**Let Us Make a Name for the Lord Jesus**

Genesis 11:1 – 9

**Proposition:** The account of the Tower of Babel highlights present-day efforts toward global governance promising peace and safety for the world.

**Application:** Make a name for God by recognizing His supremacy and His right to rule; by loving all people from all nations; by proclaiming His universal message of peace found only through faith in Jesus Christ; by fighting the temptation to live in fear of existential threats; by ceasing to make a name for ourselves.

**Introduction**

The opening line of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that *Canada was founded on the principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law*. In the account of the Tower of Babel, from Genesis 11, we discover that this city was founded on the principles that recognize the supremacy of man and the rejection of God’s rule. The newly developed technology of that generation allowed heads of state to build a city and erect a tower to protect people from existential threats, such as a global flood.

In like fashion, our advanced technology allows us to detect with greater clarity the “floods” we face today and assist us to be better prepared and protected from catastrophes such world wars or pandemics. Since humanity hangs in the balance of existential threats there is an urgent push for a global response.

The historic account of the Tower of Babel highlights our present-day efforts toward global governance pledging to protect the world from the global threats it faces.

1. **Humanity Rising in Sin** (11:1 – 4)

*International Language* (11:1): In many places around the globe, English is widely spoken and understood. For instance, in the United Arab Emirates, Arabic is the native language, yet English is the spoken language in business affairs.

Hebrew is the native tongue in Israel, yet many Israelis speak English. One can do business in Israel with minimal knowledge of Hebrew. In a similar way, the Babel generation had a *lingua franca* – a flourishing international language – spoken and understood by the people even though their native languages may have differed.

*Uniform Vocabulary:* Not only was there a *lingua franca*, that generation also had an agreed upon vocabulary, perhaps enforced by speech laws, which no doubt put limits on free speech and free thought. The absence of communication barriers, the presence of compelled speech, caused people to abandon their personal opinions in order to comply with group consensus. People were encouraged to conform to a common value system and come together around a common purpose. The people could be heard shouting the same slogans and seen reading the same red book.

And it appears the ruling elite were eager to keep it that way.

*Suitable Geography* (11:2): The term *they* in this passage seems to refer to a *ruling elite.* They had devised a plan for global governance even before arriving in the land of Shinar. When they finally came to this large plain, they were relieved to find a suitable place to build their empire. At once they went to work to set up their system. Why were they so eager to establish a system of global governance? Because out of a global crisis comes a global response. After the horrors of WWI, the nations of the world came together to form the *League of Nations.* Following the devastation of WWII, the nations of the world joined forces to create the *United Nations.* How will the nations align once the COVID-19 pandemic comes to an end? Time will tell.

The premise is that global catastrophes require global solutions. Every global response is created to prevent the global crisis from happening again. What crisis preceded the Babel generation? It was the global flood.

*Coalition of Nations* (11:3): The phrase *they said to one another* suggests *leaders of one nation* said to *leaders of another nation.* Here we have a counsel of heads of states crafting a plan.The rulers came together with a proposed answer to protect the people from a future global catastrophe. By building a city with a very high tower, by coercing people to abandon personal opinion for the greater good, by compelling them to speak an acceptable vocabulary, by urging its citizens to conform to a common set of values, and by obliging them to rally around a common purpose that generation was promised peace and safety.

The Babel generation traded its freedoms in favour of a system where survival was paramount.

*Tower of Surveillance?* (11:4): The tower, equivalent to a modern skyscraper, was visible from a great distance, and it somehow symbolized security. There is a sense that this tower was a place from which rulers could oversee the activities of others. It was a type of watch tower. It may refer to a tower of surveillance.

*Pride and Fear* (11:4): The motivation to build this city with its high tower, at the root of this global coalition, was *pride* and *fear.* The statement *let us make a name for ourselves* suggests *pride. So that we will not be scattered* is a statement of *fear.* The ruling elite desired to order the world in ways that image *man* not *God.* God was not in their thoughts. God was not in their plans.

They wished to cast off the kingdom of God to launch their own. They acknowledged no greater glory than the glory of self. They preferred to dispense with God’s law in order to establish their own.

**Read** Ps 2:1 – 3, 10 – 12

Much of what has been wrong with societies and civilizations throughout history springs from this brief statement *we shall make a name for ourselves.* And so here we have the first attemptto launch a cultural humanistic oneness without reference to God. Here is an effort to create a world without danger, a world immune to the terrors of God, a world united in pride and on common fears. Here is a mass of people, willing to trade personal freedoms in favour of a system where survival is supreme. Here is the world’s first federation of nations, but not its last.

If ever such institutions are justified, it is in response to threats that imperil the human race. But the costs outweigh the benefits. Such a world with all its promise for peace and safety will end in disaster if Lord does not intervene.

1. **God Descending in Judgment** (11:5 – 9)

*Descending a Prelude to Judgement* (11:5): As humanity moved upward in sin, God descended downward in judgment. Coming down is a prelude to judgement. God sees that they are working against His purposes. What is the purpose of God?

**Read** Gen 9:1, 7

It is the will of God that people should reproduce and settle in diverse parts of the world so that the earth might be filled. Yet the Babel generation did not see this as a blessing and so devised plans to thwart God’s command.

They turned a blind eye to the priceless value of the individual soul.

God has no need to descend in order to perceive what is taking place. But this verse teaches a vital lesson. A judge must not condemn the accused until he has personally and fully examined the case. God examined the case and issued His verdict.

**Illustration:** When I was a Science student at the University, I took a course in Cell Biology. We were to look at a group of cells in the lab. But I could not see the cells unless I put them under a microscope so they could be magnified.

God could hardly see the tower that the rulers claimed could reach to the heavens. From the height of heaven, it was barely visible. This teaches another vital lesson. Our greatest achievements are puny when compared to the omnipotence of God.

**Read** Isa 40:22, 23

*God Must Intervene* (11:6, 7): When people work as one, they can achieve great good, but they can also bring about immense harm. Empires are much like individuals, they have a mission. The failure of a global empire to acknowledge God is far more dangerous than the failure of a single person. In the Lord’s eyes the desire to set up a global and godless government had the means for great harm. The efforts of a godless ruling elite seeking to reduce existential threats spawned even greater dangers. A humanist global state that negates the will of God keeps people from finding the knowledge of God.

Nothing would thwart this harmful scheme unless God intervened. If something were not done there would be no restraint to reach their goals and the result would be tragic. So the Lord wrecked this bastion of humanism so that people might have opportunity to find God for themselves. In the next chapter, we see Abraham doing just that.

*Divine Intervention* (11:7 – 9): God has never allowed humans to realize a lasting social order from which He is excluded. If He does let such a social order exist it will spell the end of humanity. When God is excluded, global governance leads to the demise of the global village. We see this truth play itself out in the Book of Revelation. So the Lord intervened and destroyed such plans. It was not the tower that had to be done away with, but what made the tower possible – *pride* and *fear.*

To thwart the efforts of the governing elites, the Lord confused the *lingua franca.* From that point onward no one could understand what the other was saying. If one asked for a brick, the other would hand him a hammer. It was not possible for workers to function as a team unless they could understand each other.

The communication breakdown was so great that the grandiose plans for global governance built on humanistic values came to a screeching halt. Although the forced dispersion was an act of judgment, it was also an act of mercy. Dividing humanity, linguistically and geographically served to decentralize evil. The scattering the Lord brought about in His justice and mercy thwarted humanistic globalism and its futile attempt to gain peace and safety apart from God.

**Conclusion**

Existential threats have always been around. Humanity lives now as we always have on the razor’s edge of extinction. The Tower of Babel reflects our awareness of this reality. In light of this, the dream of Babel is still alive today.

Outside the U.N. building in New York there is a wall bearing the verse, "*They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.  Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they learn war anymore.*” This is the mission of the UN. But this is only the second half of the passage, the first part reads "*He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples.*” The UN refuses to acknowledge this. The quote on the UN wall is taken out of context. It shows that the kingdoms of this world, are united in a common belief that they can bring about the peace and safety of the Messianic Age, without seeking the counsel of the Lord and submitting to the rule of God.

Biblical history has always focussed on two cities – Babylon and Jerusalem. Babylon is the city that seeks to make a name for itself. Jerusalem is the city that seeks to make a name for God. Babylon is rooted in man’s pride and fear. Jerusalem is rooted in God’s peace and safety. Babylon is the city of man. Jerusalem is the city of God. The anti-christ will rule from Babylon. The Messiah will rule from Jerusalem.

**Read** Mal 1:11

Our role as believers in this time in history is to make a name for God. Let us make a name for the Lord by recognizing His supremacy and His right to rule*.* Let us make a name for the Christ Jesus by loving all people from among all nations. Let us make a name for the Lord by proclaiming His universal message of peace which is only found through faith in Christ Jesus.

Let us make a name for the Lord by fighting against the temptation to live in fear of existential threats. Let us make a name for God by ceasing to make a name for ourselves.