



# Climbing the Tower of Babel

Genesis 11:1-9

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- “Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> Then they said to one another, Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly. They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. <sup>4</sup> And they said, Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. <sup>5</sup> But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD said, Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. <sup>7</sup> Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. <sup>8</sup> So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. <sup>9</sup> Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.”

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- We need this lesson today
  - Ecc. 1:9 - “That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun.”
- The people were united by a single purpose facilitated by a common language; they wanted to build a great tower at Babel in Shinar to:
  - Make a name for themselves,
  - To avoid dispersion throughout the world.

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- God intervened because both purposes were contrary to His will
  - Gen. 1:28 - “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth”
  - Gen. 8:17 - “Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.”

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- Gen. 10:5 - “From these the coastland peoples of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.”
- Gen. 10:8-10 - “Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. 10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar”

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- The Hebrew version of the name Babel, is from the verb balal, which means to confuse or confound. The Hebrew noun form babal means confusion.

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- “And they began to build, and in the fourth week they made brick with fire, and the bricks served them for stone, and the clay with which they cemented them together was asphalt which comes out of the sea, and out of the fountains of water in the land of Shinar. And they built it: forty and three years were they building it; its breadth was 203 bricks, and the height was the third of one; its height amounted to 5433 cubits and 2 palms (8150 feet; over 1.5 miles), and the extent of one wall was thirteen stades (7800 feet; just under 1.5 miles) (600 feet per stade), and of the other was thirty stades (18,000 feet; 3.4 miles).” (Jubilees 10:20-21)

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- There are 16 other places around the world that have a Tower of Babel account in their mythology:
  - Sumerian myth of Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta, Lozi, Ashanti, Congo, Tanzania, Karbi Kuki people of Assam, Karan people of Myanmar, the Admiralty Island peoples, the Tharu of Nepal and northern India, the Greek myth of Hermes confusing the languages, the Wasania of Kenya, the Kacha Naga people of Assam, the people of Encounter Bay in Australia, the Maidu of North America, the Tlingit of Alaska, and the K'iche Maya of Central America

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- The account in Genesis makes no mention of any destruction of the tower. The people whose languages are confounded simply stop building their city, and are scattered from there over the face of the Earth.
- Erosion over time would account for some of its disappearance; the constant reuse of building materials, especially fired bricks which were an expensive commodity in those days, accounts for the rest.
- The location of the Tower of Babel is completely unknown.

# How This Story Is Repeated

- By humankind's complete selfish-orientation
  - Gen. 11:4 - “Let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

# How This Story Is Repeated

- From the beginning, people have wanted more glory for themselves
  - Gen. 3:5-6 - “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.”

# How This Story Is Repeated

- Naaman
  - 2Kings 5:11 - “But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.’”

# How This Story Is Repeated

- Saul of Tarsus
  - Acts 26:9-11 - “Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”

# How This Story Is Repeated

- The rich fool
  - Luke 12:18-19 - “So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’”
- Instead of humbly yielding to the Great I AM, they themselves become the great I.

# How This Story Is Repeated

- This attitude differs from that of Christ
  - Matt. 11:29 - “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart...”
  - Matt. 20:28 - “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

# How This Story Is Repeated

- John 13:12-17 - “You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16 Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

# How This Story Is Repeated

- Phil. 2:5-8 - “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

# How This Story Is Repeated

- Isa. 55:8-9 - “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

# How This Story Is Repeated

- How tragic it is for one to dismiss God's way in favor of his own!
  - John 14:6 - “Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”
  - Luke 6:46 - “But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?”

# The Results Of Tower Building

- While the plan seemed good to the builders of the tower of Babel, it:
  - Was foolish from heaven's point of view
    - 1Cor. 1:20 - "...Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"
  - Resulted in confusion, chaos, and destruction of one of the earliest empires of the Patriarchal Age
  - Few men learned the lessons God was trying to teach them. Of the twelve great houses that left the Plain of Shinar, only one remained believers and followers of God, the house of Eber

# The Results Of Tower Building

- We must remember that we will always be dependent on God for all things
  - Prov. 14:12 - “There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”
  - Prov. 20:24 - “A man's steps are of the LORD; How then can a man understand his own way?”
  - Jer. 10:23 - “O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.”

# The Results Of Tower Building

- Psalm 32:8 - “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.”
- Psalm 17:5 - “Uphold my steps in Your paths, That my footsteps may not slip.”
- Psalm 119:116 - “Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live; And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.”