

BIBLE STUDY, MAY 20, 2020

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. When the most High divided the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" Deuteronomy 32:7-8.

This is a most remarkable passage of scripture. Even so, most have never heard of it.

The verses are part of a song of Moses. The setting was near the end of his life and thus near the end of the wilderness wanderings. God wanted to reassure the people of Israel of two things: First, He is in charge of the nations and does as He pleases with them; and second, they are unique to Him above all the nations.

They were about to enter the Promised Land, a land of which their fathers feared to enter. So God is reminding them not to worry about the inhabitants; their size or their strength. He is in control and capable of arranging even the nations for their benefit.

God calls them to remember and to consider. Then in verse eight He reveals, or calls to remembrance, three things to them.

God reminds them first, that it is He who has divided the nations. In Genesis, chapter 10, we are told that all the nations of the earth are derived from three men; Shem, Ham and Japheth. The chapter is known as the Table of Nations. Yes, there are roughly 195 nations today, however, did you know that all of them can be traced back to a foundational number of 70? For instance, what was once Persia now consists of three to possibly five nations. Think also of the dividing of all the Middle East and of Africa just over the past one 100 years.

Have you ever wondered at how our globe is arranged, with all of the masses of water separating the continents and nations? God could have made it one large land mass and one large ocean. Perhaps He did and then the flood carved out the world as we know it. Sure, I've heard of the continental drift and all of those things; I just believe that it's the hand of God behind the drift!

The Word continues to remind them that the nations are not only divided geographically so to speak, but that mankind, the sons of Adam, are also separated culturally. How? Genesis 11 gives us the answer when we read that at Babel God confused the languages. At Babel, God instantaneously put up a barrier between them in their ability to communicate!

And then finally God reveals the template, or paradigm that He used to determine the lines of division. Everything was, and I think is, determined by the number of the children of Israel. From the time that Moses spoke these words and sang this song until now, nations have come and gone. Wars have been fought and won and fought and lost. Territories have expanded and contracted. Kingdoms have risen only to fall. Yet in the midst of it all, even while being persecuted in almost every generation, even after having been exiled and scattered throughout the world, and even without a homeland for nearly 2000 years, Israel continues.

So, what would be our conclusion about this extraordinary verse? Space doesn't allow an extensive summary, but consider this: Almost immediately following the judgment of the Flood, mankind once again started down a path of rebellion against God. So, to curb man's bent towards rebellion, God separated the nations, both geographically and communicatively.

Over the centuries man has learned how to cross those barriers. Nations began to navigate from one area to another spreading its influence to foreign lands. Their navigating skills increased until they were able to travel the globe and thus further their influence from nation to nation.

Then this ability improved even more with the invention of flight and the world grew yet even smaller. Wars that were once local between two nations became global and the cultural barriers began to fall even faster.

Then, in our lifetime, everything accelerated even more with the invention of the internet. We have in just the past few years actually witnessed the overturn of nations due to protests amassed through social media!

Mankind is heading at a rapid pace back to Babel. We call it globalization, but it is nothing more than a return to Babel. And even though man's abilities have increased dramatically since building that tower, his heart is still the same. And when he comes together it usually, ultimately ends in rebellion against God.

So as nations continue to assemble, their final destination will end with their final rebellion against their Creator. They will gather at a place called Armageddon; and no, that's not a title of the War, it's a place. It's located in Megiddo, in the Valley of Jezreel, in a little tiny nation known as Israel!

The book of Revelation tells us that in the new earth there will be no more sea. Ever wondered why? Well, it's because sin and rebellion will pass away with the old world, our world. We will be led by King Jesus and peace will reign, and there'll be no more need to divide the nations.