



+ **YOU**

**Summer 2024**  
**Promises We Can Count On**

**Sermon Title:** I Said, 'Fill the Earth!'

**To be used with Session 1:** God's Promise of Fruitfulness

**Scripture:** Genesis 11:1-9, 2 Timothy 2:13

**Connection with Bible Study:** To complement the Bible study "God's Promise of Fruitfulness" this sermon will help listeners understand that there are two sides to a covenant. God is faithful to keep His promises, but humans aren't nearly as reliable to hold up their end of the bargain. Yet, God's good purposes cannot be derailed simply because of our unfaithfulness. The story of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-10) shows that even when we are faithless, God remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13). Nevertheless, breaking God's covenant will always have consequences.

### **Introduction:**

In 2005, almost 27,000 cases were heard in United States civil courts. Of those, about one-third of them involved a contract dispute in which two parties made a deal, and one party claimed that the other party didn't live up to their end of the bargain. In other words, someone sued someone else for breaking a promise 9000 times in one year. That comes out to a little more than 24 per day. That's more than one lawsuit every hour! [Source: <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/ascii/cbjtsc05.txt> ]

Of course, this statistic is only about actual civil court cases. In contrast, take a minute to think about every time someone has broken a promise to you. Or if you dare, think about how many promises you have made that you have broken.

In contrast, God has existed since before human beings started measuring days and years and hours. Yet in all that time, He has never broken a promise. Not even once.

Today, we are going to look at the first covenant God ever made with human beings, how we broke that covenant, and how God fulfilled it anyway.

### **1. God Makes a Covenant (Gen. 1:28-30).**

Even before God warned Adam and Eve about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God told them to multiply and fill the earth. At the same time, He told them to exercise stewardship over God's good creation. In return, God gave them an abundant food source: "every green plant

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for food” (v. 30). The implication was that humans would do their part—multiply and fill the earth—and God would do His part, to provide them with unlimited natural resources.

However, humans only partially obeyed. While they certainly multiplied (see Gen. 6:1), they also turned against God. They filled the earth with wickedness (Gen. 6:5) instead of being good stewards of God’s creation. As a result, God regretted He had made man, and decided He would wipe them out and start over (Gen. 6:5-7). After Noah and his family emerged from the ark, God repeated His command to multiply and fill the earth. And this time, He repeated it three times (Gen. 8:17, 9:1, 7).

Some scholars disagree that the command to Adam counted as a covenant. But there is no doubt that he established a covenant with Noah. He put His bow (rainbow) in the heavens as a sign that he would never again destroy the world by water. In return, Noah and His descendants were to—you guessed it—multiply and fill the earth.

## **2. Man Breaks the Covenant (Gen. 11:1-4).**

Genesis 10 is a chapter often called the Table of Nations, listing all the descendants of Noah’s three sons Shem, Ham and Japheth and how they spread throughout the earth, “each with its own language” (Gen. 10:5). Chronologically, however, the events of Genesis 11 happen before Genesis 10. We know this because the first verse of Genesis 11 says that “the whole earth had the same language (Gen. 11:1).

Not only had human beings ignored God’s command to fill the earth, they were determined to disobey it. Genesis 11:4 tells us that their purpose for building the famous tower of Babel (or Babylon) was so they would not be scattered throughout the earth. Notice that they wanted to “make a name for themselves.” As Christians, our one goal should be to make God’s name famous throughout the earth!

Application point: Fear of the unknown can be a powerful motivator for disobedience. It is human nature to avoid risk. Have you ever felt God was calling you to step out in faith and do something out of your comfort zone? [Pastor, share a personal story of a time you either obeyed or disobeyed God in this area.]

## **3. God Makes it Happen Anyway (Gen. 11:5-9).**

Human accomplishment means nothing apart from godly obedience. Even though the people in the land of Shinar were technologically advanced (verse 3 notes they had learned how to make oven fired bricks), they had failed to fulfill the covenant God made with Adam and repeated with Noah. They were all concentrated in one place with one language.

God wasn’t threatened with what humans were capable of (as some suggest from reading verse 6). Rather, He was determined that humans would fulfill the task He had given them to do. From the very beginning, God intended humans to have dominion over *all* the earth, not just one tiny

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piece of it in Mesopotamia. So God confused their language. They abandoned their tower, and *finally* did what God had been telling them to do ever since Genesis 1: they scattered throughout the earth.

**Conclusion:** God is once again calling us to be scattered throughout the earth. Before ascending into heaven, Jesus commanded His disciples to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” There will always be the temptation to stay in our comfort zones of church and home without fulfilling the great Commission. But when God said “fill the earth,” He meant it then and He means it now.

*James Jackson is pastor of Glynwood Baptist Church in Prattville, Alabama. He and his wife Trish have two grown sons and a grandchild. James blogs regularly at 66in52.com, a ministry dedicated to helping people fall more in love with God’s Word through daily Bible study.*