

## Chapter 10

## Genesis 11:1-9

### The Story so Far

In the story of Cain and Abel we saw that human rebellion had been passed on to the whole human race. We all die because we have all chosen to be the rulers of our own lives. However, human rebellion increased to the point where God decided to judge the world. In the flood God re-created the world and gave human beings a new beginning. By saving Noah He showed His commitment to restoring His Kingdom through the promised Rescuer-Ruler.

### Objectives

- To show the similarities between the people's rebellion in Shinar and Adam and Eve's rebellion in Eden
- To explain how God's judgement was involved in the confusion of languages
- To show God as the sovereign King who always gets His way

### Connections

- Rebellion in Eden and at Shinar is similar

### Summary

**Although human beings rebel against God, His purposes for His world are always accomplished.**

# The Tower of Babel

## **The start of the nations (Genesis 10:1-32)**

God has rescued Noah and his family from the flood. He has given them a new creation to live in and He commanded them to fill the earth with people. Genesis 10 shows us that many nations come from the sons of Noah. The earth is being populated again with people. God's purposes are being fulfilled. Will these nations of people obey God's command to spread out and fill the earth?

## **The global rebellion of human beings (Genesis 11:1-4)**

Unfortunately we learn that human beings rebel against God again.

## **Human disobedience... again (Genesis 11:1-4)**

Moving "east" in Genesis usually means moving away from God – Adam moved east out of the Garden of Eden. Cain moved east after he killed his brother. The writer of Genesis wants us to know that the people of Shinar moved east as well. When they settle in one place they act in direct disobedience to God's command to fill the earth with people (see Genesis 1:28; 9:1, 2). They disobey God in two ways:

1. They build a city for their own security. They want to live without God.
2. They also build a very tall tower. It is thought that there was a temple (place of worship) on the top of this tower, and that each brick was inscribed with the name of the Babylonian god "Marduk". This tower is an attempt by humans to make their own religion and worship false gods.

The people are doing what Adam and Eve did in the garden, they want to live without God as their King, and therefore worship false gods. Adam and Eve rebelled and served Satan – the people of Shinar rebel and serve Marduk.

## **Becoming "like God"... again (Genesis 11:4)**

Satan told Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden that if they disobeyed God they would become "like God", and in that sense they would become great. Their names would be great. The people

of Shinar commit the same crime – they want “to make a name” for themselves. They want to be “like God”. The same pattern of human rebellion is happening all over again. It is still happening today.

## **The global impact of God’s judgement (Genesis 11:5-9)**

God is a good and just King and He must punish rebellion. However, we know that He has committed never to flood the world again, so how will He punish the people’s rebellion?

### **God’s judgement (Genesis 11:5-7)**

It is interesting that the people want to build a tower so high that it reaches into the skies. Human technology might be great in the eyes of humans but it is still so small in the eyes of a great and mighty God. God has to come *down* to see it!

The people of Shinar are able to construct such a city and tower because they speak the same language. God’s judgement on human beings is to confuse their language so they can never attempt such technology again. This is how “Shinar” becomes known as “Babel”, which means “confusion”. This is also the start of how the many languages in the world developed.

### **God’s power (Genesis 11:8-9)**

From the beginning of the Bible we have been learning that God is the powerful Maker and the controlling King of the universe. It should be no surprise to us then that God’s purposes are always accomplished. Although human beings rebel against God and try to disrupt His purposes, God always gets His way. Quite simply, God always wins! The story of the tower of Babel is no different - God gets His way! God’s plan after the flood is to fill the earth with people. Human beings try to stop God’s plan, but fail. Through their rebellion God judges them and His plan is fulfilled.

**Although human beings rebel against God,  
His purposes for His world are always accomplished.**

## **God’s Kingdom**

In the story of the Bible it is God’s plan to send the promised Rescuer-Ruler into the world to re-establish His Kingdom. We are

going to learn how human beings continually try to disrupt this plan of God. The good news of the Bible, which we see already in the tower of Babel, is that God always gets His way. And therefore we can have confidence that the promised Rescuer-Ruler will arrive.



## Think it through & discuss

1. In Genesis what does the direction “east” symbolise?
2. How are the people of Shinar like Adam and Eve?
3. What is the result of the people’s rebellion?
4. How is the tower of Babel connected to God’s Kingdom?