

God Created People Who Need Discipline

International Bible Lesson

Genesis 11:1-9

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L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

“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 11:9—KJV).

“Therefore it was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:9—NRSV).

Imagine a world where no one ever does anything good, where everyone helps only themselves. Imagine a world where everyone practices only evil continually. The Bible calls Noah a preacher of righteousness, but no one listened to Noah’s preaching and no one began to live right, so God sent the great flood as a last resort to cleanse the earth from evil (2 Peter 2:5). After the great flood, God commanded Noah’s descendants to “fill the earth.” But they too rebelled against God and refused to be “scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 9:1; 11:4). Instead, in order to emphasize their greatness, they built a city with a great tower that reached into the heavens. Therefore, God needed to discipline people once again.

God’s discipline can lead some people to repent of their rebellion and return to God and obedience. God’s discipline can slow down or stop some who are intent on practicing and inventing greater evils. God’s discipline can make doing evil more difficult. God’s discipline can also achieve His original purposes in spite of human rebellion. When God confused people’s language, He achieved His original intention that Noah’s descendants fill the earth. When God confused their language, He used the perfect form of discipline, for now they needed to find those who spoke as they did and separate into different language groups to avoid continual confusion. Next, they needed to find new places to live as they grouped around their common language. Today, God still uses appropriate discipline and always achieves His purposes. —© Copyright 2013 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Thinking Further

1. What are some of the benefits when everyone speaks the same language in a group or nation?
2. What had God wanted the people to do that they refused to do when they built their city?
3. What did they do that indicated their cultural development? Was their cultural development wrong?
4. What did the people say that indicates they were no longer a God-centered people?
5. What did God say that revealed something about the way God made people?