

# CONFUSION AMONG THE NATIONS: THE TOWER OF BABEL

FRACTURED (GENESIS, PART 2) · GENESIS 11:1-9 · APRIL 2, 2023 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

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*“Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”  
(Genesis 11:7)*

## The God-displacing Efforts of Disordered Humanity (11:1-4)

- The unity of language (11:1)
- The movement eastward to settle displace (11:2)
- The will to build a city with a tower (11:3-4)
- The desire to enter the heavens via this tower (11:4)
- The longing to make a name (11:4)
- The fear of being scattered (11:4)

## The Effortless Work of God with Humanity (11:5-9)

- God’s intention to confuse language (11:5-7)
- God’s movement to unsettle and scatter (11:7-8)
- The desire to disrupt the city and tower-building (11:6)
- The descent to the heaven-reaching tower (11:7)
- The name the made is “confusion” (11:9)

## Moving from Fractured to Restored

- Learning to be humble by turning from idols
- Learning to trust God instead of our own ways
- Learning to pursue God’s kingdom instead of using God to build our own

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the biggest building project or other sort of project with others you have participated in? What were the greatest joys or challenges in this effort?
2. This weekend we conclude our preaching series, “Fractured,” by looking at Genesis 11:1-9. Begin your study in prayer by asking God to speak to you through His Word. Then, whether you’re on your own or with a group, read that entire Scripture text aloud.
3. *Background: This final section of Genesis 1-11 brings attention to the spreading out of the nations after the flood. Genesis 10 is known as the “table of nations.” Genesis 11 begins with this story of the Tower of Babel and then concludes with the family line of the descendants of Shem up to Abram. Abram’s story in Genesis 12 begins a new section of God’s work with humanity,*

*including a new covenant (12:1-3).*

4. What is the situation described by Genesis 11:1-2?
5. “Eastward” describes not only a geography but also a distance from God (see 4:16). What do you think this might signify as this episode begins?
6. How would you describe the plans of humanity recorded in verses 3-4? What is the motivation of humanity here? .
7. How have you seen these sorts of motivations in your own life?
8. How would you describe God’s plans as recorded in verses 5-7?
9. Why do you think God would want to do this? Why might this be good for humanity?
10. Have you ever experienced God doing a disrupting work in your life that was actually for your own good? What happened?
11. Read Genesis 11:8-9 but also Genesis 1:27-28 and 9:7. How might God’s work in Genesis 11 connect with the original purposes of God for humanity?
12. What are some of the biggest things God has been speaking to you or revealing to you through this study of Genesis 1-11? If you’re on your own, write this down, pray over it, and share it with someone this week. If you are with a small group, share your answers with one another before closing in prayer.

## DIG DEEPER:

- Draw, ink, or paint Genesis 11:1-9. As you do that, let God sift through your own heart in relation to sin, temptation, pride, and control. What is God bringing to the surface as you draw? Consider writing that down or sharing your prayer reflections with a friend.
- Watch the Bible Project video, “Day of the Lord”: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/day-of-the-lord/>
- Explore great works of art on the Tower of Babel, such as:
  - Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Toren van Babel: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/pieter-bruegel-the-elder/the-tower-of-babel-1563>
  - Endre Rozsda, La tour de Babel: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/endre-rozsda/the-tower-of-babel-1961>
- Read John Walton, “Beware Our Tower of Babel”: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2023/march/tower-of-babel-genesis-close-reading-walton.html>