

“Discernment in the Age of AI. What do you think about artificial intelligence?”

Review: Addressing popular cultural questions that are relevant for today.

The story of the Tower of Babel can help give us insights in dealing with the constant bombardment of information and rapid change we face in our culture today.

Genesis 11:1-9 (NIV) “Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. ²As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. ³They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. ⁴Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.’ ⁵But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶The LORD said, ‘If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.’ ⁸So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.”

The question to ask in this story is what motivated them to build the city and tower?

- Verses 3 & 4 are key, “build ourselves a city” and “make a name for ourselves” reveals pride.
- God hates pride. (Proverbs 8:13, Proverbs 11:2, Proverbs 16:18)
- Throughout the Bible, the only person who makes a great name for himself is God. God created us to make a great name for Him. (Isaiah 43:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31)
- They were building the city and a tower out of their self-sufficiency. They felt no need for God, they relied on their human independence, ingenuity and self-sufficiency apart from God.
- Seeking fame for ourselves is where much of our pain and suffering originates. Since the Garden, we are trying to fabricate our own blessings.
- Although confident in their technology and social unity to do the project, they were *motivated by the fear* of being “scattered on the face of the whole earth.” This decision to build was in direct contradiction to what God commanded Noah to do. (Genesis 9:1)

⚠ Warning: Be careful how you use the gifts God has given you. Gifts are good when used for God’s purposes. What we create can start out as good, only to morph into something outside His will.

⚠ Warning: We all have the propensity to take credit for what God has given us, to ‘make a name for ourselves’. We often see this in sports. Pride and self-sufficiency have always separated us from God.

⚠ Warning: Fabricating our own blessings and security outside of God can lead to insecurity and fear. When God says no or go, don’t rebel, but obey. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

- As a result of man’s rebellion, God came down and confused their language, and scattered them across the earth. He scattered them to hold back sin from becoming as evil and rampant as before the flood and to accomplish His will to populate the earth.
- In our world today, we have created an overdriven sense of urgency for more and faster information and knowledge. We rush about thinking “I need it now!” More speed!”
- Reality: We all need less speed and more of God and His timing; not our own. Much of what God calls us to do is to slow down, listen, discern and wait. (Psalm 46:10) Time and waiting develops faith, character and perseverance.
- Today, one of our greatest challenges is the rapid pace of technological advancement, how we use it and how we are to keep up with it. What motivates you to have more information?

Tension # 1 Faster access to knowledge

- How do we discern what is true through AI? What are we receiving as worthy knowledge? Do we collect our truth from our own echo chamber? Do we believe without being challenged objectively? Are you addicted to speed?
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Proverbs 16:1-3 (NIV) “To humans belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the proper answer of the tongue.

²All a person’s ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD.³Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.”

- There are certain domains where spiritual discernment is critical.

Tension #2 Critical thinking and decision making

When our critical thinking and decision making is sped up, it becomes harder to comprehend the implications of our decisions. It’s less about seeking God’s heart and more about accomplishing tasks. Are you ok with letting someone or something else think for you?

Romans 12:2 (NIV) “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Proverbs 14:12 (NIV) “There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.”

Tension #3 Relationships

God desires relationship with Him and with others. (Matthew 22:37-40) Are you willing to seek out easy relationships that eliminate risk or even create fake/imaginary relationships created by AI?

What to do with all of this?

- Have boundaries and limits for how you and your family will use AI.
- Develop strong critical thinking skills and apply them against AI outputs. Don’t believe everything you read.
- Fasting from digital information/stimuli. A day, a week, a month?
- Reading the Bible and Godly books/reinforce your Biblical worldview.

Podcast Reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAC5pjdTaNQ>

