Study Guide 4
Tower of Babel
According to the Bible, the families of the sons of Noah represent all of the racial groups upon the earth. Chapter 10 of Genesis lists a total of 70 individual founders of nations or racial groups, and divides them into three primary classifications: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. It is interesting to note that Ethnologists generally agree that mankind divides into three basic groups. Here is how the Bible divides them geographically:

**Shem's Descendants. Central Nations**
Shemites included Jews, Assyrians, Syrians, Elamites, in north Euphrates Valley and its borders.

**Ham's Descendants. South Nations**
Hamites went Southward. The names given seem to be South and Central Arabia, Egypt (Heb. Mitzraim or Lands of Ham), East Mediterranean, and East Africa. There was at one point a great migration to Egypt, but Canaan (son of Ham) settled in the land later called Israel.

**Japheth's Descendants. North Nations**
Japhethites went Northward, and settled in the areas around the Black and Caspian Seas. They became the great Caucasian races of Europe and Asia.

An interesting event happened in Genesis 11. Proud and rebellious men desired to build a city and make a name for themselves under the leadership of Nimrod, so they built a tower, in the land of Shinar (Babel), that would reach to heaven. This was the first organized system of idolatry recorded after the flood. They also disobeyed God's command to be fruitful and fill the earth. God condemned their arrogant ways by coming down and confusing their languages (probably racial distinctions also) which forced them to scatter throughout the whole earth. Before this they all spoke one language.

**Questions**

1. Why doesn't God wipe out all evil from mankind?

2. God's response to man's determination to rely on himself instead of God, was to confuse their languages and to divide and scatter them over the earth. In the New Testament, something happens that is in effect a reversal of the Babel event. Read Acts 2: 1-13. What is it?
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CHAPTER 11

Answers

1. **Why doesn’t God wipe out all evil from mankind?**

   Getting rid of the bad people in the flood did not stop mankind from choosing evil again. In the Tower of Babel mankind strive together to make a name for themselves by building a tower to the heavens, a challenge that God met by confusing their languages and scattering the people throughout the earth. If the Flood was meant to make a permanent change, it does not appear to have worked.

2. **God’s response to man’s determination to rely on himself instead of God, was to confuse their languages and to divide and scatter them over the earth. In the New Testament, something happens that is in effect a reversal of the Babel event. Read Acts 2: 1-13. What is it?**

   At Pentecost, when the Spirit of God fell on Jesus’ disciples, they began speaking in other languages so people from every corner of the earth understood them. This is the opposite of the Tower of Babel incident. It represents bringing together of all that was scattered on that day. In the Church, as we demonstrated at Pentecost, God is gathering his lost children from every corner of the globe, every nation of the earth, into a relationship with Himself and back into His family.
“Yes! Aren’t we great?”
“Splendid!” “We are absolutely splendiferous! Why, we are SO wonderful, let’s build a magnificent city to show just how wonderful we are!”
Oh, oh. The people who came after Noah were at it again. How quickly they forgot that everything they had came from God. And God is far, far more wonderful than they were.
But still, they said one to another, “Let’s build a glorious city to ourselves. And in that city, let’s build a tower that reaches into heaven!”
“Splendid idea!”
“Top rate!”
“Excellent!”
And so they all agreed.
And, the thing was, they COULD all agree, because in the time after the flood, everyone spoke the same language. They all could work together. And when you work together, you can do almost anything. (But that can be dangerous too, when you don’t do the right thing.)
So one day God came to visit the magnificent city the people were building, and to see the great tower.
“This isn’t good,” God said. “Because they all speak the same language, there won’t be anything they can’t do! Every great thing they do, they will think that they are even greater - and there will be no end to the trouble that will bring. We will have to put a stop to this.”

(God said, “We” because remember, there is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. There is one God, but three persons together as one God.)
And so right then, God began to confuse the language of the people on earth. People started calling things by different names. “Hand me that hammer,” one worker said to the other one day under the hot sun, while they were working together way up on the tower.
And the other worker handed him a brick instead.
He didn’t know what the other worker was talking about anymore.
“No! No! You dummy! Not a brick, a HAMMER!”
(Have you ever noticed how we always think there is something wrong with the OTHER person when they can’t understand us - and that if we just speak LOUDER they will!).