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Genesis

Chapter 11 - God's Reconciliation Through Separation The Reason for Dispersion (vs. 5-9)

Genesis 11:5-9: The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 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. “Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. 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.

What an interesting phrase, “The LORD came down”. It shows according to Psalm 139, that the Lord is not only involved in our lives but is intimately acquainted with all of our ways. It really has a kind of personal twist to it, as we see the Lord coming down. Not that He has to come down in order to understand, but that He would come down that He might in some way convey His involvement in our lives; that this is not just a decision in which He makes apart from us, but it’s a decision He makes on our behalf. It’s like the psalmist records in Psalm 17, “He examined my heart, and He visited me in the night.” It’s an interesting picture that he gives. Throughout the Old Testament, in particular in Genesis, we see the Lord demonstrating His involvement in man at the very beginning with Adam walking with Him in the cool of the day in the garden, and the shutting of the door of the ark is an interesting picture of His involvement.

As you go on, you go all the way into Genesis 18, you see God’s involvement and we seem to have what we would call a Christology; that is to say, God’s presence as Christ in the Old Testament, Christophanies. So, as you begin to

see Him reveal Himself, He reveals Himself to Abraham under the oaks of Mamre, and Abraham doesn't recognize Him at first. He is as it were, like a man. Then, as He begins to talk to him, God begins to open his eyes, and he begins to realize that this is not just a lord, this is *the* LORD, and God begins to reveal to him great and wonderful things. As it goes on, it says that "I will go down to see if these things in Sodom and Gomorrah are as they are said." So, He begins to see and check out personally these things. Once again, demonstrating the involvement of God.

As we come to Genesis 11, it is with the introduction of Genesis 10. In Genesis 10, once again, if you'll just look at the very beginning of the chapter, it starts off,

(Genesis 10:1) "Now these are the records of the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah; and sons were born to them after the flood."

So, Genesis 10 sets the stage, taking us into the future paths of Noah's sons, grandsons, etc. So, what is he doing? Well, he's actually demonstrating to us what they're going to do. They're going to spread out into all

the earth. So, it's kind of going into the future. Then, we come back in Genesis 11, and we see them being spread out and why they were spread out within the text.

If you look with me in Genesis 10:21, it introduces us to Shem. Now, up to this point, we've seen the other sons and one grandson, that is Canaan, being introduced in the genealogy of those. In each case, you see their proclivity or tendency to a particular thing. For instance, Japheth is bent towards expansion and acquisition. Then, you go into Ham, and he seems to be drawn towards great kingdoms and oppression. Then, you have the Canaanites, who seem to be more focused on idolatry and pleasure. What Scripture is beginning to reveal to us is that, as it so aptly is put by Peter, "All we like sheep go astray." You've probably quoted that particular passage in Isaiah 53, that we have a tendency to go our own way, and we see the different ones going their own way. The thought is that maybe somebody would actually go towards God, but that's not the way of man. He goes away from God. So, it's actually demonstrating that. We read and are familiar with that passage in 1 Corinthians 15:33 that tells us,

“Don’t be deceived: Bad company corrupts.” So, the question is, how do we get away from this involvement with these people? Because you’re going to have this influence. We have this influence in the world today. We have those that are so involved in the pleasures that they have, and they surround us with those kinds of things and the idolatry that they embrace. Some of us are dealing with people that are highly oppressive and highly dictatorial, and we have to deal with them. Then, obviously, we deal with people that love to spend money and go out and acquire things and grab things and are continually competing for things. Different lifestyles that surround us. Everything but really following God. The question is, is there an “*ēber*” in the mix? Now, if you remember, the name “Eber” means a wanderer or a stranger. It’s where we get the word “Hebrew”. So, is there somebody that doesn’t feel at home with this? Is there somebody that feels uncomfortable with this? Well, as he introduces the genealogy of Shem, he actually skips to Eber, and if you look with me in Genesis 10:21, it reads this way,

(Genesis 10:21) “Also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber...”

Now, he’s not actually the first son in this genealogy. In fact, we won’t get to him until verse 25.

(Genesis 10:25) “Two sons were born to Eber...”

But he’s going to introduce him and tell us this is why we’re following this guy, because it will be through Eber that will come Peleg. It will be through Peleg that will ultimately come Abraham. It will be through this genealogy. In fact, you’ll follow this in Genesis 11 as we go on a little bit further. The focus then seems to be with Shem; we’re going to follow the one that doesn’t feel comfortable in this world; that wants to be apart and away from this world. Truly, these are the ones that God begins to call as we begin to feel uncomfortable. He makes us feel uncomfortable. It’s the goodness of God; it’s the graciousness of God to do that.

So, as we go through Genesis 10, it takes us into the future; it even takes us into, if you look in particular in verse 25,

(Genesis 10:25) “Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother’s name was Joktan.”

The point of the phrase that he used, “Peleg,” is that it seems to be a direct reference to the peoples being separated and the time of the tower, which interestingly enough, is probably only about 180 years away from the time of coming out of the ark. But somebody had interestingly figured it out that if in fact children were being born at an early stage, and they were, and then a later stage, within a short time, within 150 years, you would have well over 30,000 people and that would be a minimum. So, there would be a lot of people at this juncture and they’re all together, and what are they doing? Well, according to Genesis 11, they’re building a tower in defiance to God. We oftentimes are concerned about the things that are happening in our world, and the dissonance and the acrimony and also, when you begin to realize that there are wars and rumors of wars that are going on, the perception is, “Can’t we just have peace on earth?” The problem is that when man makes peace on

earth, it's the most dangerous thing that could ever happen because when man makes peace, he comes together according to man's ideas. According to Genesis 11, that's the worst thing that could happen, for everybody to be on the same page according to man's desires; that we would all be holding hands and saying, "Let's build a tower unto man." And it literally is the defiance of God.

So, as we come to this, this whole introduction is a reminder that when the people have the same language and then they have the same purpose, they have the same mindset, they have the same intent, this is a dangerous thing. So, we come to this in this particular setting.

Let me just give you an example of this. If you look with me in Acts 4, in which, once again, the people came all together. It's amazing how people can come together for hate and for their desires. Because fundamentally, one of the reasons why people actually come together is to defy God for the purpose of acquiring their desires. Now, everybody has different desires, there's no doubt about

that, but they know this, that if it's a selfish desire, God is standing in their way. So, they may have different desires, but they'll unite to go against God to somehow get their desires.

(Acts 4:23) "When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

(Acts 4:24) And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM,

(Acts 4:25) who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE...'

Now, once again, one of the things that we talked about last week was that word "Gentiles" being "*gôy*," which is a description of a mass of humanity without really a significant identification. What identifies as significantly is our relationship with God, but other than that, man is just "*gôy*". That's all he is. He's just a mass of humanity.

“... ‘WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE,
AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?’

(Acts 4:26) ‘THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR
STAND,
AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER...’

There’s a together, isn’t it? Ok, we’re holding hands.
We’re together.

“... AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.’

(Acts 4:27) “For truly in this city there were gathered
together...”

What a strange anomaly we’re facing within this particular passage, because how is it that you could get Herod and Pontius Pilate to like each other? How is it that you could get the Gentiles and the people of Israel together to do the same thing? Well, according to this particular passage, it was to be “against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,
(Acts 4:28) to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”

They joined together. What did they do? They joined together to crucify Christ. So, now that's two times the world came together. There's going to be third time that's found in Revelation 19, in which all the nations will gather together against the Lord. Three times. A dangerous thing, when the nations come together, when they're at peace with one another because when they're at peace with one another, coming together for any other reason but to worship God, it's destructive.

So, the passage reads in Genesis 11 of this event which they all had one language, they all had one intent; that's the way it reads in verse 1. They were using the same words; using the same language; using the same intent; same thought.

(Genesis 11:2) "It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar..."

The two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates.

"... and settled there."

(Genesis 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.”

Once again, in defiance to God.

(Genesis 11:4) “They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves...”

Not for God; not for the glory of God.

“... for ourselves a city...”

And I would say that city is a place in which we would pursue whatever our desires are. It's one of the reasons why in Isaiah the cities are called the “cities of confusion,” and if you don't believe that's true, just go downtown. Go into a great city that prides itself in going its own way, and you're going to have a city of confusion. One of the reasons why we have riots. People are pursuing their own desires. They gather together to do it, but they seem to desire their way.

So, the passage says,

“... let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name...”

And you now see in the text what they're afraid of. What are they afraid of? That they're going to be scattered. Now, once again, we made mention of this particular word “*pûş*” which makes reference to literally a breaking apart. It's kind of a breaking into pieces to which it's describing something really tumultuous. So, they're afraid of that. Of course, God had been saying, “I want you to go and fill the earth and multiply.” Nowhere does He say, “I want to break you into pieces.” But what He's saying is, “I want you to multiply, fill the earth, and I have great things in store for you.” But they saw that as a threat. So, what do you think is going to happen? Well, be careful what you wish for, or what you are afraid of. Scripture will say the very things you're afraid of will come upon you. That's why I tell people, “You don't want to hang in that fear realm because you're actually beginning to bring about the very thing that you're afraid of. You want to put your trust in the Lord. Put your hope in Him. He'll take care of

you, and that's a wonderful place to be." So, here they are, "We're afraid that we're going to be broken to pieces, shattered to pieces, and that God's going to do this." What do you think is going to happen? God's going to shatter them to pieces. He will actually use the word within the text, in which we see is actually defined as scattered.

(Genesis 11:8) "So the LORD scattered them..."

That's "*pûš*" - broken to pieces. Now, the initial thought is that "Well, God's just upset and He's getting even at them." But that's not true. God is doing a great work in their lives, and that's what I want you to see as we come into the passage.

So, as you begin with me in verse 5, we see His involvement, His intimacy.

(Genesis 11:5) "The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built."

Here again, if this is more than anthropomorphic, that is to say it's possibly more than just a description giving God kind of manlike qualities and yet He's still in the heavens.

But I think it's possible He actually visited. So, I would take it in that realm because of the fact that we see Him with Abraham and see Him involved in this way.

(Genesis 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...”

Now, I want you to underline the word “began” because sometimes certain words seem very insignificant, but they're actually not. Of course, all the words in the Bible are very significant but then some seem less, and this word “began” seems to just convey something that started, but it is interesting that this word is actually a word that refers to being profane. Now, “profane” means irreverent, and what it's making reference to is that which they desire to do was to be irreverent and disrespectful to God. This is how they were going to unite, is in their defiance towards God; more specifically in a way that would be unholy before God. They were pursuing an unholy place. So, they all have the same language, and this is what they desire to do, is to be profane?

Now, the phrase goes,

“... and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.”

Now, you have to read something like that and you go,

“Ok. So, it’s right. Whatever you dream is possible.”

People oftentimes say, “Sky's the limit. Whatever you want, you just have to wish for it, and it'll come true.”

And we know that's not true. So, what is He talking about within the passage? Well, interesting things within the text, because what we're seeing is their purpose to do a specific thing, and we know what it is, it’s a profane thing, an unholy thing.

He goes on and says, if you look at the phrase,

“... and now nothing which they purpose to do...”

And the purpose would be that sense of imagine or plot.

Now, when He uses the word “purpose” in the text, that word is never used when it’s referring to man, that I can think of, in a positive way. It’s always used in a negative way. That is to say, it’s this perception of devising wickedness.

In fact, a number of the passages that use this:

(Psalm 37:12) “The wicked plots against the righteous...”

It would be the same word “purpose” within the text. So, there’s a plotting that’s going on.

Proverbs 30:32 talks about plotting evil and uses this particular word.

So, what we’re seeing is that there clearly is a desire to go profane; there clearly is a desire to purpose that which is evil, and as He goes on, “Nothing will be impossible.”

Now, underline the word “impossible” because once again, that can be misunderstood in a lot of different ways. “*Bāṣar*” is the word that He uses in the text, which is not necessarily making reference to the fact that they can do anything that they wanted to do. The point is that they’re going to be unrestrained. So, the word literally means “to be unrestrained”. It’s like, why do we have fences? To restrain. Why do we have laws? So, God, throughout Scripture, actually builds these walls around man to restrain him from doing things that are harmful to him. When you have a little child, you want to put him in a little play pen. Hopefully they can’t climb out because if they climb out, there’s danger. So, you put them in

someplace that will contain or restrain their acts in which they tend to do. Well, God does this all the way through Scripture, and what we're going to see is God's going to restrain them now from pursuing this to the degree that they want. You say, "Well, why would He restrain them?" Well, all you have to do is go back to Genesis 6, because when man is left to himself and unrestrained, then every intent of the thoughts of his heart are evil continually. So, restraint, maybe a good idea? The necessity of restraint in man's life, a necessity? Absolutely. So, what we're going to see in the passage is God's purpose to restrain this kind of thinking so that they would not continue to pursue, and I would say, literally, self-destruction. Because it is the self-destruction that begins to happen when we pursue our own ways, when we all come together. It is not only the defiance of God, but also that which actually hurts us.

So, the passage reads this way,

(Genesis 11:7) "Come, let Us go down..."

That phrase is in what we call the cohortative. That means that God is very intense about doing this thing. It is a

great emphasis in which it begins to express strong desire, "We must go down."

It goes on to say, "We must confuse their language."

When you look at the word "confuse," it's just simply a word that means to mix up. If we were to define it in a modern vernacular, we'd just say God's got to mix things up, and that's what He's going to do.

What's the advantage of God mixing things up? Well, clearly, when man comes into realm in which he's confused, it kind of stops his pursuits. I oftentimes think of that interesting passage in Exodus 14, where the soldiers are coming against the Israelites and they're going to the water, and it says God confused them and they didn't know which way was out. What was God doing? Well, He was thwarting their purpose. He was saying, "This will stop you." Have you ever had those moments in your life where you go, "I don't know how I got here. I don't even know what I'm doing." I mean at one time in your life you had such resolve and such purpose and then something happened, and then you wake up and you go, "Man, I don't know. Maybe I need to

rethink this thing.” That's what He wants you to do. He wants you to rethink that thing, the things that we pursue. So, God begins to confuse, even in Exodus 23:27, where He says to the Israelites, “I'm going to confuse your enemy, so they won't mess with you.” I can just imagine the Israelites going, “We're passing right by the enemies. We're very vulnerable. I wonder why they're not attacking us?” It's because they're all sitting up there scratching their head, “Are those are enemies? I don't know. Where are they going? I don't know. Where am I? Where's my weapon?” I mean, they're just all confused, and God is gracious to do that, because what He's doing in this is He's literally thwarting their purpose, and He begins to do that.

Now, the word that He uses here for scattered, if you look in particular in verse 8,

(Genesis 11:8) “So the LORD scattered them abroad...”

Once again, it's that word “*pûš*,” and our initial thought is, “Well, He's just giving them what they were afraid that they were going to get. God is just giving them what they deserve.” Well, in some ways, yes, but that's not His

intent. His ultimate intent is once again to save. So, what is He doing?

There's a great description of that word “*pûš*” found in the Book of Job. So, if you turn with me in the Book of Job, let's just look and see if we could see this word defined in the literal sense. “To be scattered”. Yes, that's a good definition, but let's just get the feel of it, ok? So, within this text, Job 16, Job has been hit hard, and he literally is saying, “God hit me hard.”

More specifically,

(Job 16:7) “... He has exhausted me...”

God is just being mean, right?

So, he goes on and says that God has actually handed him over to ruffians, if you look in verse 11,

(Job 16:11) “God hands me over to ruffians
And tosses me into the hands of the wicked.”

Now, watch verse 12, very interesting point.

(Job 16:12) “I was at ease, but He shattered me,
And He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to
pieces...”

The phrase “shaken me to pieces” is “*pûş*”. That's very graphic, isn't it? “He took me by the neck, and He just shook me into pieces.” I don't know if you've ever felt that way, but the point of the text is that “Everything in my life has changed,” and when he considers the things that are happening to him, he feels victimized, obviously.

“... He has also set me up as His target.

(Job 16:13) “His arrows surround me...”

That's an interesting picture, isn't it?

And then he goes on, he says,

“... Without mercy He splits my kidneys open...”

Which is basically God not regarding his feelings; just totally discarding any feelings that he has, and it's like God attacks him at his weak point.

The way it reads in verse 14,

(Job 16:14) “He breaks through me with breach after breach;

He runs at me like a warrior.”

“He's got my weak points. He just keeps nailing on my weak points. He just doesn't let me breathe. He doesn't

let me get up.” Well, the picture of scattered, the picture of broken to pieces is virtually in this text, and it's letting us know one of the reasons why God does what He does. We are at ease and we feel very comfortable in what we're doing as we rebel against God, as we go our own way; without any thought to the future, without any thought to eternity, we are very comfortable in our sins, and God goes, “We're going to shake things up.” And as man pursues these things, God begins to unveil the problem with pursuing these things.

If you look with me in Deuteronomy 4, you begin to see God's promise to the Israelites if in fact you will not obey the commandments and stay on target, because you have to remember, one of the benefits of God scattering all the nations is He scattered Abraham too. Then He calls him out of the Ur of Chaldeans, one of the nations that he was in, and He sets him apart. So, the scattering is necessary so that, well, let me have you read this in Deuteronomy 4.

(Deuteronomy 4:25) “When you become the father of children and children’s children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the

form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD your God so as to provoke Him to anger,

(Deuteronomy 4:26) I call heaven and earth to witness against you..."

(Deuteronomy 4:27) "The LORD will scatter (*pûş*) you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number..."

But watch verse 28,

(Deuteronomy 4:28) "There you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone..."

"You'll actually go into another nation." You go, "How did this other nation form?" Well, it formed back at the tower of Babel. Well, why did God form it, and why did God give them different languages? So that when you would go back and you say, "Well, I kind of like what they're doing." God goes, "Ok, We'll send you over there. But you're going to go over there and you're not going to understand anything they're saying. You're not going to feel at home. You're going to feel very uncomfortable."

So, the passage reads this way,

(Deuteronomy 4:29) “But from there you will seek the LORD your God...”

Why are you going to seek Him? Because you feel uncomfortable. Well, that's one of the benefits of scattering everybody and making them all different. God has made you unique to be apart from this. You don't feel at home with them anymore.

“... and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.

(Deuteronomy 4:30) When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice.”

It's kind of like a Psalm 137. Remember that particular text? It actually starts off this way, “We were by the rivers of Babylon, and we cried, ‘I want to go home.’” I mean, He does make you homesick for that which is true.

If you look at Deuteronomy 28, you see the same promise, but in a little bit greater.

If you look with me,

(Deuteronomy 28:64) “Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples...”

Once again, using that particular word.

“... from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known.

(Deuteronomy 28:65) Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes...”

You won't trust what you see anymore.

“... and despair of soul.”

“I don't even know how I feel. I don't even know why I feel this way.”

(Deuteronomy 28:66) “So your life shall hang in doubt...”

Unstable and insecure in all your ways. What a wonderful thing that is, when you're away from God, because it causes you to look for the rock that you can somehow embrace, somehow hold on to.

According to Ezekiel 11:14, as it goes on in the text, it will actually give you an opportunity to reevaluate your life. You know that shaking of your world, of causing you to see that maybe that decision to go the way of the world wasn't a good idea, and so you begin to reevaluate in the midst of all of that?

If you look with me in Genesis 11, you see the Lord confusing them for that purpose.

It reads this way,

(Genesis 11:8) “So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.”

Once again, Chapter 10 shows us all the ways that they had gone into all the different places in which they went and the desires that they have in all of those different places.

It reads this way,

(Genesis 11:9) “Therefore its name was called Babel (or “confusion by mixing”) ...”

That would be the best definition for the text, which actually comes from the word “*bālal*,” which seems to literally refer to the word “mixed up”. That's where you get the word, if you go back to verse 7, “confused”.

“*Bālal*” is where we get the word “*bābel*”; mixed up. God mixed up their languages and caused them to be confused.

“So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth...”

We realize that as you go into chapter 12, this is kind of the whole setup, because in Chapter 11 we're going to finish the genealogy of Shem, and we're going to see where it goes, and it will ultimately bring us to a guy by the name of Abram. God will call Abram in Chapter 12 out from those nations. So, it's like He'll scatter him. I can just see Abraham going, “Man, I just don't feel at home anywhere” and God goes, “That's because you're an “*ēber*”. You're a Hebrew. You're a wanderer. You don't feel at home on this earth.” You go back to the Book of Hebrews 11, and why didn't these people feel at home?

Because they had a different city that they were seeking,
a different home that they were seeking.

So, the passage reads in Genesis 12:1,

“Now the LORD said to Abram,

“Go forth from your country,

And from your relatives

And from your father’s house,

To the land which I will show you.”

Now, that's definitely a stranger. You're going from everything that you know, everything that's comfortable. There are times that God literally mixes things up for us. We feel shattered, perhaps, but there's a reason for that. God is getting you to release all the things that you feel comfortable with, and He's getting you to deal with your relationship with Him. He has to pull you apart from the world. 2 Corinthians 6 tells us, “You need to come out from among them. Be separate.” And that's where you begin to see things the way that they really are. It's the graciousness of the Lord when you think about it.

In the passage, He says this,

(Genesis 12:2) “And I will make you a great nation...”

Now, He's going to make a nation that's going to declare His glory so that all the nations will at least have one sense of right and wrong. Now, interestingly enough, when you follow Israel, they don't follow this command, and it's because of that, that there's even more confusion. But God's promise will not fail. He will bring them back. They will glorify Him and will accomplish what He has declared them to accomplish. So, the question is, why is He scattering in this place and what is happening in all the scattering? Well, beyond the fact that we've mentioned that He's confusing in the sense of thwarting purpose and that He is somehow scattering so that man would maybe rethink and have some cause for regret of the things that he's been doing, to give him a sense of opportunity to change, to think differently about as he's in a different realm. God will now separate His people unto themselves, so He would distinguish them in a very unique way, and He will begin to show, “These are people that I'm the God of; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” And you see Him begin to work in the people's

life. He will part waters for them. Which god, of all the gods, parted waters for somebody or fed them bread from heaven? So, all these things you begin to see that are very distinct. This is the God that's very unique. Of course, this will be the God that so loves you that He will give His only begotten Son. So, wonderful passage, but God will begin to separate and distinguish His people in this, and if you look at the text, He actually gives this sense of restraining them from what? From evil. He's restraining them. It's an act of restraint, and if you think about all of the spreading of all the nations. We're looking at, once again, a tumultuous time in our day and age. Really, I can't think of a time when the world wasn't tumultuous, but we're seeing some things happen and I think sometimes people go, "Wow, this is really shaking things up." And God's going, "Oh, I'm shaking things up." But God is also protecting, and the question is, from what? From uniting. You have to worry when man unites, and the day is coming when man is going to unite, Revelation 19. But now we're not, and God is literally protecting.

When you think of Isaiah 10, God says, “You know, I raised up Assyria.” Which by the way, probably in the area of Iran, but “I raised up Assyria for a purpose.” In fact, He actually calls Assyria, “My rod to discipline you, Israel.” So, in Isaiah 10, you begin to see this.

Of course, you go in Isaiah 33 and God says, “I raise up evil forces to check and balance other evil forces.”

There's an interesting passage, if you look with me in Ecclesiastes 5.

It says this,

(Ecclesiastes 5:8) “If you see oppression of the poor and denial of justice and righteousness in the province, do not be shocked at the sight; for one official watches over another official...”

Now, that's the way they translated it, “official,” but actually, the way it reads is “high ones”. So, whoever has been exalted at this time. It could be a nation, it could be a person in charge, but God raises one high one over another high one, and there are higher ones over them. What is God saying? “I’m going to raise up different

nations to subdue other nations.” You remember Habakkuk, the prophet? He was going, “My nation, Israel, is just such a wicked nation. You’ve got to do something about it.” And God goes, “They’re on their way. I got Babylon coming on their way.” And you go, “Well, that's an evil force.” “Yeah, I use evil forces.” It keeps people from going too far in any one direction against God. How interesting it is and how wonderful it is that we've seen our nation oftentimes when horrific things happen, they begin to call upon the name of the Lord, and God goes, “That's what I was using them for.” So, we rejoice over the fact that God scatters because the purpose of His scattering is to restrain, and He restrains that purpose of going against God, in which one day will happen, one day will come about. If you realize that God is distinguishing us as a people in the midst of this, so that we might stand out and be somehow different, as Peter will say, that we're a royal priesthood, a holy nation. We're a different people and God is actually pulling us out. He has scattered us.

If you look in Acts 11, let me give you an interesting example here. If you remember, the church was scattered? The church was actually scattered.

(Acts 11:19) “So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.

(Acts 11:20) But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.

(Acts 11:21) And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.”

God has a reason for scattering. God made the Church of Jerusalem very uncomfortable, and He says, “You're going to have to go. You can't just stay there. You've got to spread the gospel” and He spreads them. Every time God scatters, it's a good thing. God is restraining, God is saving, God is distinguishing, and God's working in our lives. He's causing us to rethink the way that we think.

The day is going to come when man's going to join together.

Let's just read the end of this in Revelation. I like going to the end of a book because sometimes I don't like reading all of the in-betweens. In the Bible, I actually like reading in-betweens, but in Revelation 19, if you look with me, it says this,

(Revelation 19:19) “And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.”

Interesting passage, isn't it? He saw the kings of the earth and their armies, all one, to go against the Holy One. If in fact there are warring countries in the day that we live, God has given us a reprieve. He's using one to check the other, to keep the other from going too far. Of course, we've seen some of that, as one would have a desire to use weapons; He's used us in some way to curtail that, to push that down. It is a strange testimony when you consider when God had the children of Israel going to captivity with the Babylonians, one of the statements that's made is, ‘They’re more righteous than you are.’ So,

He was using the nation that was more righteous than the Israelites, and He was using them to scatter them, that He might call for himself a people. Your world's shaken up? You feel like maybe Job, somebody's ringing you by the neck and shaking you? That's not a bad thing.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we give You thanks for scattering or moving us out of our comfort zones and away from those places that we would trust in ourselves, we would go our own way; we would pursue the things that would ultimately bring us eternal destruction. It has been Your grace to cause us to feel not at home, to cause us to be in a place in which we feel uncomfortable. Lord, it has been Your grace to cause us to rethink what we were pursuing and to reevaluate our own lives. For this, we give You thanks, for You are working in our lives.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I don't know where you are, and I don't know the things that are happening in your life. But I know this, we all go through

some shaking, and I know this, God has good in it. For though man is defying God, God is reconciling man to Himself.