

THE TOWER OF BABEL

TEXT: GENESIS 10:32--11:9

INTRODUCTION:

1. In Genesis chapter 5 we have a list of the descendants of Adam ending with Noah, and then in chapter 10 we have a list of Noah's descendants.
2. Attention is concentrated on the line of Shem, because from his line came Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the nation of Israel, and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
3. Genesis 9:26 says, "Blessed be the LORD God of Shem."
4. In Genesis 10:21, Shem is referred to as "the father of all the children of Eber." The word "Hebrew" comes from Eber.
5. Abraham is referred to in Genesis 14:13 as "Abram the Hebrew." Later on in Scripture, the word "Hebrew" is used interchangeably with Israelite.
6. For example, when he was in prison, Joseph said to Pharaoh's chief butler, "I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews" (Genesis 40:15).
7. Eber is mentioned as having two sons, Peleg and Joktan. It was in his day that the nations were divided (10:25; cf. 11:8, 9).
8. Another important figure mentioned in Genesis 10 is Nimrod, the son of Cush, and grandson of Ham (10:6-10).
9. Genesis chapter 10 concludes with the nations being "divided in the earth after the flood" (10:32). The LORD scattered them because of the tower of Babel.
10. "Babel" means "confusion." Genesis 11 tells how mankind passed from one family with a mutually intelligible language, into many nations of diverse tongues and lands.
11. It all began when the people devised a worldly scheme to build a tower that would reach up into heaven (11:1-4).

I. THEIR MAKER

1. Babylon was started by Nimrod (10:8-10). Nimrod represented rebellion against God and against God's authority.
2. "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel" (10:10a).
3. Micah 5:6 refers to Babylon as "the land of Nimrod."
4. Cain was the first murderer. Lamech was the first polygamist. And Nimrod was the first man who tried to start a godless civilization.
5. And he would have succeeded if God had not intervened and stopped him (11:5-9).

6. Babylon is "in the land of Shinar" (Genesis 10:10b; 11:1), the plain between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (modern day Iraq).
7. Nimrod is associated with the founding of Babel (10:10), which later developed into the kingdom of Babylon.
8. In Scripture, Babylon stands for everything that is wicked and godless. In type and in prophecy, Babylon always represents an evil system opposed to God.
9. Jeremiah 50:23, 24 says, "How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD."
10. Revelation 16:19 says, "Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."
11. During the conquest of Jericho, Achan hid a "Babylonish garment" in his tent (Joshua 7:21), and for that crime he and his family were stoned to death in the valley of Achor.
12. That was the first recorded sin in the promised land.
13. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, Babylon is pictured as a godless city and a godless empire -- pagan, idolatrous, cruel, and wicked.
14. In the New Testament, the true church is pictured as a beautiful, virtuous bride; and the false church is pictured as a whore, identified as "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5).
15. The very first time we see the word "Alleluia" ("Praise ye the LORD") in the New Testament is in Revelation 19:1, 2, where we read, "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."

II. THEIR MOTIVES

1. In Genesis 9:1, God gave instructions to Noah and his sons -- "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish (fill) the earth" (cf. 1:28).
2. In their rebellion against God, Noah's descendants disregarded God's commandment to fill the earth. In opposition to God's will, they attempted to build for themselves a city and a tower, "whose top may reach unto heaven" (11:4).
3. Regarding their ambition to build up into heaven, Merrill Unger said, "It is probably something more than hyperbole when it is said the top of this tower might 'reach unto heaven.' It was customary in later Babylonian ziggurats

(heathen towers patterned after the tower of Babel) to regard the highest stage (usually the seventh) as 'the entrance to heaven,' the abode of the patron deity" (*Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*).

4. The builders of the tower of Babel were motivated by pride and self-sufficiency. They had fertile soil, plenty of water, bricks and slime. They had everything they needed and they felt they could be very happy and prosperous without any help from God.
5. The builders of the tower of Babel wanted to build a city for political unity, and a tower of for religious unity. They literally wanted to reach up into heaven without God (11:4).
6. The builders of the tower of Babel had worldly ambitions, and they disobeyed God's commandment. Notice the repetition -- "Let us make brick...letus build us a city and a tower...and let us make us a name..." (11:3, 4).
7. But God was not at all in their thoughts. James 4:15 says, "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."
8. Genesis 11:4 says, "Let us make us a name." Their entire scheme was man-centered, humanistic, and was done in defiance of God's will.
9. Modern day towers of Babel are also man-centered, humanistic, and done in defiance of God's will.
10. When the European Union built their parliament building in Strasbourg, France back in 1999, many questions were asked regarding its strange-looking design.
11. The main tower is called the "Louise Weiss" building, and it looks unfinished. The EU said this reflects the "unfinished nature of Europe."
12. However, it actually looks like a modern-day tower of Babel. The tower of Babel was never finished because the LORD stopped them and scattered them before they completed the work (11:5-9).
13. Many people have noticed that the Louise Weiss building is meant to look like a famous painting "*The Tower of Babel*" by the Dutch painter Pieter Brueghel the Elder (known also for his painting, "*The Blind Leading the Blind*") in 1563.
14. The original EU poster looks almost identical to Pieter Brueghel's painting, including the broken part of the foundation.
15. At the bottom right corner of the EU poster is this slogan: "Europe: Many Tongues One Voice." This seems to refer to God confusing the people with many languages (11:7-9).
16. Furthermore, there are eleven inverted five-point stars at the top of the building. These stars resemble reversed pentagrams (occult symbols).
17. It should be noted that according to Bible prophecy, the antichrist will arise from the revived Roman Empire (the EU).

16. When they built the original tower of Babel, their motives were not right, and the people building the modern day tower of Babel have wrong motives as well.
17. In addition to the EU, there are many others trying to build a modern day tower of Babel. Their goal is a one-world government and a one-world religion. The Bible tells us these goals will be achieved by the antichrist, but he will be defeated at the second coming of Christ.
18. Pope Francis certainly seems to be preparing the world for the antichrist. Right now he is in Kenya, scolding people for using too much fossil fuel. He is warning of catastrophic consequences if world leaders fail to agree at a coming meeting to combat so-called climate change by dramatically reducing the use of fossil fuels.
19. It has been noted that the pope flew into Africa on a chartered jumbo jet, which burns up a lot of fossil fuel!
20. Pope Francis has said that the Koran is the Word of God and is as valid as the Bible. There have been photos of the pope kissing a Koran, which had been given to him during a meeting with Muslim leaders after a lengthy Muslim prayer held at the Vatican.
21. The Vatican announced that the pope will meet again with Muslim leaders in late February where they plan to talk about further steps to promote the Muslim religion.
22. The pope said, "Jesus Christ, Jehovah, Allah. These are all names employed to describe an entity that is distinctly the same across the world. For centuries, blood has been needlessly shed because of the desire to segregate our faiths. This, however, should be the very concept which unites us as people, as nations, and as a world bound by faith. Together, we can bring about an unprecedented age of peace, all we need to achieve such a state is respect each others beliefs, for we are all children of God regardless of the name we choose to address him by. We can accomplish miraculous things in the world by merging our faiths, and the time for such a movement is now. No longer shall we slaughter our neighbors over differences in reference to their God."
23. This is totally unscriptural. The goal of the pope, and the goal of the ecumenical movement and the WCC is the unity of all religions. They are attempting to build a modern-day Tower of Babel.
24. Furthermore, the pope has said that homosexuals are not to be judged, and that "proselytism" (evangelism, soulwinning) is wrong.
25. Regarding worldly attempts at unifying churches -- there can be no true unity that is not based upon Bible doctrine.

26. Religions that follow the pope into his ecumenical conglomeration are helping to build the harlot church described as MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH in the book of Revelation (Rev. 17:5).

III. THEIR MISTAKE

1. Their mistake was in disobeying God. God said to "replenish (fill) the earth" (9:1), but "they found a plain in the land of Shinar" (11:2) and decided to settle down there.
2. Furthermore, they made a mistake by making grandiose plans without seeking God's approval.
3. The LORD looked down from heaven and was not pleased (11:5-9).
4. Today the LORD is looking down from heaven and He is not pleased by what He sees.
5. Notice that they attempted to go up "unto heaven" (11:4) without God. But while they were going up, the LORD "came down" in judgment (11:5-9).
6. The LORD told them to "fill the earth," but they disobeyed and so "the LORD scattered them abroad" all over the earth (11:8, 9).
7. They disobeyed God because they were afraid of being "scattered abroad" (11:4), but that is precisely what happened (11:8, 9).

CONCLUSION:

There are important lessons for us here. Regarding the people who built the tower of Babel, W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "God was not in their life, but from indifference soon came rebellion, as is always the case. Whenever a religious system glorifies humanity and makes man everything, it is not long before it minimizes God and makes Him nothing. Culture, civilization, intellect, cleverness, progress, are all among the natural gifts of God to human life, and there is no reason whatever why they should not all be consecrated to the Divine service. When they are thus yielded to Him they become doubly powerful, and are the means of blessing on every hand. When, however, they are not handed over to God Who gives them, but are kept in man's own power and authority, they lead men farther and farther

from God, and are the means of nothing but trouble on every hand" (*Genesis*).

- Genesis 11:5 says, "And the LORD came down..." This means the LORD intervened.
- The LORD intervened when He confounded their language and scattered them.
- Earlier, the LORD intervened when He sent the flood.

- Later on, in Genesis 18 & 19, we see how the LORD intervened when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.
- We see this all throughout Scripture.
- Soon, the LORD will "come down" again. Soon the LORD will intervene in human history again.
- The Lord is coming back. Are you ready?