

Babel: Am I Just Adding to the Noise?

Genesis 11:1–9; 12:1-3 | Pastor Greg Triplett | February 28, 2021

Intro – Am I Just Adding To The Noise?

Story – The confusion over dinner vs. dessert

Problem – We want our lives to make a difference, but our self-centered efforts not only get in the way...they can hurt us, hurt others, and can come across like a noisy gong or clanging cymbal (1 Cor. 13).

Question – How can I be sure that my life is not just making noise?

PRAY

Genesis 11:1-9 – Tower of Babel

I. The Setting (1-2)

*1 Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. 2 It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and **settled** there.*

1. Simplicity - “same language and the same words”
2. Settling – the land of Shinar

Background:

- Gen 1-2 Creation
- Gen 3 The Fall
- Gen 4 Cain & Abel
- Gen 5-9 Noah & The Flood

Gen 9:1 - *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”* (reiterated verse 7) → the command is to fill

The setting of the story: Life was simple, Shinar seemed suitable, so they settled

Are you ever tempted to settle?

As we read on, we’ll see that their settling was only the beginning of their self-centered plans

II. The Anatomy of Self-Centered Plans (3-4)

3 They said to one another, "Come, *let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.*" And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. 4 They said, "Come, *let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.*"

The attitude – "let us"

Their self-centered plans:

1. Empowered by new technology (3)
2. Driven by fame (4)
3. Motivated by fear (4)

Story – fear & fame on the road from CA to DC

Are my plans self-centered?

Just when they think everything is going great...

III. God Comes Down (5)

5 *The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.*

(midpoint, inciting incident, conflict)

"*The Lord came down...*" – something is about to change

"*...to see the city and the tower...*" – our small efforts (see the humor in that?)

God is active and involved in our world, our decisions, and our lives

Question for you: Is God impressed by their (your) tower?

IV. God Sees the Fruit of Their Pride (6)

6 *The LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.*

God's observation (behold) – "*This is what they began to do...*"

"*Nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.*"

- Is this true?
- Is nothing impossible for man?

- Is nothing impossible for God?
- Bit of hyperbole?

God comes down...God sees their pride...God frustrates their plans

V. God Frustrates Their Plans (7)

7 “Come, *let us* go down and there *confuse their language*, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.”

“Let us” – Qal, Active, Cohortative (Imperfect), Plural, Common, First Person (Gen 1:26 – “Let us make man in our image.”)

“confuse their language” - God’s solution...is to bring confusion!

Today I am ordained as Communications Pastor

- My job is to bring clarity (EFFECTIVE communication that is CLEAR and COMPELLING)
- To take the greatest message ever...
- ...and communicate it in a way that breaks down barriers...
- ...so people can understand.

But God brings confusion...In this we find an incredibly powerful truth...

God will not hesitate to frustrate our self-centered plans (Is this happening still today?)

- COVID-19
- Confusion (generational, political, social, racial divide)
- Why does it seem harder than ever to simply know what is true?
- Maybe God is frustrating our self-centered plans

VI. Epilogue (8-9)

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. 9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

Settling + Self-Centered (Fame & Fear) = Scattered

“Confused the language of the whole earth”

They set out to make a name for themselves – Never completed the project

They set out to not be scattered – God scattered them

Illustration – how good it is that God frustrates our self-centered plans (40 miles outside of Burke on 66)

Negative – God frustrates the plans of self-centered people

Positive – But he blessed the plans of those who are sensitive to His leadership

The Tower of Babel is not the end of the story...

Out of that lineage...from that land...God raises up a man...another man who was scattered by God...

Turn to Genesis 12. Here we will see...

VII. God's Great Plan

Genesis 12:1–3 (NASB95) — *1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; 2 and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; 3 and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."*

God's promise - "I will"

Great - גָּדַל (*gādal*) *grow up, become great or important, promote, make powerful, praise, (magnify), do great things.*

God will frustrate your self-centered plans for the sake of His greater plan!

"We have a pastor who said to us, 'Stop asking God to bless what you're doing, Bono.'...He said, 'Find out what God is doing, 'cause it's already blessed'...When you align yourself with God's purpose as described in the Scriptures, something special happens to your life." (Bono - From a 2013 interview with Focus on the Family's Jim Daley)

Problem - Am I just adding to the noise?

We want our lives to make a difference, but our self-centered efforts not only get in the way...they can hurt us, hurt others, and can come across like a noisy gong or clanging cymbal (1 Cor. 13).

Are you willing to say today that you want to move beyond the noise?

Prayer - God, I realize my tendency to take control. Forgive me for placing my confidence in my agenda and failing to seek out your desires. Today, I lay aside my self-centered plans and surrender to your will. Thank you for the great plans you have for me. Amen.