
- But also notice the second part of this verse. This defeat of Satan will come at a cost. Because as the seed crushes the head of the serpent, what else happens? The serpent will crush his heel. And we need to understand what is going on here. How does the serpent crush the seed's heel? The idea here is not some back and forth battle but rather as the seed crushes

the head of the serpent, in the process of doing so, he crushes his heel. Like the pain you would get if you crushed a serpent's head under your foot. And what is this referring to, as we know later on? The cross. This victory will come at a cost. And so again you understand why this is the first gospel.

- What you need to also understand from this protoevangelium is the fact that God's agenda is ultimately about his glory. That's the point here. God will defeat Satan and show that he is God. We sometimes get so focused when talking about salvation about our sins being forgiven and view that as the end all goal of salvation but we need to understand while that is involved in salvation, the ultimate goal is God's glory. And that is what we find from the very first mentionings of the gospel.
- V. 16 - now God turns to address the woman. And what does he say to her? I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing. Most translations say something like that but more literally the text actually says, "I will surely multiply your pain and conception." Now we have to understand both sides here. There is judgment here as a consequence of the fall there will be pain but at the same time what will God also multiply? Conception. They will still be able to have children, yes it will involve pain as we saw before but also after in the following phrase, but they can still bear children. Why is this significant? Because of Genesis 3:15 and the preservation of the line. God is saying that even though there are consequences for the fall, he will continue his agenda and move his plan forward. And then also we see the marital relationship affected where there will be confusion between the husband and wife.
- Vv. 17-19 - then we come to the man. Because he has eaten of the fruit that he was commanded not to eat of, what will happen? The ground will be cursed and it'll only be by the sweat of his brow that he will be able to eat of it. Remember what creation was originally? A man hugger. But now we see that creation goes against man. But also notice something at the end of these few verses. What else does God say will happen? Man will what? Die. And on the surface this seems bad but we have to understand that this like the conception mentioned before is part of the unfolding of how Genesis 3:15 will continue forward. Because if people could not die, then what could not happen? Jesus' death on the cross. So in allowing people to die, God is actually moving the plan of Genesis 3:15 forward and preparing the way for when Christ will die and crush the serpent's head.
- **The Response (Vv. 20-24)**
- Now we turn to see Adam's response to all of this and we find in verse 20 that he now names the woman "Eve." Up until now she has only been referred to as the woman but now Adam names her. Notice what the text gives as the reason why Adam called her Eve. It is because she was the mother of all living. But have they actually had any children yet? No. And so what is going on here? Adam naming his wife Eve shows that he

actually believes what God has just declared. He believes that God will preserve a line culminating in the seed. And so by this Adam is expressing faith.

- God then provides garments of skin to clothe Adam and Eve which carries the implication that an animal had to die. This may point to the beginnings of the idea of sacrifice that will be prevalent throughout the rest of Scripture. It points to the necessity of a death or sacrifice to provide a covering and so carries the idea of sacrifice and atonement.
- The last few verses then involve God removing them from the garden. We can often read his words in verse 22 as if God feels threatened by man or something like that, but we have to remember what we talked about before what it means that man had become like God. Was that a good thing? No. And really God is expressing that sad reality that man has become just like one of us and so he removes them from the garden so that they do not eat from the tree of life because in doing so they will forever be in a state of only being like God and really in a state of death. And so they are removed and the cherubim and a flaming sword are placed to guard the way to the tree of life. And this is all done so that God's agenda can move forward and man can be redeemed.

C. Outside the Garden (4:1-26)

- Chapter 4 now transitions to life outside the garden of Eden as God continues to move his agenda forward.
- Verse 1 states that Adam knew Eve his wife. The term "knew" denotes not just sexual intimacy but the fullness of that intimacy expressed in the covenant of marriage. And she bore a son named Cain. Now notice why she named him Cain. She says, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." This phrase can be understood in two ways. First, it can be taken as most English translations do in which it is understood in a literal sense as "I have gotten a man with the Lord." But there is another possible way to translate this phrase, which is "I have gotten a man, the Lord." Understood in this way then Eve likely believed, although wrongly, that this son was the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15. But we see right away that there was this expectation for this seed to come. But as we'll see Cain was definitely not the promised seed and was quite the opposite of that.
- Verse 2 then mentions the birth of another son, Abel. You are probably somewhat familiar with the story of Cain and Abel but what you need to understand is that really what is going on here is the battle of the two lines mentioned before in Genesis 3:15; the godly line of the seed and the line of Satan that is opposed to that line.
- And you know the story, Cain and Abel bring offerings to the Lord. The Lord had regard for Abel's offering but not Cain's. Cain gets angry and the Lord confronts him and tells him that sin is crouching at the door but he must rule over it. But what does Cain do? Does he end up ruling over that sin? No. He speaks to his brother Abel, with the implication being

“let’s go to the field.” And what’s he do? Kill him. And so is this murder just in a rage of passion or something like that? No it is premeditated. This shows the depravity of man and how the fall has severely impacted man.

- The Lord again confronts Cain but does Cain confess? No. And as a result of his actions, the Lord curses him. The Lord states that the ground will no longer yield its strength to him as well as notice what he says at the end of verse 12. What does he say Cain will be? A fugitive and a wanderer. But now notice Cain’s response. Does he accept this punishment? No, not really. What does he essentially say? This isn’t fair. He is exhibiting the clear mindset of an unbeliever. And this stands in stark contrast to his parents. When Adam and Eve sinned, did they argue God’s punishment? No, they accepted it. They knew they were in the wrong. Cain on the other hand does not want to accept it. And to show Cain’s rebelliousness even more. Notice what he does at the end of verse 16. What does he do? He settles in the land of Nod. Why is that significant based on what we just saw of the Lord’s curse? He was supposed to be a wanderer but now he is settling in a land. He is going against the Lord’s punishment. And to make matters worse, what is that place called? Nod. Do you know what Nod means in Hebrew? It means “wanderer.” He is essentially telling God, you said I would be a wanderer but to show you I’m going to settle in a town and not just any town but in “wanderer-town.” The depravity of man is on full display right away with Cain.
- And the text goes on to talk about Cain’s children and a little bit of his line. But then we come to the last couple verses of the chapter and these are important. When Cain killed Abel, you can see the plan of Satan. If you remove the line of the seed then there will be no seed that comes to crush my head. But what does he fail to take into account? Was Abel the actual line of the seed? No, who was? Seth. Adam and Eve have another son and name him Seth, which means “appointed one.” It is through him that the line of the seed will continue forward. And we see Seth has a son, Enosh, the line is moving forward.
- But then lastly, notice the end of chapter 4 here. It is at that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord. This not only refers to worship but probably even more specifically to prayer. And what would they be calling out to the Lord in prayer about? What is the only promise they have from God at this point? Genesis 3:15. They are praying that the Lord would fulfill Genesis 3:15 and bring this seed.

I. The Generations of Adam (5:1-6:8)

- The Genealogy

- In Genesis 5 we encounter a genealogy. And we just need to point out a few things about this genealogy and what’s going on here. First of all, the overall purpose of the genealogy is to show the preservation of a line of godly individuals that the Lord will use to continue his plan/agenda and to also prepare for what’s to come in that plan. That is the overall point here.

- Second, as you read through this chapter one thing will likely stick out to you which is the continual repetition of the phrase, “and he died.” Which again points back to the reality of the fall and the consequences of that are fully on display here.
- Third, what you need to notice when reading through genealogies is often there is a certain pattern and it moves quickly from one descendant to the next and so on. And so when that pattern is broken or the author takes a break from the genealogy it is significant and you need to pay attention to that because that’s what the author is trying to draw your attention to. There are two side stories here in this chapter that we’ll focus on in just a sec.
- Before we get to those two side stories, let me point out something in the first few verses. Notice real quick how the text mentions that God had created man and made him in the likeness of God. But then look at verse 3. When Adam fathers Seth, what does the text say about Seth? In whose likeness and image is Seth in? Adam’s. This is confirming what we saw before. The image of God in man is now tainted. And this tainted, fallen nature is what is now being passed on to his descendants. This supports the idea of original sin, which speaks of everyone inheriting the sin nature of Adam. I don’t want to get too much into this doctrine here but just wanted to point out this reality that has taken place.
- Now let’s turn to the two departures from the genealogy. The first occurs in reference to a man named Enoch. You have probably heard of him. He is the one who it is said walked with God and then he was not, for God took him. Jude also mentions that Enoch was a prophet. And so we see that Enoch served a prophetic role during this time. And likely his prophetic ministry focused on prophesying about upcoming judgment. We see that in Jude but we also see that here in Genesis. What does he name his son? Methuselah. What is he known for? He lives the longest. So the question is, what does this name mean? Methuselah carries the idea of “after he dies it is sent” or “his death shall bring or send.” What is being sent after he dies? The flood. That’s exactly what we see from the genealogies here. If you do the math, Methuselah dies the same year that the flood comes upon the earth. And so Methuselah is like the ticking time bomb. And so now also you can understand why Methuselah lives for so long, it is God’s patience. So Enoch is prophesying of a coming judgment and his son is the clock of when this judgment is going to come.
- This then leads us into the second departure from the genealogy, which is in reference to Lamech, which is the father of who? Noah. And why does Lamech name his son Noah? The text says that “out of the ground that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.” Do you know what Noah’s name means? Rest. And so essentially Lamech names Noah this because it will be through this one that rest will come to this earth. And where have we seen rest before? The seventh day of creation, the sabbath rest. And so Lamech understands, we need to get back to the sabbath rest. But the ground is cursed and so we need rest. And this is the be careful what you wish for scenario because what is going to bring this rest? The flood. And so you

have to understand that the flood is not only judgment (like Enoch is proclaiming) but it will also bring rest.

- The reason this rest is so necessary is because the ground and creation so intensely resists man and works against him. For example after the flood you have a couple important things related to creation happen. First of all you have seasons established, which implies that what didn't you have before the flood? Seasons. And so the weather was crazy and constantly changing. Second, you also see after the flood God puts the fear of man in animals, which means before the flood they didn't fear man. So you can imagine how crazy and hard this life was before the flood. And so even though the flood is judgment it is also functioning to bring a form of rest.
- **The Nephilim (6:1-8)**
- As we come into chapter 6, we are wrapping up the toledot of Adam and preparing the way for the toledot of Noah. And so really the function of these first 8 verses of chapter 6 are to show the depravity of the world, which shows the need for a flood, but it also towards the end introduces to how God is going to continue to move his plan and agenda forward. So these verses provide a very fitting link between the two sections.
- We have seen the depravity of man on display with Cain and his line earlier but what we will see here is that the world is in fact corrupt and needs to be destroyed.
- Maybe you have read through these verses and you're like what in the world is going on? Who are these sons of God and what are the nephilim? And so we need to unpack all of this and get an idea of what exactly is going on here.
- First, let's deal with these "sons of God." Who are they? There are many options that are thrown out there and we don't have the time to go through every single one in detail, so I'm just going to hit some of the main options. Probably the three main options out there are: 1) the sons of God refer to dynastic rulers who forcibly took control of women; 2) the sons of God refer to the godly line of Seth and so they are intermarrying with the daughters of man (the ungodly line of Cain); and 3) the sons of God are angels (fallen angels). The first option, the dynastic rulers, is largely based on ANE texts and while some civilizations believed their kings to be divine, there is no evidence that there was ever a group of rulers called "the sons of God." So this doesn't seem to fit too well. The next two are probably the most convincing options out there.
- The view that holds the sons of God refers to the godly line of Seth intermarrying with the wicked line of Cain (the daughters of man), would argue that this battle between the two lines has been what is going on in the past few chapters and so that's again what we have here. And the context definitely has that element.
- However, kind of responding to the previous view as well as transitioning into support of the third view of angels, the phrase "sons of God" consistently refers to angels in early Hebrew literature. For example, you have in the book of Job that the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. And clearly there that is a reference to angels. And so this is what the phrase consistently means, angels. But then we also have other support from allusions by Peter (2 Peter 2:4)

and Jude (Jude 6) in the NT, which seem to point to this event as well. [Also Jewish literature from before the time of Christ, like the book of Enoch, supports this position.] Some people point to Jesus' words that angels neither marry nor are given in marriage in passages like Matthew 22 in order to reject the angel view. However, in that passage Jesus is dealing with the Sadducees. And you have to recognize that the Sadducees only believed in the five books of Moses and so when Jesus makes this statement we have to determine, where in the five books of Moses do we learn that angels should not marry? Genesis 6. That's the only option. He is reminding the Sadducees that they know these angels were in the wrong and were not supposed to marry and they crossed that boundary and so were condemned. And so in heaven you'll be like angels were originally supposed to be. One last objection to the angel view is why, in the following verses, does the Lord just focus on punishing man if angels were at fault. But what we have to understand is that man here is joined in on this with the angels and is equally guilty (kind of like the serpent before).

- Ok so if this is angels being referred to here, then what is going on? It seems as though Satan has some sort of plot to where the angels would intermarry with mankind and produce some sort of half-human half-angel beings that revolt against God or are unredeemable, whatever the exact reasoning Satan had, it is very wicked. And we have to remember, who is in on this plan? Man. They are doing whatever they can to continue to try to revolt against the Lord. And this leads into verse 3 where God declares that his spirit shall not abide in or contend with [trying to convict them and get them to repent] man forever, why? Because he is flesh. You have tried so hard to revolt against me, even teaming up with Satan and fallen angels, and yet you are still what? Flesh. In the end you are no different than you originally were, you are just flesh. And then he states his days are 120 years. What will happen after the 120 years? The flood.
- The question then becomes, did this plan work though? This takes us to verse 4, which mentions that there were Nephilim in those days. The term Nephilim has the idea of "to fall" and really seems to carry the idea of being tall or big (Numbers 13:33). The Greek translation actually uses "giants" to translate this term. And so we are tempted to think, "oh man these Nephilim must have been some crazy supernatural angel/man hybrid creatures," but what else does the text say here? Not only were the Nephilim there during those days but also what? Afterward. This shows that this did not produce anything out of the ordinary, at best all it produced was what? Tall people. That's it. And the language used here suggests that there were these tall people before this event happened ["in those days" rather than "from then on"] and there were tall people after this event occurred and so this diabolical plot really accomplished nothing, just tall people who are going to die. So despite Satan and man's best efforts to go against God, God is still in control and his plan continues to move forward. And that's exactly what we see in the next few verses.
- God sees the wickedness of man and is grieved over it and declares that he will blot out man and animals from the earth. And the idea here is that God grieves over this rather than God thinking he made a mistake.

- But then the last verse is important, “But Noah found favor/grace in the eyes of the Lord.” And so we see how God will continue his plan, he will continue it through who? Noah. And that takes us into the next section, the toledot of Noah.

II. **The Generations of Noah (6:9-9:29)**

- **The Flood (6:9-8:19)**

- The main idea here is that “God resets and judges the world so that his plan will continue in it”
- So God gives Noah instructions on how to build the ark. And Noah is faithful to obey in building all of it.
- But notice real quick in the midst of all these instructions verse 18.
- V. 18 - covenant = “God’s promises that shape and drive redemptive history” (Chou). This is going to be the first covenant, which we call the Noahic Covenant. This is very important but we’ll address this more a little later on.
- And so chapter 6 concludes with Noah doing all that God had commanded him to do.
- And then in chapter 7 we have the Lord bringing the flood upon the earth. There is some debate about whether this was in fact a global flood or just a local flood of a certain area. I don’t have time to go into all the details but let’s just point out a few things in support of a global flood. First off the language used describes a global flood. There is a continual repetition of “all”; verse 19 mentions that “all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered.” “Everything on the dry land...died.” Also you have God’s promise after the flood of not destroying the earth in the same way, but we have seen throughout history many local floods. And also consider the fact of God instructing Noah to build the ark. If it was just a local flood, even a big area, couldn’t God had just told Noah to leave that area. You have like 100 years, just start walking that way and you’ll be fine, and take with you some animals and have a parade or something. [Also Peter associates it with the destruction of the earth in 2 Peter 3]. So clearly Scripture views this as a global flood and even uses a unique word for this particular flood (mabul).
- So Noah and the animals get in the ark and God sends the flood. Notice in verses 11-12 of chapter 7. The fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened and rain fell upon the earth. Essentially what you have here is the picture of an explosion of water not just from above but also from below. So it is like mankind is getting crushed in the middle of this water explosion. And this lasts for 40 days and 40 nights. It’s important to note that these 40 days and 40 nights is just referring to the time when the water was bursting forth. Then you have the receding of all the water, which lasted even longer (over 150 days).
- Chapter 8 begins with God remembering Noah, which doesn’t mean that he forgot about him or something but rather the idea of God remembering someone, which we’ll see throughout Scripture, is the idea of God’s focused acting out of a covenantal relationship. Essentially he is focusing on doing what he needs to in order to fulfill his covenant promises. He has a driven focus on you, to love you and to be faithful to you. This is God remembering.

- So God remembers Noah and we see the flood waters start to recede. But notice the imagery used here. You have the earth completely covered by water, you have mountains and dry land appearing out of the water. What does this sound like? Creation. And so what do you have? A restoration of creation. Remember that the flood had a twofold purpose. Yes there was judgment but there was also restoration. And this is why you have creation imagery here.
- And Noah sends out a Raven and it does not return. Why? What do ravens feed on? Carcasses, dead things. He sends the raven to find what is out there, and what is there? Death. We often have this nice peaceful view of Noah and the ark and that's often how we view this. But the sending out of the raven reminds us of what Noah actually came out to. Death. And what would have been his response? Thank God. That should have been me but God showed me grace. And this leads him to then do what? Offer burnt offerings to the Lord. Thank God.
- **God's Covenant with Noah (8:20-9:17)**
- Remember we have mentioned the twofold purpose of the flood that it was judgment but also restoration. And here at the end of chapter 8 and even into chapter 9 we start to see some of this restoration.
- God promises that he will never again curse the ground because of man [this is not negating the curse but rather the curse will not flesh itself out in the same way as it did earlier]. And notice in verse 22 we come to what we had mentioned before. That at this point God establishes the stability of seasons. [the emphasis in chapter 1 about the sun, moon, and stars with seasons has to do more with time, whereas here it is more so dealing with the regularity of climate]. And so now you can actually have some sort of predictable weather and it is not going crazy and changing all the time like you had before the flood. "Nature will not act capriciously but will be timely and predictable" (Matthews)
- This then leads into chapter 9 and notice right away that God blesses Noah and his sons and tells them what? Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Where have we heard this before? Genesis 1 with Adam and Eve. The point of that is to show that God's plan is continuing to move forward and we are heading in one direction, back to where? Eden, original creation. And what we are going to see is that the Noahic Covenant "not only regulates where the earth is now but is also a covenant about where the earth is going" (Chou). God is essentially saying, "The plan is moving forward, we're heading back to Eden.
- And in order for the plan to keep moving forward, God restrains various aspects of sin. First, we see the restraint of animals in verse 2. Notice that God has put the fear of man in them so that they would no longer attack man in the same way like they did before the flood, like we mentioned before. But then second, we also see that God provides a restraint of man by essentially instituting what we can kind of refer to as government or some sort of authority in verses 5-6. In these verses we see that whoever kills a man by man he shall be killed. If you have a deterrent like the government can kill you if you do something wrong, then hopefully less bad things will happen. So in these two ways "God restrains sin so that his plan will go forward."

- And so we see the establishment of this covenant and God promises what? To never destroy the earth by a flood again. And what is the sign of this covenant? He has set his bow in the sky. We often merely just think of this in terms of the rainbow and we think, “oh that’s so nice and beautiful.” But notice what term he says here. What does he say? Bow. As in a bow and arrow. So essentially God is saying that he is placing his weapon in the sky, he is setting it on the rack or whatever you do with a bow. On a side note, now you can understand when passages like say in Ezekiel 1 when Ezekiel is trying to describe the throne of God and he mentions that he sees the likeness of a bow with him, we often think oh that’s maybe showing his beauty or something like that but in reality what is going on? The weapon is no longer on the rack. He’s coming to battle. And that’s exactly what you have in Ezekiel where the Lord is actually coming to bring judgment on Israel.
- So God establishes the Noahic Covenant, which shows again that the plan is moving forward.
- **Noah’s Sons (9:18-29)**
- As we come into this last part of the toledot of Noah, we have to continue to narrow down the line because how many sons does Noah have? Three. So then through which son is the line of the seed going to continue? That’s what we’ll see here as well as some other things we should note.
- First of all we see that Noah works the soil and plants a vineyard. And it grows actually. And so here we see that there is some version of rest from the flood, Noah is actually able to work the ground. But then what happens? Noah gets drunk, which shows that man is still sinful. The flood did not change that reality and so that will still need to be dealt with.
- We then encounter a contrast between the shameful act of Ham and the honorable act of Shem and Japheth.
- We don’t know exactly what Ham did and we don’t really have time to go into all the options but from the text we can at the very least understand that Ham acted in a shameful way that dishonored or shamed his father. But then Shem and Japheth act honorably as they cover the nakedness of their father.
- This then leads into a prophetic proclamation by Noah concerning his sons. This starts out first by cursing Canaan. Who’s Canaan? The son of Ham. And the question becomes why is Canaan cursed here instead of Ham? Well what did we just have? Ham violated who? His father. And so Ham’s son will be cursed kind of to the shame of his father, Ham. And so the punishment fits the crime. And on a side note here, from Canaan come the Canaanites. And where have you heard of these people? Like in the conquest. And remember, what is Israel about to do when Moses is writing the Pentateuch? They are about to enter the Promised Land for the what? Conquest. And so essentially the Lord is beginning to show that he has had this planned for a long time.
- So Ham is cursed but then Japheth is blessed in Shem and the God of Shem is blessed. And this points to the fact that it is through who that the line of the seed will continue? Shem. And it is actually from the name Shem that we get the term “Semitic.”

- And so really through these prophetic proclamations we see that the Lord is ordaining the destiny of nations. Speaking of nations, let's move on to Genesis 10.

III. The Generations of the Sons of Noah (10:1-11:9)

The Table of Nations (10:1-32)

- As we come into this chapter we see the generations of the three sons of Noah. This chapter is also known as the "table of nations," because we will see the descendants of each of these three sons and the corresponding nations that arise from these descendants.
- I said before that at the end of chapter 9, with Noah's prophetic proclamations, we see that the Lord ordains the destiny of nations and in chapter 10 we start to see this reality unfold.
- What we begin to see from this chapter as well as the first nine verses of chapter 11, is that God has established nations as another restraint of sin. Remember God has restrained sin after the flood with the animals as well as the establishment of some sort of government or authority and now we have another restraint of sin, nations.
- This then starts to explain why you need Israel, the nation. Because if you create nations for this reason of restraining sin, you are then going to need a nation who can have an international impact to point people back to the true God. And so in this chapter and the next you again start to see this narrowing effect of not only the line of the seed but also this narrowing of which nation is going to be the nation that God uses to have this international impact.
- So we have the descendants of Japheth listed first and then the descendants of Ham and then Shem is last. Let me just point out a few things of note here in this chapter. First of all, if you start reading through this list you will notice some interesting connections. Remember, who was the cursed son of Noah's three sons? Ham. And if you look through his list you will see such nations as Egypt and Babel and Assyria mentioned. You are probably familiar with Egypt, which we have what important event connected with Egypt? The Exodus. But that Babel (also known as Babylon) and Assyria maybe you're familiar or maybe not, but if you remember later on in Israel's history when Israel gets taken into exile, the northern kingdom is taken by who? Assyria. And the southern kingdom taken by who? Babylon. So the descendants of Ham really comprise most of Israel's enemies that we see throughout the rest of the OT. And this again is essentially the battle we have seen all along of the line of the seed verse the line of the serpent but now we are seeing it on the macro scale of the nations.
- Real quick we need to make one observation because people in the past have abused these passages and used them to claim some very wrong things. Just because a person is part of say the nation of Babylon, does that automatically make them part of the line of the serpent? No. Can someone from Babylon be saved? Yes. And so we need to make sure we don't confuse how the Lord can use nations with then equating that everyone in that nation is evil, kind of like on the flip side, was everyone who was a part of Israel saved? No. So we can't confuse that.

- But anyways, back to the text. The line of Shem. As we mentioned before, this is going to be the line that the line of the seed continues. Notice the mention of Eber there in verse 21. Eber is the name from which we get the name “Hebrews.” And so you are starting to see that this is where Israel comes from.
- Notice also Peleg, mentioned in verse 25 and the accompanying note that it was in his days the earth was divided. This division being referred to here is likely, based on the context, referring to the tower of Babel event, which we are going to see in a second. So this table of nations is not only setting up for but also presuming the tower of Babel. Because in chapter 10 we suddenly have nations and you could be wondering, where did all these nations come from? And to answer that we have Genesis 11:1-9 and the story of the tower of Babel. So let’s turn to that now.
- **The Tower of Babel (11:1-9)**
- This again explains why these nations exist and like we mentioned before, nations exist in order to restrain sin as we’ll see here.
- We find in verse 1 that during this time the whole earth had one language and the same words. If everyone speaks the same language as well as uses the same words, which means like definitions and stuff are clear, then you have a very high level communication.
- And so these people end up settling in the land of Shinar and they decide to make some bricks in order to build a city and a tower. Notice, how do they describe this tower they want to build? “With its top in the heavens.” That will be important to remember for something that comes up a little later. But what else do they want to do here? They want to make a name for themselves. Where did we come across this idea of naming things earlier in Genesis? In Genesis 1 with God naming the parts of creation [and in Genesis 2 when man is naming all the animals]. In Genesis 1 we see that this naming shows God’s rule and dominion over all of creation in that he has the authority to name [and then in Genesis 2 we see a similar idea in man demonstrating his rule and dominion over creation just as the Lord had commanded him]. And so what are they saying here? They are saying, “we don’t want God to name us we want to name ourselves.” It is a clear rebellion against God. And to make this even more clear, notice the last phrase there. It says, “Lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” Why would this also be another clear act of rebellion? What were they supposed to do? They were to be fruitful and multiply and do what? Fill the earth. Instead they decide, we are going to settle in a city and build tower because we don’t want to be dispersed, we don’t want to fill the earth and we will make a name for ourselves in the process. This is true and utter rebellion against the Lord.
- So what do we see when humanity is all united together under one language with the same words, what do they do? Rebel. And this shouldn’t come as a surprise because this really has been the heart of man ever since the fall, remember what God said after the flood? That every intent of man’s heart is what? Evil. And so in order to restrain this sin, what does God need to do? Disperse them.
- In the structure of these 9 verses, verse 5 stands at the center and is a point of emphasis. It says, “The Lord came down to see the city and the tower.” Why does the text take the time to mention God coming down to see what they had built?

Remember what they said they were going to do back in the previous verse? We are going to build a tower with its top in the heavens! We'll show God. And what does God say here, let me come down and see this because why? It's not even close to the heavens.

- And so God "comes down" so to speak and confuses their languages and disperses them over all the face of the earth. [Side note on "nothing will be impossible for them" - at first glance this may sound as if God is threatened by them or something like that but as we have seen before God is God and man is merely creation and therefore there is no real threat there but rather God acts in a preventative way because he sees the wicked consequences that would come if he let them continue down this unified path of rebellion].
- So the Lord confuses their language and as a result the city was named "Babel." The term "Babel" is the same term used for "Babylon" later in the OT. And what we see here is a theme that will continue through the rest of the Bible all the way to Revelation, where Babylon is considered this center of rebellion against God. And just like here, in Revelation God will deal with Babylon and it will be no real threat to him and his reign, but he will show at the end what he showed in the beginning, I am God and no matter what mankind tries, they will always be merely the creation and I will always be God.
- So as a result of the tower of Babel we now have nations and these nations are established by God to restrain sin, because what happens when all mankind gets together and unifies? Rebellion. And since you now have nations, you can also see why you need Israel. You need a nation who will be able to be a witness to the other nations.
- Before we move on from this story we need to make one other point that connects with an event later on in Scripture. We have seen here in this passage that languages are used to scatter and disperse people. But there is a time later on in the Bible where languages actually unite people. Do you remember when that is? Pentecost, at the beginning of the church in Acts 2. Remember in that event that you have people proclaiming the gospel in tongues so that people heard it in their own languages. And so in that instance you have languages uniting rather than dividing. And whereas Babel you had people unifying in rebellion against God, in Acts 2 you have people unifying in submission to God. Acts 2 is really the reverse Babel. And why is that important? Because the question throughout Scripture after the fall, is how do we get back to what God originally created us to be? Is God able to bring us back? And the church shows, yes God is able and he is doing it. That is why also in Acts 2 you have the same word used to describe the "breath" of life in the creation of Adam in Genesis 2, being used to describe the birth of the church. The church is the "new man" (Ephesians 2) and is unified in submission to God, which is reverse Babel, through the work of Christ.
- Now you can also understand why us meeting together as a body of believers is so important. Because when we meet together, people from different nationalities, backgrounds, etc., we are making a profound statement of the power of the Gospel, that it has the power to even reverse Babel. And so we can often think of being a part of a church or coming to church is just some small thing but rather it

is one of the most profound Christ exalting things we can do as believers, because when we do this we declare to the world around us that the Gospel works and it is all through the work of who? Christ.

- But we need to move on and so let's move to the next section

IV. The Generations of Shem (11:10-26)

- In verses 10-26 of chapter 11 we have the generations of Shem. The point of this brief section is to show that we are moving from the nations (like we just talked about) to the nation. We just mentioned that the presence of nations, means that God will need to raise up a nation who can then witness to the other nations. And so the narrowing effect continues, not only of the line of the seed but also of the particular nation that God is going to use for his purpose. This is why this section ends with the mentioning of who? Abram, whom we will see later on is renamed Abraham, and who is one of the founding fathers of the nation of Israel.