

# The Tower of Babel

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Genesis 11:1-9

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- Genesis 1-11 constitutes a critical revelation by God through Moses, the author of the first five books of the Bible, of all things that constitute a complete worldview. Genesis is a book of origins.
  - The origin of the universe, time, matter, space. The origin of the solar system. Atmosphere, hydrosphere of earth. Mankind, marriage, family. Sin, guilt, fear. Redemption, forgiveness, light. Business, farming, ranching, metal shops, poetry, music. Nations and languages. And the origin of the chosen people of Israel.
  - Genesis 1-11 contains theology in seed form, and the rest of Scripture sees it come to full bloom.
- Genesis 10-11 accurately records the origin of nations and languages, which exist by a single act of God.
- Genesis 6-9 records God's judgment of **destruction** on the earth. Genesis 10-11 records God's judgment of **dispersion** on the planet. **Genesis 10:32**, *These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.*
  - The dispersion of the sons of Japheth (Genesis 10:2-5)
  - The dispersion of the sons of Ham (Genesis 10:6-20)
  - The dispersion of the sons of Shem (Genesis 10:21-31)

## I. Let's ask questions about Genesis 10-11 and the events this passage records.

### A. What was the timing of the Tower of Babel?

1. Estimates by theologians and Jewish scholars range from 100 years to 340 years post-flood.
2. The days of Peleg – Born 100 years post-flood and he lived 239 years.
  - a) **Genesis 10:25**, *To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan.*
  - b) **Genesis 11:18–19**, *When Peleg had lived 30 years, he fathered Reu. 19 And Peleg lived after he fathered Reu 209 years and had other sons and daughters.*
  - c) The Bible does not plainly say if the dispersion happened when Peleg was young or old. However, his name may indicate that it was earlier; Peleg means "**division**."

### B. Who was the leader of the rebellion at Babel?

1. Nimrod is the likely leader.
2. **Genesis 10:8–10**, *Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord." 10 The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.*

### C. What was the population at the time of the Tower of Babel?

1. It depends on the timing of the construction. If early in Peleg's life, estimates are 30 to 40 thousand. If, later in Peleg's life, the population could soar much higher.

## II. The Obstinacy of Man (Genesis 11:1-4)

### A. One unifying language (11:1)

1. One language – it simply means one language (Hebrew, Latin, Greek, English, etc.)
2. The same words – not repetitive. Think dialect. Spanish (Cuban/Mexican) (Mind the Gap!)

### B. One idolatrous rebellion (11:2-3)

1. Settled – to take up residence and become established. (11:2)
  - a) This settling is in opposition to Genesis 9:1.
2. God had instructed them to sojourn and not settle. (Verse 4, "lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.")

### C. One humanistic goal (11:3-4)

1. Build a city (social and religious center)
2. Build a tower (religious center for worship)
  - a) Technology (forged bricks and mortar of bitumen {tar; asphalt})

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- b) False worship – To reach the heavens (to survive the judgment of God (flood))
  - 3. Build a name (psychological)
    - a) Purpose – for ourselves

### III. The Judgement of God (Genesis 11:5-8)

- A. The Lord came down...
  - 1. **Genesis 11:5**, *And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built.*
  - 2. **Genesis 18:20–21**, *Then the Lord said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know.”*
  - 3. **Exodus 3:8**, *And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.*
- B. The Lord witnessed man’s independence and unity
  - 1. When unity is bad.
  - 2. When independence is sin
- C. The Lord passed judgment (11:7-8)

### IV. The Dispersion of Confusion (Genesis 11:9)

- A. It was called Babel (Genesis 10:10)
- B. The language was confused (made unclear, indistinct, or blurred; bewildered).
- C. The Lord accomplished His purpose.

### V. Discuss Romans 1 in relationship to Babel (The day of Pentecost Acts 2) (Revelation 17 & 18)

- A. **What precipitates the judgment of God (His punishment or wrath)? Romans 1:18**, *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*
  - 1. Ungodliness – not giving proper respect for a God or God’s institutions.
  - 2. Unrighteousness – failure to adhere to moral principles, commands, or laws.
    - a) Suppression of the Truth – to lessen the intensity, temper, hold in restraint; physically holding something down. (The flood (God’s judgment was not ancient history. Flood family still around; many had first-hand testimony from the eight on the ark)
    - b) There was active suppression of the truth **Acts 17:26**, *And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,*
      - (1) Natural disasters
      - (2) Reshaping of the earth
  - 3. **What they saw. Romans 1:19**, *For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.*
  - 4. **What happened to them. Romans 1:21**, *For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*
    - a) **Romans 1:22–23**, *Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*
  - 5. God Gave them Up
    - a) Heart (Romans 1:24-25)
    - b) Body (Romans 1:26-27)
    - c) Mind (Romans 1:28-32)