

ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT (PT. 1)

GENESIS 11:1-9

Text:

Introduction:

Like nothing else in many years the attack on America on 911 has certainly reignited the dangerous movement – the ecumenical movement, an effort to unite people and religions.

To most people in America now, it seems like a great way to be united, but when one again considers the Scriptural element of the whole situation, one would find out that God is not pleased with these actions.

The prevailing philosophy of the last days desires that all professing religions join together in unity regardless of doctrinal integrity.

The word "Ecumenical" means worldwide, universal. The ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement will be to bring all religious groups together into one worldwide group, if not in organizational unity, at least in sympathy of the movement. In their words, we may not all be Catholics or Methodists, Muslim or Lutherans, etc., but we all still worship the same God.

I say as kindly as possible but truthfully the ecumenical movement is a Satanic system of lies built on a lie and supported and promoted by professional liars.

There is NO single final Scriptural authority within the ecumenical movement.

The ecumenical movement exists in three levels.

(1) There is THE ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL of the ecumenical movement, represented by the World Council of Churches at the global level, national councils on the national level, and clergy associations on the local level.

(2) There is THE EVANGELICAL LEVEL, represented by interdenominational parachurch organizations, fellowships, and mission organizations. Examples of Evangelical ecumenism are Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth With A Mission, Promise Keepers, and the World Evangelical Fellowship.

(3) There is also THE DENOMINATIONAL LEVEL, which is the 'local church' crowd. While there are exceptions among some old-line Pentecostals, the Charismatic world focuses on experience instead of Biblical doctrine and seeks to unite every sort of denomination.

Nobody lifts a voice against any doctrinal heresy. Many of the most popular Catholic and Charismatic and public religious leaders run this show.

The goal of the Ecumenical bunch is to destroy the belief in Absolute Authority coming from God and putting in its place, the relative authority of man, composed of the preferences and opinions of men who consider themselves fully equipped to be your guide instead of the Bible itself.

Hebrews 4:12-13

¹² For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

However the Ecumenical Movement itself isn't something new. In reality the Ecumenical Movement can be traced back to the book of Genesis.

Let's turn to Genesis 11 and read verses 1-9.

Genesis 11:1-9

¹ And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. ² And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar;

and they dwelt there. ³ And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. ⁴ And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. ⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. ⁶ 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. ⁷ Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. ⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. ⁹ Therefore is the name of it called Babel; 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.

Notice:

1. THE REBELLION

As was the case with Nimrod in chapter 10, the rebellion of the people in this chapter is not immediately clear.

Verse 2 says of the people:

Genesis 11:2

² And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

Verse 3 tells us of their industriousness with building materials.

Genesis 11:3

³ And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

Verse 4 tells what they did with the materials they made. On the surface it seems like an altogether innocent record, but a closer look reveals a rebellion against God.

Notice with me the rebellion of the people, first it was:

A. Rebellion Against the Plan of God

Look at verse (2) again.

Genesis 11:2

² And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

The plain of Shinar was probably located in what is modern-day Iraq, and stretched all the way down to the Persian Gulf.

It was a fertile place, and the people apparently liked it enough to settle down there and build a city.

That seems like a perfectly good plan, except for the fact that it was an act of disobedience to the revealed plan of God.

Remember, when the door of the ark opened following the flood, God greeted Noah and His sons with a blessing and specific instructions for the future.

Note:

Genesis 9:1

¹ And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

The word “replenish” in that verse means “to fill”.

Man was to spread out and populate the earth. That was God’s plan for mankind and the planet.

Here on the plain of Shinar, people are congregating and settling, rather than spreading out and filling.

Many times we too rebel against the plan of God when we find a place that is comfortable and pleasing to us.

This rebellion was not only against the plan of God, but notice also that it was:

B. Rebellion Against the Position of God

Genesis 11:4

⁴ And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

Literally, their plan was to make a tower whose top was to heaven, and in the process make a name for themselves.

One writer explains the purpose of this tower as being to “join or displace God.

This tower was supposed to reach to the heavens, but it was not built for the God of heaven. No, it was built for the men of the earth.

The city of Babel and its tower are a picture of what happens when men rebel against God, follow their own plans, and seek to build up their own names.

Whenever men do this, God is not impressed, and He is not idle either. With that, we see in this text not only a rebellion that defied the God of heaven, but we see also secondly:

2. THE RESPONSE

There is a perfect balance in the way this story is told in Genesis 11. The second half of the story is a sort of mirror image of the first.

The hinge in the middle of the two halves is verse 5, which says:

Genesis 11:5

⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

The first half tells what man did, the second half tells what God did, and displays some things about Him as well.

Consider God's response in this text and what it tells us about Him. First of all, it displays:

A. His Magnitude

At Babel a large group of people decided to build a massive tower so large and tall that its top would touch the heavens.

To them, it was the biggest thing they could imagine, and yet, when God decided to look at it, He had to come down.

When you read verse (5) is sort of a humorous picture. If it had been as big and wonderful as they had thought then God wouldn't need to come down.

Someone said, "Their tower was so microscopic that the all-seeing omnipotent God had to come down to see. It was if God stooped down like a man on his hands and knees and lowered his face to the earth to see the great tower."

This story is told in such a way that it displays the magnitude of God in comparison to man. What is impressive to man is often rather insignificant to God.

When we stand before God, it will be His magnitude that impresses us, and not the other way around.

As we see God respond to this tower and these people, we are reminded of His magnitude. Notice further that displayed in His response is also:

B. His Mercy

When God comes down to see the tower and the city, He recognizes what is going on, and He says in verse 6:

Genesis 11:6

⁶ 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.

God was not intimidated by what He saw. He was not scared of men's abilities.

He recognized where this whole endeavor was headed. God saw that if they succeeded in building this tower, and making a name for themselves, they would only go further into their selfish rebellion, and in turn further away from Him and His will for them.

How God responds to them is yet another picture of His mercy towards man. Once again we are reminded that He is the God who does not wipe out rebels.

Though they were disobeying Him and defying Him, God judges them in a merciful way.

There is one final thing I want to point out that relates to what is recorded here in Genesis 11. Notice not only that there is a rebellion that defied the God of heaven, and a response that displayed the God of heaven, but consider also that there will be:

3. THE REALITY

Isn't it interesting that man was going up in rebellion and God was coming down in righteousness! Religion vs. Christianity.

God names the city Babel which means confusion. We also get the word Babylon from this word. The Ecumenical Movement has resulted in confusion.

There are least three lessons that can be learned from this Ecumenical effort in Babel:

A. The Danger of a Life Apart From God

Whenever a religion glorifies man instead of God that becomes the very issue for the survival of that society.

This is a pattern we see with man over and over again.

Illustration:

The New Pope

Culture, cleverness and craftiness are all natural gifts God gives us, but once we turn these gifts against God and His purpose for society, we tread on the dangerous side of life.

B. The Disaster of False Unity

The bases of unity is sound doctrine.

Romans 16:17

¹⁷ *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*

Proverbs 4:1-2

¹ *Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.* ² *For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶ *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:* ¹⁷ *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

2 John 1:8-11

⁸ Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. ⁹ Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: ¹¹ For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

1 Timothy 4:1

¹ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Isaiah 5:20

²⁰ Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

¹⁴ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I

will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ *And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

These people were driven to an outward unity with self, but God was dedicated to an inward unity with the Spirit.

Close:

Satan's sinister plan involves the building of an ECUMENICAL TOWER OF BABEL....one that has deceived many.

The ecumenical movement is but a vain attempt to bring about (false) peace:

Jeremiah 6:14

¹⁴ *They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.*

and false unity denying that true unity and peace can only come by Christ.

At this time true believers are scattered people but the Lord will one day gather His people.

The problem with any ecumenical movement is that to obtain the "prize" of UNITY many groups/individuals trade off doctrine to reach a Lowest Common Denominator (LCD). The line between truth and human unity programs is caused to fade..to intentionally be blurred so that people are afraid to make sound decisions between right and wrong.

Ezekiel 22:26

²⁶ Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

The Bible prophesied it would, the one-world spirit is forming quickly and seeking to draw all who call on the name of Christ into its ungodly fellowship. What can you do?

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

¹⁴ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God

hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷

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