**The Tower of Babel**

*Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.****2****And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.****3****And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.****4****Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”****5****And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built.****6****And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.****7****Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.”****8****So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.****9****Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:1-9, ESV)*

 Walking with the Lord in this life is our real calling, instead of living life with decisions made independently of God, as the people of the Tower of Babel did.

 Greetings in the Lord dearly beloved, as we talk today about decisions. Our lives are filled with opportunities to make decisions. Every day, there is something to decide. However, according to the Bible, when our human freedom becomes absolute independence from God, then we become like the people of Babel, headed towards a failed end to our plans. Therefore, today we’re going to talk about the warning that the Tower of Babel account has for us, so that we may stay closely connected to God. I pray that we’ll be able to strengthen our ties to God through hearing the message about this story. Again, our life calling is to walk with the Lord instead of to live independently of Him. Let’s talk about some details....

 Having a close relationship with God protects us from coming up with wrongheaded and ungodly plans. The people that settled in Babylon developed an unholy unity due to their extreme collective self-confidence. Their plans to build a tower is presented in such a way that we might think of people and their sinful attitude in earlier chapters. The spirit of pride and independence from God were great dangers to them. It is for that reason that God had to destroy that which they had built up. The result of human pride was dispersion and division. Mankind’s plan had to be dismantled in order that people would not begin to live as their ancestors did in Noah’s days before the flood. For that reason, God not only destroyed their plan, but also stood against the purpose of that place.

Specifically, Babylon in the Sumerian language was called “Bab-ili”, which meant “the gate or doorway to God/gods”. However, God changed that name to something depicting a laughable and sad confusion, referring to the city not as Babel/Babili, but making the people “Balal”, which has a similar sounding pattern as a wordplay in Hebrew. Beyond that, the Sumerians praised the reality of having one language in their literature of the time, while the Bible see that reality as a huge spiritual obstacle. The latter was a huge problem, because as God had said, mankind would be able to do what they wanted, not spreading out over the earth as God had commanded, and further worsening in their evil morality and evil deeds. Human unity needed to be sourced in God and not human social planning. The tower itself was a sign of human independence from God – it was not that they wanted to take over God’s position, but that they wanted to use God and decide their relationship with Him on their own terms. They wanted to deal with the True God in the same way that had done with their false gods.

Pride is one of the most painful sins from which we can stay free through a relationship with God. There were once two ships on the Black Sea that had collided and sustained hundreds of casualties in the freezing waters. Eventually the cause of the accident became evident. It had not been a mechanical or technological issue. It had been caused by human stubbornness and pride. Each captain had known that there was another one near his ship. Both of them could have steered their ships far away from each other. But neither of them wanted to change their path. Each one’s pride was not allowing them to address the issue rightly. By the time they woke up to the reality of the danger, it was already way too late.

The same thing can happen when people go to make human plans (without including God). In other words, when we don’t pray or do not search the Word of God for direction concerning our plans and programs, we will often find a lack of blessing in the work itself just like the people of the Tower of Babel. When we do not bow before God and His Word, we reject His protection and blessing then and there.

So, let us ask ourselves: What are the principles on which we make decisions generally? On what tasks has God not given an answer? What are those plans that we have to pray on? I hope that even if we don’t get an answer through prayer, that we would base our decisions on Scripture.

Therefore, if we can hold onto at least one thing from today’s message, it is that a plan that doesn’t involve God’s direction will not be blessed, no matter what success people believe it will have.

Having a relationship with God protects us from wrongheaded and ungodly plans and programs. Walking with God is our true calling, rather than making decisions in life apart from Him, as the people of the Tower of Babel did. The Lord bless you all. Amen.