



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Genesis 8:20- 11:9

"The Age of Human Government"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for another opportunity to study Thy word. We are so grateful to Thee for the Lord Jesus Christ and for the salvation which he has purchased for us in the shedding of his precious blood upon the cross at Calvary. And Lord, we are thankful to Thee for Thy word, which records the ministry of Christ, records the anticipation of it in the Old Testament, and the actualization of it in the New. And we thank Thee, Lord, for the presence of the Holy Spirit who is our teacher and guide. May he teach us tonight as we study Thy word. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Now, tonight we are looking at the third of the ages in God's plan of the ages. We have looked briefly at innocence, which generally speaking began at Genesis chapter 1 at verse 26 through chapter 3, verse 24. Then the age of conscience which began in Genesis 4:1 and concluded in chapter 8, verse 19 with the end of the flood, and now tonight we want to look at the "Age of Human Government," which begins at Genesis chapter 8, verse 20 and goes through chapter 11 and verse 9.

Now, this of course is an attempt to set forth in simple fashion God's purpose or plan for the ages. These are not dogmatic divisions in God's history. These are attempts to set it forth so that you may remember it and see how God is working. We have seen that in God's plan and program he, generally speaking, tests man with respect to some revelation which he has given man. He records in the Bible the response of man to that, which is inevitably failure, because man is a sinner. And then also there is recorded divine judgment because of sin. And in each one of the ages, as a rule, there is also a word by God concerning the coming of Jesus Christ, who is God's Redeemer, our Redeemer. He is God's answer for man's need.

And in the Old Testament on up to the New Testament times there is a progression in the revelation of God concerning the Redeemer. We have a brief and general reference to the Redeemer in Genesis chapter 3. We have a little more revelation as we go on. Finally in the latter parts of the Old Testament we have a lot of revelations concerning Christ. And finally, when Jesus Christ comes we have a full account of his life and ministry in the gospel. Then in the epistle of the New Testament we have an explanation of the doctrinal significance of the ministry of Christ as recorded in the gospels. And the Bible concludes with the Book of Revelation, the apocalypse, which is, of course, the culmination of God's plan for men.

Now, in the first age, remember, man was placed in the Garden of Eden in a perfect environment. He was given one simple test, which is recorded for us in Genesis chapter 2, verses 16 and 17. And the Lord God commanded the man saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Now, we studied the age of innocence in some detail, because this is perhaps the most important of the first three ages. In fact, I think we could say it certainly is the most important of the three. We saw that man responded by disobedience, not by immorality at first, but by simple disobedience of this expressed command of God. He did not believe God, and as

a result of his unbelief of the word of God he rebelled. And he sinned. Then this sin manifested itself ultimately in murder, because Cain slew Abel. But sin, we saw essentially, was unbelief, which led to rebellion and issued in immorality. Man failed, and so God judged man. Man was ejected from the Garden of Eden, but at the same time man was given a promise concerning the seed of the woman who would ultimately win back that which man lost by his sin in the Garden of Eden. And that which he lost was dominion.

Then we saw that man, having been ejected from the garden, in the age of conscience, lived with the knowledge of good and evil. He may have said, as regarding his condition in the age of innocency, "Lord, if we had just known the difference between good and evil, we never would have sinned." And so in the age of conscience, the best of the knowledge of good and evil is given a simple test, will he approach God by way of sacrifice and do that which is good. We saw that as far as Abel was concerned he made a good beginning, because he approached God by sacrifice and God honored his approach. Because, you see, this approach by sacrifice was God's way of approach, since it was his lesson to men that we may only approach him through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who would come and die for sins. But in the case of Cain and ultimately in the whole race, with the exception of Noah and his family, man sinned by failure to approach God by way of sacrifice, acknowledging their sinfulness and need of God. The result was the age of conscience ended with the judgment of the flood.

Now the flood, as far as we know, was a universal flood. Scholars debate this; it is just possible that this reference in the Bible to covering all of the earth is a reference to all of the earth that was inhabited. We cannot be dogmatic about this. As far as the text of Scripture is concerned, it seems to have been a universal flood. At any rate, this was God's judgment and Noah and his wife, Mrs. Noah, and the three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Mrs. Shem, Mrs. Ham, and Mrs. Japheth. How would you like to be named

Mrs. Ham? [Laughter] There are people named Mrs. Ham today, you know. At any rate, the eight human souls were preserved by the ark.

Now, in the ark, again, we have a lesson from God to the effect that we are saved only through the work of God. For the ark was a picture, a lesson, an objective lesson, a Texas sized object lesson no doubt, but an object lesson showing man that he only be preserved from divine judgment if he obeys God and flees to God' refuge. The ark is a type of Christ, an illustration of the work of Christ. For if we are in Jesus Christ, when eternal judgment comes, or when the judgment of the great tribulation comes, we are safe and secure, because Jesus Christ is the one who has died for our sin, and being in him we are preserved. This again is his way of teaching men in the Old Testament the simple facts concerning redemption.

Now, in the 8th chapter and the 20th verse of the Book of Genesis, we begin a new age. This is a new age which is begun just as the first and the second ages were begun, with this difference, the age of innocence began with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The age of conscience began with Adam and Eve outside of the Garden of Eden. The age of human government begins not with one pair of human beings, but with four pairs of human beings, Noah and his wife and the three sons and their wives. And so, after the divine judgment of the flood, we read in verse 20 of Genesis chapter 8 these words and I'm going to read through verse 22.

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord;" (This is an interesting thing that this new age begins with an act of worship on the part of Noah) and builded an altar unto the Lord and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; (Now that means in Old Testament language that he accepted the sacrifice that Noah was offering.) and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I

have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

This is the beginning then of the age which I calling, just for the sake of terminology, the age of human government. Now, just as in each one of these ages, innocence and conscience, so in human government we have a test to which man is put by God. This test is apparently a three-fold one. Now, if you have the lessons, this in outline is contained within them. But first of all, man was expected to offer sacrifices. This is one thing that we want to notice. In each one of these ages, we have some truth that is peculiar to the age. That is, which is only applicable during that age, such as for example, the tree which was in the middle of the Garden of Eden. In no other age do we have a similar test. This is unique in the age of innocency in the Garden of Eden. But there is certain truth that permeates each one of the dispensations or ages of God. Some truths are instituted by God as human responsibility in a particular age and they continue throughout other ages. For example, this matter of approaching God by animal sacrifice, this is something that permeates the age of conscience, human government, and later on the age of promise, and law on up to the time of Christ. But at the time of Christ animal sacrifices are done away with.

But here, the first responsibility, apparently, during the age of human government is the continuation of the responsibility to offer animal sacrifices in approaching God. This will not end until the Lord Jesus comes. He is called, in the New Testament, the what? The Lamb of God, right; John the Baptist when he saw him, remember, said more than once, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Now, the reason that John the Baptist said that was simply this, that he saw that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of all of the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Every time a Hebrew in the Old Testament brought an animal sacrifice, he was, in effect, saying, Jesus Christ must come some day and die for sins. He may not have known who Jesus Christ was. He may not

have known anything about where he would be born, when he would come, but he recognized in the offering of the animal that the God of the Hebrews, the only true God, must be approached by way of sacrifice. He knew, of course, that the blood of animals, the blood of bulls and goats, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it, could never take away sin. An animal cannot take away human sin. He knew that fact, but he knew that God must be approached by way of sacrifice, so he did.

Now, the first responsibility under the age of human government is to approach God by means of sacrifice. Now, I want to make this plain, because in a Bible class that I used to have here in Dallas, in a home such as this, there was a lady who came in and began to listen. And I was teaching through the Old Testament, not this particular series of studies but just through the Bible. And she was new to Bible study and it so happened that she came in when we were teaching the Old Testament. After she had been in the class for five or six times she said to a friend of hers that there was something that I kept saying that she could not understand. And the friend of mine asked her what it was. And she said, "Well, Dr. Johnson keeps saying over and over again that we must approach God by way of animal sacrifices. And how is it possible, for animal sacrifices surely cannot take away sins?"

And she was absolutely right. She, of course, had misunderstood me, and so when I say and emphasize that they had to approach God by way of animal sacrifices, please be sure and remember what I just said, that they knew that the animals could not take away sins. They knew that the shedding of the blood of a lamb or a bullock or a pigeon or whatever it may be, they knew that the animal's blood was not sufficient. They knew that this stood for something with God. While they may not, as I say, have known all of the lineaments of the coming Redeemer, they knew that someone would come who would fulfill these sacrifices that they were making. Well this was their responsibility and you will notice that Noah begins by building an altar unto the Lord. And he takes of

every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and he offers burnt offerings upon the altar. So the first responsibility of man, then, is to approach God by way of sacrifice.

The second responsibility is described for us in chapter 9, and now I want to read verses 1 through 7 of chapter 9, for these form a unity. "And God blessed Noah." Isn't that interesting? You see, God, who is the Father of Jesus Christ is a God of grace. He is a God of love and mercy. He is also a God of righteousness and holiness. And so some provision must be made for man's sin before we may approach him, but he is a God of mercy and grace. And so we see this age begins with this statement by Moses, "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."

Now, this is something we've already had, haven't we? Where were men told to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth? Right, Adam was told that in Genesis chapter 1 verses 26 and 27, so that we have again a repetition of certain truths that pertained in a preceding dispensation or age. This pertains in the age of innocence. Adam and Eve were to reproduce. And this is, I think, truth that pertains right down to the present age. I'm not going to tell you how many children you ought to have in your family, but it is the normal thing for men and women who marry to have a family. And this should be the normal expectation. So if you are advising some young people, or if you are a young person yourself, remember this, it is God's desire than man be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. As far as I can tell, this particular responsibility has never been abrogated. So the second responsibility, be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth. And notice the 7th verse, "And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein." So secondly, man was to overspread the earth.

Well, I said I was going to read through these verses, let me read from verse 2 on. "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth. "Now that means simply that the animals would be afraid of them, and they of course were not

to be so afraid of the animals, because they should have known that the animals were afraid of them. This is something that pertains right down to the present day, too. Isn't it a strange thing that, for example, I think this is true, that normally if you were to come upon a wild animal the animal would flee instead of the man? I'm really happy that's true. [Laughter] Suppose every time you saw a rattle snake, for example, it started to make his way toward you. That would be very, very disconcerting, wouldn't it? It's a comforting thing to know that a rattle snake, as a rule, will flee from man. "And upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth." Oh by the way, women, that pertains to rats and mice, too. [Laughter] That's just a word of encouragement that I giving you tonight.

"And upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But," now notice these words beginning with verse 4. "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." Now, I think that we can discern from the reading of the Bible that Adam and Eve were not allowed to eat the meat of animals. They were allowed to eat herbs, but they were not allowed to eat meat. And so, now for the first time man is allowed to have charcoal broiled steaks. That's what this means, every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, but there is a distinct limitation. "The flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." In other words, you shall not eat flesh with the blood in it. In other words, no flesh with blood in it; be careful how rare your steak is, in other words.

"And surely your blood of your lives will I require," to explain that, "at the hand of every beast will I require it." That means this; if you take life I will require your life. If an animal takes a man's life, the animal must be slain. Now, later on in the Law, when the Law is given to Israel in further detail, we shall study the age of Law, this is one thing that's spelled out. If a wild beast, for example, takes the life of a man that wild beast is to be slain. So, that is what he's speaking about here. "At the hand of every beast will I

require it." The beast shall not be allowed to take the life of man, for the life of man is more valuable than the life of the beast. That means that your daughter or your son is more important to you than your dog. "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man."

"Whoso," now this is the point, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." And here is the third responsibility. Man is responsible to offer sacrifices. He is responsible to be fruitful and multiply, to overspread the earth. And thirdly, he is responsible to order the earth governmentally. Here we have, implied I think, now remember in Genesis, particularly in the early chapters up until Genesis chapter 12, we are covering thousands of years in approximately 11 chapters. From Genesis chapter 12, verse 1 on, we shall cover only hundreds of years with many chapters. So we have history compressed in the early chapters of the Book of Genesis. So there are many things that are implied by these statements, I think, which are not specifically stated. And I think that we're justified in stating the inference, but not stating it dogmatically. I think that with this introduction of this requirement that when man's life is taken by man, that man's life shall be taken. And the institution of what may be called civil government in this respect. I think we have implied full civil powers being given over to men.

The reason for this, apparently, is that man may well have said to God, not that he did say this, but he might well have said this, "Now, Lord, you put us in the Garden of Eden, but we didn't know the difference between good and evil, so we sinned. It's only natural. If we had known, we would not have sinned." So God, put them outside the Garden of Eden with the knowledge of good and evil, and they still sinned. And so man might well have said to God then, "But Lord, if we had just had law, if we had just had police power, then we would not have sinned as we did during the age of conscience. Wickedness would not have multiplied if we had had civil responsibility." So God says, "All right, I'm going to give you now civil responsibility. You have full civil powers,

rights." But we are going to see that even though man possesses civil power and authority, man is still sinful. Man's trouble, you see, is not education. It is not responsibility. It is not knowledge. Man's difficulty is the fact that his heart is sinful. That's his problem, and that we see reflected right here in these opening chapters in Genesis.

We have also instituted here, apparently, for the first time capital punishment. Verse 6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." You see the extreme dignity of humanity is the basis for capital punishment. In the image of God man was created, as a being like God, so that when we take the life of a being like God, this is a serious thing in the eyes of God. As far as I can tell from the study of the Bible, capital punishment, instituted here, has never been abrogated. Now, you will notice also, in this respect, the difference between the ages. In the age of conscience, when Adam and Eve were ejected from the garden, and when Cain slew his brother Abel, what did Cain say? Why Cain said something like this, "Lord, if they find me, they are going to slay me." And then God said this, "If they slay you Cain, I will exact vengeance sevenfold." In other words, if Cain is slain, seven shall be slain. Now, we see the difference in the ages here. Here it is "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," but here, a distinction so that we notice that some truth which is applicable in one age is not necessarily applicable in another age; but here, capital punishment instituted.

This is a very popular thing, capital punishment. And we, of course, see in our newspapers constantly debates over whether capital punishment is a desirable thing or not. And I am not posing as a sociologist who knows anything about whether these things are bad or good. From looking at it from the standpoint of the word of God there is only one answer and that is that capital punishment has been instituted by God, and it has never been abrogated. I realize that there are many problems in this connection. We do not execute justice in our courts as we should. And no doubt there has been much

injustice in our courts, and certainly many men have lost their lives unjustifiably, because of human imperfection in the carrying out of this type of punishment. From the standpoint of experience, it seems to me that this is justified. I may lose some friends by saying this.

A few years ago in Britain, and they are still debating it in Britain, there was quite a movement on to eliminate capital punishment. It is interesting to read the reasons why and then compare our situation in the United States, where in the case of the Chessman case we had so much publicity. But in Britain, where they do have capital punishment, and where it is in general carried out, not as in our courts here where it is so easy to slay and get away with it if we have proper influence, or if we have sufficient money, or even if we just let it rock along, we hate to execute capital punishment. But over there, almost always when a person is murdered, someone is executed for it. In fact, it was an interesting thing to know this, that in Britain there were not as many murders four or five years ago, I don't remember the exact year, as there were in the city of Houston, Texas. In all of Britain, with its fifty million people, there were not as many as in Houston, because capital punishment was carried out. So I don't want to give you a lecture on civil responsibility, but it is here. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

Now then, here we have then the test under human government, this age that lasts about four hundred and fifty years. Man is to bring sacrifice when he approaches God. Man is to overspread the earth. Man is to order the earth governmentally. Let's see what happens. Now, Genesis chapter 9, I'm going to come back to parts of Genesis chapter 9, but I want to turn over to chapter 11 now. For in Genesis chapter 11 we have the description of man's response to his responsibilities under human government. This incident in chapter 9, at the end of the chapter where Noah is drunken and is naked, and where one of his sons, Canaan, has to be judged, is an evidence, of course, that though the flood destroyed sinners it did not destroy sin. And when Noah and Mrs. Noah came

into this new age after the flood, they brought with them the same old nature that they had during the age of conscience, so that the trouble was still present though a new beginning was made with Noah and Mrs. Noah.

The reason I'm turning to Genesis chapter 11 instead of Genesis chapter 10 is that chronologically Genesis chapter 11 precedes Genesis chapter 10. Frequently in the Book of Genesis a genealogy is given and then details that take place during the time of the individuals who make up this genealogy is then recorded. And that is what we have. In Genesis chapter 10 we have something like an ethnological table of nations, but then in Genesis chapter 11 we have some information, some truth concerning certain ones who are in this table of nations. And it really proceeds in time Genesis chapter 10. The why of the dispersion of men is given in chapter 11. The how of the dispersion of men is given in chapter 10. Chapter 10 tells how men spread over all the earth. Chapter 11 tells us why they were scattered over all the earth; so Genesis chapter 11.

Oh by the way, there is one character that stands out in Genesis chapter 10, who would have stood out in Genesis chapter 11 were it not for the fact that he is not specifically mentioned in chapter 11. He is a man by the name of Nimrod. How many of you like to hunt? You probably have heard people call you, jokingly, Nimrod. For Nimrod, of course, is the illustration of the man who loves to hunt, because Nimrod, we read in Genesis chapter 10, verse 9, he was, by the way, the king of Babylon, or the ruler of Babylon. And in the 9th verse we read "He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Now, that's simply a way of saying that he was a superlative hunter. "He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar." So Nimrod was the king of Babylon. And he was a great hunter before the Lord.

All of the evidence that we have about Babylon and about Nimrod is that he must have been not-too-pleasant a fellow. I'm reminded of the story of the village pest who

died. Everybody in the village hated it, but at his funeral everybody was there to pay their last respects to the man that nobody liked. So the minister, as the custom was frequently at the certain point in the service when the eulogy was to be given, he said, "Now we're going to set aside a few minutes, and anyone who wants to say a good word about John may say it right now." And there was a long embarrassing silence, because nobody could think of any good thing to say about John truthfully. Finally, one fellow got up and said, "Well you can say this about John. He was not always as mean as he sometimes was." [Laughter]

Now, Nimrod was that kind of individual apparently. He was the king of Babylon, and he must have been not only a mighty hunter before the Lord, but also a mighty evil man, because Babylon all through the Bible is an illustration to that which is contrary to the mind of God. And as you read through the Bible you will discover this that Babylon is always associated with that which is opposed to the kingdom of God. If we say something is Babylonish, then we mean that it is contrary to God, because Babylon is always the anti-type, the opposite of Jerusalem. And even in the Book of Revelation in the 17th and 18th chapters of the Book of Revelation, we read of Babylon in the future, and the fall of Babylon, which is recorded then, is the signal of the overthrow finally of all opposition to God. So here in Genesis chapters 10 and 11 we see some important truth concerning this city and this land, which is the reflection of that which is opposed to God.

And the striking thing about it is that Babylon is opposed to God, not as a great immoral city, but as a city which simply wanted to be independent of God, for this is ultimately the nature of sin, the desire to be independent of God. The man who is the greatest sinner before God is not the man who is guilty of adultery, fornication, uncleanness, envy; the man who is the greatest sinner before God is the man who wants to live independently of God. He's the greatest of sinners for he is generally full of pride and self-righteousness. He doesn't need God. This is why a very self-respecting citizen

may be one of the greatest sinners in the community. This is important, important for us to get the right idea about sin. The other is sin, but this is the basic character of sin.

Well now let's look at Genesis chapter 11 and see how man responds. I think we can see that man fails in each one of these responsibilities, though the failure is pictured in some cases more significantly, more clearly than in others. We read in Genesis chapter 11 and verse 1. "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech." Now, these words in the Hebrew text mean something like this, they are of one articulation, and of one vocabulary. In other words, they pronounced their words the same, and they used the same words. Everybody spoke the same language. The whole earth was of one language and one speech. Now, whether this was Hebrew or not, we do not know. It is interesting that philologists, students of the history of languages, are beginning to see more and more evidence of the fact that originally men did speak one language, and the many languages that we see now are the product of an ultimate one language. It's interesting.

"And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east." Where? Well, from Mount Ararat, which was in Asia Minor in our modern day Armenia, for that's where Noah landed, on Mount Ararat. By the way, occasionally you'll see in the papers reference to the fact that a certain flier flew over Mount Ararat and saw the outlines of a ship on top of Mount Ararat. Mount Ararat is a very high mountain, and unfortunately it is in territory which is under the control of the Russians, and so it is impossible for us to engage in any scientific expedition to see if this is true. But I have seen several references to this, that there are the outlines of something that looks as if it could be a very large ship well up in the top of Mount Ararat. Of course, it's covered with snow. Who will ever know as long as the Russians do not allow others to make scientific expedition there, and they are not particularly anxious to find the ark, I'm sure. That is pure rumor, of course. We cannot say that the ark is on Mount Ararat now. That is pure rumor. But I have seen more than one reference to this in our newspapers.

"From the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there." Now, the land of Shinar was the valley in which the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers came together, so it is in general the land of Babylonia where Babylon was. "And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly." This, too, is interesting. The text says "thoroughly." That's the old English, "burn them throughly." Generally speaking, in ancient times in making brick it was customary to allow the brick or the clay to be dried by the sun. Now, the sun was hot enough for them to make bricks in this way. But it is interesting in this case that we have the Genesis writer saying, "And burn them throughly." In other words, they knew about the burning of bricks. We might think that this is some later writer describing how they must have made them, being guilty of some kind of anachronism, saying something about an earlier age which was true of a later age. But we have now again discovered bricks by archeological excavation, which were dried by fire as these were. So we not only know that the Genesis account is an accurate account, but we also know that in this valley there was a high degree of civilization.

We knew this from other things, too. Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees, and we know now that in this area that there were educational institutions which were similar to our colleges today. In fact, just a generation or so ago they uncovered certain inscriptions which had mathematical problem, which scholars in Great Britain, who discovered these inscriptions, worked on for many years before they were able to solve them. So there was at this time a very high degree of civilization, and when we think of Abraham leaving Ur of the Chaldees, for example, and coming over into the land of Palestine, we must not think of some ignorant country bumpkin when we think of Abraham. He undoubtedly was a very intelligent man and must have been fairly well educated, certainly a very intelligent man from the standpoint of natural intelligence revealed in the life and success and prosperity that he enjoyed in the land of Palestine itself.

At any rate now let's go on, "And they had brick for stone, and slime," that is, bitumen or asphalt is the correct translation of this Hebrew word. The Revised Standard Version translates it correctly bitumen. "And they had brick for stone, and asphalt had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven." In archeological expeditions to this particular country, we now have uncovered many such towers as this. We have uncovered an inscription in which it is stated that Nebuchadnezzar, who is known to Babel accounts, restored or attempted to restore the tower of Babel or Babylon. So we know of the Babylonian ziggurats. They are built on a large base, sometimes as high as a hundred and twenty feet high and flat, and then there are squares or rectangles that are built on top of them, each one being, say, twenty feet high. One of them smaller than the other so that it's like blocks, you know, one big block and then a smaller block, and then a smaller, and so on. And each one was generally named for somebody, like the moon, the sun, the stars, the heavenly bodies, the planets. And then on the top of them, and they frequently were as high as our modern twenty-eighty story building, on the top of them there would be an altar. So, that is what is being described here in the 11th chapter of the Book of Genesis. "Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name."

Now, notice this, "Let us make us a name." You notice all the first persons in this. You don't notice any praise and honor and glory being given God, do you? "Let us make us a name." "Let's build us a city and a tower." "Lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them

abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

Therefore is the name of it called Babel."

Now, Babel means "the gate of God." Babylon means "confusion." So God took the term which they had used, gate of God, this is the way to God on our tower. When you are on the top of our tower, you are right at heaven's doorstep, so to speak. God, with a play on words says, as a result of his judgment. This is not Babel or "gate of God," this is Babylon or "confusion." "Because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." Now, I think you can notice, there is first of all, no reference here to the offering of any sacrifices to God at all. They failed to offer the sacrifices in approaching God. They want to build themselves a city. They want to build themselves a tower. There is no reference to the name of God, no mention of any worship of him whatsoever. They are leaving God entirely out of their thinking. They are substituting for the internal unity that should have taken place, because of their common worship of the Lord Jehovah; they are substituting an external unity reflected in this tower which was to reach to heaven itself. They cultivated fellowship with man, and they lost fellowship with God.

There is evidence also of a failure to order themselves governmentally. Noah, for example, we discover in the 9th chapter, "began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken." And so Noah, who is the leading character in this particular dispensation, is found, because of sin, to be unfit to govern himself. And also, in this desire of men to erect a city and a tower, to gather themselves about it, we see rebellion against God and an unfitness to govern themselves. And most of all we see a failure to overspread the earth. God had said, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." What are they doing? They are saying, "Let's all gather together in Babylon, and so we can comfort one another there. We can build a city and a tower and we can all be gathered here. And we can have this city and this tower for security and protection, so that we will not be scattered over the earth." So they are

attempting to do the exact opposite of that which God had told them plainly to do. They say, "Lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth." And the Lord had said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein, and replenish the earth." So he had told them to go out over all of the earth and to be fruitful and multiply. They had said, "Let's gather together in this one place. Build ourselves a tower for our protection and security. And here, be one people." So in exact opposition to God's simple command man is seen again to be a sinner; a city and a tower, false safety. The writer of the Proverbs says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower."

I am one hundred percent for the United States, for example, being armed to the teeth. I do not trust anybody, because I know that men are sinners. I don't even trust my wife, because she is a sinner. And she doesn't trust me, because I am a sinner. We love one another deeply, but nevertheless we know that we are sinners. And we can do anything, you know? Men are that sinful. Now, I have had a very happy married life. Don't [Laughter] take my words too seriously. I'm not sure to cut that off a little. [Laughter] I am trying to emphasize something, though. We cannot trust anybody. We cannot trust the Russians. Who has to be told that? We cannot trust the British. You cannot trust the French. You cannot trust the Italians. Just read world history, you cannot trust anybody for men are sinners. You just cannot trust men. I am in favor of being armed to the teeth, the United States, but this will not be of any help to us at all, if as a nation we do not recognize that our strength must come from the one God who is the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. See, he is our strength. We may have the latest in armament, and I certainly hope we have, because we'll need. We may have the latest in armament, but if we do not have the God of heaven on our side, then we are in a bad way.

Gideon can overthrow the Mideonites with a trumpet, with a candle, and with a shout, even though they outnumber him thirty-two thousand to three hundred. This is important. The Babylonian sought a name for themselves, not realizing that in the Lord

God we have a strong tower. And I'm not talking about just God in general. You often hear people say, "America needs God." True, but we need to distinguish among the gods. There is only one genuine God, and he is the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There is no other God. We do not need faith in God. We need faith in *the* God, who is the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let's be careful to make the difference.

I often read editorials, for example, even in the *Dallas Morning News*, which is a paper which acknowledges deity, "What we need is more faith in God." That is insufficient for a Christian. A Christian cannot agree to this. A Christian can only agree to this if we add, "We must have faith in the God who is the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." This is why Paul says, "I thank my God who is the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." He speaks about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is all the difference in the world. Others were speaking of God. But there was only one God, and he was Jehovah. Now, that was important. "Make us a name," a false ambition. "Some trust in chariots, others in horses, but we will trust in the Lord our God," the Psalmist said. And he mentioned, and he made, he had in mind a particular God; "Lest we be scattered," a false unity on a bad principle. They should have been united seeking the interests of the true God, instead united in order to keep from being scattered.

Now, I want you to notice the judgment that comes upon them. "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." Apparently, in order to forestall the setting up of some false worship, God is going to confound their language. That's the first thing that he does. So he confounds their language. This is the first judgment upon men because of their sin, that they may not understand one another's speech. This is why we have to learn languages today. This is why we go across the water, and we hear somebody say to us, instead of "How are you?" "*Wie geht es Ihnen?*" And we wonder, "What in the world is he talking about?" And ultimately, we have to go through a hard

process to learn that we must say, "Es ghet, Sehr gut" when we hear him say, "*Wie geht es Ihnen?*" See, because he has a different speech from our speech. We may even see some connections between the two, but nevertheless it's different. We can recognize ultimately that he's trying to say "good" when he says "gut." And vice versa, but here we have the confusion of languages.

"So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel." So their speech was confounded. They were given tongues that they could not understand one another. And also they were scattered over the earth. Genesis chapter 9, verse 1 and verse 7, because man would not fulfill it is fulfilled by God. Since they would not be scattered over the earth, he scatters them over the earth. So many is judged.

The age of human government ends then in divine judgment. But in this age, just as in the other ages, we also have a revelation of the mercy and grace of God. Let's turn back to Genesis chapter 9 now. And I want to read through, in the remaining few minutes, the account of the rainbow, and what it may suggest for us. Genesis chapter 9, in verse 8 now, "And God said unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you." So here is an agreement into which God enters with man, and he unconditionally will fulfill this. He does not say, "Noah, if you do this, I will do this, but this is what I covenant to do for you and for your seed." "And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." This is a promise then that there will never be again a universal flood. Now, this does mean that God will not execute universal judgment again. He says he will not execute judgment by means of a flood. Peter, in his second epistle, will point out that

this is not a prohibition against final judgment, for there will come a final judgment by fire, but again no universal flood.

And there will be a sign for it, verse 12, " And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." The rainbow is the sign of the covenant.

"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

So the rainbow is given as a token of the promise of God that there will never again be a divine judgment by means of a flood upon the earth. Every time that we see the rainbow in the sky, this should remind us of Genesis chapter 9, there will never be another flood, and man will never be destroyed by means of a flood of water.

The last incident of interest in this section contains a very interesting promise, a broad reference to the Redeemer. Noah became drunken. In verse 20 we read, " And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without." Apparently, Ham or his son Canaan, for some reference is made to Canaan here, is guilty of some kind of vulgarity in connection with Noah and his nakedness. Noah, as far as we know, did not at this time know of the deadly qualities of fermented grape juice. At least there is no

evidence of it. And there seems to be no serious blame placed upon Noah because of this condition. And this may have been simply an experiment. He may have been experimenting around with the fermentation of the grapes and discovered that it was quite powerful. At any rate, the children sinned in their reaction to the nakedness of their father. That is, Ham or Canaan his son.

"And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him." Now the Hebrew text here is very interesting. It reads, "His son, the little one," and so it may have been a reference to Canaan who was the son of Ham, and Ham may have been referred to as simply the father. We're just not positive, because you see, the curse is pronounced on Canaan rather than on Ham. But it may have been pronounced on Canaan as a punishment on Ham, too, because of course, if someone were to pronounce a punishment upon my son that would in a sense be a judgment upon me too. We just cannot be positive here. At any rate, the language is quite plain; this was a divine judgment upon Canaan. But in this there is also a promise. Now notice, this is one of the interesting prophecies of the Old Testament, very brief, and very general and very comprehensive, but its implications are plain. "And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." Now, this in effect then, is a curse placed upon the line of Ham or Canaan, and his descendants will be servants. Now, the line of Ham and Canaan is associated most in general with the nations that live in present day Africa. And so, this is in the sense a judgment placed upon that line of the human race, the descendants of Ham. It is not stated that we shall make them servants, it prophecy and not a command. Now, that is important, notice that.

And secondly, verse 26, "And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." Now, Shem, of course, is the Semitic line, and out of Shem will come the Redeemer, for Jesus

Christ is of the line of Shem. Abraham is in the line, and then later on Isaac and Jacob, ultimately David, and finally Joseph, who was the legal father of Jesus Christ. They are of Shem. Now notice, it does not say, "Blessed be Shem." But "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." Shem is blessed because of his identity with the Lord God. Israel is blessed not because Israel is better than another human race, any other parts of the human race; Israel is blessed because of its relation to Christ. "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." So Canaan shall serve Shem. The Canaanite line shall be a servant line, and shall be subject to the Semitic line.

"God shall enlarge Japheth," and Japheth represents the head of the line of the Gentile nations, and this is a promise of blessing upon them. "God shall enlarge Japheth," but notice, "he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." In other words, Gentiles shall be blessed through their connection with the line of Shem. So here is a remarkable prophecy with regard to these three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Shem who represents the Semitic line and the one from whom the Lord Jesus Christ shall come is obviously the blessed of the three. "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." "God shall enlarge Japheth," from whom the Gentile nations come, but "he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." He shall receive his blessing through Shem. He shall be blessed through, ultimately, Jesus Christ. Later on we shall read how that in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. The future salvation Gentile nations shall come through the Semitic line, specifically through Jesus Christ, and Canaan shall be the servant of the two. So here is a remarkable Messianic promise began, not as broad as Genesis 3:15, for Genesis 3:15 said the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, shall come from the seed of the woman, the human race. Here, the Redeemer is linked to the Semitic division of the human race, and thus in the age of human government we have further prophecy concerning the coming of Christ, remarkable prophecy.

Well, our time is up, we must stop and close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the Lord Jesus Christ and for the promises in Thy word concerning him. We thank Thee that he was the seed of the woman and that he also is of the line of Shem, of the seed of David according to the flesh. And we thank Thee that he came and died for our sins, and that through simple faith in him we may have everlasting life. We pray, Lord, that if we have not yet believed in the Lord Jesus, through whom alone there comes eternal life, may in our hearts we commit ourselves to him, trusting him to redeem us, to be our Savior forevermore. For we ask it in his name. Amen.

[Johnson] For those of you who have to go, you can feel free to go, but for those who would like to ask a question or so, just fire away.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] We don't know when the Negroes became black. We don't know. We just assume that as a result of living in a climate in which they lived in, from the sun, that there must have been some effect on their skin. But we don't know, at least I don't know.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] No, I do not think so, because in the Old Testament, remember, we must interpret the Bible by all of the Bible. We must not allow one part of the Bible to contradict another. And we have many references in the Old Testament to, for example, reference made to the "Lord is a God of war." Now, these passages could not be understood if there were not some harmonization of them, and the harmonization, of course, is this. That is the Ten Commandments, as well as in this, there is a prohibition

against murder. But in the case of war, particularly in the case of, only in the case of a war which is in the will of God, in the righteous sense. Israel, for example, is told to exterminate the Canaanites in the land. In that sense, this Genesis chapter 9 does not apply.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Well, I think they get it generally from, just as many cults gets justification through various isolated things; they get it by an improper exegesis of certain individual passages of the Old Testament. "Thou shalt not kill," for example. They say that. Of course, the text means "Thou shalt not murder." That's the meaning of the Hebrew word, "murder." It's not a prohibition against killing, for God told Israel to exterminate the Canaanites. They were like a cancer in the land and had to be cut out. We will talk a little bit about that later on when we get to Israel coming into the land, because that is a problem.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Well, it is stated here as if it were sudden, but it is possible that it were a gradual thing, because in this compression of history, as I tried to mention there, it's very possible that what this is a reference to is that God scattered them and allowed this process whereby we develop dialects, you see, to work out.

[Comment from the audience]

[Johnson] Yes, the scattering may have come first and then the confusion comes, because they lived in such separate areas. We know that this principle works, and this

why a southerner has difficulty understanding someone from Brooklyn, for example, and so on. On the other hand, it is stated simply that he confounded them. It does not say that it's not. It doesn't say that it's later. We just have to make an inference. I usually when I talk about this in more detail just say that we do not know at this point. It is not stated that it was immediate, it may have been, but it's not necessarily to be inferred from this text.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Well, it doesn't mean that he took every one of his animals. It means that he took of every kind of clean beasts, you see, one of each kind of clean beast.

[Comment from the audience]

[Johnson] No, of some he took seven, that's right, so he took of every unclean. By the way, that's a good illustration of a principle in Bible study which I have found through the years. I was converted when I was in the Insurance Business, so I faced some of the same problems that you're facing in the study of the Bible. When you begin to study it in detail, you discover a lot of things that you can't understand, and almost always, in fact I've found it always to be true, the reason we have difficulty is because we haven't studied enough that particular point. That if we will just go on reading the Bible, put aside these difficulties, and just say, "Now, I want to look for the answer to that, I'm not going to worry over, but I'm just going to put it aside and keep reading," sooner or later you'll come across a thing, "Well, that's the answer to that problem that I had back there." And you'll find that that will work constantly in the study of the Bible.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Well, I don't know a whole lot more than is stated there, except that Moses does say in this place, that the blood does represent the life of the human body. This is why, when Jesus Christ offered his blood upon the cross, it was the equivalent of offering life for us.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] No, I think it's perfectly all right if men want to do that. There is nothing in the Bible that says you cannot do that. There is evidence in the Bible that there will be one day a general language. In fact, Christians can anticipate this somewhat. I have a good friend who is professor of New Testament at a school in the Midwest. He was a few years ago in Hong Kong, and Christians are scattered all over everywhere, and you can always find an evangelical Christian wherever you go. It is wonderful how God has scattered them all over the world and they are preaching the gospel where they are. But anyway, he went to Hong Kong and some missionary friends took him to a service of some evangelical Christians. When he got and he went to the door, the minister of this little church was standing at the door greeting everybody. Of course, they were talking in Chinese and he couldn't understand a thing. He said when he got to the door his man with him introduced him, "This is Professor Tenney of Wheaton College, and he does not understand Chinese." And so the Chinaman said, "Hallelujah." And Professor Tenney said, "I said, 'Amen.'" [Laughter] So to answer your question, there is nothing in the Bible that says that you cannot have one speech. I wish we did have, but we're not going to have it. Anything else?

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Well, a burnt offering, there were many kinds of offerings in the Old Testament. Later on, many offerings, specific instructions are given with regards to different types of offerings. There were meal offerings. There were sin offerings. There were trespass offerings. There were peace offerings. There were drink offerings, and so on. But a burnt offering was an offering in which the obedience of the offerer was reflected. An offering was burnt so that the smoke from the burning of the offering would go up in token of obedience of God, so that the burnt offering was designed to represent obedience. That was its specific angel, so to speak. And so that's the meaning of a burnt offering, an offering that was burned in order to express its complete devotion to the fires of God's holiness in dealings with men.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Yes.

[Comment from the audience]

[Johnson] Perhaps, and also the Genesis 4 account may be a reference to a...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]