

Is God a Nationalist?

Dr. Jerry A. Collins

*They said, “Come, **let us build** for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will **reach into heaven**, and **let us make for ourselves a name**, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. The Lord said, “Behold, **they are one people**, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and **now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them**. Come, **let Us** go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” So the Lord **scattered them abroad** from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore, its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the **whole earth**; and from there the **Lord scattered them abroad** over the face of the **whole earth** (Genesis 11:4-9).*

Introduction

The Hebrew word עַמִּים (*goyim*) is translated “nations” the majority of time in the Old Testament. The Greek term ἔθνος (*ethnos*) is translated “Gentiles” or “nations” the majority of time in the New Testament. These words are used for a corporate body of people who gather for group identity. That group identity developed distinctions that eventually separated them into nations. The table of nations in Genesis 10:32 concluded, *these are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their **nations**; and out of these **the nations** were separated on the earth after the flood*. It seems that God intended the peoples of the earth to be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth as nations of people, rather than under a united globalist type of arrangement. That is, God was an advocate for nationalism. This strategy is God’s way of preventing globalist utopian concepts to govern the affairs of men on earth.

A Monument to Pride

Nationalism is oriented toward developing and maintaining a national identity based on shared characteristics such as culture, language, race, religion, political goals, or a belief in a common ancestry (Wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalism). We have been witnessing an international rise of nationalism recently, like Brexit, the election of President Trump, and nations such as Poland and Slavic countries which have defied the European Union centralized control. The media spin and current belittling of nationalism is an attempt to brand it as some out-of-touch, racist, and bigoted idea.



But we should not just accept the spin and assume their stance is correct. It seems that the Bible has an angle we should consider to gain a more insightful perspective and honest evaluation of nationalism. Nationalism is a Biblical concept.

The Tower of Babel was an attempt at globalism. The narrative is about the entire human race wanting to avoid being scattered (Genesis 11:4). This united race had a globalist ambition, wanting to bring the united population under the umbrella of a global utopia. Yet, the irony is that the united race at Babel, described as the *whole earth* (v. 8), were, in the end, *scattered abroad* [by God] *over the face of the whole earth* (v. 9). God disbanded the globalists and forced a nationalist status which would evolve into languages, borders, and cultures. Confusing the languages necessitated the people populating into groups. Needing an identity, they eventually formed national structures. God had squelched their attempt at a global hegemony, a centralized authority, forcing this national orientation.

Their attempt to globally establish themselves was based in pride or hubris. United by a common language, the people migrated in an easterly direction (v. 2). They settled in Shinar, where these nomads became settlers. The *sons of men* resolved to build a monument to themselves made of bricks that reached up into the heavens (vv. 3-4). Zealous for societal development, alliance, and fame, their brickmaking led to the resolution *let us build for ourselves a city*. But not just any city—one with *a tower whose top will reach into heaven*. Their ingenuity at brick construction and their boldness to engineer a lofty tower was derived from their immense pride.

That craving was displayed by their motive to *make for ourselves a name*. The purpose of the entire venture was notoriety, glory, and renown. They had hoped to secure their united future by arrogantly exalting themselves. The hubris to secure their destiny was driven by a fear of anonymity *lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth*. Fearful of obscurity, they pursued their own united significance. It was this ambition and alarm that, combined together, motivated human pride. The preoccupation with this recognition would take from the honor, glory, and renown that belonged to God alone.

God Confronts Man's Hubris

God decided to visit this construction site to investigate *the sons of men* (v. 5) and see the earthlings work. One commentator writes, “no matter how high they towered, the Lord still had to descend to see it” (Cassuto, *Commentary on Genesis*, vol. 2, p. 230). God’s evaluation is that *they are one people, and they all have the same language...and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them* (v. 6). This entire enterprise was a defiance of God’s original intent for the race of men to be fruitful, to multiply, and to fill the earth (Genesis 1:28). God noted that, instead, they were now within reach of their own purpose, to exalt themselves.

God intervened to confound their expectations by *confus[ing] their language that they may not understand one another's speech* (Genesis 11:7). Where they had hoped to be united, *the Lord scattered them abroad from there* (v. 8). They experienced their greatest fear and were dispersed. The end result was *they stopped building the city*. Their globalist aspirations were dashed. “Babel” became the symbol of man’s united pride, frustrated by the purpose of God. Man’s hubris ended in chaos and confusion.

God nullified their united global ambition by dividing them into people groups, eventually becoming nations. God expected the scattered groups of people to orient themselves toward national identities. It’s evident that as long as sin is in the world, God would employ nationalism to abate human pride and sin (Stigers, *A Commentary on Genesis*, p. 129). The language barrier prevented unification.

God is a Nationalist

God is a nationalist not a globalist. God even created His own nation with a language, religious ritual, law code, culture, and borders (Genesis 15:18; Exodus 23:31; Numbers 34:1-12, and Deuteronomy 1:7-8). God promised to *give to you [Abraham] and to your descendants [Israel]...all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession* (Genesis 17:8). God even provided law codes to protect strangers and aliens, who were immigrants from other territories living within the borders of His nation (Deuteronomy 24:17ff). In the Millennial Kingdom, Israel will also be a nation with its own status and borders (Isaiah 26:15; and Ezekiel 47:13-14).

In Romans 13:1-7, God’s commitment to civic government is another indication of His nationalism. We are commanded to submit to civic jurisdiction, *every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God*.

Therefore, whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. God established a nationalistic structure to govern the affairs of men on earth, not a globalist centralized scheme.

The Tower of Babel is a warning against the expansion of a global system until it encompasses everything and everyone. It's a caution against utopian presumption to set out to build a social structure that reaches into heaven. What's disturbing is the idea that a global hierarchy can replace the role of God. It's a concept that can erase the distinction between earth and heaven with a utopian kind of vision. Men can build a social or political edifice that's so large and comprehensive that it can replace heaven itself. God objects to it. God used nationalism to establish man's rule on earth, as a check against globalism.

The twentieth century is a reminder of the worst kind of consequence of the widespread promulgation of utopian designs. There is the potential for these aspirations to become pathological and produce what is profoundly anti-human. What happened in the last century was mayhem on a scale that had never been matched in the entire history of humanity. The Armenian genocide, WW1, the Stalin purge, the Holocaust, the Mao Zedong purge, WW2, and Pol Pot's killing fields are just some examples. There can be something extraordinarily dangerous about utopian visions and designs.

Early in the biblical narrative, with the Tower of Babel, we have a warning against globalist hubris and some indication that properly functioning governmental systems must have an appropriate scale. It seems that a Tower of Babel phenomena is most evident today in the European Economic Community's attempt to bring all the European nationalistic governmental multiplicity under the umbrella of a single elitist unity. The EEC exists to simultaneously erect a system that undertakes another global strategy to control the masses.

God Establishes Christ's Global Reign Over Nations

The antichrist will venture yet another global kingdom (Daniel 7:8, 23-24; 9:26-27; 11:37-38; and Revelation 13:1-10). That's next on the Biblical prophetic calendar. It will be an attempt at a global strategy with open borders and no national distinctions, with power given to governmental elites, the beast and the false prophet (Revelation 13:1-8, 11-18). Satan's beast will arise out of a ten-nation confederacy. This alliance of nations will give up their national status for the beast's global aspirations during the Tribulation (Revelation 17:12-13).

The beast and the false prophet will coordinate the strategy of Satan to establish a global kingdom and dominion on the earth, over the nations and masses. And guess what? God will disband that effort by force as well (Revelation 19:11-21). Even after Satan is released from the abyss, he will attempt one final global coup to subvert Christ's kingdom reign over the nations at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:7-9). God will vigorously dissolve that hostile attack, too. Just as He did with the united population in the beginning at the Tower of Babel.

God's nationalist undertaking continues in Christ's global rule over nations on earth in the Millennial Kingdom (Psalm 2:8; Isaiah 25; Revelation 2:26; 20:4-8). This is the only global governance over the nations that God accepts. The prophet Zechariah declared *many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the Lord. "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'in those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'"* Throughout human history and into the prophetic future, God remains steadfast in His nationalistic program for mankind.

Unlike the Tower of Babel, where the united race declared, *let us make for ourselves a name*, God will have *highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father* (Philippians 2:9-11). Until then, all other global kingdoms are unacceptable. No rival dominions will prevail. It's Christ's global kingdom reign over the nations of the earth that will be established and flourish. God's commitment to a nationalist governance continues into eternity in the New Jerusalem where *the nations will walk by its light and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it* (Revelation 21:24).

Applications

- Participating in a global utopian enterprise is to counter what it is God has set up to govern the affairs of men on earth.
- It is entirely acceptable to support a nationalistic idea without the extremes the media and governmental elites want to characterize as nationalism.
- On a personal level, always evaluate your own sense of pride in life.
- Today an oligarchy, a group of political, business, and religious leaders of an elite ruling class, such as George Soros and the Pope, are behind much of the socialist's utopian global schemes. A socialist structure is being cast today, motivated by a globalist governance of a ruling class.
- The outcome of a nationalist structure is constant conflict between the nations throughout history. This conflict seems to be by God's design to motivate the self-interests of nations, preventing them from pursuing globalism.
- Eventually, a globalist utopian governmental authority established by the antichrist will emerge to subjugate nations under its authority. That global strategy is at work in the world today through the satanic heavenly dark forces (Ephesian 6:12).
- We should *pray for the peace of Jerusalem* (Psalm 122:6-7). Jerusalem will be the scene of Christ's return (Acts 1:11; Zechariah 14:4), and at that time, He will establish permanent peace globally. All Christians should be eagerly awaiting His return and praying for the time when the Prince of Peace will reign in Jerusalem over the nations of the earth.