

Text: Genesis 10:1-11:9

Title: "God's will for strong nations" - Part One

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Introduction: As a baseball fan and newcomer to the area here, I've been intrigued by the references I've heard to a "Red Sox Nation." Evidently, the phrase was coined by a *Boston Globe* writer named Nathan Cobb, who used it in a 1986 article to describe the part of Connecticut that rooted for the Red Sox instead of the Mets in the World Series that year.

Today, a Red Sox fan can pay up to \$250 per season for the privileges of official citizenship in Red Sox Nation. That level of citizenry is called the "Monster Pack" because it comes with the guaranteed right to purchase two Green Monster tickets at Fenway. For the first time in 2008, Red Sox Nation actually elected a president after a full-blown campaign season, complete with primaries and debates. One thing you cannot do as a member of Red Sox Nation, of course, is root for the New York Yankees.

Nations are the theme of this section of Genesis (10:5(2), 20, 31, 32(2)). Of course, we are not reading about baseball teams and their fans. Rather, we are reading about an important aspect of God's will for mankind. From our Bibles we understand that God has ordained three important social institutions: the family, the church, and the nation. This section of Scripture is often called "The Table of Nations," because in it God takes the time to tell us about the importance of strong nations to our well-being, and what the characteristics of strong nations are. I want us to organize our study of this passage under three points in this regard this morning:

I. Strong nations are a part of God's will for mankind.

Illustration: *The People's Daily* is the state-run newspaper of the country of China. They have a website, and on that website they host what they call "The Strong Nation Forum." The purpose of the forum is to promote discussion regarding how to make China a stronger nation.

As Americans, we have become accustomed somewhat to hearing about how we are too strong, about how the other countries of the world dislike us, and about how we need to have a greater concern for international interests rather than national interests. Well, our passage emphasizes that strong nations are a part of God's will for mankind, and it gives us some clues regarding what makes a nation a strong nation.

A. Strong nations recognize that all men are created equal (10:1, 32).

Illustration: "The downside of diversity: A Harvard political scientist finds that diversity hurts civic life. What happens when a liberal scholar unearths an inconvenient truth?"  
By Michael Jonas | August 5, 2007 *The Boston Globe*.

"It has become increasingly popular to speak of racial and ethnic diversity as a civic strength. From multicultural festivals to pronouncements from political leaders, the message is the same: our differences make us stronger.

"But a massive new study, based on detailed interviews of nearly 30,000 people across America, has concluded just the opposite. Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam -- famous for "Bowling Alone," his 2000 book on declining civic engagement -- has found that the greater the diversity in a community, the fewer people vote and the less they volunteer, the less they give to charity and work on community projects. In the most diverse communities, neighbors trust one another about half as much as they do in the most homogenous settings. The study, the largest ever on civic engagement in America, found

that virtually all measures of civic health are lower in more diverse settings.

“The extent of the effect is shocking,” says Scott Page, a University of Michigan political scientist.

“The study comes at a time when the future of the American melting pot is the focus of intense political debate, from immigration to race-based admissions to schools, and it poses challenges to advocates on all sides of the issues. The study is already being cited by some conservatives as proof of the harm large-scale immigration causes to the nation's social fabric. But with demographic trends already pushing the nation inexorably toward greater diversity, the real question may yet lie ahead: how to handle the unsettling social changes that Putnam's research predicts.”

Application: The Bible gives us this answer, and the answer it gives is one that our founding fathers understood well: all mankind is equally the offspring of Noah. We are commonly created in the image of God. All men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. Nations are strong when they are united under this principle of the common dignity of human life.

It was our neglect of this biblical truth with the institution of slavery that ripped our nation apart in our Civil War. America will be a strong country when Americans see themselves as Americans, not African-Americans and Asian-Americans and Native-Americans and European-Americans, etc.

Evolution does not provide a rationale for the equality of humanity. The man more responsible than any other for the widespread acceptance of evolution in the 19th century was Thomas Huxley. Soon after the American Civil War, in which the negro slaves were freed, he wrote as follows:

"No rational man, cognizant of the facts, believes that the average negro is the equal, still less the superior, of the white man. And if this be true, it is simply incredible that, when all his disabilities are removed, and our prognathous relative has a fair field and no favour, as well as no oppressor, he will be able to compete successfully with his bigger-brained and smaller-jawed rival, in a contest which is to be carried out by thoughts and not by bites" [*Thomas Huxley: Lay Sermons, Addresses and Reviews* (1871), p. 20.] The reliance of Hitler's Nazism on evolution for their master-race doctrines and eugenic actions is a well-documented part of 20th century history. Against all this, the Bible teaches that we are all the sons of Noah, that we are all brown, that all men are created equal.

B. Strong nations recognize that family strength is foundational to national strength (10:5, 18, 20, 31).

Application: The Bible is pretty clear that, before there could be strong nations, there had to be strong families. Satan is intent on ripping our nation apart, and he wants to do it by destroying families. So does our passage give us any clues about the key to strong families? It suggests that the roll of Dad is the key. We do not have any ladies mentioned here.

Note these data points about the importance of strong homes through strong dads: [(<http://www.fathersloveletter.com/Ministry/statistics.html>; accessed April 2008); the site cited a study that was the source of each conclusion]:

"An estimated 24.7 million children (36.3%) live absent their biological father."

"Children who were part of the 'post war generation' could expect to grow up with two biological parents who were married to each other. Eighty percent did. Today, only about 50% of children will spend their entire childhood in an intact family."

“With the increasing number of premarital births and a continuing high divorce rate, the proportion of children living with just one parent rose from 9 percent in 1960 to 28 percent in 1996. Currently, 57.7 percent of all black children, 31.8 percent of all Hispanic children, and 20.9 percent of all white children are living in single-parent homes.”

“The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states, ‘Fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse.’”

“Children growing up in single-parent households are at a significantly increased risk for drug abuse as teenagers.”

“Children who live apart from their fathers are 4.3 times more likely to smoke cigarettes as teenagers than children growing up with their fathers in the home.”

“Children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems.”

“Three out of four teenage suicides occur in households where a parent has been absent.”

“In studies involving over 25,000 children using nationally representative data sets, children who lived with only one parent had lower grade point averages, lower college aspirations, poor attendance records, and higher drop out rates than students who lived with both parents.”

“Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school.”

“School children from divorced families are absent more, and more anxious, hostile, and withdrawn, and are less popular with their peers than those from intact families.”

“Children in single parent families are more likely to be in trouble with the law than their peers who grow up with two parents.”

“Adolescent females between the ages of 15 and 19 years reared in homes without fathers are significantly more likely to engage in premarital sex than adolescent females reared in homes with both a mother and a father.”

“A white teenage girl from an advantaged background is five times more likely to become a teen mother if she grows up in a single-mother household than if she grows up in a household with both biological parents.”

“Over half of Americans agree that most people have unresolved problems with their fathers. Cumulatively, 55.6% agreed with this statement, up from 54.1% in our 1996 poll. More non-whites (70.4%) than whites (56.3%) were in agreement. Interestingly, the generation who has experienced more father absence, 18- to 24-year-olds, displayed the highest level of agreement (67.2%). Income was also a differentiating factor: of the respondents making \$25,000 or less, 70.1% agreed, compared to only 48.0% among those who make more than \$50,000.”

America is in trouble because Dads have gone missing.

C. Strong nations speak a same language (10:5, 20, 31, 11:1-9).

Application: The importance of a common language to the strength of a nation has been an emphasis of some political leaders, but it is also the clear teaching of our Bible passage here. One of the themes of Genesis 10-11 is that common language is a critical component of maintaining “one nation under God.” The former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, has studied the issue and emphasizes the importance of English to the strength of our nation this way:

“English is the language of American success and provides the basis for American cultural unity.

“As a part of any comprehensive immigration reform, we should renew our commitment to our cultural values by teaching legal immigrants to speak and read the English language, educating them about U.S. citizenship based upon U.S. history and giving them an understanding of the Founding Fathers and the core values of American civilization. We should continue to encourage those who want to become U.S. citizens, but it is important that we grant citizenship to only those individuals who also want to embrace and assimilate into the culture of the United States” [<http://newt.org/EditNewt/NewtNewsandOpinionDB/tabid/102/ArticleType/ArticleView/ArticleID/2453/Default.aspx>].

D. Strong nations protect their borders (10:5 “were separated”, 10, 19, 20 “their lands”, 30, 31 “their lands”, 32 “were separated”).

Application: It is amazing how the principles of Genesis 10-11 speak to the needs of 21st century America, isn't it? The principles of God's Word are timeless, and one of these principles is that nations ought to have boarders that they can defend – nations ought to be separated by boarders. Illegal immigration is a problem in this regard. Drs. Tim Kane and Kirk Johnson describe our problem this way:

“Illegal immigration into the United States is massive in scale. More than 10 million undocumented aliens currently reside in the U.S., and that population is growing by 700,000 per year. On one hand, the presence of so many aliens is a powerful testament to the attractiveness of America. On the other hand, it is a sign of how dangerously open our borders are.

“Typical illegal aliens come to America primarily for better jobs and in the process add value to the U.S. economy. How-

ever, they also take away value by weakening the legal and national security environment. . . . Even though they pose no direct security threat, the presence of millions of undocumented migrants distorts the law, distracts resources, and effectively creates a cover for terrorists and criminals” [<http://www.heritage.org/Research/Immigration/bg1913.cfm>].

Conclusion: God has called us as Bible-believing Christians to be citizens of a great nation. There are many forces that threaten to weaken our country, but we can be salt that helps to preserve what God’s blessing on our fathers has given us in this land. As citizens of America, may we be committed to the principles that we are one people equally created in the image of God, that strong families are the key to a strong nation, that we should speak one language, and that we believe that our borders should be protected.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*