



## THE TOWER OF BABEL

Genesis 10:1–11:9

The Tower of Babel marks one of the great turning points of history. It explains the origin of nations and the wide diversity of languages and people. It also highlights the power of God to accomplish His purposes despite the rebellious actions of humanity.

Today we complete the opening section of the book of Genesis—chapters 1–11. This portion of Scripture is the most foundationally important section in the entire Bible.

It's unfortunate that many so-called Christians today say that Genesis 1–11 is not that critical. It's just poetry, they say; it's just a series of folktales and legends to encourage people in life; you don't need to take it all so literally.

Well, if God didn't say what He meant, how do we know the rest of the Bible is what He really meant to say?

Let me tell you, so many of our core doctrines are directly or indirectly introduced in the first eleven chapters of Genesis. This is why there's such a battle over these chapters.

- Did God literally create the universe to be perfectly suited for life on earth?
- Who created male and female genders?
- Who created marriage to be cooperation instead of competition?
- Where did sin come from?
- Where did the idea of an innocent animal dying for sin come from?
- Was there a promise of someone becoming

- the final sacrifice to pay for our sin?
- Why do we have to grow old and die?
- Where did crime and justice come from?
- How old is the human race?
- Why does the earth look millions of years old, if it was created only thousands of years ago according to Genesis?
- How do we know if Planet Earth will be able to sustain life throughout human history?

Well, all these questions have been answered in Genesis 1 through 9.

Genesis chapter 10 answers another question:

- Where did all the nations of the earth come from?

The answer is very simple. They all descended from Noah's three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. A long list of the descendants of these three sons is given

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in chapter 10, which concludes in verse 32, “From these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.”

So, every nation today can trace its roots back to one of Noah’s three sons.

Here’s another question that’s answered in Genesis 11:

- Where did all the different languages come from?

Now evolutionists argue that humans learned to talk by grunting, like the animals from which we supposedly descended. The problem with this theory is that as far back as we’ve been able to trace human languages, we’ve discovered complex languages with vocabulary and grammar, not primitive symbols or grunts.

The evidence proves that language isn’t the result of evolution over millions of years but that language appeared immediately, in complex forms. We know from Genesis 2 that language is a unique characteristic of humans—a communication gift to us from God’s creative wisdom.

But how did we jump from one language given to Adam and Eve to so many different languages today?

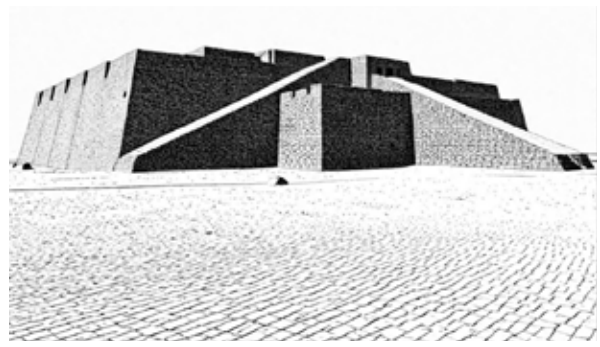
In Genesis 11 we’re told how it happened. Look at verses 1-2:

*Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.*

At this point, everyone is speaking the language God created for Adam and Eve. We’re not told what that language was, so don’t write and ask me because I don’t know.

Following the flood, the people stayed together and eventually arrived in the land of Shinar. Shinar is the original Babylon. We’re going to run into this city of ungodly defiance throughout Scripture.

So, here’s the human race, a hundred years after the flood, probably numbering several hundred thousand people by now. They’re migrating to this beautiful area and effectively ignoring God’s command in



Ziggurat in Ur as it looks today, partially reconstructed.

Genesis 9 to disperse and populate the earth.

They make their defiant declaration here in verse 4:

*“Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”*

In other words, “We’re not going to disperse and obey God’s command.”

Now back in chapter 10 and verse 8 we’re given the name of their leader—Nimrod.

In verse 9 he’s called “a mighty hunter before the LORD.” The phrase “before the LORD” literally means “in opposition to the Lord.” “Mighty hunter” means “despot.” Nimrod is going to become the world’s first dictator.<sup>1</sup>

And the centerpiece of his empire is a tower. We’re told now in verse 4 of chapter 11 that it was “a tower with its top in the heavens.” Literally, the top represented the heavens—the stars and constellations.

Archeologists have discovered the remains of a tower in this region—a step pyramid, or ziggurat—which was part of a religious system. The Arabs in this region even nicknamed it the Tower of Nimrod. We don’t know if it’s the original tower ruins or not.

What we do know is that Nimrod created the worship system around the stars and planets. The historian Herodotus, who lived four hundred years before Christ, wrote that these ziggurats were topped by religious shrines. Apparently, these shrines were brightly tiled and painted with the astral signs of the



zodiac. Here in Genesis 11, these people built the original tower and developed the worship system of the heavens and what we now call astrology.

You might think nobody today would believe that stars and planets out there influence their lives. Oh, but to this day, people pore over their horoscopes, believing the stars have power over their lives. People today even talk about speaking into the universe and the universe responding with an answer.

From the Tower of Babel, astrology seems to have passed over to ancient Egypt. The famous sphinx has the head of a woman, representing Virgo, the first sign of the zodiac. It has the body of a lion, more than likely representing Leo, the last sign of the zodiac. In other words, the sphinx may have represented their worship of the universe, which they believed was immortal—the beginning and the end.

In Revelation 22 Jesus will set the record straight once and for all when He says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Now, back in Genesis 11, we read of the Lord’s response to the building of the tower:

*And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s*

*speech.” So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth.* (verses 5-8)

In His gracious restraint of their growing idolatry, the Lord supernaturally separates mankind by creating different languages.

Listen, if God can create one language for Adam and Eve, He can certainly create more than one.

By the way, the Lord is going to perform another miracle involving language in the future millennial kingdom, when He brings all His redeemed together following the tribulation period. He announces through Zephaniah the prophet:

*“I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord.”* (Zephaniah 3:9)

We may still use our native languages in the kingdom, but God will give us all the ability to speak the same language as well. The separation of mankind at the Tower of Babel is going to be miraculously reversed in the coming kingdom, and we will worship our king and Creator in one, universal language.

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How would you answer fellow Christians who downplay the importance of the early chapters of Genesis?

What does the Tower of Babel reveal about God and His priorities? What does it reveal about humanity?

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan D. Sarfati, *The Genesis Account* (Creation Book Publishers, 2015), 642.

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