



# 2020 IN 20/20

2020 (the year) IN 20/20 (seeing it clearly)

Part 8: The Issues – Nations & Israel

Sermon Study Guide  
October 11, 2020

## **Review:**

In our 2020 series, we've talked about (1) Conservative vs. Liberal, (2) Sinfulness of Man and Law and Order, (3) Political Correctness, (4) Pro-Life vs. Pro-Choice, (5) Racism, (6) Sexuality, and last week, (7) Church Leadership in 2020.

## **Introduction:**

This week will conclude our "2020 in 20/20" series as we discuss the "The Nations and Israel." There is a lot of interest in the nations, races, and ethnicities these days. Is there any biblical basis to this type of national, ethnic, and racial loyalty, or should we ignore these distinctions and simply see ourselves as people? Does nationality/ethnicity/race have a place of importance, other than for the prosperity of companies like Ancestry.com?

## **A Biblical Overview of the Nations**

After God created Adam and Eve, He commissioned them to be fruitful and multiply, filling the earth, which they did not do. As the years went by, evil had so permeated the world, that God was ready to destroy the world with a flood because of the wickedness of man. Noah became the new father/head of the human race, along with his already living three sons and their wives. After the flood, people groups developed through the ancestral lines of Noah's three sons – Shem, Ham, Japheth.

These people groups united under one of Ham's sons named Nimrod. Instead spreading out, the people rebelled against God's command to fill the earth. They were trying to unite all people to build a tower that reached to the heavens. Men really could not reach the heavens, but they thought in their hearts that they could be equal with God. God did not like this idea, so He confused the languages and dispersed the people over the face of the earth-mainly to areas that we know today as Asia, Africa, and Europe.

## **Distinguishing Features of Noah's Sons**

- **Shem** – Asia – tended towards spirituality - **religious fervor**
  - Shem's descendants were called Semites. Abraham, David, and Jesus came from Shem.
- **Ham** – Africa – an Egyptian word meaning "black" - **physical prowess.**
  - Ham's descendants settled in Canaan, Egypt, and the rest of Africa.

- **Japheth** – Europe – to make wide or enlarge - **intellectual activity**.
  - Japheth's descendants settled for the most part in Europe and Asia Minor.

**Look at how this unfolded in Genesis, just after Noah and his family left the Ark when dry land appeared.**

**Gen. 9:18-29**

- What were the people of the earth commanded to do?
  
- Noah, one of the great heroes of faith, planted a vineyard, and he got drunk and naked. How did the three sons of Noah handle their dad's indiscretion?
  
- Even though all the wicked people were killed in the flood, the possibility of sin still exists. Why?
  
- What were the curses and blessings Noah gave to his three sons?

Note: The curse for Ham's action was only given to Canaan. His offspring were the Canaanites who settled in the Gaza area. They were eventually wiped out when the Israelites took the land (Deuteronomy 7:1-3).

- What is revealed in Ham's mocking attitude towards his father and God?

**One of the sons of Ham, named Cush had a son named Nimrod who became a mighty warrior.**

**Gen. 10:6-10a**

- The mighty warrior of the Lord was Nimrod. The cities of his kingdom were Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. How was his pride destructive to all he was? How does that relate to your areas of pride today?
- Nimrod's mighty city in his kingdom was Babel. What do we know about it? What was the command that God gave to mankind and why do you think it was ignored?

## **In Genesis 11, we see man's attempt to unite the world.**

### **11:1-9**

- What do we learn from verses 1-2 about the people in the land of Shinar?
- In verses 3-4, the people started making bricks and mortar. Then they realized they could build cities and towers. (Ziggurats are similar to the pyramids found later in Egypt). What were their two proclamations to the people? (v.4)
- What was God's reaction to what the people were doing and what were God's concerns?
- Now in the year 2020, we have buildings that are over 100 stories tall and we are no closer to reaching God. What is the real root issue from this faith lesson? How did they leave God out of the picture? How can this happen in our temples – Romans 12:1-2?

- What did God do to the people that caused them to inadvertently obey His commands? (v.7-8)
- Why is the city called Babel? What are the lessons we can learn from Babel? (v.9)
- We are free to develop in many areas, but we are not free to think we have replaced God. What “towers” have you built in your life?

God’s intention was that man would disperse, populate the earth, that nations would be formed. Those nations would develop different languages, and the nations would maintain their distinction. God was not for the uniting of the world to make a name for themselves, especially if that name eliminated a need for and a reliance on Him.

**Note:** We will see an attempt to unite the nations at least one more time, most likely just after the beginning of the Tribulation.

**The rest of Genesis 11 contains a genealogy of the descendant and family of Shem. One of his descendants was a man named Terah, who was the father of Abraham.**

Terah set out with his son Abram, his grandson, Lot, and Abram’s wife Sarai to Canaan, but wound up settling in a place called Haran.

## **Genesis 12:1-3**

God appeared to Abram and called him to leave his country (Haran), his kindred (family), and his father (Terah), and go to a land (Canaan) that God would show him.

- What two things does God promise He will do for Abram and his family? (Abram becomes Abraham later in his life) (vs.2-3)

**Note:** This was the very beginning of the nation of Israel

**God had a special calling and plan for Israel in the past and He has a special calling and plan for Israel in the future.**

God chose Israel as the nation from which the Messiah/Savior/Jesus Christ would come. The OT Law and sacrificial system prepared the way for the coming of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, the Jews, by and large, rejected Jesus as Messiah/Savior.

**Jesus was born and raised as a Jew, lived almost all His life in Israel, chose an all-Jewish ministry team, ministered primarily to the Jews, and left His ministry in the hands of Jewish believers.** In fact, all the early believers in Christ were Jews.

The Apostle Paul, a devout Jewish Pharisee, became a believer in Jesus Christ. It was Paul who brought the Gospel to the Gentiles, who were much more open to the Gospel than were the Jews.

**Look at what God says about Israel - who over the years had generally responded to God's call with disobedience and unbelief.**

## **Romans 11:1-32**

Though they were God's chosen people, to whom God held out His hands, they had, in many ways, rejected His offer.

- What does it mean that He "foreknew" His people would reject the Messiah? What is God's response to them? (vs. 1-2)

- Elijah appealed to God that, “they have killed your prophets...and I alone am left...”  
What is God’s response to Elijah? When do you feel alone- what would God say to you?  
(vs.3-6)

*Their rejection of Jesus as a nation was not a fatal blow to Israel. Israel’s rejection led to the Gospel going to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous. When the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled - then Israel’s eyes will be opened, and the Jews will call upon the Messiah. (Galatians 3:28)*

- What does it mean that the Gentiles are grafted into the stump? (Vs. 16-24)

If we, as wild branches (Gentiles) were able to be grafted into the Jewish root of Christ, how much more will the natural branches (Jews) be able to easily be grafted back into the Jewish root of Christ – that is, when they believe!

- The Jews’ hearts will be opened when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. What does it say in verse 25-27 for the future of the Jews?

In this passage, Paul shows how Israel is beloved for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, David, etc. The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. God does not take back His promises! God’s mercy results in Israel’s rejection not being a forever or fatal blow.

## **Closing:**

### **Romans 11:33-36**

God alone is the possessor of absolute power and absolute wisdom. All of us are absolutely dependent on God. God works out all things to bring glory to Himself. The all-powerful God deserves our praise for our salvation and for grace.

### **As we close, here are some things to remember**

1. As we look at the issues of 2020, it is okay to love your homeland, whether you are American, Armenian, Mexican, African, European. It is fine to have ethnic, national, racial pride.

But your primary identity is in Christ.

2. God chose Israel as His chosen nation. Even though they have mostly rejected Jesus Christ as Messiah/Savior, someday their hearts will turn to Christ. Then we will rejoice together with the Israelites as followers of Jesus Christ.

Continue to support the nation of Israel as God's chosen people