

Remnant Life Church
May 31, 2026
Familiar Stories Retold:
Reach for the Sky
Genesis 11:1-9

Our familiar story this morning finds us in the time after the great flood

- Here is how we come to this place:
 - After the creation and the populating of the earth through the sons and daughters of Adam, sin became rampant
 - Because Cain had killed Abel (**Gen 4:8**) God sent Adam and Eve's third son, Seth, to be the one to carry the goldy lineage leading to Jesus
 - But Seth's descendants intermarried with the godless tribes and the evil of man's hearts became so great that God sent the flood to cleanse the world and begin again with Noah and his family

Following the flood, the world began to repopulate again through Noah and his three sons, and man began to scatter to different areas

- Settlements began to form which would lead to villages, tribes, cities, and eventually nations
- But even though they were dispersing, they still all spoke the same language (**Gen 11:1**)
- And because of the evil still in the hearts of man, they once again began to plot against the authority of God so they could elevate themselves
- Because since the beginning, pride has always been at the core of every evil and sin of man – and it is still true

READ – Gen 11:1-9

The story of the Tower of Babel is most often recounted as a way to explain the diverse languages of the world

- While it is that, it is also so much more
- And what that is, is a cautionary tale that must be observed and guarded against even today

Where does this start? How do we come to the place of this tower being built?

- (**11:2**) - *As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.*
 - It is nearly universally accepted that Ararat, where the Ark came to rest, lies in the mountains that form the border regions between Turkey, Armenia, Iran and an enclave of Azerbaijan
 - There are actually two peaks there called Little Ararat and Greater Ararat
 - The Bible does not specify the exact place other than it is within this range of peaks
 - And so, moving east from there, as the second verse says, is the Plain of Shinar that today would include parts of Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Syria
- It is during this time of expansion that we are introduced to a powerful man by the name of Nimrod

- His father was Cush; the son of Ham; who was the son of Noah
 - Noah was Nimrod's great-grandfather
 - Nimrod was many things including the first great builder and established the first kingdom encompassing at least 4 cities
 - In 10:8-10 we read ...*the first centers of his kingdom were Babylon...*
 - He then traveled north to Assyria and built other cities including Nineveh
 - Nimrod was the "king" or founder of Babylon and would have spearheaded the building of the tower
- How should we view this story in Genesis?
 - Is it a retelling of what physically took place?
 - Or is it a metaphor that is intended to make a point but did not actually happened?
 - Well, there are other accounts that bear out the historicity of this event
 - It is the ancient Jewish historian Josephus, who was born and lived just a few years after Jesus' crucifixion, who writes this about Nimrod and bears out the Scripture...

"Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God, as if it were through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power. He also said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to reach. And that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers. Now the multitude were very ready to follow the determination of Nimrod, and considered it an act of cowardice to submit to God; and they built a tower, neither sparing any pains, nor being in any degree negligent about the work: and, by reason of the multitude of hands employed in it, it grew very high, sooner than anyone could expect; but the thickness of it was so great, and it was so strongly built, that thereby its great height seemed, upon viewing, to be less than it really was. It was built of burnt brick, cemented together with mortar, made of bitumen, that it might not be liable to admit water. When God saw that they acted so madly, he did not resolve to destroy them utterly, since they were not grown wiser by the destruction of the former sinners; but he caused a tumult among them, by producing in them diverse languages, and causing that, through the multitude of those languages, they should not be able to understand one another. The place wherein they built the tower is now called Babylon, because of the confusion of that language which they readily understood before; for the Hebrews mean by the word Babel, confusion..." (Ant. I: iv: 2)

- The biblical account, confirmed by this writing from outside the Scripture (not that we require that) tells us several things:
 - First, man learned nothing from the world-wide punishment God had brought on the sin of man

- They not only had not learned anything but had set their minds even more intently on exalting themselves
 - This tower, which today is called a Ziggurat, was to be the shining beacon of their might and abilities
 - They would “make a name for themselves”
 - IOW – promote and elevate themselves while, at the same time, demoting God
 - And here is a key principle truth we must learn from this -
 - Anytime we promote ourselves, we are at the same time demoting God
 - And we are told of God’s view of this foolishness throughout the Bible
 - **Deut 4:39** – *Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.*
 - **Isa 45:18** – *For this is what the LORD says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: “I am the LORD, and there is no other.”*
 - In both **Matt 6:24** and **Luke 16:13** - *No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other...*
 - The single, most consistent sin of the Israelites throughout their history was the worship of the idols of other pagan nations
 - How much worse that they now wanted to, in essence, worship themselves
 - Not worshipping the creator, but the created
 - It brings to mind the word ‘folly’ in the Bible
 - Most often used in reference to the sinful actions of man
 - David writes in **Psalms 69:5** - *You, God, know my folly; my guilt is not hidden from you.*
 - One source defines folly as a fountain of foolish actions
 - The actions of the people in the Plain of Shinar were truly folly
 - Even satan attempted to get Jesus to embrace the folly of self-centered promotion when he tempted Him in the wilderness saying that he would give all the riches of the world to Him if He would bow down and worship him.
 - Jesus’ response was to speak the command of **Deut 6:13**
 - *Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.*
 - And don’t forget that satan’s temptation and the subsequent fall of Adam and Eve revolved around self-promotion (**Gen 3:1-6**)

And so, for us this morning, within this biblical account 3 aspects of the flesh nature of man are exposed.

- Aspects that we must continue to guard against today - Even within the church
1. “Build ourselves a city” (11:4a)
 - **Genesis 9** the flood has ended, and God gives a command as a part of the covenant He then makes with Noah
 - And it is the rainbow that is the symbol of the covenant
 - (9:1) - *Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.*
 - Now contrast what God told them to do with what they proclaimed for themselves
 - (11:4) *Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.*
 - Almost immediately the people of the earth set about to disobey God
 - God said go and repopulate the whole earth
 - They proclaimed defiantly that they were not going to do that
 - Meaning the entire foundation of their plan was as a sinful act because it was in violation of God’s command
 - When building a house, one of the most important steps is in the very beginning
 - The foundation of the house must be secure and level
 - If not, the house will be built crooked
 - But there is something else to consider here in why they wanted to do this
 - Ever since the expulsion from the Garden of Eden man has been obsessed with trying to recreate an idyllic utopia to live in which was the ultimate goal for the people here in **Genesis 11**
 - And it is still the longing in our hearts for what was lost
 - What do people so often cry out for throughout their lives?
 - ‘Just a little bit of peace and quiet’
 - Was that not what God gave man in the Garden?
 - There was peace because there was no conflict
 - And there was quiet
 - Not a quiet as in the absence of sound
 - But a quiet in the spirit because they were living in the perfect will and provision of God – without strife, without stress, without conflict
 - That is what we were created to live in
 - Fellowship with God, our creator
 - And in spite of the presence of sin today that longing is still present
 - Sin removed us from the very place God created us to live in for all eternity – with Him
 - Yet that is our great hope and now our great promise
 - A promise restored because of Jesus
 - God always had a plan and purpose for man
 - Adam was immediately given an assignment - to care for the garden and name every animal God created (**Gen 2:15**)

- When sin entered it did not cancel our purpose to do His will it just altered how it would or could be done
- And the expulsion from the Garden was not only a necessary punishment, but a continuation and preparation for God’s plan for His creation
 - What was His plan?
 - To reestablish relationship with His creation
- Out of their own self-centeredness those wanting to build the tower did not want to obey God but instead wanted to create for themselves their own utopia
 - Their desire was for security and preservation
 - God did not call us to protect our way of life at all costs; He called us to live within the realm of His will and leading for our lives
 - Their plan was doomed from the start because their purposes were not the same as God’s purposes
- Nothing will last that is not aligned with the purposes of God – not even churches

The first thing we must guard ourselves against is the desire to self-promote and elevate ourselves

- They were going to do that by building themselves a great city
2. “Make a name for ourselves” (11:4b)
- Make for ourselves a reputation; to become famous; to bring glory to ourselves because of what we have done and who we are
 - The one thing they were forgetting however, is that only God gives true, right authority
 - (Rom 13:1-2) - *Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*
 - Now there have been many times, this verse has been used inaccurately by men and women in the church to gain and maintain control
 - It is wrong because they do not have the emphasis in the right place
 - They emphasize what God has given them, rather than the fact that it came from God in the first place and not of themselves
 - What they, and all of those in church authority must understand, is that this verse should be used as a guide for leadership first, and the people second
 - And never, ever lose sight of the fact that God is the authority of all!
 - We can contrast that way of thinking against what Abraham received from God
 - In Gen 12:1-3) – Abraham is called to leave his people and follow where God tells him to go
 - In that journey it was God who gave Abraham great fame and authority
 - Why? – because Abraham committed himself to serve God in humility
 - He left the security of his own home to be obedient to God’s command

The builders of the tower, however, exalted themselves in pride instead of exalting God’s name in humility

The second thing we must guard against is embracing the pride of the heart that is unwilling to serve God in humility

Then we read what God said about what they were doing

3. “Nothing they plan to do will be impossible” (11:6)
 - The KJV says, “nothing will be restrained from them...”
 - Now be careful how you read this verse
 - God was not concerned about what man might accomplish as if He might lose control
 - What He was concerned about was what they were capable of doing to each other through the evil of their hearts
 - Accountability is one of the great constraints to the evil of man’s heart
 - Our first accountability is the reverent fear of Almighty God
 - Has not our culture lost virtually every bit of the fear of God?
 - It is why we have sunk in the cesspool of sin to the level that we have
 - Nothing is too evil
 - And in this country the ongoing celebration of the murder of the unborn remains at the forefront of that evil
 - You can hardly speak against it anymore without the weight of our culture’s condemnation pouring down on you
 - We are truly flying in the face of the warning of **Isaiah 5:20**
 - *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.*

Since this account in **Genesis 11** there has never again been a time when all of humanity has been united as one

- Because God, in His mercy, has always thwarted the intentions of the evil heart attempting to bring unity for its own selfish purposes
- We have, however, been given glimpses of the depth of that sin when it has occurred in pockets of the world’s population for even a brief time
 - From 1920 – 1953 Joseph Stalin was able to unify the military and politics of eastern Europe and under his tyrannical rule an estimated 20 million people were killed in the name of their political agenda
 - And then again from 1933 – 1945 Adolf Hitler united an entire nation toward one goal, and 17 million people were exterminated
- And this is how the end of this age will come when the antichrist and his false prophet unite the world for one last attempt at defeating God
 - One last Tower of Babel will be attempted to be built
 - But God, as He always has, will in His mercy intervene and it will be for the last time

When God confused the languages at the Plain of Shinar it was an act of mercy

- He did it to preserve and spare the people of what would have eventually had to happen

- satan's lies of a utopia by man's hands always leads to destruction because of the sin and corruption
 - Every great society of history, the Babylonians, Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, Persians, Myan and Aztec nations have all collapsed in on themselves by the corruption of first the leaders and then the people

The sad truth is, and this should not be a surprise to anyone here, our nation is rapidly headed down that same path

- But I don't believe it will be to usher in a new nation to take our place as was the case with so many of those I listed
- I believe it will be to usher in the last days and the final uniting of a sinful world against God

And that is why today we must stand together as a remnant for the Kingdom of God

- In **2 Kings** Isaiah is foretelling of the deliverance of the Israelites from the Assyrians
 - *(19:30-31) Once more a remnant of the kingdom of Judah will take root below and bear fruit above. For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors.*
 - He is speaking words of encouragement to them then as well as to us today

In Paul's letter to the church in Rome, he speaks similar words

- He references Elijah's cry out to God in fear (**I Kings 19**)
 - When God assures Elijah that 7000 prophets have been reserved and are still serving Him; a remnant
 - Paul writes in **Rom 11:5** - *So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.*
- God desires for us to be a remnant, to remain faithful, and strong in our faith!
- But that will only happen when we take our eyes off of what we want, our desires, our tower and instead commit to joining with His purpose for our lives.
- Because it is only in that place of His will that we will know a peace and a joy - including a right fellowship with each other - that no man-made utopia will ever be able to provide!