

Genesis 11

First, I received a question: Did Solomon repent of his sin?

1 Kings 11:1-13:

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded. So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant. "Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. "However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

If we read the rest of the chapter we do not see his repentance.

The following article is from gotquestions.org

Of course, [Solomon](#) lived in the Old Testament dispensation and thus did not experience being "born again" or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, for that was not possible before the Christ's ascension and the birth of the church (see [John 16:7](#)). The terms *born again* and *saved* (in the sense of eternal salvation) are New Testament terms. That kind of language is not used of Old Testament saints. So, when we speak of Solomon's being "saved," we are simply referring to his justification before God and his presence in heaven today.

King Solomon was greatly used by God in many ways. He received [wisdom and riches](#) from God. He built a beautiful temple because God chose him for that, and God's presence later dwelt there. Solomon's dedication of the temple in [1 Kings 8](#) is a humble, awe-filled occasion marked by thousands of sacrifices and a prayer overflowing with faith and praise. God used Solomon to write three books of the Bible: Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. God said concerning Solomon, "I have chosen him to be my

son, and I will be his father" ([1 Chronicles 28:6](#)). Surely, these facts allow us to surmise that Solomon was saved and is in heaven today.

On the other hand, King Solomon also sinned greatly against the Lord ([1 Kings 11:3–13](#)). Sadly, he married [pagan wives](#), built pagan altars for them, and even participated in pagan worship himself. The only reason God did not immediately take the kingdom from Solomon was that God wanted to keep His covenant with David ([1 Kings 11:12](#)). The record of Solomon's sins, plus the dismal tone in Ecclesiastes, has led some to suggest that Solomon was not saved and is not in heaven today.

Some point to the fact that Solomon is not mentioned in the great hall of faith of [Hebrews 11](#) as another clue that he was not saved. However, many other Old Testament characters are not mentioned there, either, and [Hebrews 11](#) was never intended to be a comprehensive list of the redeemed.

Just as in the life of David, there were periods of disobedience in Solomon's life that required confession and repentance. Do believers today ever sin? Of course they do. The actions of God's people don't always match up with what they profess. When believers stumble, they should confess their sins and receive God's promised cleansing ([1 John 1:9](#)). We know that David did exactly that ([Psalm 51](#)). Did Solomon? Yes, we believe he did.

The [book of Ecclesiastes](#) is a dark study on a life lived apart from God. Solomon looks back over his wasted years and finds no joy in them, only futility, vanity, and "a chasing after the wind" ([Ecclesiastes 1:14](#)). But he had learned his lesson—albeit the hard way—and he wraps up the book with this advice: "Now all has been heard; / here is the conclusion of the matter: / Fear God and keep his commandments, / for this is the duty of all mankind. / For God will bring every deed into judgment, / including every hidden thing, / whether it is good or evil" ([Ecclesiastes 12:13–14](#)). This surely sounds like a man who has returned to the Lord and is trusting in Him.

Of course, the ultimate answer to whether or not Solomon was saved rests with God, not with us. Salvation is in the hands of God and God alone because, as Scripture says, God looks on the heart ([1 Samuel 16:7](#)). But we believe that Solomon did trust in God and, in spite of his disobedience, was a son of God. His writings clearly speak of a man who had a personal relationship with God and knew firsthand the folly of living without God. We assume that, upon his death, Solomon went to paradise. Despite his failures and shortcomings, Solomon was saved, by grace through faith, just as we are today.¹

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/was-Solomon-saved.html>

Outline is from the Outline Bible:

SECTION OUTLINE FOUR (GENESIS 11:1–32)

This section describes the confusion of all things.²

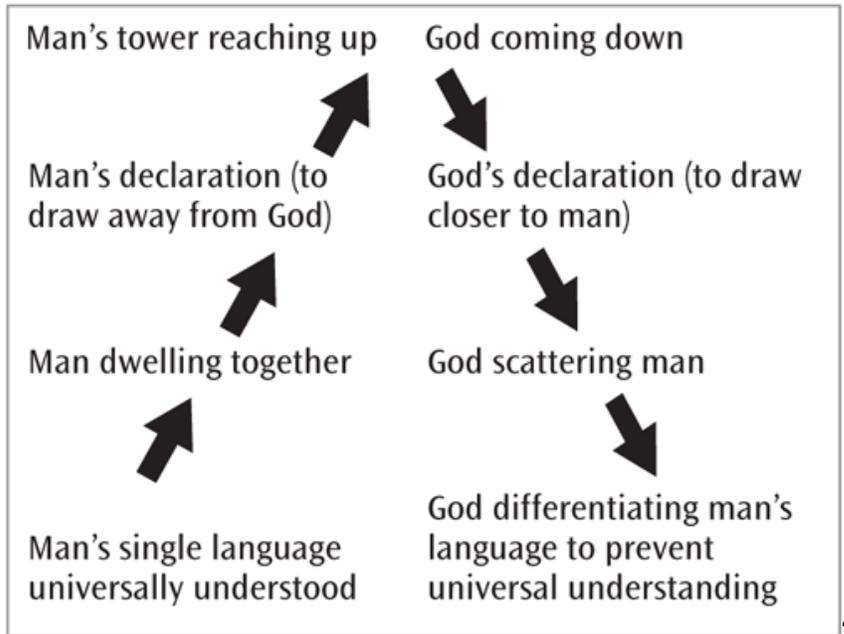
- I. THE SIN (11:1–4): All human beings attempt to unify themselves for their own glory.
- II. THE SENTENCE (11:5–9): God scatters them by confusing their language at the tower of Babel.
- III. THE SETTLEMENT (11:10–32): A history is given of Shem’s descendants. Shem is the ancestor of Abraham.³

Moody Bible Commentary:

This narrative concerning Babel, just like the flood narrative, is structured in the form of a chiasm in which the points and themes in the “upward” part of the narrative are mirrored—and thus reinforced—in the “downward” part of the narrative. This identical structuring of the flood and Babel narratives links them together and thus reinforces the concluding point of both, namely, that depravity is as “attached” to man as it can be (and its impending judgment as inevitable)—as much so after the flood as before it. The structure of this brief narrative may be diagrammed as follows:

² H. L. Willmington, [*The Outline Bible*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Ge 11:1–32.

³ H. L. Willmington, [*The Outline Bible*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Ge 11:1–32.



ESV Study Bible:

The Tower of Babel. This episode is significantly more important than its length suggests. It presents a unified humanity using all its resources to establish a city that is the antithesis of what God intended when he created the world. The tower is a symbol of human autonomy, and the city builders see themselves as determining and establishing their own destiny without any reference to the Lord. (The tower story may also be a polemic against Mesopotamian mythology. Eridu Genesis, a fragmentary text found at Ur, Nippur, and Nineveh, describes the goddess Nintur's calling for humanity to build cities and to congregate in one place. Her desire, according to this text, is that humans be sedentary and not nomadic. Yahweh demands just the opposite, so that the earth would become populated.)

Line-by-line study:

I. THE SIN (11:1–4): All human beings attempt to unify themselves for their own glory. Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. ² It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. 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. 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."

a. This section seems to not be after Genesis 10, but sometime during Genesis 10.

⁴ Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., "[Genesis](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 66.

- b. The whole earth used the same language, or more literally, one set of words. This does not mean simple language. Instead, it means one language.
- c. CSB: *The tower of Babylon incident occurred earlier than at least some of the events of chap. 10 since **the whole earth still had the same language and vocabulary** (10:5, 20, 31).*⁵

NET: *The whole earth*. Here “earth” is a metonymy [the substitution of the name of something for that that is meant: ex. Suit for business suit] of subject, referring to the people who lived in the earth. Genesis 11 begins with everyone speaking a common language, but chap. 10 has the nations arranged by languages. It is part of the narrative art of Genesis to give the explanation of the event after the narration of the event. On this passage see A. P. Ross, “The Dispersion of the Nations in Genesis 11:1–9,” *BSac* 138 (1981): 119–38.

² **tn** *Heb* “one lip and one [set of] words.” The term “lip” is a metonymy [the substitution of the name of something for that that is meant: ex. Suit for business suit] of cause, putting the instrument for the intended effect. They had one language. The term “words” refers to the content of their speech. They had the same vocabulary.⁶

- d. I like what MacArthur shares: *God, who made man as the one creature with whom He could speak (1:28), was to take the gift of language and use it to divide the race, for the apostate worship at Babel indicated that man had turned against God in pride (11:8, 9).*⁷
- e. The CSB shares: *The account of Adam and Eve’s sin in the garden of Eden (chap. 3) and the tower of Babylon narrative share many similarities in plot, vocabulary, and theme. Both show people acting with sinful pride to try to make themselves godlike, and both show God expelling sinners from their homes as punishment for their sin.*⁸
- f. Verse 2: they journey east...

Dr Constable: *Some of the Hamites migrated “east” (specifically southeast) to the plain of Shinar (cf. 10:10). This was in the Mesopotamian basin (modern Iraq).*

*“In light of such intentional uses of the notion of ‘eastward’ within the Genesis narratives, we can see that here too the author intentionally draws the story of the founding of Babylon into the larger scheme at work throughout the book. It is a scheme that contrasts God’s way of blessing (e.g., Eden and the Promised Land) with man’s own attempt to find the ‘good.’ **In the Genesis narratives, when man goes ‘east,’ he leaves the***

chap. chapter

⁵ Robert D. Bergen, “[Genesis.](#)” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 25.

BSac Bibliotheca Sacra (a journal)

⁶ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 11:1.

⁷ John F. MacArthur Jr., [The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Ge 11:1.

chap. chapter

⁸ Robert D. Bergen, “[Genesis.](#)” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 25.

*land of blessing (Eden and the Promised Land) and goes to a land where the greatest of his hopes will turn to ruin (Babylon and Sodom).*³⁶⁵⁹

- g. CSB: **The land of Shinar** corresponds to ancient Babylonia and includes the region of the cities of Babylon, Erech, Accad, and Calneh (10:10). **Migrated from the east** can be translated “migrated eastward.”¹⁰
- h. This definitely seems to me that this takes place soon after Genesis 9. This is recounting immediately after the flood.
- i. They find a plain... God had commanded them to fill the earth (Genesis 1, 2, and 9), but they were all together in one place, so God in His mercy is going to help them spread out.
- j. They are at Shinar: We saw that area in Genesis 10:10: **SHINAR** (שִׁנְאָר, *shin'ar*). A region of Mesopotamia that, at various times, included Nimrod's kingdom, Babel, and Babylon (e.g., Gen 10:10; 11:2; Isa 11:11; Dan 1:2; Zech 5:11).¹¹
- k. This seems to be the broader area around Babylon. The NET shares: *Shinar is the region of Babylonia.*¹²
- l. Verse 3 continues now with what is going to happen.
- m. Make bricks, burn them thoroughly. The Bible tells how they are building: bricks for stone, tar for mortar.
- n. CSB: *Unlike the original readers' homeland of Israel, with its extensive quantity of limestone building material, the people of Babylonia used **oven-fired bricks**. Archaeological excavations have confirmed that ancient inhabitants of the land used **asphalt for mortar.***¹³
- o. Notice they say, “Let us...” this is echoing God's language from Genesis 1. They want to be like God. See Gen 1:24.
- p. Verse 4: they are gathered all together and they are united in a common purpose, but it is the wrong purpose.
- q. CSB: *The people's pride and ambition is expressed in three different ways: (1) the fivefold use of the first-person pronouns—**us** (three times), **ourselves** (twice), and **we**; (2) their desire to **build ... a tower into the sky**, thus giving them access to “the heavens,” the domain of God; and (3) their attempt at self-glorification—**let us make a name for ourselves**. Because they did it to avoid being **scattered throughout the***

³⁶⁵ 365. Idem, “Genesis,” p. 104.

⁹ Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ge 11:1.

¹⁰ Robert D. Bergen, [“Genesis.”](#) in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 25.

¹¹ John D. Barry et al., eds., [“Shinar.”](#) *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

¹² Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 11:2.

¹³ Robert D. Bergen, [“Genesis.”](#) in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 25.

earth, all their efforts amounted to a rebellion against God and his command to fill the earth (9:1).¹⁴

- r. Think of Stonehenge.
- s. NET: *A translation of “heavens” for שָׁמַיִם (shamayim) fits this context because the Babylonian ziggurats had temples at the top, suggesting they reached to the heavens, the dwelling place of the gods.¹⁵*
- t. Do you hear the ignorance and insurrection? Lest we be dispersed. (ESV)
- u. Or be scattered in NASB
- v. “Let us” again...
- w. Build a city
- x. A tower that will reach to the heavens...
- y. Make for ourselves a name...
- z. Notice repetition of “us,” “ourselves,” and “we.”
- aa. This is human pride.
- bb. This is human depravity.
- cc. God is not as much judging them, but rather in His grace He is saving them from their own sin by scattering them.
- dd. By having a city, they may think they will not need to migrate as much. They can help each other out and support each other. That is not wrong, but it seems as though God in His omniscience knows their motivations.
- ee. NET: *The Hebrew verb שָׁטַף (pavats, translated “scatter”) is a key term in this passage. The focal point of the account is the dispersion (“scattering”) of the nations rather than the Tower of Babel. But the passage also forms a polemic against Babylon, the pride of the east and a cosmopolitan center with a huge ziggurat. To the Hebrews it was a monument to the judgment of God on pride.¹⁶*

Extra info:

Moody:

*Just as at the beginning of the flood narrative (6:11–12), the present narrative begins with a reference to **the whole earth** (lit., “the land,” ha-ares), referring to the people living on the land. This also serves to anticipate the negative impact of humanity’s sin on the land itself as described at the end of this narrative, as at the end of the flood narrative. In both instances the people are scattered, and the land is divided (9:19; 11:8–9). As in the flood narrative, the present account also represents an indictment of all humanity, not just a portion thereof. That all humanity was willingly involved in the Babel rebellion is underscored by their use of **the same language**, sharing “identical ideas” (**the same words**).*

¹⁴ Robert D. Bergen, “[Genesis](#),” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 25.

¹⁵ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 11:4.

¹⁶ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 11:4.

lit. literally

The negative event to ensue is already implied by the reference both to **Shinar** (v. 2), previously mentioned in connection with the rebel Nimrod (10:10), as well as man's journeying (from the land of Ararat; 8:4) and settling in the east (see comments at 3:24). **Humanity's great sin is, in any event, explicitly indicated in v. 4, centered in their collective desire—expressed with one “voice” (Come, let us)—to build for ourselves a city, and a tower ... and ... make for ourselves a name. In other words the building project itself did not represent man's sin. Instead the sin was in the purpose for which the building project was undertaken, to “make for ourselves a name.”** The term “name,” as commonly used elsewhere, refers to reputation or memorial. Thus the sin was that by building the great city with a tower, humanity was seeking to establish a memorial or testimony to themselves in exclusion from God. (God is neither mentioned nor alluded to anywhere in this human-focused passage.) Interestingly this relates to the previous chapter that ends with the genealogy of Shem, whose name actually means “name” (or “reputation”). **This is, in essence, the first expression of secular humanism (i.e., the promotion of human values and achievement to the exclusion of theological ones).** In contrast, God promises Abram that as part of the promised blessing, God would make his name great. **The city and tower could not have been a ziggurat, as some scholars claim, since ziggurats were specifically constructed for religious purposes in the worship of various gods (hardly reconcilable with the expression “for ourselves”).**¹⁷

II. THE SENTENCE (11:5–9): God scatters them by confusing their language at the tower of Babel.

⁵ The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 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. ⁷ Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech.” ⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. 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.

- a. The Lord comes down... That phrase is anthropomorphic in nature. It is ascribing to God human attributes. We see it other places: Gen 18:21; Ex 3:8; 19:11, 18, 20.¹⁸
- b. In Genesis 18:21 it seems to be a Theophany or more likely a Christophany where God is present in human form.
- c. The Lord knows what is going on as He is omniscient and omnipresent.

v. verse

v. verse

i.e. that is

¹⁷ Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., [“Genesis,”](#) in *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 66–67.

¹⁸ [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

- d. Notice verse 5 says “sons of men” had built. This seems to be emphasizing the descendants of humanity multiplying. The NET shares: *Heb “the sons of man.” The phrase is intended in this polemic to portray the builders as mere mortals, not the lesser deities that the Babylonians claimed built the city.*¹⁹
- e. “had” built means it was complete.
- f. Verse 6: The Lord speaks.
- g. Who is the Lord talking to?
- h. It seems to be just like in Genesis 1:3, 24 and throughout that passage. God is speaking to either the angels, or the Godhead. This could also be anthropomorphic language, that is ascribing to God human attributes. This could be sharing with us God’s thinking.
- i. God has great concern. In their depravity with the same language and the same location this could lead to very bad things.
- j. Verse 7: God intervenes, He does what they were trying to prevent in verse 4. This is an act of grace.
- k. God confuses their language.
- l. God says, “Let Us go down...” Again, anthropomorphic language as God is omnipresent.
- m. CSB: *Perhaps the most dramatic Hebrew wordplay in the tower of Babylon episode involves the deliberate reversal of sounds between vv. 3 and 7. Humans created brick—a word that contains the sound sequence l-b-n in Hebrew—to rebel against God. In response God created confusion—a Hebrew word containing n-b-l—to reverse the evil human plot.*²⁰
- n. NET: *God speaks here to his angelic assembly. See the notes on the word “make” in 1:26 and “know” in 3:5, as well as Jub. 10:22–23, where an angel recounts this incident and says “And the LORD our God said to us.... And the LORD went down and we went down with him. And we saw the city and the tower which the sons of men built.”*²¹
- o. Dr Constable:
- p. *“If language is the audible expression of emotions, conceptions, and thoughts of the mind, the cause of the confusion or division of the one human language into different national dialects might be sought in an effect produced upon the human mind, by which the original unity of emotion, conception, thought, and will was broken up.*

¹⁹ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 11:5.

vv. verses

²⁰ Robert D. Bergen, [“Genesis,”](#) in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 25.

²¹ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 11:7.

This inward unity had no doubt been already disturbed by sin, but the disturbance had not yet amounted to a perfect breach."³⁷⁰²²

- q. Some scholars believe that this judgment also involved the implantation of ethnic and racial distinctions in humankind. The Table of Nations in chapter 10 may imply this.³⁷¹²³
- r. Verse 8 gets interesting. The Lord had already confused their language. Now it says, the Lord "Scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth..."
- s. It seems that God is confusing their language and scattering them.
- t. God scattered them and they stopped building the city.
- u. Dr Constable: *Some interpreters take the confusion of languages to have been a local phenomenon only.*³⁷² *Most, however, regard it as the source of the major language groups in the world today.*²⁴
- v. Verse 9: therefore means an inference.
- w. The name of that city was called "Babel" which means to confuse.
- x. The Lord confused the language of the "whole" earth and "scattered them..."
- y. NET: *Babel. Here is the climax of the account, a parody on the pride of Babylon. In the Babylonian literature the name bab-ili meant "the gate of God," but in Hebrew it sounds like the word for "confusion," and so retained that connotation. The name "Babel" (בְּבֶלֶט, bavel) and the verb translated "confused" (בָּלַל, balal) form a paronomasia (sound play). For the many wordplays and other rhetorical devices in Genesis, see J. P. Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis (SSN).*²⁵
- z. Moody: *Just as He graciously prevented humanity from expressing their collective rejection of Him by "confusing" their language and causing them to scatter, so He will graciously enable them to one day express their collective worship of Him by "restoring" to them a clarified speech to serve Him in one accord (Zph 3:9). A foretaste of this was given at Pentecost, on the day the church was born, when the language of the people was clarified and the gospel was heard by all (Ac 2:5–6).*²⁶

³⁷⁰ 370. Keil and Delitzsch, 1:174–75.

²² Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ge 11:7.

³⁷¹ 371. See Merrill, "The Peoples . . .," p. 22.

²³ Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ge 11:7.

³⁷² 372. See James E. Strickling, "The Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues," *Kronos* (Fall 1982), pp. 53–62. Strickling believed lightning struck the tower of Babel and that the confusion of speech that followed resulted from a scrambling of the electrical circuits in the brains of those struck. This is an interesting idea but impossible to prove.

²⁴ Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ge 11:8.

SSN Studia semitica neerlandica

²⁵ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 11:9.

²⁶ Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., "[Genesis.](#)" in *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 67.

III. THE SETTLEMENT (11:10–32): A history is given of Shem’s descendants. Shem is the ancestor of Abraham.²⁷

¹⁰ These are the records of the generations of Shem. Shem was one hundred years old, and became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood; ¹¹ and Shem lived five hundred years after he became the father of Arpachshad, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹² Arpachshad lived thirty-five years, and became the father of Shelah; ¹³ and Arpachshad lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Shelah, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Shelah lived thirty years, and became the father of Eber; ¹⁵ and Shelah lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Eber, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁶ Eber lived thirty-four years, and became the father of Peleg; ¹⁷ and Eber lived four hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Peleg, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁸ Peleg lived thirty years, and became the father of Reu; ¹⁹ and Peleg lived two hundred and nine years after he became the father of Reu, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰ Reu lived thirty-two years, and became the father of Serug; ²¹ and Reu lived two hundred and seven years after he became the father of Serug, and he had other sons and daughters. ²² Serug lived thirty years, and became the father of Nahor; ²³ and Serug lived two hundred years after he became the father of Nahor, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁴ Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and became the father of Terah; ²⁵ and Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years after he became the father of Terah, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁶ Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. ²⁷ Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot. ²⁸ Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. ²⁹ Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram’s wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor’s wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰ Sarai was barren; she had no child. ³¹ Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there. ³² The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.

- a. **Jewish people came from one common ancestor**
- b. Dr Michael Rydelnik shares now through DNA studies we can tell that the Jewish people in the Israel area came from one common ancestor
- c. Now, we are back to a genealogical record.

²⁷ H. L. Willmington, [*The Outline Bible*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Ge 11:1–32.

- d. ESV Study Bible: *While the periods mentioned are still unusually long, they gradually become somewhat shorter. The length of time during which these men live is much shorter than is recorded for men living before the flood (cf. 5:1–32). This is similar to the pattern found in a clay tablet from the Mesopotamian city of Uruk, called the Sumerian King List (see note on 5:1–32). It was inscribed by a scribe during the reign of King Utukhegal, about 2100 B.C. It tells of kings who reigned for extremely long times. A flood then came, and subsequent kings ruled for vastly shorter times.*²⁸
- e. CSB: **The family records of Shem** constitute the fifth of eleven (Hb) toledoth sections in Genesis (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2). Whereas the previous toledoth section (“the family records of Noah’s sons,” 10:1–11:9) presented Noah’s “unchosen” descendants, this one traces the “chosen” offspring.²⁹
- f. Shem, son of Noah.
- g. Moody shares: *Much like the genealogies in chaps. 4; 5, and 10, so the genealogy here follows immediately after a brief narrative describing the commission of grave sin (4:1–15 [the murder of Cain]; 4:23–26 [unjust capital punishment]; 9:20–29 [sexual perversion]; and 11:1–9 [collective rejection of God]). Thus this “moderates” the negative tone of the previous episode by demonstrating that God’s fundamental blessing of humanity in 1:28 remains intact, and if intact in its physical aspect, then also, potentially, in its spiritual aspect. The present genealogy, moreover, being that of Shem, also serves as an adept literary-theological transition to the next thematic “half” of Genesis. The expectation is thus laid that the present genealogy of Shem will likewise be followed by a narrative episode involving the making of a shem (“name”) for a man. And indeed it is, for in 12:2 God declared to Abraham, “I will ... make your name [shem] great.”*³⁰
- h. Compare with Genesis 10:22-25.
- i. Now we see ages listed. Shem was 100 years old when he became the father of Arpachshad. This was 2 years after the flood.
- j. **They are tracing Shem because Shem was the ancestor of Abraham and the Jewish people.**
- k. Some see a contradiction because in Gen 6:3 God said that people will only live 120 years old. There is a simple explanation: 1) God meant 120 years until the flood, or 2) God slowly started making people not live as long, so that by the end of the Torah, the Pentateuch, Moses lived 120 years old. See the end of Deuteronomy (Deut 34:7).
- l. Verse 11: Shem lived 500 more years and had other sons and daughters...
- m. Verse 12: Arpachshad: 35 years and became the father of Shelah.
- n. Verse 13: Arpachshad lived another 403 years having other sons and daughters...

²⁸ Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 70.

Hb Hebrew

²⁹ Robert D. Bergen, “Genesis,” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 26.

chaps. chapters

³⁰ Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., “Genesis,” in *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 67.

- o. Verse 14: Shelah lived 30 years and became the father of Eber...
- p. Verse 15: Shelah lived 403 years after he became the father of Eber and had other sons and daughters,.
- q. Verse 16: Eber lived 34 years and became the father of Peleg...
- r. Verse 17: Eber lived 430 years after he became the father of Peleg and he had other sons and daughters...
- s. Verse 18: Peleg lived 30 years and became the father of Reu...
- t. Verse 19: Peleg lived 209 after he became the father of Reu and he had other sons and daughters.
- u. Verse 20: Reu lived 32 years and became the father of Serug...
- v. Verse 21: Reu lived 207 years after he became the father of Serug and he had other sons and daughters.
- w. Verse 22: Serig lived 30 years and became the father of Nahor.
- x. Verse 23: Serug lived 200 years after he became the father of Nahor and had other sons and daughters.
- y. Verse 24: Nahor lived 29 years, and became the father of Terah.
- z. Verse 25: Nahor lived 119 years after he became the father of Terah and he had other sons and daughters.
- aa. Verse 26: Terah lived 70 years and became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.
 - i. Now we see three listed
 - ii. Abram
 - iii. Nahor
 - iv. Haran
 - v. Joshua 24:2: *And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.*
 - vi. Abram was a pagan. God did not choose him because he was special and followed God. God took the initiative.
- bb. Verse 27: Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot.
 - i. Notice: "Now these are the records..."
 - ii. We now see Lot and Abram...

CSB: **The family records of Terah** is the sixth of eleven (Hb) toledoth sections in Genesis (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2). Far more than a simple genealogical table, this section stretches across parts of fifteen chapters and includes a rich supply of information about the life of Terah's most famous son, **Abram** (later called Abraham). In the Hebrew, the spelling of the personal name **Haran** differs from the place name Haran (charan; v. 31).

Nahor's wife ... Milcah eventually produced eight sons (22:20–23); her most famous son, Bethuel, became the father-in-law of Abraham's son Isaac (25:20).

In contrast to Milcah, **Sarai** (later called Sarah) **was unable to conceive**. This painful fact is emphasized by the biblical writer restating the fact: **she did not have a child**. God's provision of

Hb Hebrew

v. verse

*an heir for Abraham in spite of Sarah's barrenness is a major theme in the narratives that follow (15:2–4; 17:15–21; 21:10).*³¹

- cc. Moody Bible commentary about Gen 11:27-50:26: *Having established in the previous section (1:1–11:26) that humanity is depraved and stands in need of redemption, God focused in the rest of Genesis on delineating the “path” by which that need will be met. Since Gn 3:15 shows that man’s need for redemption will be solved by the divine-human “seed” of the woman, the present section is concerned with establishing the ethnic and familial parameters of that seed, commencing with the prophetic promise of His descent from Abraham (12:3) and concluding with the prediction of His descent from the tribe of Judah (49:10).*³²
- dd. Moody: *This entire section involving key episodes in the life of Abraham is subsumed under **the generations of Terah** (11:27), which bears out the important principle that the action of one’s male descendant(s) reflects to a certain degree on the reputation (the “name”) of the father. In this Terah set the direction, both spiritually and geographically, for Abraham and his own descendants in the line of promise.*³³

*Further from Moody: The thematic focus on the “path of redemption” begins in this section with God’s unconditional promise to Abraham—later known as the Abrahamic covenant. This placement is significant, for the Abrahamic covenant entails blessing not only for Abraham and his own descendants, but also for **all the families of the earth** (12:3; cf. 22:18). This underscores the preeminence of God’s love for humanity among the factors that motivated Him to lay out the path of redemption culminating in the sacrifice of the Messiah Jesus.*

Many scholars argue that the Abrahamic covenant is a conditional covenant, dependent upon Abraham’s obedience to be fulfilled. In response to this interpretation, see below the comments on Gn 17:1–8. Seeing the Abrahamic covenant as unconditional is of great importance for understanding God’s character and the nature of His salvation of humanity in any age. This unconditionality is implied not only by the absence of any conditional (“if-then”) statement in God’s declaration of the covenant in 12:1–3 (hence Paul’s designation of this covenant as a “promise” in Gl 3:17), but also by the structural arrangement of the biblical narrative surrounding that declaration. Both in the preceding episode where Abraham is “taken” by his father (11:27–32) and in the following episode on the sojourn in Egypt (12:10–20), Abraham’s lack of merit—

³¹ Robert D. Bergen, “[Genesis.](#)” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 26.

³² Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., “[Genesis.](#)” in *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 67–68.

³³ Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., “[Genesis.](#)” in *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 68.

cf. compare or consult

even demerit—as a covenantee is clearly evident. As with all God’s redemptive covenants (i.e., promises), the causative factor is God’s grace, not human merit.³⁴

- ee. Verse 28: Haran died in the presence of his father of Teran...
 - i. Now we see the land of Ur mentioned.
 - ii. Ur of the Chaldeans...
 - iii. NET: *The phrase of the Chaldeans is a later editorial clarification for the readers, designating the location of Ur. From all evidence there would have been no Chaldeans in existence at this early date; they are known in the time of the neo-Babylonian empire in the first millennium B.C.*³⁵
- ff. Verse 29: Abram and Nahor take wives...
 - i. Sarai: the NET shares: *The name Sarai (a variant spelling of “Sarah”) means “princess” (or “lady”). Sharratu was the name of the wife of the moon god Sin. The original name may reflect the culture out of which the patriarch was called, for the family did worship other gods in Mesopotamia.*³⁶
 - ii. Nahor’s wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah.
 - iii. Milcah will come up later: Gen 22:20, 23; 24:15: NET: *The name Milcah means “Queen.” But more to the point here is the fact that Malkatu was a title for Ishtar, the daughter of the moon god. If the women were named after such titles (and there is no evidence that this was the motivation for naming the girls “Princess” or “Queen”), that would not necessarily imply anything about the faith of the two women themselves.*³⁷
- gg. Verse 30: Sarai was barren, repeated, she had no child.
- hh. Verse 31: *Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.*
 - i. This shows that it was initially Terah who left Ur
 - ii. Terah, Abram, Lot (grandson), Sarai.
 - iii. They go as far as Haran and settle there.

Moody:

i.e. that is

³⁴ Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., [“Genesis.”](#) in *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 68.

³⁵ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 11:16–28.

³⁶ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 11:29.

³⁷ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 11:29.

Terah, not Abram, is presented as the one taking the lead to set out toward Canaan. This is clear from v. 31a, which portrays Terah as the one who **took** Abram, Lot, and Sarai. **This passive portrayal of Abram is extremely significant, for it disallows the conclusion that the promise was given to Abraham as a result of anything especially meritorious that he did.**

This view of Terah as the leader of the journey does not contradict Stephen's statement in Ac 7:2, in which he indicated that Abram received his call from God "when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran." Having received this call, Abram would have sought, quite naturally, to consult with the family patriarch. Terah, though a pagan (as made clear in Jos 24:2–3) affirmed the validity of the call and took it upon himself, as patriarch, to take the lead. This shows that Terah explicitly intended **to enter the land of Canaan**. This westward move was significant in view of the general trend of human migration up to this point was eastward and was associated with rebellion, its consequences, and further "distancing" from God (Gn 3:24; 4:16; 10:10–12; 11:2). Thus for a Mesopotamian who desired to "bridge" that distance and so draw as close as possible toward God, Canaan was a perfectly logical destination, being at the end of a direct line westward from Mesopotamia.³⁸

- ii. Verse 32: Terah lived 205 years and died in Haran.
- jj. ESV Study Bible: *By way of completing this short introduction to Terah's family, the narrative records his death at the age of 205. If Abram was born when Terah was 70 years old (see v. 26), and if Abram was 75 years old when he departed for Canaan (see 12:4), then Terah died 60 years after Abram's departure (70 + 75 + 60 = 205). In Acts 7:4, however, Stephen says that Abram left Haran after the death of Terah. A simple way to resolve the chronological difficulty is to suppose that Stephen was following an alternative text (represented today in the Samaritan Pentateuch), which says that Terah died at the age of 145.*³⁹

v. verse

³⁸ Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., "[Genesis](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 68.

³⁹ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 70–71.