

Sabbath School Lesson #5 – All Nations *and* Babel – 23-29 April 2022

Christ would have us avoid coughing the spirit that actuated the builders of the tower of Babel and necessitating to be confounded. “Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:19). Those people had the idea that they could build a city so great and a tower so high that they could defy the judgments of God. They really thought themselves greater than God. The same idea possessed Lucifer, of whom we read: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations! or thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:12-14). The spirit that was in Lucifer was identical with that in the builders of Babel, and the reason for this is that it was Satan himself – Lucifer fallen – who prompted that work. He is “the prince of this world” (John 14:30), “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2).

Sunday: The Curse of Ham – After Noah recovered from drunkenness and was told that his son Ham had seen his nakedness, Noah “said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant” (Genesis 9:25-26). What about the centuries’ theological absurdity of arguing that slavery of black people was the result of the curse of Ham? Let us deal with that absurdity. Here are “the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan” (Genesis 11:6; 1 Chronicles 1:9). The black race were never the descendants of cursed Canaan. The black race descended from Ham, through Cush, and not through Canaan. It is further proved that the black race are not the descendants of cursed Canaan, by the only history we have of the family of Noah. The descendants of Canaan first settled the following countries, recorded in Genesis 10:15-19: “And Canaan begat Sidon his first born, and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite; and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar unto Gaza, as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.” This clearly points out the nations that were dispossessed by the Israelites, when they came out of Egypt and took possession of the Land of Canaan; and in this transaction was fulfilled the curse pronounced upon Canaan. The curse pronounced upon Canaan, and the blessing pronounced upon Shem, were prophetic. “Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan, shall be his servant.” Israelites descended from Shem, and the Canaanites, embracing the several nations named as Amorites, etc, descended from Canaan, and when the Israelites came out of Egypt, they drove out the Canaanites, and made servants of the Gibeonites, “remnant of the Amorites”, “hewers of wood and drawers of water” (Joshua 9:3-27; 2 Samuel 21:1-6), thus accomplished prophetic curse. The Cushites, the other branch of Ham’s family, from whom descended the black race, settled in another part of the world. Like the Canaanites, they were a seafaring people, and sooner arrived at civilization than did the other Noah’s family. First great empires like Egypt were founded by Cushites. Moses “had married a Cushite woman” (Numbers 12:1 ESV) – KJV says “Ethiopian woman”. The Cushite woman had darker complexion. “Though called a “Cushite woman” (Numbers 12:1, R.V.), the wife of Moses was a Midianite, and thus a descendant of Abraham. In personal appearance she differed from the Hebrews in being of a somewhat darker complexion” – EG White {PP 383.3} – see Genesis 25:2-4 – Habakkuk 3:7 refers to Cushite and Midianite in parallel. Cushites and Midianites are not Canaanites. Black race are not descendants of Canaan on whom the curse of servitude was pronounced.

Monday: The Genesis Genealogy – In what way does the Genesis genealogy reveal the origin of nations? “These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread” (Genesis 9:19). The Bible reveals the origin of nations as well as the origin of the world, of man, of sin, and of salvation. In all these things the Bible record is correct, because it is the word of God. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16).

In the tenth of Genesis is a record of the sons and sons' sons of Noah. The chapter close with these words: "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood" (Genesis 10:32). In this chapter there is given us the origin of nations; and from these have come all the races and nations of men. That this has been doubted or disputed, does not affect the fact. The record bears every fair and genuine test that is put upon it; and every such test, however searching, only serves more clearly to demonstrate the perfect truthfulness of the record made by Moses the faithful servant of God, and that still stands in the book of Genesis.

Tuesday: One Language – How does the Bible help us trace the origin of languages? Until the building of the tower of Babel, the descendants of Noah all dwelt together relatively in the same region, "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech" (Genesis 11:1). Then at the building of the tower, God confounded their language so that they could not understand one another's speech. "So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Genesis 11:8-9). The confusion of tongues and consequent dispersion of men into nationalities occurred in the days of Peleg, the great-great-grandson of Shem. "Unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided" (Genesis 10:25). Peleg was born one hundred and one years after the flood. For Shem "begat Arphaxad *two years* after the flood"; Arphaxad was thirty-five years old when Salah was born; Salah was thirty years old when Eber was born; and Eber was thirty-four years-old when Peleg was born. Thus we have (2+35+30+34) 101 years after the flood when Peleg was born, in whose days the families of the sons of Noah, in their nations, were divided in the earth (Genesis 11).

Wednesday: "Let Us Go Down" – Who spoke to the other saying, "let us go down, and there confound their language" (Genesis 11:7) and does that suggest plurality of God? The same Beings involved in the beginning. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). How many were involved in the beginning? "After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God said to His Son, 'Let us make man in our image'." – Ellen White {SR 20.2}. How did Satan feel when God spoke to His Son in the beginning? "But when God said to His Son, "Let us make man in our image," Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man, and because he was not, he was filled with envy, jealousy, and hatred. He desired to receive the highest honors in heaven next to God" – Ellen White {EW 145.1}. What was the order in heaven before the fall of Satan and how does it explain Satan's interested in the third position? "The Son of God was next in authority to the great Lawgiver" – Ellen White {2SP 9.1}. "Satan's position in heaven had been next to the Son of God" – Ellen White {1SM 341.4}. "Satan, the chief of the fallen angels, once had an exalted position in Heaven. He was next in honor to Christ" – Ellen White {RH February 24, 1874, par. 33}.

Thursday: The Redemption of the Exile – Did the scattering of the people of Babel immediately help bring redemption of the exile? Soon after the flood, we find them so filled with rebellious pride that they began to build a city and a tower, thinking that thereby they could protect themselves against any judgments that God might bring upon them (Genesis 11:1-9). This impious attempt was brought to nothing, and people were scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth, yet they did not forsake the service of Satan. Within about four hundred years after the flood, the people of the earth were once more sunken in idolatry and superstition. At that time the Lord came to Abraham, one of the descendants of Shem, and said to him: "Get thee out of thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3). The Lord saw in Abraham a willingness to serve him, although all his people were idolaters (Joshua 24:2)), and he separated him from them, so that through him may come the redemption of the exile.