

## THE TOWER OF BABEL

**Most biblical historians agree that the Tower of Babel was a religious temple around which metropolitan ancient Babylon was built.** “And the Lord came down to see the **city** (ir) **and tower** (miggaddal) which the sons of men had built.” (Gen.11:5)

The Tower of Babel was built to reach the heaven by a united humanity: “And they said, ‘Come, let us build for ourselves a **city, and a tower** whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” (Gen.11:4)

Like Nimrod the Tower of Babel is famous in extra-biblical literature. Here are SIX examples:

- The Book of Jubilee records that it took 43 years to build to a height of 8150 feet (Gen.10:20-21).
- The Book of Apocalypse of Baruch records its height as 694.6 feet (Gen.3:5-8).
- Josephus quotes unnamed sources that claim the spiral path of the tower was so wide it contained lodging for the workers and their animals used in the construction.
- Similar stories are found in Central America. One story explains how Montezuma escaped the great flood and later became wicked and attempted to build a house reaching to heaven but the Great Spirit destroyed it with thunderbolts (Bancroft, vol.3, pg.76)
- Dr. Livingstone told of Africans with a similar tradition whose builders heads were cracked by the fall of the scaffolding (Missionary Travels, chap.26).
- Historians tell of a similar type tower commissioned by Nebuchadnezzar about 560BC in the form of eight-level ziggurat to be built to a height of 328 feet.

“Babylonians and Assyrians kings prided themselves upon the heights of temples and boasted of having made their tops as high as heaven.” (Archaeology of OT by Unger, pg.100)

We will examine our lesson text by the following FIVE homiletical points.

- |            |              |           |
|------------|--------------|-----------|
| • Language | (Gen.11:1)   | Same      |
| • Land     | (Gen.11:2)   | Shinar    |
| • Labor    | (Gen.11:3-4) | Structure |
| • Lord     | (Gen.11:5-7) | Speech    |
| • Leave    | (Gen.11:8-9) | Scattered |

**This lesson will study SIX aspects of the Tower of Babel.  
It will explain the diversity of languages of among nations**

### **1. The Tower of Babel was built in the land of Shinar (southern Mesopotamia).**

“And it came about as they journeyed east (from Araret and the ark), that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.” (Gen.11:2)

We believe the Cushites settled in the land of Shinar and possibly the Hamites (Gen.10:6-20).

“Shinar was the old name for south Babylon. It was the land between the Tigris and Euphrates. In Babylonian language, it is Sumer or Sumerian.” (Hebrew and English Lexicon by Brown and Briggs, pg.1042)

The Sumerian culture is the oldest recorded secular history of the Postdiluvian civilization.

**2. Prior to the destruction of the Tower of Babel, the Postdiluvian world was one family, one language, and one nation.**

“Now the whole earth used the same language (phonology and linguistic) and the same words (alphabet and vocabulary).” (Gen.11:1, 6)

“These are the sons of Ham, according to their **families**, according to their **languages**, by their **lands**, by their **nations**.” (Gen.10:20)

A grandson of Ham named Nimrod (Cushite) became an empire builder of nations in opposition to plan of God (Gen.10:8-12). He extended his empire from Shinar to Assyria (Gen.10:11). One of his religious cities in the land of Shinar was **Babel** (Gen.10:10).

**3. This one language was carried by the Sethites from the Antediluvian world to the Shemites of the Postdiluvian world. This was the language of the messianic lineage.**

This was the language of Abraham (Eber/ Gen.10:21; 11:10-32) until changed to Hebrew by the Lord with the Abrahamic Covenant and with the new race of people called to become God’s priest-nation (Gen.12:1-3; 14:13; Ex.2:11; 19:6).

“The Hebrew belongs to the Semitic or Shemitic group of languages.” (Unger, pg.464) “Hebrew originated from the old Phoenician alphabet from which all alphabets in current use, Semitic and non-Semitic, were ultimately derived.” (Unger, pg.464)

**4. Under the leadership of Nimrod, the Hamitic people developed a furnace brick industry (Gen.11:3). With these brick, they built the first wonder of the Postdiluvian world, the Tower of Babel.**

They developed furnace brick rather than sun dried brick or stones. They also developed bitumen for mortar from the asphalt pit of the area rather than clay mortar. It was very expensive. “The low firing temperature of the bricks (550-600 degrees C) resulted in a high porosity; thus the mastic was freely absorbed and gave such strength that the walls made of it are stronger than rock or any kind of iron.” (Singer, The History of Technology)

The Tower of Babel was a religious city built around a temple tower dedicated to uniting the 70 nations under one international ruler in defiance of God (Gen.10:9; 11:4).

Later this religious structure will be called ziggurat and pyramid. “The oldest recovered ziggurat is that at ancient Uruk (Erech; Gen.10:10) dating from the latter part of 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.” (Archaeology of OT by Unger, pg.102)

**5. Tower of Babel became a monument to the energy of the flesh and old man cosmos diabolicus developing a religion apart from faith in Christ (Gen.3:15; Rom.1:14-32; 2 Thess.1:8-9; Gal.3:8).**

“This is the land and culture of Abraham (Josh.24:2). “At Ur, the birthplace of Abraham, the god was Nanner and his holy shrine was set on the topmost stage.” (Unger Bible Dict., pg. 115)

**6. The Tower of Babel brought a two-fold divine judgment (Gen.11:6-9).**

- The Lord confused their language so that they may not understand one another’s speech (Gen.11:7).
- The Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth (Gen.11:8; 10:25/ Peleg).

They stopped building the city (Gen.11:8). “The real fundamental difference between one group of men and another is not the racial distinction, but rather, language. Difference languages will effectively enforce segregation, where nothing else except force could.” (Scientific Creationism, pg.182)