

Jan. 6, 2016

Genesis 10-11– Table of Nations and the Tower of Babel.

Matthew 9 – Jesus miraculous ministry of healing.

Ecclesiastes 2:18-26 – Hedonism vs. joy in light of the next life.

### **Reflections:**

Genesis 10-11. In chapter 10 we have what is known as the Table of Nations (see chart below). It gives a survey of the descendants of Noah's three sons as it relates to God's command to fill the earth (9:1). The genealogy is horizontal rather than vertical because the purpose is to trace the geographical, political, and ethnic genealogy of the various tribes and cities as they spread out across the Earth. The table shows which peoples in the ancient world shared in blessings and cursing motifs in relation to Israel. All Israel would have to do is to check the table to see which nations would be anti-Israel (erroneously labeled today as anti-Semitic). The battles among these nations and with Israel continue to play out to this very day. The only elect "nation" on the Earth is Israel. Moreover, any nation that becomes "anti-Semitic" seal its own doom as we will see in chapter 12. In chapter 11 we have the Tower of Babel as well as the genealogy to Abraham. The Tower of Babel is a demonstration of man's open rebellion against God and His command to fill the Earth. Of course, God always gets the last word as He scatters them. Note the hint of the trinity in the "Us" of 11:7. A modern tower of Babel is the United Nations, which is evil and used by Satan to attempt to unite the Earth under some ideal of the triumph of Humanity over God and His providence. By scattering the people, God made it more difficult for Satan to control the entire world.

Matthew 9. There are several miracles in this chapter. It is important to note that miracles in the Bible are rare. They tend to come in clusters throughout history as there are several at the Exodus and among some of the prophets, and then again in the ministry of Jesus Christ and His apostles. Contrary to popular belief, miracles in the Bible are never used to prove the existence of God. Man already knows that God exists through natural revelation (Rom. 1:18-20). Miracles are given to authenticate God's messenger, be that messenger Moses, Jesus, or the disciples.

Ecclesiastes 2:18-26. Verse 24 in isolation can be used to commend hedonism, which is explicitly condemned in the Bible (Luke 12:19-20; 1 Cor. 10:7). There is a big difference between the hedonist's "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die" and Solomon's exhortation to enjoy life because it comes "from the hand of God." God gives us things to enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17). However, in our pleasures and enjoyments we should never forget that while we are to enjoy "cheer in the days of our youth," God will bring us all into judgment (read Ecc. 11:9). God wants us to enjoy life, but to live it in the light of the next one.

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don