

פרשת נח / Parashat Noach

Shabbat Cheshvan 6, 5770, October 24, 2009
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d
<http://www.matsati.com> | matsati@matsati.com

5

The Key to Understanding the Torah

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 6:9-11:32
הפטרה: Isaiah 54:1-55:5
הברית: Matthew 24:36-46, 1 Peter 3:18-22
החדשה

10 The triennial cycle brings us to the tower of Babel in *Bereshit / Genesis 11:1-9* in this week's parsha, Parashat Noah. According to the Bible, the city of Babel was founded by Nimrod (see *Bereshit / Genesis 10:8-10*). The root word for Nimrod (נמרוד) means "to rebel," and is indicated to be a skilled hunter. Interestingly, the language indicates that Nimrod was a mighty hunter and that he did this in defiance of the Lord's command. It isn't surprising that the people of Babel chose to build the city in direct defiance of G-d's command to spread out and "fill the earth" (compare *Bereshit / Genesis 9:1 to 11:4*).

15

בראשית 11:1-9

1 ׀ וַיְהִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ שְׂפָה אַחַת וּדְבָרִים אַחָדִים: וַיְהִי יָא
2 בְּנֹסֶעַם מִקֵּדָם וַיִּמְצְאוּ בְקֵעָה בְּאֶרֶץ שִׁנְעָר וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם:
3 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ הִבֵּה נִלְבְּנָה לְבָנִים וְנִשְׂרָפָה
4 לְשֵׂרָפָה וְהָיָה לָהֶם הַלְבֵנָה לְאֶבֶן וְהַחֲמֵר הָיָה לָהֶם
5 לְחֵמֶר: וַיֹּאמְרוּ הִבֵּה | נִבְנֶה־לָנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֵאשׁוּ
6 בְּשָׁמַיִם וְנַעֲשֶׂה־לָנוּ שֵׁם פְּרֹנְפוֹן עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ:
7 וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה לִרְאֹת אֶת־הָעִיר וְאֶת־הַמִּגְדָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ
8 בְּנֵי הָאָדָם: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הֵן עִם אֶחָד וּשְׂפָה אַחַת
9 לְכָל־ם וְהָיָה חֶחֱלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת וְעַתָּה לֹא־יִבְצָר מֵהֶם כָּל
10 אֲשֶׁר יִזְמוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת: הִבֵּה גִרְדָּה וְנִבְלָה שֵׁם שְׂפָתָם
11 אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שְׂפַת רֵעֵהוּ: וַיִּפֶץ יְהוָה אֹתָם
12 מִשָּׁם עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ וַיַּחְדְּלוּ לְבִנֹת הָעִיר: עַל־כֵּן
13 קָרָא שְׁמָהּ בְּכָל־כִּיּוֹשֵׁם בְּכָל־יְהוָה שְׂפַת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
14 וּמִשָּׁם הִפִּיצָם יְהוָה עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ:

20

Bereshit / Genesis 11:1-9

11:1 Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. 11:2 It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. 11:3 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. 11:4 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.' 11:5 The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 11:6 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. 11:7 'Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech.' 11:8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. 11:9 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. (NASB)

1

HaShem's concern about mankind is pointed out while comparing *Bereshit / Genesis 11:1* to *11:6*. There is something about being one, one language, and having a unity amongst the people. This unity was led by a rebellious spirit, one that does not follow in the ways of the Lord. The purpose in building the city was to "make a name for ourselves" (see *Bereshit / Genesis 11:4*). This is the direct opposite of "calling on the name of the Lord" (see *Bereshit / Genesis 4:26*), and means their intent was to build a society that exalted them and kept God out.

Migdal Bavel (מגדל בבל) the tower of Babel, was located in the "plain of Shinar" of ancient Mesopotamia and is historically identified as the original site of ancient Babylon. It is believed that the tower was designed to be a form of idolatrous ziggurat whose purpose was to unify the ancient people. Whether the tower was a form of idolatry or not it was certainly built in a rebellious manner to unify the people. The tower was not just a skyscraper that served as a cultural icon; it was believed to be a center for astrological study. The study of astrology is to study the movements and relative positions of celestial bodies which are interpreted as having an influence on human affairs and the world. This is why they named their city Bab-ilani, "gate of the gods." HaShem condemns astrology (see *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:31* and *Devarim / Deuteronomy 18:9-14*) because its assumptions are false (the heavenly bodies are not gods whose activities influence human events) and the role of divining the future without relying upon the Lord. The point of *Bereshit / Genesis 11:6* was not that the people would progress in knowledge but that they would progress in rebellion and evil to such an extent that the human race would degenerate to a level like the days of Noah (see *Bereshit / Genesis 6:6*). Here HaShem intervenes to prevent this by confusing language.

Chapter 11 here in *Bereshit / Genesis* holds the key to understanding the Torah and all of scripture. Up until this point we see that mankind has a propensity towards the evil inclination, and the Lord had a plan to prevent the degeneracy to greater levels of evil while at the same time showing men His ways and drawing men to Him. In Chapter 10, the seventy nations which represent all of mankind, there really were no special people. It is at this time the concept of the "special nation" develops and G-d introduces the "special covenant" all beginning with the story of Avraham. Avraham is introduced in the genealogy at the end of Parashat Noah. HaShem chooses Avraham in Parashat Lekh Lekha (Chapter 12) to become the forefather of His "special nation." The remainder of sefer Bereshit, the Torah, and all of Scripture (Tanach and Ketuvei Shelachim) then deals with this special nation, special people, and special covenant that G-d makes with those He chooses.

The concept of being G-d's chosen people, its origin, and reason are found here in Parashat Noah. The reason is to provide a way for mankind to continue to walk in G-d's ways and purpose man's life for the service of HaShem. We can summarize certain factors in the events and covenant promise that follows:

1. His instruction to mankind as a whole was challenged by a rebellious people (migdal bavel, "tower of Babel" *Bereshit / Genesis 11*) causing

- 70 Him to confound the language and divide the people into distinct nations.
2. All the nations formed as a result of judgment at Babel and were already in rebellion against G-d and unsuitable for His purpose.
 - 75 3. To become a special nation ... Such a nation would be characterized by (i) divine revelation and (ii) national experience, i.e. to be the nation through which the savior would come.
 - 80 4. G-d therefore chose Avraham to establish a new nation through which all the nations would be blessed.
 5. His promise of a coming Redeemer to reconcile a lost world to Himself.

85 The Lord said that we are not to learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations (see Devarim / Deuteronomy 18:9-13) and then follows by specifying the diviners, soothsayers, enchaners, sorcerers, spell-casters, consultuer of spirits, and necromancers. Numerology and astrology are both an abomination before G-d and was the reason for the confounding of the languages
90 at the Tower of Babel. The Lord commands us to stay away from these ways.

In this week's parasha, we see the reasons for G-d causing the flood and confounding the language as a result of the degenerative nature of mankind. This sets the stage for an introduction to the concept of being a special people, a special nation and having a special covenant with the Lord. The details of the
95 special covenant is related to our living and being righteous before the Living G-d. In Jeremiah 23:5-6, we find the Messiah will be "The Lord our Righteousness" and the way He becomes our righteousness is by becoming the atoning sacrifice, by the atonement He has made in His own blood. The apostle Peter explains it this way:

100 ***1 Peter 3:18-22***
3:18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 3:19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, 3:20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. 3:21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 3:22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him. (NASB)

105
110

115 The promise of a coming Redeemer to reconcile a lost world was fulfilled
in Yeshua the Messiah. As believers we have to look really hard at our hearts, do
we truly believe the scriptures? As the children of G-d through faith, are our lives
unaffected by Christ that lives in us? Do our lives demonstrate that we are
120 members of His Holy Kingdom? Our relationship with G-d begins with
understanding how G-d related to people in the bible (pre and post-diluvian) and
then how G-d wants us to relate to Him. As a holy people, it is important to seek
G-d's forgiveness but not only that, we need to closely examine our hearts and
our ways. Do you truly believe G-d's Holy Word the Bible? Do you truly
125 believe in G-d's Messiah Yeshua and the atonement he made upon the cross? Has
there been an effectual change in your heart as a result of the Ruach Hakodesh
(The Holy Spirit) that produces living evidence which demonstrates you are a
child of the kingdom? It is obvious from scripture that G-d considers greatly how
we live our lives. Taking for granted the "mercy of G-d" can lead one to
130 complacency, smugness, and self-satisfaction and even accepting Yeshua in our
heads only but never truly accepting the gift of salvation in our hearts. Please
take the time today to carefully consider the consequences of having only a head
knowledge of Yeshua's words.

135 **Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!**

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever

140