**Tower of Babel/Genealogy of Terah/Abram**

**SERMON STUDY – Genesis 11:1-9**

Recap for week of February 13, 2022: The time period from Genesis 1 to Genesis 11 is known as undated history, *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or primeval* history. It tells the story of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, including that of humanity, beginning with Adam and Eve and the birth of their children. There was Cain and Abel and the first murder. After Abel’s death, a third child was born to Adam and Eve. They named him \_\_\_\_\_, and it was from his branch of the family tree that the righteous \_\_\_\_\_ stemmed.

What did the writer of Genesis give as the reason for the Great Flood?

The Creator saved a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of humanity – just Noah, his sons, and their wives along with multiple pairs of both clean and unclean animals. Out of the ark, emerged the sons of Noah: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and their families.

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Covenant was a promise that God made to Noah and his descendants after the flood. This first covenant has several features that make it different from all the others that will follow.

First, it is an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ covenant. Meaning it is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ dependent on anything humanity does or does not do. There are no conditions attached in order for \_\_\_\_\_ to keep God’s Promise. It is \_\_\_\_\_-sided – a promise from God to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Second, it was made to Noah and all his descendants as well as “\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_” and the earth in general. So, the covenant extended beyond humanity –to ALL of creation.

Third, or lastly, it was sealed with a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the [rainbow](https://www.gotquestions.org/meaning-of-the-rainbow.html).

That brings us to the Tower of Babel story. It’s placement in Genesis may occur after Noah and his family leaves the ark, but if we were to look back at chapter \_\_\_\_\_\_ verses 21 through 30, we see that each family already had their \_\_\_\_\_\_ language, their lands, and their nations. So, this story is what we call an allegorical tale, a literary or writing tactic to try and explain the separation of languages and division of people already described in chapter \_\_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_\_ of diverse languages is said to have happened when the “whole earth,” a community of people who migrated from the \_\_\_\_settled in one place, on the plain of Shinar. Like humans have always done, they build homes and settle into communities. In the midst of their city, they built a tower – the first \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ - with its top in the heavens. Most scholars agree that the type of tower described was called a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - a very common building in Babylon or ancient Mesopotamia. (Notice the root word of BAB-ylon)

Archeologists have uncovered \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from different time periods. Most were made of fired bricks on the outside. They looked like pyramids, built on a platform of ascending \_\_\_\_\_\_. The number of floors ranged from two to seven, giving access to a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at the very top. Most were NOT places for public worship or ceremonies, but rather a dwelling place for the \_\_\_\_\_\_. In the future, each city would have its own patron god. Only priests were permitted on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or in the rooms at its base and it was there responsibility to care for the gods and attend to their needs.

According to the writer of our story, God or Yahweh descended from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to see the city and the tower which had been built. What the LORD saw was a people “making a name for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*.*” And God said, “This is only the beginning of what they will do, nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them BECAUSE they all speak the same language.” God continued saying, “Let \_\_\_\_\_ go down and confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s language.” The writer claims \_\_\_\_\_\_ and whoever the reference to “us” is made – made the language of the whole earth a “babel.” The use of the word “Babel” is a play on words - with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ different meanings coming together in our story.

One meaning comes from the first ancient empire or civilization of Mesopotamia called the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Empire. (2334–2154 BC). In the language of this civilization – the word Babel means “gate of the \_\_\_\_\_\_” – a reference to the shrine at the top of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. But in the Hebrew language – the language of the Israelites – the word Babel means “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” And so, we see the play on words coming together in naming the tower Babel.

Questions for reflection:

* How do we try to contain or keep God locked away in a building, like the community who built the tower of Babel, the ziggurat that contained a shrine (and gods) at the top?
* How do we keep God at a distance or expect only folks like pastors and priests to “care for God” and “God’s kingdom” like the ancient civilizations that built the ziggurats?
* Where have you seen the Lord “descending to you?” How does the Lord show up in your daily life? When the Lord appears – do YOU think the Lord is pleased with what you – what we – what humanity has created or built, in the name of God?
* Like the writer in this story, do we ever “blame God” for a lack of understanding? For confusion among people who are different from “us”? Do we blame God, for the separation and lack of understanding among people of different cultures, diverse nations, or who speak a different “languages?”

**SERMON STUDY – Genesis 11:27-31**

Shem (Noah’s son) is the father \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who is the father of Abraham. Abram is his original name, until God changes it to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the 17th chapter of Genesis.

In the Old Testament – the word \_\_\_\_\_\_ - in all capital letters is more correctly read as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – the Hebrew name for God.

It is meant to be said as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

God’s name was considered to be so holy that God’s people were even afraid to say it.

To ponder: The LORD (YAWEH) is as close to you as your breath.

**SERMON STUDY – Genesis 15:1-21**

With the story of Abram, the primordial or undated history ends.

Scholars date the story of Abram to somewhere around \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ BC.

Questions to ponder:

* Why was Abram so upset? What was at the root of Abram’s fear?
* What was the covenant made in this passage and how is this covenant different than the one God made with Noah?
* What was the promise God gave to Abram and what is Abram’s role in the covenant?

Prayer Practice this week: Be specific in sharing your fears and doubts, hopes and dreams with God. Trust that the LORD hears and will respond. Trust you will be blessed.