

# Genesis 11:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

## Analysis

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**And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar;...** This passage belongs to the primeval history section (Genesis 1-11) which establishes universal truths about God, humanity, sin, and divine purposes before focusing on Abraham and Israel. These chapters answer fundamental questions about human origins, the spread of wickedness, God's judgment, and the preservation of a righteous remnant.

Recurring patterns emerge: human sin escalating from individual disobedience to societal corruption, divine patience followed by judgment, gracious preservation of a remnant, and covenant promises ensuring redemptive purposes continue. The genealogies connect historical persons, demonstrate the fulfillment of divine promises (blessing and multiplication), and trace the line leading to Abraham and ultimately Christ.

Key theological themes in this section include:

1. sin's destructive progression affecting all humanity
2. God's righteous judgment while preserving mercy
3. human pride and autonomy opposing divine sovereignty
4. cultural development as both blessing and potential idolatry
5. God's sovereign plan advancing despite human rebellion.

These narratives provide the necessary context for understanding God's calling of Abraham and the covenant promises through which all nations will be blessed.

## Historical Context

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The primeval history (Genesis 1-11) parallels ancient Near Eastern traditions including Sumerian King Lists (pre-flood longevity), Akkadian flood traditions (Atrahasis, Gilgamesh), and Mesopotamian city foundation myths. However, Genesis demythologizes these traditions, presenting monotheistic history rather than polytheistic mythology. The genealogies connecting Adam to Noah to Abraham provide historical framework absent in pagan myths.

Archaeological evidence confirms ancient urbanization (chapter 4's cities), agricultural development, metallurgy, and musical instruments emerging in Mesopotamia's early history. The Babel account reflects Mesopotamian ziggurat construction (stepped pyramid temples), particularly in Babylon. Linguistic diversity requiring explanation was obvious to ancient peoples, making the Babel narrative culturally relevant.

For Israel in covenant with Yahweh, these chapters explained their relationship to surrounding nations. All peoples descended from Noah, but Israel descended from Shem through Abraham—chosen for blessing all nations. The flood demonstrated God's justice and mercy: judging wickedness while preserving the righteous. This pattern would recur throughout Israel's history, assuring them that God's covenant faithfulness endures despite judgment on the wicked.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיְהִי י	בְּנִסְעָם	מִקֵּדָם	וַיִּמְצְאוּ	
H1961	And it came to pass as they journeyed	from the east	that they found	
	H5265	H6924	H4672	
הַ	בְּאֶרֶץ	שִׁנְעָר	וַיֵּשְׁבוּ	שָׁם:
a plain	in the land	of Shinar	and they dwelt	H8033
H1237	H776	H8152	H3427	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 10:10** (Parallel theme): And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

**Genesis 14:1** (Parallel theme): And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations;

**Daniel 1:2** (Parallel theme): And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

**Isaiah 11:11** (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

**Zechariah 5:11** (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.

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