



The Eighteenth Century of His-Story: A World Divided in Preparation for Jehovah's Salvation

Noah and his family, along with the creatures in the ark, walked out of the ark into a brand new world. It was not the lush, watery world teeming with life that they left over a year earlier. It was no longer a world ready to swallow up the church in bitter hatred. Now they were alone. The world was now a barren wasteland divided into a variety of land masses. It was a world of seasons, storms, and fire. It was a world that constantly spoke of the judgment of God upon sin, but in the rainbow it reminded the church of God's covenant promise to preserve the world until every member of the body of Christ has been gathered into the church. It was new, but it was still a world of sin. The head of the serpent had not been crushed. God had much more to reveal about his glorious plan of salvation, and he would employ sin and Satan for that purpose. The next one hundred year period of His-story is marked by division and scattering. This division was brought about by God's judgment upon Nimrod's rebellious attempt at unity on man's terms, and this division sowed the seeds of the diversity of man and the beauty of the church united in Christ. This beautiful harvest is now taking place as we live in the last day of His-story.

The new world in which the church now lived was like a new piece of canvas upon which God begins to reveal a new aspect of his glorious plan of salvation. In chapters 9-11 of Genesis, God paints in broad strokes the background of his masterpiece, which he calls “Jehovah’s Salvation.” The church watches. What will “Jehovah’s Salvation” look like? She knows that God will save her from the power and bondage of sin. She knows that this salvation will come in the way of the seed of the woman. She knows that Satan has been given great power in this earth to build majestic kingdoms and lure man with the siren call of pleasure into his own destruction. She knows from the flood that God sovereignly saves his church in terrible judgment of sin, yet with wonderful power and grace. She knows that God will not destroy his work of creation, because he saved it with the flood, and he even established a covenant bond with Noah and the creation. How exactly will this great salvation from sin be accomplished? How can the power of sin be broken? Sin in itself was not touched by the water of the flood, as became obvious in Noah’s drunkenness and Ham’s wicked reaction to that sin. God calls his church to “stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD” (Ex. 14:13). From this time forth more than ever before, the saints of God, the prophets, and even the angels “have enquired and searched diligently” and “desired to look into” that salvation.

The background God begins to paint is darkened with two rebellious events. The first event is the rise of Nimrod, the mighty hunter. The second event is the building of Babel. Though Satan is behind these events, striving to confound the plan of God, God sovereignly uses them as part of his plan. With the flood God demonstrated his omnipotence to crush the magnificent power of Satan as it bore fruit in the cities and

developments of man. Now God will show his church how he uses Satan's defiance for the accomplishments of his own sovereign purpose.

God had given the command to Noah and his sons, "be fruitful and replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1). The new world was formed and established so that man would enter into its many new places and fill it. Gradually Noah and his sons began to establish a home for their families. New plants and trees began to dot the barren landscape, and we read that "Noah began to be an husbandman." He began to organize his new life, care for domestic animals, and coax new growth from the plants that were left. He learned to cultivate the plants for food, and the time came when he had a thriving vineyard with grapes in abundance. Genesis 10 describes the families that had developed during this period of time. The animals also would multiply and begin to fight over space and resources, bringing new fear and uncertainty to man.

During this time of new growth, one man in particular began to attract fame for his skills as a hunter. Whether he excelled in his ability to provide fresh meat, or whether he had invented ingenious means to destroy the great beasts that multiplied and now terrified man is not clear from Scripture. Either way, Nimrod saw wisdom in uniting as one people instead of going out to replenish the earth as God had commanded. In his fame, he envisioned power, glory, and freedom to pursue happiness and pleasure, and he had the genius and power to accomplish his vision. Instead of scattering into the earth and facing all sorts of dangers and hardship, he understood the power of cooperation among men and the value of satisfying the basic desires of man for security and pleasure. Nimrod was a mighty hunter. He called the people back together. "It makes no sense to explore to the uttermost regions of the earth to replenish and fill it," he proclaimed. "I

can provide all that you need for a decent life. We can work together and find solutions to every problem we face.”

To anyone who protested, “but God said...”, he replied, “But look what I can do. Do you want a secure and safe place to live and enjoy life? Follow me. I produce results. If you want to be stalked by wild beasts, that is your choice.” Nimrod made no attempt to hide from God. He was a hunter “before Jehovah.” The church was once again faced with the challenge: walk by faith or walk by sight. Nimrod worked boldly in defiance of God, but God sovereignly turned all he did to conform with his plan.

One integral component to Nimrod’s master plan was the construction of a tower. He convinced everyone of the value of a tower and with a united heart “...they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” Gen. 11:4). This was the plan of man. It made good sense from an earthly perspective. This was the wisdom of man, but it was not the wisdom of God. This was walking by sight, not by faith in God’s word. In man’s puny mind, the glorious ways of God seem to be foolishness. God did not want unity in man; he would have unity in Christ. Unity in the church would be a unity of diverse peoples who have scattered to the far regions of the earth, and who have developed unique and diverse traits and characteristics that could be united only in the church, the body of Christ.

Nimrod saw a unity of people to serve their own needs and desires for their own glory. God saw a church made up of diverse peoples for his own glory. The church by this time already in history likely had become the minority again. The pressures to forsake the church and join hands with the world were growing. Persecution, if it had not yet become physical, was quickly moving in that direction. The salvation of the church and judgment upon the cause of Nimrod would serve the purposes of God to

gather a diverse people of God into one united body. Jehovah God, this time not by a mighty flood, but rather by something more like a still small voice brought a diversity of language to man who up to this point, was united with one language. Without any external display of power in great storms, earthquakes, lightning or thunder, God confounded their language, so that they could not understand one another's speech.

Language is an amazing wonder that is deeply rooted in the whole way of thinking of a people. In that wonder God worked new and diverse languages to fit the diversities already developing in the new generations of man. Now each family or group of families had language to match their character. Confusion reigned as they tried to work together under Nimrod's plan, but the chaos drove each group of common language into the far regions of the world to establish the life God prepared for them there. It was not until the day of Pentecost when God poured out the Holy Spirit that this wonder was worked in reverse. When the whole plan of salvation, Jehovah's Salvation, Jesus Christ, was complete, these diverse peoples were again called together, and they all heard the gospel in their own language.

Genesis 10 gives a general description of these divisions and how the different regions of the earth were populated by different families. One man, Peleg, who became a descendent in the line of Abraham, was so named because of the great divisions that took place at this time. From the plains of Shinar, some families began to move out into the regions we now call Africa. Others moved north into what is now Europe, the Netherlands, and other northern countries until they could go no further on account of the oceans. Those who traveled east would fill what is now India and China. Those on the frontier who were best suited for exploration and survival may even have walked across a land bridge to what is now Alaska and populated the Americas. Given the great quantities of ice in the glaciers that covered much of the north lands, the sea levels may have been low enough to allow for foot travel to the Americas. The early historian

Josephus states in book 1 chapter 5 of his *Antiquities of the Jews* that “there were some also who passed over the sea in ships.”

So the peoples and nations of the world scattered to their places, taking with them the knowledge of the flood and all that God had revealed to man up to this point of salvation. Apart from the grace of God, however, this knowledge would deteriorate and conform more to the desires and imaginations of future generations. The true knowledge of God would be lost, and they changed “the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things (Rom. 1:23). The reality of God became vain stories and myths that mixed the glory of man with that of God. Even so, the power of God’s grace has become manifest as he again calls his people from every tribe, tongue and nation into the one glorious body of Christ.