

GROUNDS OF FAITH CAFÉ: “Genesis” (Subtitled: Is there a snake in your Garden too?) Further subtitled: Lessons from the Garden! Lesson 10. (Gen 11:1-10; 27-32). For lesson copies, go to <http://www.montgomerychurch.org/resources8.html>

Introduction: From Genesis Chapter 3 through chapter 11, Scripture depicts a series of narratives with a common theological structure: sin - punishment – renewal (shown below). In Genesis 6-9, God brought His creation back from the brink of chaos (triggered by human rebellion) by His process of re-creation. He articulated His commitment to His creation in covenant vocabulary. *Covenant* is a relationship built on *promise* & God’s promises are eternal – they need no “renewing,” only *remembering!* Previous problems stemmed from man’s *choices*, centering on an illegitimate desire to *gratify self* rather than *glorify God*. One lingering question is: will this new humanity, proclaimed to be created in the image of God, learn anything?

Characters	Sin	Punishment	Renewal
Adam & Eve (3:1-24)	Desire to be “like God” Eating of prohibited tree	Painful childbirth; toil; hierarchical “rule”; expulsion from Garden (from God’s Presence)	Clothed in animal skins Birth of Cain
Cain & Able (4:1-24)	Anger --- Murder	Wanderer (expelled from “soil”)	“Mark” on Cain Birth of Seth
Noah & Flood (chapters 6-9)	Social violence on community scale	flood	Sacrifice; Covenant sign; Noah’s descendants
Tower of Babel (11:1-9; 27-32)	Self-gratification (name); Fame “security” = “place”	Scattering; communication confusion	Abraham

Read: Genesis 11:1-10 & 11:27-32 completely through. Note the reference to journeying “east,” the apparent inference that mankind considers its “security” as being in one community in one locale (separate from or without acknowledging God), and the linkage between human abilities/works and fame/name.

- **Re-read 11:1-2.** Also read 3:24 and 4:16 for background. What interpretation do you make, if anything, of Scripture’s use of “journeying east” according to these verses?
- **Re-read 11:3-4.** Now re-read 4:16-17 and compare the two accounts.
 - What similarities do you find in these accounts and what do you find significant about them, if anything?
 - Now, think about the concept of a “name.” In these accounts, whose “name” seems to mean most to man? Now discuss what importance you think God attaches to the “name” one wears (recalling that God gave Adam the privilege & responsibility of “naming” the animals, 2:19; and that Scripture declares that “*men began to call upon the name of the LORD*” after Seth’s son was born in 4:26). What part does our “name” play in our identity?
 - Now re-read 1:28 & 9:1. Given these commands by God and the account of man’s activities in 11:3-4 & 4:16-17, what fundamental problem (s) do you conclude remain in the relationship between God and mankind?
- **Re-read 11:5-9.** What does God say about man’s activities? What does God do to mankind as a form of punishment? **BONUS** (if you have time): Read Acts 2:1-12. Do you think God’s activity through His Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2 reverses His actions in Genesis 11? Discuss.
- **Re-read 11:10, 27-32.** Just like the flood narrative, the tower of Babel narrative is structurally “wrapped” by genealogies – one immediately preceding it; another immediately following. In these verses, we are introduced to God’s renewal figure – Abram. Interestingly, in contrast to man’s futile attempt to acquire a “name” for themselves by their own achievements (11:4), Abram will be *gifted* with, not only a “name,” but a “*great name*” (12:2) as a consequence of God’s Promise. Given these verses, why do you think that God chose Abram to carry out His Promise?