

March 20, 2022 - Bill Howell

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 March 2022

Preacher: Bill Howell

[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Well, it's good to be with you this morning.

It's always a treat to be down south when the melt-off is going on up north. As you pray for Dayspring, Turkey Hill, other camps, we'd certainly encourage you to pray for the Lord's work at Storybook Lodge Christian Camp.

The exciting time of the year is approaching with 11 straight weeks in the summer, and camps are filling up. It's exciting to look online and see all the registrations and all the opportunities if the Lord doesn't come first.

So pray for prepared hearts, Bible teachers, campers, counselors, workers, cooks, all who will be involved. Pray for Kevin. He'll be coming up in July, and we'll look forward to working with some juniors at that time.

We left about a week ago, a little over a week ago. There's a couple feet of snow on the ground. And I texted folks yesterday just to ask how things are progressing.

[1:17] Because spring is a treacherous time of year. It's Storybook Lodge with all the pine trees, and it gets in the 30s and 40s, and there's some melt-off during the day. But then it freezes up at night, and you're walking around on ice for a while.

So I'm asking, can you see dry ground yet? That's what I'm waiting for. No dry ground. I think we'll stay in St. Louis another couple weeks. But thank you for prayer and for the Lord to prepare hearts. Turn with me to Genesis chapter 11. I'll be looking at the Tower of Babel and making some application. You already had a question on that in your Peter study.

And I understand you were talking about that some last week with Jacob and the ladder up to heaven, coming down from heaven, and contrasting it.

I appreciate the song, There is a Fountain Filled with Blood. I've asked Karen to have that at my funeral, if I get promoted before others. So, family members, you're a helper reminder of that, if I'm promoted before the rest of you.

[2:29] Great song of the Lord's work. Genesis 10 talks about the genealogies from Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

And as you look through that from time to time, you see some interesting names. A son of Cush was Nimrod, in verse 8 of chapter 10, who became a mighty one on the Lord, a mighty hunter before the Lord.

Some history tells us that he was a hunter of souls in rebellion against the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, in verse 10 of chapter 10.

He also went forth, in verse 11, into Assyria and built Nineveh. Another great city that was not known for its godliness. And you continue on down the list, you find Shem in verse 21, the descendants of Shem.

And his sons were Elam. In the Bible, that's the Persians, towards the Gulf of Persia. And Asher, the Assyrians. And Arpexad, who's in the Messianic line, leading to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3:45] And Lud, don't know about him. Aram, or the Syrians. So these were all the sons of Shem. And the sons of Aram were Uz.

You know a story in the Bible. There was a man from the land of Uz, whose name was Job. And so interesting to look and see some of these genealogies.

And then we have the Tower of Babel, starting chapter 11. And after that, we have the records of the generations of Shem, following up the Messianic line here, the genealogy, up to Abram.

Father, help us this morning to get something from your word that would build and strengthen and be profitable.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Chapter 11, verse 1. Verse 1. Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. It came about as they journeyed east.

[4:48] They found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. 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.

And we wonder, how long did this take place after the flood? We aren't told. We're told that Noah lived 350 years after the flood.

It's hard to imagine this taking place in his time. He would not have supported this plan. Shem lived 500 years after the flood. Again, he would not have supported this plan.

We just don't know how long after the flood this took place. But the whole world of mankind is, in general, trying to stick together. And they're apparently looking for a home.

They moved eastward. We think of Adam and Eve being sent east out of the Garden of Eden. Later we find Cain went east after he separated from his family following the murder of his brother.

[5:50] And now they appear to the people of the earth after the flood are moving towards the east. They found a broad plain.

They thought it was apparently large enough to build on and enable them to stick together. They're using this new technology, apparently, of bricks instead of building with stone.

And they likely had plans to build the greatest city ever. Think of cities. And you think of the largest city in the United States, New York City.

Population about 8 million. Checking online, the largest city in the world is, according to the reports I saw, Chongyang, China with 31 million.

But these plans on the plain of Shinar were not going to be accomplished. And yet, the greatest city ever will be accomplished by our God.

[6:57] And the city's name is going to be the New Jerusalem. And he's going to move his people into it in his time. And you read about the dimensions in Revelation 21.

1,400 miles by 1,400 miles by 1,400 miles going up. A square city. And we don't know exactly what that's like.

But it does remind me of the Holy of Holies. In the temple. Prior to that, in the tabernacle. And that was a perfect square. And so it's like God is moving his people into the holy place to be with him. He's going to reside with them forever in the new Jerusalem. In the new heavens and the new earth. Can you think of another broad plain where men will gather in abundance in a day soon to come?

It's in the northern area of Israel. It's called the plain of Megiddo. And men are going to be gathered there by the Antichrist. All the armies of the world, it's said.

[8:10] Are going to gather there in preparation to move down against the Israelites in Jerusalem. And their desire would be to obliterate anybody who doesn't agree to worship the Antichrist and fall into his camp.

But as you know, who've read the end of the book. These plans are going to be interrupted. When the commander of the armies of heaven comes riding down on a white horse.

With his armies following him on white horses. I think I'll be there. If you're a believer, you'll be there. Our role will be more of a cheerleading kind of role.

Because he's going to do all the work in judging the rebels at that time. We read about this in Revelation chapter 16. And his coming down, the one who's faithful and true in Revelation chapter 19.

Napoleon is reported to have said this is the most natural battleground in the whole world. As far as he was aware.

[9:19] It's going to happen someday. Verse 4. Genesis 11. They said, Now building a great city is one thing.

Building a high tower as the centerpiece of that city is entirely another matter. This tower would assume a religious purpose. Climbing up to heaven.

Climbing up to God. Climbing up to be equal with God. To take over. It's a religion that is opposed to the living God. Religion is simply man's excuse to turn away from and against the living God.

And their goal in this was to exalt themselves instead of the Lord. And they would defy the Lord by refusing to scatter and fill the earth as he desired.

Genesis 1.28. Be fruitful and multiply, he told Adam and Eve. And fill the earth. After the flood. Genesis 9.1.

[10:35] He repeated the same thing to Noah. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And that implies a spreading out to fill the earth. And these who are gathered here are deliberately resisting the plan of God.

They wanted a name for themselves. It's interesting. The Shem means name. And several of you know the Jewish people have always been, the most religious ones have been hesitant to quote the name of God.

Or even to write the name of God. When it's written, they leave out the vowels. So we say Yahweh, they leave out the vowels. Even the name of God, they leave out the O.

And instead of speaking the name, they often will call the name. They'll speak of the name. And here are the people. They want the name for themselves.

And man. Man is so contradictory. That's why the Lord tells us not to put our trust in man. On the one hand, man wants to pretend that he's no different than the animals.

[11:46] And therefore is not any more accountable to God than the animals. When he acts like an animal, well, he's just acting like he was created. Doing what he was made to do.

He can't help himself. On the other hand, man wants to present himself as God, as deity, as the highest that he knows.

One who is worthy of worship, collective worship by mankind. We are unworthy, aren't we? We're inconsistent.

We're unreliable. We're fallible. God Almighty and the Lamb alone are worthy of blessing and honor and glory and power. They deserve our total worship.

Verse 5. The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. Now, it's interesting. The Lord has to come down to see anything, doesn't he?

[12:44] It doesn't mean he doesn't have perfect vision from heaven, but he describes this in terms that we can understand. All creation is below him. He's in the highest heaven.

This kind of talk reminds me of the Lord visiting Abraham in Genesis 18. When the Lord and a couple of angels traveled by Abraham's tent on their way to check out reports the Lord had heard about Sodom and Gomorrah.

He hadn't heard good reports. And we think, Lord, you know what's going on in Sodom and Gomorrah, right? And of course he does. But there he allows that whole scenario so we can see Abraham interceding for Lot.

And the Lord hearing the intercession of Abraham and delivering Lot. And, you know, Abraham, the Lord doesn't say, I'm going to destroy him with fire and brimstone.

I mean, we don't have that recorded in Genesis 18 when he's talking to Abram. But Abraham knows what's going on in Sodom and Gomorrah. And he's, oh, Lord, you wouldn't destroy the whole city for the sake of...

[13:52] And he starts naming a certain number of people. Now, if Abraham knows the reputation, the Lord, of course, knew well before Abraham. And yet he describes it as coming down and I'm going to go take a look and I'm going to see.

And the Lord is perfect in his judgment. The judge of all the earth does right, whatever his decisions are. Verse 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. Oh, the people, they're one people, they're united.

That sounds good. But it's not good unless the people are united under God. You know, it's interesting. We still have those words in our Pledge of Allegiance.

They were added in 1954. We've had them for 60, close to 70 years. I wouldn't be surprised if there's continued effort to take them away.

[15:00] But under God is the only way to live. I trust that's your plan. That they were one in challenging God's rule and they were desirous of

establishing their own.

Now nothing they set out to do would be impossible for them. You think, well, really? How can that be? Well, would anybody have ever imagined that man would go to the moon?

Now man's making plans to go beyond the moon and travels. Would anybody ever imagine that man would fly before airplanes?

And now there's airplanes and, you know, you watch the sci-fi movies and you see men with little jet packs on their back and they're flying around. And that's going to happen someday if the Lord doesn't come first. The problem with man and his creativity, which is part of being in the image of God, is that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.

It was before the flood and then God, quote, said after the flood. The heart hasn't changed. And the descendants of Noah from Shem, Ham, and Japheth, they've got hearts that need to be born again.

[16:14] Continues to our current day, doesn't it? So in pursuing the domination of the world without God, they also could knowingly or unknowingly be connected to spiritual assistance from the netherworld.

In our day, we have an organization referred to as the United Nations, where 193 of the countries of the world have a representative. The UN began in 1945 as an attempt to avoid another war like World War II.

The idea to prevent world wars, that's a good idea. But has the United Nations been successful with this goal? Chiseled into a wall across from the United Nations building in New York is a Bible verse. Isaiah 2 verse 4. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nations shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore. It's a beautiful verse, isn't it? I would suggest this verse does not describe the accomplishments of the UN over the past 75 plus years.

[17:33] Now admittedly, there hasn't been an event known yet as World War III. But I would think we would agree that the UN has not solved the problem of man, warring against man.

I'd also suggest I know someone who's going to make Isaiah 2 verse 4 happen. And he doesn't need to consult with any of the world rulers to do this.

He'll do this single-handedly. He's referred to by Isaiah as the Prince of Peace. He's the one who has made peace for us with God.

In Ephesians 2 verse 14, our Lord Jesus is described in the terms of, He is our peace. Who has broken down the barrier. And how many barriers has he broken down?

He's broken down. There it's talking about the barrier between the Jew and the Gentile. The dividing wall. The Gentiles could only go so far into the temple complex.

[18:37] There's the court of the Gentiles. They couldn't go where the highly esteemed Jewish people could go. They weren't considered first class. You remember Paul almost got murdered because they thought he had taken some Gentiles beyond the place they were supposed to go.

And eventually Paul got, the Lord took Paul to Rome that way. But the Lord's broken down the barriers. He's broken down the barriers between male and female.

I mean there's certain roles, gender roles. But as far as value before God, the rich and the poor equally valued. Red, yellow, black and white. They're precious in his sight.

He's broken down the barriers. And he's going to make Isaiah 2-4 happen in a day to come. Verse 7. Come, let us go down.

And there confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech. So God determines to slow down man's united march to doomsday by confusing their languages.

[19:47] And when you can't understand what somebody else is saying, you really can't work together very well. You who've been in a foreign country, and if you only know English, you know how slow it is to communicate and for relationships to develop or for anything to be accomplished.

Everything goes really slowly. Well, that's what God's doing here. He's going to slow down man's united march to doomsday. And rebelling against him. Verse 8.

So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth. And they stopped building the city. And so when this happened, the people went their way, as we would understand it, with people of the same language, the same tongue.

You know, since they wouldn't spread out over the earth by their own choice, the Lord helps them along to scatter and fill the earth. Verse 9.

So this city was called confusion.

[21:08] And here begins the history of the second most named city in the Bible, Babylon. If Jerusalem, the most named city, is the city of God, then Babylon represents the city and the world of system against God, opposed to him.

You know, when man tries to set his own agenda instead of following the plan of his creator God, who's also the redeemer God. Man thinks he's very wise in his independence.

But he's ultimately slipping into confusion. You see any confusion in your world today? You see confusion among world leaders?

Confusion among leaders in our country? Confusion among people in our country? This is where people go when they set aside the God of the Bible and the Bible, which is God's word.

The evil one pressed Eve toward this kind of wisdom way back in the Garden of Eden. How did that work for Adam and Eve? If you eat this fruit, it'll make you wise.

[22:19] You'll be like God. Well, that sounds good. But as soon as she ate, she found she wasn't God. She gave it, handed it to her dummy husband.

He ate. He found he wasn't God. They knew good and evil, and they knew they were evil. One final comment here is that God doesn't seem to be fretful in this passage, does he?

Regarding man's desires and intentions. He's not sweating. He's not pacing. He observes. He comes down to take a closer look. He comes down to take a closer look. And then he responds without breaking into a sweat.

He knows what man's like. And he's turning man aside for the time being from destroying himself. So, fast forward.

How many years? 5,000 years? Who knows exactly how many years, but to the 21st century. Due to technology, we now have a world where human beings are more connected worldwide than they've ever been since the Tower of Babel.

[23:29] And we have a growing desire. And we have a growing desire by many world leaders to establish a global world government.

The Great Reset is the name of the 50th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum held in June 2020. It brought together high-profile business and political leaders with the theme of rebuilding society and the economy following COVID.

It focuses on man uniting to take care of planet Earth by developing plans to deal with climate change, carbon credits, a green Earth, and how to make people go along with their plan.

I don't know if they discussed how to prevent war at this time. You know, this one-world concept?

It's nothing new to those of us who've read the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the last book of the Bible. You know, I can't help but to think that if any unbeliever would read the Revelation, he'd be shocked to see the events there lining up with the direction of our current world. It's in Revelation that we read of the final destruction of religious Babylon in chapter 17.

[24:48] And that describes, as you recall, the woman riding the beast, the spiritually adulterous woman, the unfaithful bride, describing religion.

And she's riding the beast for a time. There's a certain agreement that, as we can see in our world today, that anything goes, religiously speaking, except saying that there's one way through Jesus Christ.

That's not tolerated. Anything else goes. You can make your own way to God. All roads lead to God and so forth in the thinking. And that's what it's going to be in the end.

But the beast ends up turning on the woman and destroying the woman. The Antichrist destroys this one world religion because he wants there to be one person who's worshipped himself.

And he was Satan's man. And as you recall, Satan made that offer to someone else many years ago. After the Lord Jesus was anointed by the Spirit, the Spirit took him where?

[25:59] Out into the wilderness. First thing, to be tempted by the evil one for 40 days. And one of the temptations was, I'll give you all the kingdoms of the world if you'll fall down and worship me.

No. No way. You worship the Lord God and him only. And yet, there's going to be a push towards this in the future.

And in Revelation chapter 18, we find commercial Babylon being destroyed. Wow. What are people going to do when the whole business of the world collapses because of all the calamities that the Lord is bringing down upon people to try to get souls to turn to him in the very last days?

As you read Revelation, you can say that this time to come, soon to come, will be a part of God's great reset.

We also read in Revelation of great turmoil in Jerusalem. There's going to be destruction, great destruction in Jerusalem before the Lord comes down. He's going to come down before the complete destruction.

[27:06] And then, of course, we read of the new Jerusalem where righteousness dwells in the last two chapters of the Bible. In our COVID days, we've seen how the world came together in seeking solutions to the problem with an experimental vaccine being promoted as the best solution.

And not all of us agree with that. But the world leaders around the world united in this. They really did.

We've seen that when the fear of physical death is spread by the media and by world health organizations, people will do whatever they're told to do by the governmental authorities.

Not everybody, but in general. There's no stronger worldly motivator than the fear of death. So you can imagine, as you read in Revelation of the days to come, when the world leader says, you can't buy or sell without taking my mark on your hand or on your forehead.

People are going to go, I've got to live. Well, not really. There's something more important than physical life. And several are going to choose the Lord over their physical life.

[28:38] But those who don't are going to be lost for eternity, according to Revelation, by choosing that mark. Can you imagine what's going to happen when the rapture of the church takes place?

Wow. There's going to be something that comes out of our, from our government leaders explaining the whole situation. Probably something like aliens caught them up and took them away.

People are going to believe what their leaders say about something like that traumatic event, which is the blessed hope for those of us who are believers.

And it's going to happen in the Lord's perfect time, the great resurrection day, according to his wisdom. Now, following the dispersion of mankind at the Tower of Babel, nations begin to form. Again, we see that in Genesis 10, we see that in Genesis 11, following the experiment at Babel. And this has been God's plan for the nations.

[29:45] It's going to be his God, his plan until the end of the current world. I'm just going to read a few verses about the nations from Revelation. In chapter 12, we read of the woman who gave birth to a son.

A male child is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. Israel through Mary, the son being the Lord Jesus. And her son was, the child was caught up to God and to his throne.

In Revelation chapter 15, we read of those who have been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name.

Now, they were executed. They got their heads cut off. But the Lord says, they're victorious. They're the winners. And they're standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

And they're singing a song, the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are your works, O Lord the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways, King of the nations.

[30:52] I'm reading the New American Standard Bible. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you are holy, for all the nations will come and worship before you.

For your righteous acts have been revealed. In Revelation 21, or again, chapter 21 and 22, the new heavens and new earth.

That's what starts out in chapter 21. I saw new heavens and new earth. And so later in chapter 21, we read of the city, the new Jerusalem.

Verse 22, I saw no temple in it for the Lord God and the Almighty. The Lord God and the Lamb are its temple. The city has no need of sun or the moon to shine on it. For the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

The nations will walk by its light. And the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Verse 26, and they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.

[31:52] And you say, wow, kings, nations, new Jerusalem. And I can't give you any details because I don't know anything more than what it says right here in Revelation 21 and 22.

We don't have a lot of information about the new heavens and the new earth. But here's what we do have. In chapter 22, we read of the tree of life being found in the new Jerusalem.

And in verse 2, it will bear 12 kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations. What's that mean, Bill?

I don't know. I don't know what that means. Except it does tell me there's going to be nations, kings, in the new heavens and new earth. I'm going to have a perfect body. I'm not going to have any needs.

I'm not going to need to be healed anymore. Same thing with you, but we'll find out more in the future. The Lord lets us know just a little bit about what's to come.

[32:54] You know, God has used nations to keep other nations in line. You know, you look at World Wars 1 and 2. The defeat of Germany in both cases and her partner nations.

We think of God and the nations. We think of the nations being a drop in the bucket to God. Isaiah 40, verse 15. He's raised up world leaders.

He's put them down. There's much of this in the book of Daniel. When we read of the Gentile world powers. The times of the Gentiles.

Starting with Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. Followed by the Medes and the Persians. Followed by Alexander and the Grecians. Followed by the Roman Empire. God raises leaders up.

He takes them down. Included in his plans. We're using Rome. And Pax Romana. The Roman peace.

[33:53] The iron fist of Rome. And a certain degree of stability during that time. For the spread of the gospel. In the fullness of the time the Lord came. And Paul and the early brethren went out with the gospel.

In a relative peace. Now the gospel. When they said the gospel. There was disturbance among people. Who wanted to reject the gospel. But the Lord had the perfect time set up.

The Grecian language. In which the New Testament was written. Was spread throughout the Middle Eastern known world at that time. God's wonderful plans. God has raised up Barack Obama. Donald Trump. Joe Biden. You say Bill don't blame the Lord. But you know it's true. The Lord raises men up.

Sometimes to help a nation rise up. Sometimes to take a nation down. It's his prerogative. It's his plans. And we have to accept that.

[34:53] And we trust him. We trust him for his plans. Which end up with the revelation and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. So quickly. When prominent leaders in the U.S. want to promote globalization.

How should we respond? Well I tend to support those who would want to defend the national interests of this country. But I don't want to get fearful. More fearful of globalization than the Lord was when he dispersed the men at the Tower of Babel.

He wasn't fearful. He wasn't stressed. In fact. The push for globalization should make each of us believers excited that the Lord's coming for the church is ever so near.

Because we read about that in Revelation. Read Revelation if you haven't. Get back and read it if you haven't read it for a while. And we also realize. We've got to keep in mind our real citizenship. It's not in the United States of America. It's in heaven from where we wait for our Savior to come. Philippians 3.20 God's going to let Satan put his man on the world throne.

[35:58] For a little period of time. And it's going to prove that man cannot successfully direct the world affairs apart from God. You know.

It's not going to last because of the sinful nature of man.

There's not going to be any world unity on race or climate control or any other issue. In fact. The Bible says if the Lord didn't return. Mankind would wipe himself completely off planet earth.

Matthew 24.22 And in the end the Lord puts his king on the throne of the world. And he'll rule firmly as a benevolent dictator down here from Jerusalem for a thousand years.

Read about it in Revelation 20. Unprecedented peace and prosperity. And then on into eternity in the new heavens and new earth. So. Again quickly. Trying to get this finished.

Does God have plans to unite mankind? Well he certainly does. And his plan is functioning right now. His plan is to unite sinners from every tribe, tongue, people and nation.

[36:54] And trusting his son. For salvation. Upon faith in Jesus Christ. Each soul is immersed into the spiritual body of the Lord Jesus Christ. United to him. To each other. He's the head. We're the members of his body.

The church. The church is God's plan. To unite souls from every tribe, tongue, people and nation. You can recall from Acts 2. The founding of the church.

I won't read it now for the sake of time. But God who gave different languages and separated people at Babel. Is now bringing them back together. In his church.

They heard the disciples. They heard the 120 there. Or the maybe. Well. They're speaking in foreign languages. And it attracted the attention of everybody there. God bringing people back together.

In Christ. And our unity is not a temporary unity. Based on a passing fad. Like saving the whales. Or saving the world. In some way. It's based on a person.

[37:53] The Lord Jesus Christ. Our beloved Savior. He'll never change. He'll never fail. He'll never leave us. He wants our unity in him to be a testimony to those around us.

We love because he first loved us. We love our brethren because of him. We may disagree on minor issues. And yet we learn to just keep quiet. When somebody doesn't understand how to respond to COVID correctly like me.

I just be quiet. I just let them go on. And maybe someday the Lord will recognize. I don't know everything about COVID. I don't know everything about what's going on in the Ukraine.

Around the world. I don't know everything about anything. But my Savior does. And he's in total control. Father we thank you for your wonderful plan.

We thank you for dispersing souls at Babel years ago. We thank you for the future of planet earth. Eventually we're going to see the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[38:53] And Father we would ask that you'd continue to work. Work to save souls. To bring them into the church. To unite them to yourself and to one another. In a special way that no man on earth can accomplish.

It's a supernatural work of God. Thank you for my brethren here. Encourage them in their walk with the Lord. And their walk together in the local church. We ask in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.