

Which Is Worse?

And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky. Let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise, we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth." Then the Lord came down to look over the city and the tower that the men were building. The Lord said, "If, as one people all having the same language, they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down there and confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth, and they stopped building the city. – Genesis 11:4-8 HCSB

It's interesting to see how God deals with different kinds of sin. It helps a person who is seeking to be a true disciple to correctly interpret and react to human behavior. In today's passage, Humanity was directly rebelling against God's command to spread out over the Earth.¹ Their response was, "Let's build a tower...lest we be scatted over the face of the earth." God reacted by introducing the difficulty of multiple languages and spreading them out by force.

Just a few chapters earlier, however, we see that humanity was rebelling against God to the point that every scheme humanity's mind thought of was nothing but evil all the time.² God decided in that case to wipe them all out – to destroy them utterly – leaving only one man's family to replenish the population!

Why was one sin dealt with so harshly and the other so leniently? The Babel generation was dispersed, but not destroyed. The Noahic generation was utterly destroyed. In Genesis 6:11, we see a clue. It says, "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence."³ In the case of the Babel generation, they revolted directly against God's command. In the case of the Noahic generation, they further committed ethical crimes against one another.

Once again we see the centrality of ethical behavior in the lives of the Christ's disciples. God will always deal with sin. Those who contradict Hashem will soon see themselves scattered like chaff in the wind. However, those who proceed from this sin of the heart to the sins of the flesh and began acting out their wickedness upon their fellow humans will encounter an altogether different fate.

This was illustrated in the Master's teaching when He said to His disciples, "Offenses will certainly come, but woe to him through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to stumble."⁴

Sin against me – and I can forgive you. Sin against my children – and you will suffer my wrath. This is the message of [Yahweh Ch'uwl](#); a message that any parent could understand.

¹ Genesis 9:7

² Genesis 6:5

³ Genesis 6:11

⁴ Luke 17:1-2 HCSB