

My Way or the Highway!

Taken from Genesis 9—11

Foundation

Don't skip this part! Take a few minutes right now to pray. God stands ready to help and guide you as you explore His Word. All you need to do is ask Him.



Does it ever frustrate you when a good idea falls flat on its face and a bad idea gains great acceptance?

What a deliverance! Upon leaving the safety of the ark, Noah had built an altar to worship his Lord. Surely God must have first place in everything! Starting all over, Noah and his family had set out to obey God and live uprightly before Him. God had told them to be fruitful, have more children, and populate the earth—and that's exactly what they intended to do.

But it soon became clear that even though the evidence of sin had been destroyed with the flood, the root of sin still existed. This was obvious in the life of Ham—one of Noah's sons.

One day Noah drank some wine from his vineyard and became drunk. His son Ham found him lying in his tent totally naked. Even though Ham knew it was wrong to look at someone in their nakedness, he looked anyway and then ran to tell his two brothers.

"Shem, Japheth," he called with a laugh. "You'll never guess what happened to Dad! Who would have thought it? Come and see for yourselves!"

When Shem and Japheth arrived, they realized what had happened. But instead of sharing in the shame of the moment, they turned their heads away to keep from looking at their father. Then taking a cloak, they walked backwards to their father and covered him. When Noah awoke from his drunken sleep, he discovered what Shem and Japheth had done—and what Ham had not done. As a result, Shem and Japheth received a blessing and Ham's descendants, the Canaanites, would be cursed, for their hearts would turn against the Lord. This was just the beginning.

As Noah's descendants multiplied, they moved eastward and settled in the plain of Shinar, where they became very comfortable. People from the tribes of Shem, Ham, and Japheth got along well and began making a name for themselves. When they put their heads together, it seemed there was nothing they couldn't accomplish! In all their success and self-sufficiency, they disregarded God's plan to scatter and fill the earth. Instead they followed their own plan.

Using mud bricks and mortar made from tar, the people began to build a tower in their own honor—a monument to their own strength. Steps led up the side of the tower to a place of worship at the top. But the worship there was not directed towards God.

God saw the evil motives and disobedience of Noah's descendants and stepped in, confusing their language. Suddenly unable to communicate with one another, the people abandoned their building plans and took to

Ham's curse would fall upon his son Canaan. Canaan was the father of the Canaanites, who later proved to be very evil people.

The city surrounding the tower was named "Babel," meaning "confusion." It was very similar to a tower built later in Babylon called a ziggurat, which functioned as an artificial mountain that served as the center for idol worship.

the roads, spreading out around the world—just as God had originally intended. In spite of human rebellion, God’s original plan would be accomplished after all. When in stubborn pride many people insisted, “My way!” God stood firm and showed them the highway!

Footwork

In your Bible, turn to Genesis 11:6. What does it say? Does this seem like a strange statement for God to make? God wasn’t concerned that the people might somehow become too powerful, for He created mankind and has the last word over all His creation. Instead, God knew the danger and tragic consequences of people becoming wise in their own eyes.



How will you respond when you’re tempted by your own selfish plans and desires? Will you choose to follow God’s plans or your own?