

# Lessons From the Tower of Babel

Rick Railston

Recorded on November 16, 2019

What if you were reading a history book that covered a span of 500 years? Putting it in modern terms and in North American terms, let's say it was a history book that started when Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas and it extended to the Revolutionary war, to the Civil War, to World War I, World War II and up to the point where we landed a man on the moon—that's 500 years. Let's say this entire book that covers 500 years, one quarter of it covered a singular event—just one event. What would you think when you read that book? You would think the author has devoted one quarter of this book to one event? Maybe that event is very important. Maybe it's something I should focus on. Maybe it's something God considers, in our case, that we should pay attention to and know about.

That has happened in the book of Genesis. Genesis 10 and 11 cover a span of approximately 500 years, from the flood to the death of Abraham's father, Terah. Within those two chapters, there exists 500 years of history, but half of one chapter—Genesis 11—is devoted to a specific event and that is the Tower of Babel. This one event is singled out in two chapters that cover 500 years, so we have to ask the question. I always think when I read something in the Bible, why did God do this or why did He say that or why did He put it that way? Why did God inspire Moses, when he wrote those two chapters (and we know the chapter breaks are inserted by men, but that section of scripture) to emphasize this one event so much? Is it just a story of men behaving badly? Is it a story of explaining how different languages came to be or is it something more important that God wants us to learn by investigating this account? So the title of the sermon is:

## Lessons From the Tower of Babel

We're going to do three things. First, we're going to look into the background and the context leading up to Genesis 11, then we're going to look at the story itself in Genesis 11 and the third thing we're going to do is see what lessons God might want us to take from this account.

First let's look at the background and the context. The text of the story begins in Genesis 11, but the true story starts much, much earlier than that. With that in mind let's go to Genesis 6 and we'll begin in verse 5. I'm going to read this out of the New King James.

**Genesis 6:5** *Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart [meaning mankind heart] was only evil continually. (KJV)*

Let's just stop there and transfer that into modern day. We think it's bad today (and it is bad today) but I don't think we've quite reached the point where every intent of the thought of virtually every person on the face of the earth is evil, continually. We're getting there but we're probably not as bad as it was in the days of Genesis 6. Going on in verse 6.

6) *And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.*

7) *So the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” (KJV)*

Verse 8 we get to the point of the matter.

8) *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. (KJV)*

Apparently Noah and his family were the only ones. As we're going to see, they were the only ones that made it through, nobody else did. God started over by bringing a flood on the earth, which by most accounts was about 2370 B.C.—there about. That can vary depending on a lot of different factors. I'm not saying it had to be that year but it kind of gives us an area of time to look at. We know that Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, his three sons and their wives, were the only ones that were saved—that were spared. We know also that the line of Seth was spared—was saved—but the line of Cain was wiped out at the flood. His line did not live through the flood. With that in mind let's look at Genesis 9:1—just this one verse. I'll read this out of the NIV. This is after the flood waters had receded but this is important to the subject of the Tower of Babel.

**Genesis 9:1** *Then God blessed Noah and his sons [of course their family], saying to them, [this was God's instruction] Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. (KJV)*

How can you fill the earth if you don't spread out far and wide? That's the implication; that I want you to repopulate the earth, I want you to spread out so you can do as I commanded you. Keep that in mind and let's go to chapter 10:1.

**Genesis 10:1** *Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.*

6) *And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.*

8) *And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. (KJV)*

Let me read from Clark's commentary; we know commentaries don't have the weight of scripture or the authority of scripture, but listen to what Adam Clark says in his commentary about the situation. The name Nimrod comes from Marad; it means, he rebelled. The targum is a translation of Hebrew into Aramaic. It was used at the time of Christ and we know the New Testament is written, in some cases—certain sections of

the gospels—in Aramaic. So Clark says, *the targum on 1 Chronicles 1:10 says* (now he's quoting the targum) *Nimrod began to be a mighty man in sin, a murderer of innocent men and a rebel before the Lord—before Jehovah.* Then he goes on to say, *the Jerusalem targum—now he quotes from the Jerusalem targum—he was mighty* (referring to Nimrod) *and hunting and in sin before God, for he was a hunter of the children of men and he said unto them, depart from the religion of Shem and cleave to the institutes of Nimrod;* of himself. Clark goes on, *and the targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, [now he quotes from that targum]: From the foundation of the world, none was ever found like Nimrod; powerful in hunting and in rebellion against the Lord.* He ends that quote from that targum and then he says, *the syriac* (which is the name of the ancient Syrian language) *calls Nimrod a war-like giant.* As I said, we can't rely totally on a commentary but it paints a certain picture. Verse 9, in Genesis 10.

9) *He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord.* (KJV)

What does it mean, “before”? It's interesting that this same word here in verse 9, is used in Exodus 20:3, referring to the first commandment. When God says, you shall have no other God's before Me. Here, in verse 9, he was a mighty hunter before God. This word, “before” can also be translated against, or we could say in place of God—God says have no other gods before Me—that means don't put any gods in place of Me or in front of Me. So it's not much of a stretch to understand that Nimrod was trying to put himself above God or put himself between God and the people of his day.

We get the impression that Nimrod was attempting to replace God in humans and the human's eyes. To be the one they look to rather than God Almighty. Clark also goes on to say, about verse 9, the word in which we render hunter—he was a mighty hunter before God—signifies prey. This is applied in the scriptures to the hunting of men by persecution, oppression and tyranny. Hence, it is likely that Nimrod, having acquired power, used it in tyranny and oppression and by violence, finding that domination which was the first distinguished by name of a kingdom on the face of the earth. Prior to Nimrod, the Bible does not talk about a kingdom of men. Nimrod is the very first one where that term is used, as we're going to see in just a second. Tradition has it that Nimrod encouraged, and in some cases threatened the people to turn to him to survive and be protected because we know animals procreate much faster than human beings and at the time of the flood when the animals were let loose and began roaming the earth, they began to reproduce much faster than the humans and they had to have food to eat and the humans were in jeopardy from the animal population at that time. So Jewish tradition has it that one of the reasons that Nimrod gained power, because he was such a mighty man and a mighty hunter, is he guaranteed their protection from the animals. In other words, he was saying you can't survive without my help. As an aside, you wonder if the mark of the beast ahead of us, will do the same thing. That mark of the beast, somehow the beast power will say you will not survive without this mark. You wonder if that will come full circle before we're all done here. Then the beginning of verse 10.

10) *And the beginning of his kingdom* [that was the first time this is used, referring to a human kingdom] *was Babel* [the margin in the King James says Babylon], *and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.* (KJV)

Nimrod founded the world's first kingdom. Jewish tradition, Jewish history, tells us that he perpetuated the paganism that existed prior to the flood. It came through—that paganism—Ham's wife according to Jewish tradition. That she smuggled idols onto the ark and then when the waters receded, they began to repopulate the earth and paganism began through Ham's line. That is tradition, the Bible doesn't say directly, but it had to come from somewhere. It had to come from someone who was on that ark. The point is, that here we now come up to the tower of Babylon; this is the background, this is the context when we arrive at Genesis 11, so let's turn there, verse 1. You're probably going to want to place a marker here. I'm going to read this out of the New International version. So we get to Genesis 11:1, mankind was told to disperse. With that in mind, notice what actually happens.

**Genesis 11:1** *Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. 2) As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.* (KJV)

Best we can determine, Shinar is in modern day Iraq and it's about 400 miles almost due east of Jerusalem and they settled in this valley. It's understandable that as the people began to repopulate the earth, the story of the flood was right there in everybody's mind. That after the flood people were reluctant to come down from the mountains and the high deserts and the high plains to get into the valleys because of the fear of another flood. Yet, here they come into the valley, this particular valley of Shinar. As I said, God said I want you to spread out, so what did the people do? They didn't—they came all together. They did just the opposite of what God told them.

Let me read from Josephus, [The Antiquities of the Jews](#), Book 1, chapter 4, page 30. *Now it was Nimrod that excited them to such an affront in a contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah. He was a bold man of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God, as if it were through His (meaning God's means) that they were happy. But to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny. Seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God but to bring them into a constant, dependence on his power. [Because of his strength, because of his might, because of the animal population at the time, the idea was to gather together and this guy is going to protect us] Now the multitudes were very ready to follow the determination of Nimrod and to esteem it a piece of cowardliness to submit to God.*

Once more, humankind looking to a man, rather than looking to God. As they say, there's nothing new under the sun. Nimrod pursued power and he set up a system to retain that power. Too often in world history, too often in the church of God's history, men set up institutions that give them power and they will do almost anything to retain that power. One way of Nimrod achieving power over the people would be a giant

building project. Let's get together, let's do something grand, let's do something magnificent, let's do something that mankind has never done before. We're going to ascend to the level of God. I have a plan, follow me. Going on in verse 3.

3) *They said to each other, Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly. They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar.*

4) *Then they said, Come, let us build [notice this, two things] ourselves a city [number one], with a tower [number two] that reaches to the heavens ... (KJV)*

When did this happen? If you look at the genealogies involved, construction probably started about 115 to 125 years after the flood. That would place it at about 2250-2255 approximately. That was approximately 1750 years after creation. Now, what about the population at that time? Various people do math of population expansion and so on, but it's likely the population in that period of time, after the flood was in the mid 100,000 to half a million—400,000. But if this construction started a couple of decades later, another twenty-five to fifty years, the population could have been closer to a million—we don't know, someday we're going to find out.

What about the tower itself? The tower was probably a ziggurat. A ziggurat is a rectangular or a square stepped tower. What they do is build walls of brick, very thick and they come up to a certain level—two, three, four, five stories—then they build another rectangle above it, but slightly smaller. The first rectangle they fill in with dirt, then the second rectangle is a little smaller and they build that where it rests on the width of the first rectangle, so its weight is barred by the first one. They fill that with earth and then they build a third rectangle and it gradually gets smaller as you build up and so when you get to the top of a ziggurat, it's the shape of a pyramid. It can be square or it can be rectangular. So it's the shape of a pyramid but with stepped sides—not smooth sides as we see in the ancient Egyptian pyramids—but with stepped sides. The fact is, no matter where you were in the city of Babel, or Babylon, you could see this tower because it was enormous.

Most of the historians believe that the structure was made of mud and straw—bricks—that were baked under very, very high heat. As a kid, I had an example of that. My Mom, when we were young boys, started making ceramics. She got very good at it. She would make these elaborate figurines—they were small—and they were made of clay. She formed them with water and made them by hand and then you let it dry but the clay was still very soft. You could scratch it with your fingernail and put a crease into it. She was able to buy a used kiln—that's a brick oven basically, made with fire resistant bricks. Dad had to install 220 volts to power this thing and it was about the size of one of the little refrigerators you see in a hotel room. Waist high and about \*that\* square. She would place this figurine—this mud figurine—into this kiln and bake it to a couple thousand degrees. There was a little peep hole in there and she would have a little receptacle with this finger-shaped piece of material in there and one of our jobs was to peep in the peep hole and it was all red inside. When that material began to sag, it would just bend over and start to melt, that told you it reached the proper temperature, so she would shut it off, let it cool and when she reached in and pulled it

out, this figurine was not mud anymore. It was hard and it was stiff and you could flip it with your finger and it would ring. So the fire changed the material. So in this day and time—in Nimrod's time—they would fire these bricks to very high heat and they would be very strong.

How tall was the tower? I'm going to read from the book, Structures or Why Things Don't Fall Down by professor J.E. Gordan. In that, there's a section that he considers the Tower of Babel from a structural and engineering point of view. He says: *Brick and stone weigh about 120 pounds per cubic foot and the crushing strength of these materials is generally rather than 6000 pounds per square inch. Very strong. Elementary arithmetic shows that a tower with parallel walls could have been built to a height of 1.3 miles. That's over 6800 feet. He says: 1.3 miles before the bricks at the bottom were crushed at the weight of the structure. However, by making the walls taper toward the top as they do in a ziggurat, could well have been built to a height of where the men of Shinar would run short of oxygen and have difficulty in breathing, before the brick walls crushed beneath their own dead weight.*

Pilots have to have oxygen above 12000 feet and what Professor Gordan is telling us is that structurally, it could have been above that height. If it was big enough and it was carefully enough built. The great pyramid of Giza was originally 481 feet tall. It was the tallest man-made structure for 3800 years. Then, the Lincoln Cathedral, built in Great Britain in 1311 was 525 feet and surpassed the height of the Great Pyramid. In 1899 the Eiffel tower was built and it was 986 feet and then in 1931 the Empire State Building was built and it was 1250 feet and then in 1973 the Twin Towers were built and they were 1776 feet and their replacement is exactly that height today. In 2009, the tallest building that has ever been constructed—it's called the Burj Khalifa—was built in Dubai and it is 2723 feet. It's a half a mile high. I've seen pictures of it—moving pictures—and you are looking up like \*this\*. It's an amazing structure, it's like a needle sticking up in the air. A ziggurat is not built in that manner as we've just seen. So how tall was the Tower of Babel? No one knows but from a structural standpoint it could have been the size of a large mountain—could have been, we don't know. My personal opinion is that it was built to the height of the lowest clouds so that the top of the ziggurat could be covered by clouds and we'll see why in just a minute; that's just a personal opinion.

Archaeologists have recovered many ziggurats in the Middle East and the question people speculate is could one of these be the ruins of the Tower of Babel. Jewish tradition leans toward one built at Nimrud in Northern Iraq. Another possibility was the Temple of Ishtar that Nebuchadnezzar built in Babylon. It was built over the ruins of a previous ziggurat. The speculation is, did Nimrod build his tower—his ziggurat over the ruins of the original Tower of Babel—we don't know. It's interesting, the Greek historian Herodotus visited Nimrod's tower, the one built over the ruins of the previous towers in 460 B.C. and he said Nimrod's tower had been crumbling for many years and I'm quoting Herodotus right now: *It had a solid central tower, one furlong square [furlong is 220 yards] with a second erected on top of it and then a third and so on up to eight. All eight towers can be climbed by a spiral stairway running around the outside and about half way up there are seats for those who make the journey, to rest before they go up*

*the rest of the way.* The point is there is plenty of evidence that ziggurats were built in the Middle East, going back thousands and thousands of years, so it's no stretch to believe that the Tower of Babel actually existed. People have said that's a myth. No, if you look at the archaeological evidence, there is plenty of evidence to indicate that the Tower of Babel was right there, somewhere in that area.

Let's go on in Genesis 11:5.

*5) And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.*

*6) And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. (KJV)*

God says, if I let this go on, there's going to be trouble.

*7) Go to, [it's interesting] let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.*

*8) So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. (KJV)*

It's interesting it doesn't say, they left off to build the tower. So I think it's an indication that the tower had previously been completed. Moses doesn't record that they left off building of the tower.

*9) Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth. (KJV)*

What He asked them to do originally. So by confounding the languages, He did so. The Hebrew word for Babel—Brown, Driver and Briggs—says it means, *to confuse* or *to confound* and God did just that. God had to intervene so that men would spread apart. It could well be that they were advancing too fast to fulfill His plan, we don't know, we'll find out someday. The question we brought up in the beginning, is this just an interesting story or is there more to it than that? Let's go to Romans 15:4 and see that God doesn't make the Bible a storybook—an entertainment book. It's not there for our entertainment. It's there for a totally different reason.

**Romans 15:4** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, [that includes the account of the Tower of Babel] that we through patience [I'm reading out of the King James, the Greek can mean also, endurance] and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (KJV)*

So we're told that the Old Testament scriptures, which he is referring to, are there for our learning and to help us persevere in our journey and to give us hope. So back to the original question, why did God want so much space devoted to this singular event,

in Genesis 10 and 11? What lessons can we learn from the Tower of Babel? You can think of a bunch more than I can, but we're going to talk about three lessons in the remainder of the time we have left.

The first and most obvious:

### **1. The human mind is in direct opposition to God's mind.**

Human minds think exactly the opposite of God's mind. The first humans—two humans that God created—He gave them a choice. You can do what I command you to do or you can do what you want to do. We all know what that choice was; man wanted to do what man wanted to do. They did what they thought was best for them. We know in hindsight, it wasn't good for them, it wasn't good for humanity. God said don't eat of this tree. Well, the first two humans, what did they do? They ate of it. God told Israel, I brought you out of Egypt and what did Israel say? We want to go back. It's crazy. God said worship Me only and Israel worshipped anything but God. God said to Israel, put Me first and Israel did what? They put idol after idol after idol in front of God Almighty. When they got to the Promised Land, God said go into the Promised Land, I will be with you. What did Israel say? There're giants, we can't go—and they didn't go. The exact opposite of what God wanted them to do. We're afraid—in other words they didn't believe what God said. Then He told Israel, that generation after that refused, as you go into the land, I will be a hornet ahead of you. I will wipe out the people ahead of you, you don't have to worry. What did they say? We want chariots, we want horses and spears and we want bows and arrows because we want to do it ourselves. So God said, okay if that's what you want. God said, I'll be your King and Israel said, no we want a human king, a man we can look to. Whatever God said, humankind did exactly the opposite. That is a huge lesson and after the flood, what did God tell man to do? We read that in Genesis 9:1—He said spread out over the earth, repopulate the earth, go far and wide, stay away from each other, go out and do things as families. But they wouldn't do that. The wording indicates that God wanted people to go out and establish family relationships far and wide and man did just the opposite. Remember in Genesis 11:4, if you have your marker you can go back, or I can just read.

**Genesis 11:4** *And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, [and what is the last part of the verse?] lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. (KJV)*

We'll do exactly opposite of what God wants us to do. The express purpose of building a city and the express purpose of building a tower was to prevent the people from dispersing widely and to retain control over the people because if you have them jammed together, a man like Nimrod could more easily control the people. That is not what God wanted but the people said, we want to look to a man. We want somebody to tell us what to do. We don't want God telling us what to do. Why the total opposition to God? When you think about it, the Bible is a record of opposition to God Almighty. Let's go to Romans 8:7, a very familiar scripture.



**Romans 8:7** *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: (KJV)*

The Greek word enmity can mean hostility, hatred or in opposition. The carnal mind is in opposition to God, it's hostile to God. The carnal mind hates God.

7 continued) ... *for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*  
8) *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (KJV)*

Remember what God said—we won't turn there—in Isaiah 55, He says for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My thoughts are higher than your thoughts and man just doesn't believe that. Man feels like he knows the best way. The Tower of Babel is the ultimate example of that. Man's mind being in opposition to God's mind. It's just amazing and behind it of course, Satan is there, provoking the minds of men to do what he did. We'll talk about that in a minute.

Let's compare the Tower of Babel to the founding of the New Testament church. You wouldn't think there is a comparison there, but there is. We're going to see a stark contrast in opposites between the Tower of Babel and the founding of the New Testament church. At the Tower of Babel, God came down and turned a single language into many languages and He broke their party up and they all scattered. What happened on Pentecost in 31 A.D.—we won't turn there, we know the story, it's in Acts 22—all those in the room were filled with God's Holy Spirit by that miracle. They came out of that room—there's a crowd gathered down below—and they began to speak in other languages or to be heard in other languages. The Bible doesn't say if the miracle is in the speaking or in the hearing but there is indeed a miracle because everyone heard the apostle speak in their own language.

If you look at it carefully, there are sixteen different languages mentioned in Acts 2. God performed a mighty miracle through the power of the Holy Spirit turning divided languages into one. Everybody heard the same message at the same time. At Babel, one language was used to promote an evil agenda—a satanic agenda—carnal men working together against God—one language. The first New Testament Pentecost did just the opposite. It took all of those divisions of languages and turned them and reversed them into one so everybody could hear exactly what was said. What was said—you can check it later in Acts 2:11—was to announce the wonderful works of God. That's what they heard. What they heard was the life and the death and the resurrection of the Messiah—it's what was proclaimed that day and everybody heard it in one language. Look at the contrast; one language to do evil, one language to preach the truth about God and Christ and the resurrection and the Messiah. It's clear from the Tower of Babel, that the carnal, Satan-led, Satan-inspired human mind, is the complete opposite of God's mind. The lesson for us is that we have to realize that we have that nature inside us. We have a nature inside of us that opposes God, that is against God, that's hostile to God, and we have to remember that, every day of our lives, because we have to exercise God's Holy Spirit to counter that nature. Remember Paul said, let this mind be in you, which was in Jesus Christ, in Philippians 2. That's what we struggle with every day. We have to have God's Spirit rule us, rather than our human Spirit. If

we have the mind of Christ, we will not be the enemy of God. This first point is, the human mind and God's mind are exactly opposite.

The second point.

## **2. The satanically influenced human mind wants to replace God Almighty.**

How? What Adam and Eve did—have your own way, do your own thing. By doing so, they rejected God Almighty. They replaced their wishes with God's commandments. Let's go to Genesis 11:4, if your marker is there, we read it earlier; we'll emphasize a different part of the verse, however.

**Genesis 11:4** *And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, [notice this, two things here] whose top may reach unto heaven [number one]; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.*  
(KJV)

We see that man doesn't want to submit to God, he wants to decide for himself and this verse reveals two principles. Reach up to heaven, make a name for ourselves. Let's take the first one—A, if you like to outline.

### **A. Mankind attempted to rise up to the level of God through this tower.**

They are attempting to do it physically but isn't that what man does anyway—everything is physical, not spiritual. The Babylonian language is called Acadian and Acadian Babel means, the gate of God. Totally different meaning than the Hebrew, so were they building a tower to get up to the gate of God? Were they attempting to do that? That's exactly what Satan did, didn't he? Let's go to Isaiah 14:13. Remember, we know in the book of Job, Satan's presence was a common event around the throne of God, which is counter to what people say—God can't be in the presence of evil—well, read in the book of Job. This is exactly what Satan did; going to the gate of God.

**Isaiah 14:13** *For thou hast said in thine heart, [referring to Satan; God is saying to Satan] I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:  
14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*  
(KJV)

It's not a stretch to say that the men of Babylon—Nimrod in particular—were deceived by Satan to follow in Satan's footsteps. We know Satan deceives the whole world; Revelation tells us that. Satan was just repeating with humans what he had done. He instilled in the human mind; we're going to rise up to the level of God; we're going to be like God. That's why I believe the tower was at least as high as the lower cloud level because Nimrod could go up to the top, disappear into the clouds and claim to have spoken to God or claim that he was God coming down to earth and he had walked back down and he was God on earth. That would have increased his power and prestige and

his authority—God on earth. In some ways you could say it was a counterfeit of Christ, being a human coming to the earth and Nimrod, thousands of years before, comes down these steps to be God on earth. Satan counterfeits everything in advance—everything that is a part of God’s plan. Also, when you think about it, he was a counterfeit Moses because didn’t Moses go up to the top of Mount Sinai and disappear into the lightening and the thundering’s and the clouds? Then he came back down—he went up seven times beginning in Exodus 19. Nimrod, in advance of Moses was doing the same thing. I’ll go up to the clouds, I’ll commune with God, I’ll come back and tell you what God says.

God told Adam and Eve how to have eternal life. He said you can eat of any fruit of any tree in the garden except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but if you do that, you’re going to die—that’s what God told them. If they disobeyed, they didn’t want to obey God, so they lived life their own way and look at the result of that. At Babylon, the people said, we want to ascend up to God’s level. We want to walk up there, we want to be the same as God but we want to do it our way. God tells us how to have salvation or to be God but they said, we don’t want to listen to that, we’ll just walk up there ourselves and be like God. It’s interesting that Nimrod placed himself—all of these Babylonians were led by a man named Nimrod—he placed himself between God and the people. Isn’t that interesting, that Nimrod said, follow me and I’ll go up and commune with God or even that I am God and I’m going to come down and talk to you. He placed himself between God and the people. We see the same thing going on today; nothing new under the sun. The Catholic Pope and the priesthood place themselves between God and the people. The Pope is called the vicar of Christ, the representative of Christ on this earth, again a man between God and the people. It’s sad to say that in the greater church of God we have had a history of people saying look to me, listen to me, do what I say rather than what God says. Again, nothing new under the sun. Satan provokes human beings to do exactly what he attempted to do—replace God. That’s point A.

## **B. Man wants to make a name for himself rather than exalting the name of God.**

Genesis 11:4, we’ve read that twice before and it says, let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad. It’s interesting the Hebrew word for “name” is Strong’s #8034 and guess how you pronounce it—shame. It’s the Hebrew word transliterated in the English, shem, but it’s pronounced shame. It means *the idea of definite and conspicuous position, as a mark or memorial of honor and renown*. They wanted to elevate themselves to have a name, to be respected, to have authority. So they built this giant monument—really—the tower of Babel, to themselves. To call attention to themselves to say, look what we’ve done—look at us. Nobody in the history of the world has done this, what we have done. They didn’t give glory to God at all. It’s interesting that modern science today, in the main, is nothing more than a monument to man. According to evolutionary theory, man is at the epitome of the evolutionary chain; the mind of man is the epitome of any brain or mind in evolution, so the mind of man—science aggrandizes the mind of man. Today, as I mentioned in the announcements, we see the results of that; the mind of man gone amuck. Look at all the mass

shootings, look at the wars, look at the famines, look at the evil, look at the exploitation, look at the abuse of young girls and young boys and the list just goes on and on. The famine, the war, the disease—that's the result of the mind of man and yet science says, we can figure it all out, we have the ability—trust our minds.

There's no better example of one seeking to make a name for himself than first, Satan the devil when he tried to ascend to God's throne—I will exalt myself he said, in Isaiah 14. Then, the builders of the Tower of Babel—whose footsteps did they follow in? They followed in Satan's footsteps; they tried to do the same thing. God wants the opposite from us, doesn't He?

The Parable of the Wedding Feast—we won't turn there for lack of time—but in Luke 14 he remarked with the wedding feast, how certain people came in and they picked the chief rooms. They would go into the grand room or the living room and sit by the fire in the comfiest seat and Christ said, I don't want you doing that; don't do that. You go to the lowest room. Go down in the basement, go into the kitchen, don't exalt yourself because He said, whosoever exalts himself is going to be abased and whosoever abases himself, shall be exalted. Those at Babel tried to exalt the self just as Satan tried to exalt himself. Nothing changes, same thing is going on today. In the world, people exalt themselves. In the church, people exalt themselves. Look to us! We have campuses, we have colleges, we print books, we're on television, we have this, we have that—look to us, an institution or a group of human beings. The spirit-led mind doesn't exalt the self, the spirit-led mind exalts God Almighty. Let's go to 1 Chronicles 29 and see probably, the best example of that. This is David shortly before his death. David was the king of all Israel, over all of God's people and he could have beat his chest on this last days and bragged about everything that he did while he was alive but in his last days, notice what he said. Look at his attitude.

**1 Chronicles 29:10** *Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation [didn't bless himself, he blessed Jehovah]: and David said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. (KJV)*

David knew then that Jehovah was his Father; it says so right here. David was under the covenant of salvation, just as we are today. David was aggrandizing his Father, verse 11; notice David's focus.

*11) Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. (KJV)*

Nimrod establishes his own kingdom, David is saying (he could have bragged about Israel) but he didn't do that. He said Yours is the Kingdom and You are above all.

*12) Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. (KJV)*

God's strength, not our strength.

13) *Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. (KJV)*

The Babylonians and Nimrod wanted to make a name for themselves. What David is doing is focusing on God's glorious name, Jehovah. Verse 14.

14) *But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. (KJV)*

I think Mark Mickelson said it best last week when he said, when we make the covenant with God at our baptism, what we should do is give God everything, just lay it all out before God; we should do that every day frankly. Then he mentions, God gives us back what we need. But we're willing (as was said in the sermonette) to walk away from everything. We are willing to sacrifice everything to please God, to obey God and to do His will. Look at David's attitude. On the other hand, mankind wants to emulate Satan; usurping God's place, making a name for himself. We should be here to exalt God, praise His name, please Him, do His will. There are powerful lessons of this account.

The third and last point. This is something we have to keep in mind every day of our lives.

### **3. The father of lies has deceived the world into thinking God is the liar.**

That God will not keep His promises. The Bible is clear who the originator of lies is; who the father of lies is. Let's go to John 8:44 and we will read what Christ had to say about that. Christ is speaking to the religious of His day and He calling a spade a spade.

**John 8:44** *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. [Just like the Babylonians did in building the tower] He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (KJV)*

The Jewish New Testament says of that last phrase, he is liar, indeed the inventor of the lie, the father of lies. The first lie probably ever told was Satan starting to convince a third of the angelic hosts to follow him. That is probably the first time a lie was told and Satan was the author and the father of it. The key is that Satan, down through the centuries and the millennia, has convinced the world into thinking that it is God who is the liar. He did with Adam and Eve. What God told them was not going to happen—God's telling you a lie. You want to know, you want to be like God, then eat of this fruit. So Satan told Adam and Eve a lie and look at the results.

What did God promise after the flood? Let's go to Genesis 9:11. God made a promise after the flood. God is talking directly with Noah. We don't have time to prove it, we've talked about it before and there's plenty of scriptural evidence to show that God Almighty was Noah's God and God is talking directly to Noah.

**Genesis 9:11** [He says to Noah] *And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.*

12) *And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:*

13) *I do set my [rain] bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. (KJV)*

God promised to never flood the earth again and the token, the symbol of that promise, exists to this very day. I was thinking, all the time it took to build the Tower of Babel (we don't know how long it took) what did they do? How many times did they build under a rainbow? As we read this scripture, think about that. It probably took generations to build this tower and how many rainbows appeared above them as they built this tower. Let's go to chapter 11:3.

**Genesis 11:3** *And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. (KJV)*

The Hebrew word for "slime" is #2564 and it means *bitumen*. The Tanach Translation says, for the last part of the verse, and bitumen served them as mortar. Remember what God commanded Noah to do when he built the ark, in Genesis 6:14? He told Noah to coat the inside of the ark with bitumen because it's a water proofer. He says you coat it thoroughly because when you're out there in the middle of those storms and the seas and the tumult, you don't want to spring a leak, so you coat it inside with bitumen; maybe on the outside too. The point is here, in Genesis 11:3, they had slime for mortar and the builders of the tower waterproofed the tower. It's not a stretch to see that, we don't want another flood, we want to make this waterproof so that another flood would not leak in and destroy and wash away the bottom of the step pyramid so they coated it with bitumen. They did not believe God when He said, I will not flood the earth again, even though the rainbow was up there.

Josephus said in his Antiquities of the Jews, it was built of burnt brick, cemented together with mortar, made with bitumen that it might not be liable to admit water. They were hedging their bets, they didn't believe God, they didn't believe His rainbow in the sky. They are only a couple hundred years—less than 200 hundred years after the flood itself so it's fresh in people's minds and in their tradition. It's interesting that the humans there at that time, while they were working away under a rainbow from time to time, it's bizarre that they believe God was strong enough to flood the world again, so they are taking precautions against that but they didn't believe His promise that He wouldn't flood the world again and He gave them a sign up in heaven. How weird is

that? That shows you the human mind. So what is the lesson today in this regard? Let's go to Hebrews 13:5 and this is something I remind myself all the time when opposition occurs or Satan attacks or difficulties arise. I'll read this out of the New King James.

**Hebrews 13:5** *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, [quoting Joshua 1:5 and in Deuteronomy] I will never leave you nor forsake you.*" (NKJV)

God promises that, just like He promised never to flood the earth and gave us a sign.

6) *So we may boldly say: The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"* (NKJV)

That's something all of us needs to keep in mind as we go forward. Men are going to oppose us, the government is going to oppose us. Sadly, other churches will oppose us. Satan convinced the builders of the Tower of Babel that God was a liar. Satan wants us to rely on ourselves or to rely on other human beings or to rely on an institution or to rely on a man that's going to come and save us; a man—not God—a man. Let's go to Mark 10:27. When we get into dire straits, when we need a rescue—and I can't tell you the number of times over the last several years, we've needed God to come and rescue us. It was beyond our power, beyond our control.

**Mark 10:27** *And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.* (KJV0)

We have to keep that in mind. When we cry out to God and say God, I have no power, I have no authority, this has come upon me, I cannot control it, come and rescue me. With God, all things are possible. Here is the absolute truth, let's go to Titus 1:2. This is a final scripture. Satan has convinced the world that God is a liar. This is what God says and in today's parlance you can take this to the bank.

**Titus 1:2** *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;* (KJV)

God promised eternal life if we will just do what He says. If we will just do what He asks us to do. If you will put Me first, if you will follow Me, if you will please Me, if you will love Me with all your heart, if you will love your fellow man as much as you love yourself, it's a promise that we will have eternal life.

In summary, the account of the Tower of Babel is there for a reason. It is a striking example of mankind's opposition to God. A striking example of how opposed mankind is to God. It is recorded for our learning and for a warning to us, lest we go astray, lest we put something in front of God. God doesn't want us to exalt ourselves. He doesn't want mankind to exalt himself. Not building edifices and institutions that exalt the self and the Tower of Babel is the ultimate edifice of mankind saying, look to me, look what

we can do, we don't need God, we just follow this man—that's the ultimate example of this. God wants us to willingly bow down to Him, submit to Him, worship Him and put Him first. In these last days, I believe God is refining His people. He is sending out a calling to refine all of the people that He has chosen that are alive on the face of this earth. He is calling His children to put Him first in every aspect of our lives, to truly know Him and His Son as recorded in scripture and to do His will and to please Him. So let's learn from the lesson of the Tower of Babel.