

Subject: *Man's Tower and God's Power*

Scripture: *Genesis 11:1-9*

How many languages are there in the world today? 7,100

How many languages can you read or speak?

Language does two things: it unites people and it divides people.

Two main factors separate all the people of the world: the places where they live and the languages they speak.

Shortly after the beginning we see the relationship of God and mankind. At first we see how God ordained marriage and the home. God was in control. We read about the first couple, Adam and Eve, and how God made them man and wife. God was in control. Then we read about the first sin of Adam and Eve, and how God brought a curse them and banished them from the Garden of Eden. God was in control. We see how sin spread over the human race and the flood destroyed all people except Noah and his family. Again God was in control.

In Genesis 10 and 11 and read about the beginning of nations in the world. In Genesis 10, we have the record of the nations after they were divided, and in Genesis 11, we have the reason why they were divided. One more time God was in control.

In Genesis 10 we see the completeness of their division. They are divided (dispersed) over the whole earth. In chapter 10 we learn how and where the nations were divided.

In Genesis 11 we see the cause of their division. They are divided because they wanted to settle down and unite around one goal. They wanted to build a city and a tower. But God didn't want that, so He confused their language, stopped the building project, and scattered them to different locations. This is when and how all nations and languages began.

1. MAN'S PROUD UNITY (vs. 1-4)

A. The people spoke one language

Language is the key to communication and relationships among people. A language may be written and read. It may be spoken and heard. For people who can't see there is a language called Braille, and for people who can't hear there is sign language. At this time in history there was only one common language written and spoken by all people.

B. The people settled in one location

They apparently had one leader (Nimrod) – see **Genesis 10:8-10**. He began to be a mighty one and was a mighty hunter. His power was legendary. People were still talking about him in the days when Moses wrote Genesis (“wherefore it is said...”). The beginning of Nimrod's kingdom was Babel in the land of Shinar (cp. Genesis 11:2).

C. The people shared one goal – “Let us” is found 3 times in the text (vs. 3, 4)

This was the first attempt at a one-world government. They had one language, one location, and one goal. In the last days, men will come together and the Anti-Christ will lead a one-world government. In those days there will be political unity and religious unity. There will

be one world religion and one world government supporting one another. This is mentioned in Revelation 17-18, and referred to as “Babylon.” We see signs of this already in the religious world and the political world. In religion there is the ecumenical movement. In government we have the United Nations and the European Union.

Their building materials (vs. 3) were man-made (brick) and they were made to last (slime = a sticky, tar-like substance). In New York City, you don’t see many things made of wood, but you see brick, steel, iron, concrete, and marble—things that are made to last.

Their goal (vs. 4) was man-centered—to build a city and tower whose top would reach unto heaven. Their motive was to glorify and to unify themselves. They were concerned with their identity instead of God’s glory. It was all about what they wanted, not what God wanted. The problem was not what they put in their plan, but what they left out. They left God out. This was an early form of humanism, man is the measure and purpose of all things.

The people built the city and tower as a monument to their own greatness. The tower was the focal point of the city, something like the skyscrapers in cities today. Their tower was to be a great human achievement. Ancient ruins of other towers like this have been discovered by archeologists called ziggurats. They are temples built in the shape of a pyramid.

Before we leave this part of the message I just want you to think about the difference between what Nimrod did and what Abraham did. Nimrod built a city and a kingdom for himself, but Abraham lived in a tent and looked for a city that God would build. Nimrod was a man of the world and he lived by sight. Abraham was a man of God and he lived by faith.

Hebrews 11:9-10 ⁹ By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: ¹⁰ For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

2. GOD’S POWERFUL DIVISION (vs. 5-9)

The people had one language, one location, and one goal, but they also made one mistake. They left God out of their thinking and their plans. They tried to live independently of God. The people made the mistake of thinking God didn’t know or care about what they did.

Man proposes, but God disposes. Someone said, “If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans.”

Proverbs 21:30 *There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord.*

God did four things (“Let us”) in response to their building project.

A. The Lord saw their tower

Notice in verse 5, the Lord stooped way down to see the city and the tower. God is the Most High God. He is supreme, high and lifted up above all.

B. The Lord scrambled their language

This is the beginning of languages, and even to this day, language is a huge barrier between people. At the United Nations the ambassadors from the different nations wear headsets to the speaker's words as they are translated into their own language. City buses in NYC have public information for riders posted in English, Spanish, French, Russian, Korean, and Japanese.

C. The Lord scattered the people

The people were united, but God divided them. The location was called “Babel” which means confusion. The tower was being built as a monument to their pride, but instead God made it a monument of His divine power.

Psalms 2:1-10 ¹ *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?* ² *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,* ³ *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.* ⁴ *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.*

From the beginning of time man has rebelled and tried to be self-sufficient and independent from God. He has tried to leave God out of his thoughts and plans. But God has ways of humbling human pride and showing us that He is in control. People still try to build their own little kingdoms and set themselves up as little rulers over their own lives. But that won't work—it never has and it never will.