

GOD'S SOVEREIGN INTERVENTION WITH HUMANITY

GENESIS 11:1-9

CAMPBELL BAPTIST CHURCH (04/19/2020)

Does this sound familiar? “Why are people so divided in this world? Why are there so many racial tensions? Why can’t we all just get along? We just need to live in harmony and unity. If we do enough good there will be peace in our time. We really can end wars! We can do it together. We just need to believe in ourselves and what we can do. We need to realize our potential as humanity.” You’ve heard people say these things. Perhaps you have asked these type of questions yourself. There seems to be a tension with everything that is going on in this world. The common narrative you hear from people is that Utopia could be reached if we all just worked together there could be peace. If we all did something we really could make a difference in this world. Along with these sentiments, there always seems to be something or someone to blame. Those questions become an accusation of sorts, “Why doesn’t God do something about all this injustice?” To which the Christian’s response should be, “He has done something, He is doing something, and He will do something about it according to His Sovereign Plan.”

The Bible records many different times where God intervenes directly in the affairs humanity, according to His Sovereign Plan. In Genesis 11:1-9, we are given the story of one such occurrence and from our passage we will seek to give two reasons as to why God intervenes in human history. The first reason why God intervenes in human history is *because of the sinful imaginations of humanity*.

I. ***The Sinful Imaginations of Humanity.***

In Genesis 10:8-10, we read of the founder of the city of Babel. His name was Nimrod, which means rebel. There’s a description of him being “a mighty hunter before the Lord” which carries with it the idea that he hunted for the souls of men. We could say that he was a rebel against God that sought to lure the souls of many others into his rebellion with him. This is the man who founded the city of Babel along with several other cities in the plains of Shinar. Nimrod’s rebellious spirit carried on to the people who we read about in our passage. Each time we read these “Let us”

statements, it reveals the depths of their rebellion and why God chose to intervene.

The first “let us” statement doesn’t seem so defiant and rebellious at first glance. We read this in verse 3. This phrase “burn them thoroughly” informs us that they were exerting much effort to both plan and prepare even the materials for this tower that they were going to build. They did not decide to start to build this tower on a whim. They had a premeditated plan. They purposefully expended time and effort in their preparations to build the tower. Here is a manifestation of what we would call self-sufficiency, they could do anything they wanted if they just put enough effort in and tried. We hear similar sentiments today, “You can do it if you just put your mind to it.” Perhaps this is the belief that drives the good works salvation mentality. “I will go to heaven if I just do enough good.” Our best efforts are not sufficient enough to save us from our sinful depravity. Only Jesus through his resurrection power can save us from sin. Let’s go on in our passage.

The second “let us” statement uncovers more of the sinful, rebellious imaginations that drove these men to expend such efforts to execute their plan. In the first portion of verse 4 we read these words... Their desire to build a tower whose “top was in the heavens” shows they wanted it to be seen by all. They wanted to make a certain statement by building this tower and it is a religious statement that they made. These towers from this area of Mesopotamia are called ziggurats and were built beside the temples of ancient god’s. The god’s they worshipped would “live or dwell” at the top of the tower that they built. So we know the reason they built this tower involved some kind of idolatry. Yet, the full weight of why they built this particular tower is not fully exposed until we read the next “let us” statement, so we need to look at that now, as well.

In the third “let us” statement, we find the full weight of the sinful imaginations and intentions of the men that built the tower. We find this statement in the second part of verse 4. They wanted to make a name for themselves. They desired to be remembered as the one’s that brought everyone together. In their imaginations, they didn’t need God. They could bring mankind together in peace and build a tower and city where they could forever enjoy that peace as one. Their rebellion is directly against God and His commands. It reflects the statement made by the Serpent during the temptation

in the Garden of Eden where he tried to propose that Adam and Eve could be gods or godlike. Humanity from that time has sought to be gods to themselves. The god of this world has deceived mankind into thinking that they might actually achieve a higher degree of enlightenment, without God. Humanity is their god. Today, we call this belief humanism. This is the “god” this world has worshipped throughout the history of mankind. Humanism has manifested itself in many different ways throughout human history. Often it is centered in a governmental system that seeks to bring people together under one nation or as one nation, with one person as the supreme leader. It has taken the form of Imperialism, Globalism, Communism, and Socialism to name a few, with humanity ruling over each other and dictating how all people should live and what they should believe. All this with the goal of eliminating differences and bringing supposed peace, but in man’s terms, not in God’s terms. This has been going on since the Garden of Eden, but the whole reason that Nimrod is singled out in the previous chapter is because he is the first one “to be a mighty man.” Nimrod was the first one to seek to rule over everyone and impose his rebellious spirit upon them. Various ancient civilizations speak of a man who ruled in the plains of Shinar, in Assyria, and even possibly Egypt. They all have a different name for this man possibly because of the confusion of languages that happened. We don’t know if each of their accounts are about the same man, but we do know that Nimrod was trying to bring the world under his control in this way and the results were that the people in the city of Babel were building this tower in support of bringing all humanity, under one rule and control, centered around the great tower and city that they were building there. They didn’t want humanity to be dispersed, because they wanted to boast in the unity and peace that they had brought themselves. It’s as if they were saying, “We don’t need you God. In fact, you are irrelevant, unimportant, and outdated. We are self-sufficient and self-reliant. In fact, we can rule the world better than you. Our plan is better. We will be our own god”

Listen to these lyrics from a song written in the late 60’s early 70’s.

IMAGINE

IMAGINE THERE’S NO HEAVEN, IT’S EASY IF YOU TRY

NO HELL BELOW US, ABOVE US ONLY SKY

IMAGINE ALL THE PEOPLE LIVING FOR TODAY

IMAGINE THERE'S NO COUNTRIES, IT ISN'T HARD TO DO
NOTHING TO KILL OR DIE FOR, AND NO RELIGION TOO
IMAGINE ALL THE PEOPLE LIVING LIFE IN PEACE
YOU, YOU MAY SAY, I'M A DREAMER, BUT I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE
I HOPE SOME DAY YOU'LL JOIN US, AND THE WORLD WILL BE AS ONE

IMAGINE NO POSSESSIONS, I WONDER IF YOU CAN
NO NEED FOR GREED OR HUNGER, A BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
IMAGINE ALL THE PEOPLE SHARING ALL THE WORLD

YOU, YOU MAY SAY, I'M A DREAMER, BUT I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE
I HOPE SOME DAY YOU'LL JOIN US
AND THE WORLD WILL LIVE AS ONE

John Lennon, wrote these words. He was known as a rebel and he once said that the Beatles were, "...more famous than Jesus now." This is the aim of humanism, to be more famous than Jesus, to be known more than God, that man would be exalted above God or as god. Since Lennon this doctrine has continued to infiltrate society to the point that it seems that even Christians seem okay with it. Secular humanism is ancient paganism cooked up and made to look attractive to our generation. It is being spoon fed to our children at a young age in schools. Much of popular entertainment celebrates it and culture embraces humanism passionately. You are labelled as "outdated or bigoted" if you don't adhere to its ideals. What the previous generations allowed in moderation we have embraced zealously. Tell me why have the human philosophies of psychology been so accepted? It is because previous generations allowed it space beside the Bible. At the same time, Satan attacked the authority of the Bible in churches and seminaries, in order that man's opinions would be viewed as more important than the changeless and infinite wisdom of God. Satan has convinced people that truth is relative. This is part of the narrative that drives our society. Their "truth" is not truth at all. The world we live in has been thoroughly confused and deceived. However, Colossians 2:8 warns us, "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ." Rememder, God's ways are so much higher than man's ways, but some would rather consult professional psychologist than ask a pastor to give counsel from the truth found in God's Word. Don't forget, the Bible has, "All we need for life and Godliness." The only way to truly be God-like is through submission to the divine

Word and will of God, not through humanistic arrogant pride. Self-reliance will drag you to hell. Self-sufficiency will be your ruin. The sinful imaginations of our society should not be influencing us as Christians in this way. My friends, I'm sure each one of us have allowed humanism to influence us somehow or someday. It's time for Christians to live what we say we believe. We must repent and turn from our back sliding rebellion against God. The world and its promises are fleeting, but God has eternity to offer those who submit to His good and righteous authority. We need to renew our minds in Christ, not in human philosophies. Remember Romans 12:1-2, "I appeal to you therefore brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Our minds need to be renewed, refocused on the things that show God's worth.

The second reason why God intervenes in human history is because God has a Sovereign plan of Salvation to accomplish.

II. ***God's Sovereign Plan of Salvation for Humanity.***

The sinful imaginations of humanity had not escaped the notice of God. In verse 5 of our passage we read of this fact. Again, in Proverbs 15:3 we read these words, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." We need to remember that God was not surprised by what these men were contriving to do. He was observing them all along. God knew about the building of the city and the tower that they were building. His going down was an intervention and His intervention brought about His desired results. His will was done. We must remember that God is indeed omniscient. God's attributes have never changed and will never change. He is always the same. So He knew what was going on in Babel. He knew how the rebellious spirit of Nimrod had affected the people. He knew of their concerted efforts to build this city and tower. He knew of their conceit and evil desire to make themselves great and not God. God knew what was going on, just like He still knows what is going on today.

What God saw was that mankind had one language to speak. He

saw that man was depraved and had sinful imaginations in their heart. Their selfish-ambition, rebellion, and utter-disobedience was evident. God had commanded them to “fill the earth,” but they were disobeying that command. Their goal was to have everyone together in one-city in order that they wouldn’t have to fill the earth and be separate from each other. God had a plan for humanity and they responded with a “Too bad, God! We have our own plan, which we think is better.” So God came down at the right time and intervened by confusing the language, so that there was not just one language anymore, but many languages. This brought an abrupt halt to the building of the tower.

God’s Sovereign plan that He had before time began would not be thwarted by mankind’s sinful imaginations. Although, the Babelites had spent some time and effort on their “great plan,” God had spent much more time in preparing His Sovereign plan to bring Salvation and Redemption to man. The schemes of finite men would not keep the triune, infinite God, Creator of the Universe, from bringing His Sovereign plans to fulfillment and fruition. He was not going to suddenly let mankind usurp His divine authority and claim divinity. Anything that they had been given, along with the materials to make the bricks was given to them by God. He had allowed them to have life and had even preserved mankind from sin and themselves since the Garden of Eden. That’s the whole reason we have the story of the Flood, God was preserving man not to keep sinning, but to live for Him after the flood. That’s the whole reason He didn’t destroy Adam and Eve in the Garden. He was seeking to keep man from self-annihilation. Humanity has been so self-focused since the Garden, but God would want us to turn our minds and hearts toward Him. “Set your minds on things above, not on things on this earth.”

When God dispersed mankind by confusing their language at Babel, His intention was to eventually bring humanity together in His time, way, and plan. If we were to look just one chapter later in the Bible, we see that God was already working to bring about that plan to bring Salvation and blessing to all the nations that He had dispersed across the face of the earth. We read this in verse 2 & 3 of chapter 12. The entire Old Testament is the story of how God was seeking to bring this about despite the efforts of men and Satan to thwart God’s perfect plan. We could talk about story after story

where it looks like the chosen people of God would be eliminated and the plan of God would be ended, but God again and again intervenes and preserves Abraham's family and the nation of Israel, until His Sovereign plan for the Salvation of mankind was fulfilled through the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His plan for the rest of eternity, for those from every tribe, tongue, and nation who will believe, is that they will be with Him in Heaven. This will be accomplished and will not be thwarted, because He really is Sovereign over all things for all time.

What a magnificent display of the great grace and perfect patience of our God. It's evident that rebellion is part of our sinful depraved nature, yet God's grace can conquer and disperse the sinful rebellion of man through faith in Jesus. He patiently waits, and at the right time according to His plan, saves each one who will believe in Him. God is a God of patience and impeccable timing. He is not late in executing judgement or hurried in bestowing grace, and because of this He is worthy to be worshipped. Indeed, He is in control even in the dark times that we are living through right now. He was not taken by surprise that this virus would come and infect and kill people all around the globe. He knew that we would need to be in isolation. Even right at this moment, our God is still on His throne and He truly is in control. "No power of hell or scheme of man can ever pluck us from His hand." He's the Almighty, Unchangeable God and He rules and reigns for all time.

So you see God intervenes in the affairs of man because he knows of the sinful imaginations of man's heart, but also because He is sovereignly working out His plan for the salvation of man throughout their history. We as Christians need to look at our world with fresh eyes seeing they need to be adopted as we have been into God's family as we have been. We need to remember that God has a perfect plan, time, and place for bringing about his salvation in the hearts of men. We are to be his tools, because the Great Commission is part of His plan to bring back men from every tribe tongue and nation as one body the Church, the bride of Christ. We do not know who He is calling, so we share the news of Salvation in Jesus Christ. He is the only way, man cannot contrive his own way to heaven. Jesus is the only way and people need to hear and know that truth. We must not be ashamed of the truth, because we serve a powerful, perfect, and righteous God who is in control. We don't need to lose

heart in difficult times, we need to look to Christ, because “by Him all things consist.” (Col. 1)

We need to lay aside any rebellious spirit that we might have allowed to creep into our lives, because of the worthless philosophies of man. God is truthful and reliable. We don’t need to create some new truth for ourselves as the world around us would want us to do. God’s Word is enough.

To the one who has not yet come in faith to Jesus, He can forgive you from your sins today. God knows what is going on in your heart. He knows your struggle to believe. He knows the sin that you are dealing with, that you think you have to deal with on your own, before you come to Him. You can’t do it on your own. That is why God intervened at Babel, because man thought they could be a god to themselves. That they didn’t need God. You need Him today and He has promised that if you come to him in humble faith, He will forgive your sins and cleanse you from your unrighteousness. You can have faith that God will keep His promises. He has promised to save all that call on him in faith. He has kept that promise for over 2000 years now, do you think now it would suddenly be different with you? No. So have faith in Him and He will save you from your sins.

God sovereignly intervened at Babel, so that He could bring Salvation in Jesus Christ to all that call upon Him. This is the reason why we have the story of Babel. God is in control trust Him with your life and even the affairs of this world.