

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan

Genesis 11

Chapter Eleven introduces us to the famed "Tower of Babel" and the divisions of languages and the founding of the nations of the earth. Most Bible scholars believe that the mountains of Ararat are in the modern day nation of Turkey. The text says, they journeyed from the East. That word and phrase can also be translated, eastward. This is a pointer that sometime after the flood as the population rapidly expanded, the people moved eastward from the modern-day nation of Turkey to the plains of Shinar, which is in modern day Iraq. Babel is Babylon or essentially modern-day Baghdad. The language of the people was self-aggrandizing, five times the first-person pronouns are used. They desired to build a tower that would allow them access to God Himself. They wanted to make a name for themselves. Everything they were doing was about them and perpetuating their name in the earth. God didn't like it, nor would He allow it. So instead of destroying them, He had mercy and gave them different languages so they could not understand one another. The different language groups eventually got together and began to spread out across the earth. Hence, God used the people's own evil intent to accomplish His purposes to fill the earth, which is what He had asked Adam, Noah, and their descendants to do.

In verse ten, we encounter the phrase that we have seen before in the book of Genesis, "This is the genealogy of..." This time it is the genealogy of Shem, Noah's oldest son.

The word "Shem" means "Name" in Hebrew. Noah named His oldest son, "Shem," a reference to the unspeakable and sacred name of God Himself. The oldest son carried on the sacred name of God. The Jewish people to this day do not pronounce the sacred name of God. Because of the commandment, "*Do not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.*" So, to not use God's personal, covenant name in vain, they just do not speak it at all. Therefore, we do not know the pronunciation of God in the Old Testament. We only have the consonants of His name, not the vowels, since the Hebrew language did not have written vowels in ancient times, only consonants.

Prayer and Action Steps

Dear God in Heaven, You alone are to be worshipped. You alone deserve our praise, adoration, and obedience. Thank You for giving us the ability to know You in Jesus, the Messiah. Please forgive us when we have worshipped things, people and all the gifts You have given us, instead of You the Great Giver. Forgive us when we have wanted our way, rather than Your way. Please help us to focus on who You are and the way You have laid out for us to come to You and know You personally. Please teach us Your Word and Your ways. Grant us the grace to live in the wonder of who You are and Your great favor toward us. Today listen to the speech around you and remember that all people at one time spoke the same language and it was God who allows us to speak our language and dialect.

Date _____ Scripture _____

- Read the chapter. If you have time, read it again.
- Highlight, underline or circle the Key Verse or Verses of the chapter.
- Ask yourself these questions as you read through the chapter.

Is this historical narrative, analogy, metaphor, allegory, or some other element of speech or communicating truth?

What is the Context? Old Testament? New Testament? What is the writer speaking or writing about? To whom is he writing?

Is this a clear passage of Scripture (can only be interpreted one way)? Or could the passage be interpreted legitimately, in two or more ways, according to grammar and context?

Does the passage teach a Biblical Precept; that is, tells you something to be, do or act?

Are there principles in this chapter that if followed, would require me to change my attitudes or actions?

Does the passage give a Biblical Pattern that is followed here and other places in the Bible?
