

Bible Essentials

Scripture Passage: Genesis 11:1-9

Think about your past week. How has God answered prayer or worked in your life? What prayer requests do you have? Write them here. Then take time to pray about your requests and ask him to open your heart for today's study.

Read today's passage. Jot down your initial impressions of the passage.

Here is some context for Genesis 11:1-9.

In our previous lesson, we saw Noah and his family leave the ark, and the first thing they did was build an altar to worship God. God blessed Noah and his sons and gave them a command: "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth." This was an essential command because currently there were only 8 people on the face of the whole earth.

Noah and his descendants do OK with the first part of God's command. They increased in number, as is discussed in Genesis 10. But they didn't do so well with the second part of God's command. They decided that they didn't want to be scattered over the face of the whole earth, so they planned to build a tower to the heavens. This is where today's story in Genesis begins.

What are your thoughts about the context? Write some key points here.

Read the passage again. Use a different Bible version if you have one available. Then summarize the passage in your own words.

Look closely at the passage and answer the following questions.

What does the passage say about God?

What does the passage say about people?

What does the passage say about God's plan?

What else strikes you about this passage?

Understanding how a passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible is important.

The idea of people being scattered over the face of the earth is seen throughout the Bible, with the establishment of different nations in different areas. Of course, the Bible primarily focuses on people in what is now the Middle East and parts of Africa and Europe, but ultimately, people did eventually move to fill all corners of the earth. The Old Testament is primarily concerned with the nation of Israel, which we will meet later in our study of Genesis, but in the New Testament, we find that God wants to reach all nations and tribes and tongues with the gospel—the good news of Jesus Christ.

When it comes to languages, although having different languages did temporarily slow down the progress of people, the continued growth of the human race enabled groups of people to establish great cities and nations for themselves. This same act that was meant to slow down people’s progress in making themselves great also created a barrier when it came to spreading the gospel later. Yet we see that just as God can scramble languages, he can also make people speak or understand other languages, as shown in Acts 2. On the day of Pentecost, God allowed the disciples to speak other languages so that his gospel could go out to all nations without a language barrier.

What are your thoughts on how this passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible? Write your thoughts here. If you have any questions, write those as well. You may find answers in future lessons, or you may want to find another Christian that you can ask.

Use the following questions to apply today’s Scripture passage to your own life.

How does this passage affect how you view God?

How does this passage affect how you view yourself?

How does this passage affect how you will live your life?

Close in prayer, asking God to help you apply what you learned today.