

Dr. Kenneth Mathews, Genesis, Session 9, The Nations and the Tower of Babel, Genesis 10:1-11:26

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This is Dr. Kenneth Mathews in his teaching on the book of Genesis. This is session 9, The Nations and the Tower of Babel, Genesis 10:1-11:26.

Session nine is The Nations and the Tower of Babel.

The significance of this section is important to us because it is the concluding section regarding chapters 1 through 11, the history of the universal families. It is significant also because it gathers many of the ideas theologically that the author wishes to teach, and so it will be important for us. The idea of a genealogy in chapter 10 is not typically appreciated, but we will find that it is something that is comprehensible and can be appreciated as the author guides us through the importance of the Table of Nations for Israel and for ourselves.

Now there are actually two superscriptions that we'll be looking at today. The first one occurs in chapter 10, verse 1. This is the genealogy or the account of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood. The description after the flood is not incidental, because now we enter into a new era, the post-flood world.

We have a background in chapter 9, which I will speak to in a moment. Then there is a second superscription in chapter 11, verse 10. This is the account of Shem.

And so we have a genealogy in chapter 10 and a genealogy in chapter 11, verse 10. Sandwiched between is the narrative concerning the Tower of Babel. So here is the structural arrangement.

Chapter 10 has a genealogy. Chapter 11, the Tower of Babel. And then chapter 11, verses 10 through 26, a repetition of genealogy.

When it comes to chapter 10, you will notice with me that the last part begins in verse 21, the Shemites. So these are the descendants of the son Shem. And then we have the Tower of Babel.

Then, the genealogy of Shem is given a second time, beginning in chapter 11, verse 10, and running through verse 26. Well, why do we have two genealogies of the Shemites? One reason is because there is an emphasis in the mind of the author pertaining to Shem and his descendants. And this is because of what we find in chapter 9. You'll recall that in chapter 9, God made a covenant with Noah and his descendants after the flood.

And this is found in chapter 9, verses 1 through 17. Then, there is an interlude of chapter 9, verses 18 and 19. Verse 20 picks up with Noah, who, like Adam, was the first Adam, and now Noah, like the first Adam, is the new Noah, who will be the father of all the peoples of the world.

And he, like Adam, was a cultivator of the soil. The description in verse 20 deals with planting a vineyard. He was a developer of viticulture.

Whereas in the ancient Near East, the gods are said to have been the developers of wines, Genesis makes it quite clear that the vineyard is a creation of humanity, of humans. And that wine is not divine, a divine gift. But rather in the context of Genesis, we know that all productivity that comes from the soil is a gift from God.

Now he becomes drunk, and you'll recall that. Ham ridicules Noah by seeing him in his nakedness within his tent and then gossiping about it. When he goes outside and tells others about it, we have Japheth and Shem, who step forward and cover up their father without looking at him.

They did not have the kind of contempt for their father like Ham did. And remember, Ham is the father of Canaan. And Canaan would have been of special interest to Hebrew readers since they were living in the area of Canaan.

Noah, when he awakens, he recognizes that he has been defamed and ridiculed by Ham. And so, he utters a prayer of invocation asking God to bring curse upon Canaan. And then he blesses the Lord as God of every good gift for Shem and Japheth.

So, when we look at Canaan, you'll remember that we spoke of how Canaan most likely in some way perpetuated the contempt that his father had. Hence, there is the curse that's delivered to Canaan. Now this helps us understand what is the purpose of the Table of Nations that follow in chapter 10.

Because we have a moral map that is provided for the readers of Genesis, the descendants of the Hamites are to be treated with some suspicion, whereas those of the Japhethites and the Shemites are given a more favorable viewpoint. Now, that doesn't mean that all of the Hamites are condemned and consigned to wickedness by any means.

It simply means that there is a moral map provided to the Hebrew people who are going to be introduced once they enter the land to all these various people groups. And a question would be raised: who are they, and where are they from? Also, a second reason for giving the genealogy of Shem is that it results in the most important transitional figure from the universal history of humanity in chapters 1

through 11. And then the particularistic, specific history of the family of, well, one family, Abraham.

This is because at the end of chapter 11's genealogy, we have the birth and the life of Terah, who is the father of Abraham. So, we are in a position to understand the linkage that the genealogy provides for us as we think about the different types of genealogies that occur in the Bible. We spoke of this on an earlier occasion when we looked at Genesis chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 is the segmented genealogy of Cain, and remember, a segmented genealogy gives more than one descendant of a patriarch.

That's what's taking place in chapter 10. It is segmented. So, you will have all three sons, the Japhethites, the Hamites, and the Shemites, and then within them will be further segmentation or branching of various descendants from each patriarch.

The other kind is called linear, and this is found in chapter 5 regarding the Sethites. This is a streamlined approach by the author as he in rapid pace shows the direct lineage by naming one person per generation. And so it begins in chapter 5 with Adam and then his son Seth and all those who came after Seth one by one.

When we move to chapter 11 verses 10 through 26, we have that same kind of arrangement of a linear genealogy. In our mind's eye, if we bring these two genealogies together, then we find that chapter 5 results in Noah naming his three sons. So, there is at the conclusion of chapter 5 a branching of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

And then we pick up with that descendant, Shem, in chapter 11. In chapter 11 verses 10 through 26 is also linear. If you'll look with me at verse 26 of chapter 11, And then we will have in chapter 11 verse 27, this actually introduces the Abraham narrative, which we will speak of in our next session.

What this tells us is that God is, by virtue of the linear, distinguishing from the others the genealogy by whom he will bring about the deliverer promised to Adam and Eve in chapter 3, verse 15. And that this deliverer will be the offspring of the woman. As it turns out historically, we see then that Noah is an unexpected kind of a deliverer that God uses to preserve the human family and survive a worldwide cataclysmic flood.

So, we move from Adam, created in the image of God, who gives by virtue of inheritance the image, but also Adam's sinful preoccupation, his nature, has given us to sin and rebellion that will always result in death. And then he died. So it goes from Adam, which introduces chapter 5, to Seth, and that's why it's identified as the Sethites.

It ends with Noah. The genealogy is picked up in chapter 11 with the Shemites and goes to Terah, the father of Abraham. So we have in effect then the connections, the interdependence of the nations in chapters 5 and 11.

It begins with Adam, Seth, moves to Noah, and then to Abraham. When we come to looking also at this broader structure of genealogy, the Babel narrative, and then genealogy again, you will notice that there is a dischronization. There is a way in which we find that there is a reversal when it comes to a chronological arrangement of chapters 10 and 11.

Because chapter 11, verses 1 through 9, describes the causation, and chapter 10 describes the result of that cause, in other words, cause-effect. Chapter 11, verses 1 through 9, the Tower of Babel incident, ends with the scattering of the peoples at Babel and how there will be then a multiplication of diverse people groups that are scattered around the world. And that's what you find listed in chapter 10.

Why is it? Why do we have this dischronization? And that is because of the arrangement that's important to the author, who wants to show that the chapter 10 nations leads to the Tower of Babel with its rebellion, with its pride, and the necessity of God, as we've seen repeatedly throughout these early chapters, of God stepping in to deliver the people from themselves. And that is by an act of grace to preserve and to maintain, through the human family, the blessing that God has intended for the human family. Whereas the genealogy of just Shem, in its linear fashion, takes you down to a deliverer, and that is Abraham.

In doing so, the author of Genesis, by virtue of arrangement, explains how God is going to work through the Shemite genealogy, leading to Abraham and creating a new nation for Abraham. This would accord well with what we find in the curse and the blessing described in chapter 9. Now, let me speak of some of the characteristics of the genealogy. You will find that there are 70 nations listed, and these 70 nations are representative of all nations.

And they are selected. For example, it says in chapter 10, verse 5, regarding the Japhethites, from these, the maritime people spread out into their territories by their clans within their nations, each with its own language. So, you can see there that there's more that could be named, various maritime peoples to follow.

So, these must be representative. As you know, in the Bible, there is an emphasis and appreciation and interpretation of seven and multiples of sevens. And we will find the same thing taking place: an emphasis on the sevens.

You will find that there is a highly structured arrangement with various kinds of repetition. At the end of each family, the Japhethites, Hamites, and Shemites, you

will find a conclusion: what is a colophon? It occurs in chapter 10, verse 5, I named it already, territories by clans, nations, and language.

And then, if you look at chapter 10, verse 20, the Hamites, these are the sons of Ham, again, clans, languages, territories, and now nations. Chapter 10, verse 31, these are the sons of Shem, by their clans and nations in their territories, and by their clans and languages in their territories and nations. Then, in verse 32 of chapter 10, there is a grand finale: these are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent within their nations.

From these, the nations spread out over the earth after the flood. So, what we have in the colophons would be the criteria by which the inclusion of these various people groups were made. There are three general ideas, and that is that the table of nations is going to be gathered on the basis of the criteria of language, so it's ethno, ethnicity, and linguistic.

Then we will find that it also involves geopolitical ideas, that is territories and the various political groups that are associated with that. And then third, the ethnogeographic, and this would be the geography of these various people groups. So, we have languages, we have territories and nations, and then the territories mentioned here.

So, it is not, strictly speaking, a genealogy of a biological idea when we generally think of genealogies. Let me give you an idea of what's in mind here. Let me give you one example of how the genealogy names people groups.

Verse 13 of chapter 10 says that Mitzrayim, and by the way, Mitzrayim is the Hebrew word for Egypt, and it means the two Egypts, the upper and lower Egypt. Mitzrayim, Egypt, was the father of these various ites, and they are listed in 13. This would be people groups.

But then I want you to notice in verse 15 that we have a reference to a city, and so in verse 15, Canaan was the father of Sidon. Sidon was a Phoenician city, an important city, and he identifies Sidon as his firstborn. So, what we have in mind then is that the collection of these various nations would reflect not biological descent at every place, but maybe what we have would be a desire to show linkage between groups that would be nations, that would be individuals.

Now embedded, you will have at places some explanation with elaboration, and we find that with Nimrod in verses 8 through 11. Let's look at it together. Cush, that would be from the Sons of Ham in verse 6, Cush was the father of Nimrod, who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth.

Verse 9, he was a mighty hunter before the Lord, and that is why it is said, and here is a proverb, like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord. And then it goes on to list the successors to Nimrod, and these, you know, are nations that are described in verse 10, cities in verse 11, such as Nineveh. Now, there's been some dispute as to what this means before the Lord, and some see it as a very positive statement: this is with the blessing.

Others see this as rather neutral, just observing that God is overseeing the development of the nations. I tend to agree with those who think what is taking place before the Lord is like what we find in chapter 6, verses 1 through 8, describing the horrific sinfulness and depravity of the people that brought about the flood. And there it says that God saw, in verse 4, he saw how wicked the people had become as a result of the intermarriage between the Canaanites and Sethites.

And that also here, it is not a positive, but a negative appraisal that was received before the Lord. Now, why do I say that? Well, because of Babylon. Babylon was one of the arch enemies of the Hebrew people, and because of what we find with the Tower of Babylon in chapter 11.

I think that is one way in which we can understand Nimrod, that has much going for it. Now, there are a couple of other ways in which the Table of Nations has a reputation, and that is when it has the sons of, and you'll see that, for example, in verse 2 of chapter 10. The sons of, that is an emphasis on the ancestor, so the sons of Japheth is emphasized.

And then, like we saw in verse 8, you have another which uses the language, the father of, and there's an emphasis on the development of the offspring of that particular ancestor. Well, what do we say about the message that we find in chapter 10? That is, we have Noah's blessing in chapter 9, verses 1 through, or repetition of 1, and also verse 7. This is an introduction to the covenant that God made with Noah. Verse 1 of chapter 9 reminds us of the blessing at creation in chapter 1, verse 28.

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. Now, certainly, when it comes to the genealogy that's found in the table, they are highly fruitful. And they ought to fill the earth, and that's what's taking place in chapter 10, a description of the diversity of the peoples.

Yet, they are still under God's blessing. A second lesson to be learned is the interconnectedness of the nations. What brings them together is not based on language.

They have diversity of language, diversity of culture, and diversity of ethnicity. But why is it that they have a connection with one another, and how is it that this relates to God's blessing? What brings them together is their humanity created in the image

of God. What brings them together is God's benevolent plan and purpose for the various nations.

A third advantage of the Table of Nations is that there's even a blessing for Israel's traditional enemies. See, God does not want to destroy but rather to redeem. And there is a plan that will be unfolding in Genesis to show how he will ultimately rescue the various people groups who opposed him, who opposed the Israelites, but one day will be blessed through the Israelites.

And I've already mentioned one when it came to Nimrod. He's the father of the Babylon region. And then, you can go on to read verse 11.

You have Nineveh mentioned, and that's a chief city of Assyria. Egypt is mentioned. These are the classic traditional enemies of Israel.

But you see, what's at work here is the way that God is configuring the nations to achieve the blessing. And so, this is the sovereign outworking of God. And when we look at the purpose, in other words, the grander stage, the broader framework, we can understand and appreciate the steps that are necessarily taken by God to bring representatives of all people groups into the proposed and planned blessing of God.

This is reminiscent of what we find in Deuteronomy 32, verse 8, where Moses says, When the Most High, God, gave the nations their inheritance and divided the human race, he set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the people of Israel. Here, the number of Israel would have been Jacob and his sons and their families, constituting 70 people in the Jacob family that descended into Egypt. Then, the Apostle Paul spoke in his sermon in Athens, Acts 17, verse 26.

Here he says, From one man, God has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. So, this all falls within the plan of God intending to bless. When we think about what follows the Tower of Babel, I know there's one thing I overlooked, and I want to race back.

It also reminds us that when you read chapter 10 and look at the 70 nations, you will notice that Israel itself does not occur. And I think this is because there's an assumption that the Israelites reading this know there is Israel. For any of those outside of Israel are reading this, then they know that this book of Genesis and Torah comes from Israel.

So, there's an assumption that Israel does exist and that all of this is to be read and appreciated and understood by Israel's readers. Now let's turn to the Tower of Babel. In the Tower of Babel, we have a structure that shows, as we have seen already on

several occasions, the mastery of the language and literature that biblical writers exhibit.

And the author of Genesis does very much the same. And so, it is not a haphazard of weaving together unrelated information, maybe from books, listings of genealogies, that would be the writings, oral recollections, a variety of genres such as narrative and poetry, and as I've already said, genealogy, weaving together a coherent telling of how God created in the early history of humanity the consequence of sin in the garden, the grave enemy, that is, the grave itself. And then he died, and then he died, and then how God steps in at each threat to the blessing, delivers a remnant, and provides for the blessing for the human family.

And we see this taking place again because in chapter 11, verses 1 through 9, we will find that the structure highlights its theological message, and we'll come to that in a few moments. But let's look at verse 1 and also verse 9. This is what you call a beginning and an ending of similar language, and it functions like brackets. The literary language that's used, described is called *inclusio* or inclusion.

Verse 1, now the whole world had one language and a common speech. Verse 9 says that that is why it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. And from there, the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

So, as you probably know from earlier reading or hearing some recounting of this story, the issue is the city Babylon. And by the way, the narrative focuses more on the city than it does the edifice built, and that's the tower. And we are reminded time and again in the narrative that the people were united.

And this, of course, was in conflict with the blessing God had intended, where in chapter 1, verse 28, and chapter 9, verses 1 and 7, there is in the mind of God the privilege, and there is the advantage of blessing by giving people an inheritance for each people group, a territory, a land, a part of the created order of the earth. And so, this is what God wanted them to do, was to migrate, to populate, and collectively to execute control over, a stewardship over the earth that God had made. And in this way they were carrying out the creation of humans in His image.

So, they have a derivative role as vice regents serving under the lordship of God who had created and had declared a special purpose for those created in the image of God. Now, along the lines of the structure, what is important is the idea of a reversal. It's called *chiasmus* or *chiastic structure*, like an X, and there's a reversal you might think of a mirror image.

In verses 1 through 4, we have the description we saw in the flood narrative: the ascent and the building of the tower. And then in verse 5, we were going to have a

reversal. In the flood narrative, you remember it was chapter 8, verse 1, where God sent a mighty wind, the spirit of God, and there the destroyed, uncreated becomes anew, the recreated, and so you have the receding of the waters descending, coming down.

And that's what's taking place here. Verse 5 shows us the peak, so to speak, but the Lord came down, and in coming down, He sees the city and He inaugurates a plan to save the Babylites from themselves. Because they were not carrying out the plan of God, and their motivation was out of pride.

This is specifically stated when it says in verse 4, we may make a name, see, reputation for ourselves. Now, in the entire Bible, we have a number of word plays, and the best-known word play would be on the name of Babel itself. Let's look at it.

And verse 9 reads, that is why it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. Now there's a play on the sound of Babel, because the word that's translated confused is Baalal. You can hear it, can't you? Babel and Baalal.

From the perspective of God and the Hebrew reader, what we see here is that Babel was not a paragon of virtue or great achievement, but rather was nothing more than confusion. Also, we find with literary features, why this is such an entertaining narrative, and also why it is so beautifully constructed in terms of its cohesion. And that is irony.

There are a number of ironies, the chief of which is what we have already found in verse 5. Here they are producing this tower, a monument to themselves. But even though it is a tower that they hope would reach to the heavens, verse 4, ironically, the Lord had to come down to see what was taking place. And this, of course, is a highly human description of God's show to ridicule the intention of humanity.

Humanity, in a unified fashion, is designing an act that does not take into account a loyalty to God, but rather a loyalty and purpose to themselves. And so the author would have us know that verse 5, but in contrast, the Lord came down and indirectly brought about a judgment against the united peoples by confusing their language. Because obviously, by having one unified language, their communication enabled them in an expeditious way, enabling them with a higher level of competency in building this tower.

So, another way in which the literary features are instructive would be what we've already said at each point in looking at these features, and that is the unity of the people versus the scattered. That's why you will find out what they say to one another in verse 3: They say to one another, come, let's make bricks. So you see is a cooperative effort on the part of these united peoples.

And then again, in verse 4, they say to themselves, let us build ourselves a city. And then again, the plural, let's make a name for ourselves and not be scattered. But of course, scattering does take place, and that's the purpose of God for confusing their language.

So, in verse 8, it says that the Lord scattered them. How did he do that? Indirectly by changing their language into various dialectical differences in language. And then you will find that is stated again at the end of verse 9, scattered.

Now, that's what's taking place, of course, in chapter 10. Let me give you one example of that. If you turn back to chapter 10, verse 18, the latter half of verse 18,

Later, the Canaanite clans scattered and were divided. So, this is the effect of the confusion of the language. It achieves God's purposes.

Now, what can we say about the message? Well, the first and most important message to be learned here is the threat of pride. See, they have a technological ambition. What they want to do is use their advanced technology in Mesopotamia by taking mud bricks, firing them, and then using mortar to make for themselves, by their advanced technology of the age, a very stout and strong tower.

And that's what's taking place then in verse 3. Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly. And then the commentator says they use brick instead of stone and tar for mortar. So, this is the verse of stones.

And why is that significant? Because in Canaan, there is a great availability of stones. And stones were the primary building tools for the common people in Canaan. So, this reflects then what they mean by making a name for ourselves.

You remember that in chapter 6, verse 4, it speaks of the warriors who were renowned of old. And that word renowned is the Hebrew word name. They were making a name for themselves, working with their hubris and pride.

Also, there's a false unity, a message having to do with false unity. Now, for those of you who've read the New Testament, you're very familiar with how the Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of the unity of the Christian family, the Christian church. And that there is no place for rivalry within the Christian church.

So why is it here that the unity of the nations is disparaged? This is because the unity of the nations is not grounded or founded upon God, but rather upon their pride. When you think about God's creation, you have a unified six-day creation account that provides for sustaining human life. It provides for a beautiful world, a place for blessing, and a place for life.

But also, there is within that diversity within the animal families, within the human family itself, male and female. So, diversity is a blessing of God. But unity, while it is sought after, that unity must be grounded in their common humanity, created in the image of God, all you see under the rule and reign of God.

So, when it comes to various ethnicities, it is not an occasion for us to charge that one ethnicity is preferred over another. But rather that the diversity is a blessing from God as long as the diversity works within the unity of the common human family that God is blessing. When you read the book of Revelation, for example, in Revelation, you will find settings of heavenly worship around the throne of God, around the throne of the crucified Savior, Christ, depicted as the slain lamb of God.

And you will have this language occurring, the language of various people groups, ethnicities, and languages, all in a harmonious, unified word of praise and thanksgiving. Now, one of the purposes of the Tower of Babel is to put Babel, so to speak, Mesopotamian Gentile pride and technology where it belongs, and that is to be suspicious of it. The Mesopotamian religion, for example, let's speak to it.

In Mesopotamia, they did build superstructures, and there is a similarity between the idea of a tower that would reach from earth to heaven. And this is called a ziggurat. There were ziggurats built.

They were stair-step in construction, and they were flat, rectangular, or square at the bottom, and then would ascend up to a peak, to a top, which would be a way of an image of a mountain. Mountain, as you know from looking at it from a horizon, there you have earth, and then at the horizon, you will see it appears to touch the skies. And so the ideology here is that what we have here is reflective of a ziggurat.

Then you have Mesopotamian political pride. The political pride is reflected by the naming of the city Babylon. Babel, of course, confusion.

Babylon sounds like the Hebrew. Babel sounds like the Hebrew. Babylon actually means a gate to a god, or we could say just simply the gate of the gods.

And that was the way they envisioned themselves. The Gentile powers, in the case of Babylonia, were constructed under the leadership of the gods. But there is nothing divine about the ziggurat, nothing divine about Babylon, because this, we are told repeatedly in this narrative, was built by men, by humans.

And so, we want to keep that in mind. For example, verse 5, But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building, not the gods. Now, what are we to learn from this as Christian readers? As Christian readers, we recognize

that within the world itself, that one of the great hurdles for peace, as we attempt to cohabit in a peaceful relationship among the nations, is the hurdle of language.

The hurdle of language is a part of different cultures. The problems that different cultures create for us are where the nation is opposed to the nation, but God, in His gracious acts, has in mind a way in which to bring peace about on earth. In Acts chapter 2, we see how this has begun and is continuing to this day.

In Acts chapter 2, you had a Jewish population in Jerusalem and many pilgrims who would come to Jerusalem at the time of a great festival, in the Hebrew Bible, known as the Festival of Weeks. Pentecost may be the Greek term with which you're most familiar. At Pentecost, then, in chapter 2 of Acts, we have a description of the way in which God is going to overcome the burden of diverse languages, diverse cultures, and hence the friction and the breaking down of the way people understand each other and can work together in peace.

Verse 4 reads that the people who had gathered, the disciples, were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now, there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, this is the blowing of the wind of the Spirit of God, a thunderous sound; a crowd came together in bewilderment because each one heard, see, this is where the diversity is overcome because each one heard their own language being spoken.

Utterly amazed, they asked, aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? The disciples, for the most part, were from the northern region of Galilee and had a Galilean dialect versus that of the Jewish Judahite dialect that would have been heard in Jerusalem. They continued, then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? So, there is a listing of the nations that were represented in the pilgrimage that came to Jerusalem. These are nations that are listed in our Genesis chapter 10.

So, they were speaking the language of that particular territorial residence, the national language. And verse 9 and 10 list them, really it goes all the way through 11. Parthenians, Medes, Elamites, these are residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya near Cyrene.

Visitors from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism. Cretans and Arabs, we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues. So, God again, as we've seen repeatedly, we find that we have sin, God's judgment, but grace greater than our sin as human beings.

So, it is the enabling work, the Spirit sent by the Father and the Son, to transform the diversity of peoples into a unity, a unity founded upon, grounded in the oneness of God. It is a unity that involves living the life of God and enjoying what God had in mind from the outset. And so, as we conclude this section, chapters 1 through 11, and have been thinking about the early history of humanity, I want to ask you, as we saw with Enoch, as we heard about Noah, are you too, are we also working, walking, I should say, walking with God? Is God our friend? Is God our companion? Is He giving Himself to us, and are we giving ourselves to Him? This is made possible, as you know, from our Lord Jesus Christ.

God had to step in, in a special way, by sending His own Son, Jesus Christ, who became fully, completely a human being who did not rebel against the Lord, unlike the first Adam, but obeyed His Father in all things, who died on the cross for our sins, who was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitting at the right hand of God the Father, making petition, making provision for us as the blood of Christ is eternally effective. And this is what Jesus prayed in His days on the earth, in John chapter 17, you'll find this in verse 3, on the night of His arrest and then trial, the next day His crucifixion. Humanity has always been striving, like our first parents, for eternal life.

And that eternal life was lost in the garden. But now it's possible to be created anew, a new people, transformed into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, Jesus prays to the Father, this is eternal life.

This is eternal life. That they, that is the disciples, may know you. And this knowledge of God is interactive, it's relational, it's personal.

We spoke of that, God is Spirit, He created men and women His image, as spiritual beings who can have this companionship, this relationship. That they may interact with you, that is know you personally. The only true God, this is reality.

The only true God, this is the real, real. And the one you, Father, have sent. And then Jesus refers to Himself, Jesus Christ.

This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent, Jesus Christ. And so there is a challenge here for us, to recognize the identity of who the true one God is. And to also come to understand ourselves.

Once we come to understand ourselves and God's benevolent plan for us, we will have an opportunity to enter into His life. This is the overarching message of Genesis, and it has been a focus for us in Genesis chapters 1 through 11. When we come to the next session, we will see a major step taken by God to ensure that the blessing of God, the purposes of God, for you and for me, and for all peoples who will turn from our selfish, prideful, self-building tower.

The question is, is whether we are willing, not any longer to build our tower, but rather to submit ourselves in receiving God's life, to contribute, to live in God's kingdom.

This is Dr. Kenneth Mathews in his teaching on the book of Genesis. This is session 9, The Nations and the Tower of Babel, Genesis 10:1-11:26.