

SERIES – Lessons from the Hebrew Bible  
Celebration of Diversity - 2/2/25  
Genesis 11:1-9

- I. Lessons from the story of the Tower of Babel
  1. God values human diversity
  2. Diversity is a way to counter the tendency for people to develop arrogance
  3. In spite of our differences, our DNA is 99.9% the same
- II. Practical Implications for Us
  1. If God values our differences, we should too
    - Human differences enrich our understanding of the world and produce increased creativity and innovation
  2. There is no basis for discriminatory attitudes
    - Biologically we are essentially the same as everyone else
    - We all trace our ancestry to the same early African humans
  3. We should not ignore our differences
    - We can celebrate our differences without treating anyone unfairly
    - We can strive for equality by loving one another
  4. We should seek out those who are different than we are
    - Knowing people different than ourselves helps reduce negative feelings we may have toward them
  5. We should guard our hearts to maintain a deep sense of humility
    - We still have much to learn about how God wants us to treat others

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Genesis 11:1-9 – Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. <sup>2</sup> And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. <sup>3</sup> And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and fire them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone and bitumen for mortar. <sup>4</sup> 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; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” <sup>5</sup> The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, “Look, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup> Come, let us go down and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” <sup>8</sup> So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. <sup>9</sup> Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth, and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Proverbs 16:18 - Pride leads to destruction, and arrogance to downfall.

Colossians 3:12-13 - You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. <sup>13</sup> Be tolerant with one another and forgive one another whenever any of you has a complaint against someone else. You must forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven you.

HUMAN FAMILY – by Maya Angelou

I note the obvious differences in the human family.  
Some of us are serious, some thrive on comedy.

The variety of our skin tones can confuse, bemuse, delight,  
brown and pink and beige and purple, tan and blue and white.

I've sailed upon the seven seas and stopped in every land,  
I've seen the wonders of the world not yet one common man.

I know ten thousand women called Jane and Mary Jane,  
but I've not seen any two who really were the same.

We love and lose in China, we weep on England's moors,  
and laugh and moan in Guinea, and thrive on Spanish shores.

We seek success in Finland, are born and die in Maine.  
In minor ways we differ, in major we're the same.

I note the obvious differences between each sort and type,  
but we are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.