

“When People Say, “We Don’t Need God.”
Genesis 11:1-9

A little boy was overheard talking to himself as he strutted through the backyard, wearing his baseball cap and toting a ball and bat. "I'm the greatest hitter in the world," he announced.

Then, he tossed the ball into the air, swung at it, and missed.

"Strike One!" he yelled. Undaunted, he picked up the ball and said again, "I'm the greatest hitter in the world!"

He tossed the ball into the air. When it came down he swung again and missed. "Strike Two!" he cried.

The boy then paused a moment to examine his bat and ball carefully. He spit on his hands and rubbed them together. He straightened his cap and said once more, "I'm the greatest hitter in the world!"

Again he tossed the ball up in the air and swung at it. He missed. "Strike Three!" "Wow!" he exclaimed. "I'm the greatest pitcher in the world!"

The battle for our worship is a battle that draws our flesh and its desire to exert itself over God. The flesh demands that it be stroked, satisfied and honored. The inner part of our being cries out for independence. From our earliest days we desire to do things for ourselves. But we cannot please God or satisfy his demands for righteousness by ourselves. When it comes to worshiping God, He is the one who supplies what we need.

The story of the Tower of Babel describes this battle on a grand scale. The whole earth's population was gathered at the Plain of Shinar to build a tower and “make a name for ourselves.” The plain is in the land of Babylon, which God uses to represent man-made religion. In the end times, Babylon, in the Plain of Shinar, will once again become the place where man-made religion exerts itself against God.

Pride is a sin which keeps us from God. **Proverbs 16:18** *"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."*

Pride is the sin which entered Lucifer's heart and caused him to fall from his honored place among God's holy angels (Isa 14:12-14).

Pride is a sin, blind as we are to it, that puts us on a path of self-made religion and keeps us from enjoying God's salvation.

The TOWER of BABEL represents man's effort without God.

Let's begin by examining the Motivation for BUILDING the TOWER of BABEL. The builders of Shinar wanted "A TOWER that reaches to the heavens" (Gen 11:4). There is nothing wrong with building buildings, or improving our living conditions. There is nothing wrong with dwellings, cities, skyscrapers, or highways. At first glance, one might think, "why is God so upset about a tower?" Millions of buildings and towers have been built since, with God's blessings.

The problem in Shinar is in the purpose of the Tower. It was a statement that represented the heart of the post-flood people to establish a way to reach God through their own effort. This is represented in the many artists' drawings of the Tower of Babel.

The tower was most likely in the form of a ziggurat, or pyramid. Such towers have been found in Babylon. Genesis 11 explains why ancient people from entirely different cultures built similar looking towers for worship. The pyramids of Egypt, the ziggurats of Babylon, and the Aztec temples of Mexico and South America all follow a similar architecture.

Some intelligent scientists with Ivy League educations propose that the reason for the similarities is that ancient aliens gave the design and assisted primitive earth-dwellers in building similar looking towers! A better explanation is found in the Bible. The dwellers of the plain were scattered to the ends of the earth. They carried their building experiences and techniques with them, and when they arrived in their new homes, they quickly built towers like they had built in Shinar!

The TOWER was built for TWO REASONS

- i. SPIRITUAL POWER
- ii. POLITICAL POWER

Rather than waiting to hear God's voice, they decided to attempt to reach God on their own. The statement in Genesis 11:4, "a tower that reaches to the heavens," does not mean that they thought they could break the limits of the atmosphere. It is a statement of hyperbole, with the intention that they would use the tower as a place of worship. At the highest point of the ziggurat was an altar that was used to worship false gods. This was the SPIRITUAL POWER that they were seeking.

The tower also represented their desire for POLITICAL POWER. God instructed Noah and his sons to "fill the earth."

Genesis 9:1 *"Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.'"*

Genesis 8:17 *"Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it."*

The tower was in direct contradiction to God's command. They desired a unified, one-world government. Mankind is incapable of this type of government, in spite of his repeated efforts to bring about one world dominion. The Babylonians tried and failed. The Greeks tried and failed. The Romans tried and failed. The Roman Church tried and failed. Only JESUS will bring about a one world government!

The LESSONS from the TOWER of BABEL

What can we learn about the condition of our own hearts?

First, we learn that as people created in God's image, we have GREAT POTENTIAL (Genesis 11:4) *"Let us build a tower to reach the heavens."* We think that ancient people were little more than cave-dwelling numb-skulls. This is far from true! In the pre-flood and post-flood world, an increased life-span allowed great learning. The Bible tells us about early metallurgy and other skills often considered the accomplishments of a great civilization. Consider Noah, who with God's help built an ark that shipbuilders today would be proud of!

God has created each of us, and humanity in general, with great potential. He wants us to THRIVE! Human kind has sent men to the moon, examined the far reaches of the universe, and uncovered the genetic code of life! We are constantly learning about the world God created for us, yet this knowledge does not enhance our worship of God, but rather drives us away from God! As believers, we await the day that only God can bring, when *"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea"* (Habakkuk 2:14).

GOD'S RESPONSE to man's effort without god was to say that *"nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them"* (Genesis 11:6). God was not yet through with mankind. This was not the time for His ultimate judgement, nor was this the time for the "seed of the woman" to come and bring deliverance. God's plan was not yet complete. More of his attributes needed to be fulfilled.

We also learn something important about ourselves. We think that we can reach for the HEAVENS without GOD!

The builders of Shinar made two statements that represented their disobedience and disregard for their creator. These two statements are repeated my millions to this day.

The first is that **"We Don't Need God for Spiritual Enlightenment"**

The tower was for WORSHIP. Note the statement of Kurt Matthews, *"Genesis 11:1-9 also mirrors the attempt of humanity in the garden to achieve power independently of God"* (Matthews, New American Commentary, 467).

The **STRUCTURE of this passage** demonstrates **Man's Attempt to REACH GOD.**

The entire passage of Genesis 11:1-9 is written in a poetic pattern that points to the most important point. Matthews illustrates this in the following diagram:

A "the whole world had one language" (v. 1)
 B "there" (v. 2)
 C "each other" (v. 3)
 D "Come, let's make bricks" (v. 3)
 E "Come, let us build ourselves" (v. 4)
 F "a city, with a tower" (v. 4)
 G "the LORD came down ..." (v. 5)
 F' "the city and the tower" (v. 5)
 E' "that the men were building" (v. 5)
 D' "Come, let us ... confuse" (v. 7)
 C' "each other" (v. 7)
 B' "from there" (v. 8)
A' "the language of the whole world" (v. 9)

The culmination of the passage is in verse 5. God came down.

Mankind was attempting to reach God, but we cannot commune with God on our own terms. **THIS IS THE PRIDE OF MAN!**

We are the ones that have fallen. We have departed from God. He is the one seeking us, and only He can bring us back to a place of forgiveness and restore that which was destroyed in the Garden.

We attempt to reach God in many ways.

- (1) Good works
- (2) Human effort
- (3) Religion

But a relationship with God can only be found when we accept the love that he demonstrates to us.

The **SECOND** illustration found at Shinar is that We Think that We can **RULE** on the **EARTH** Without God.

The builders of the Plain had a **POLITICAL** motive for building a **TOWER**. They wanted to control their world without the help and guidance of God. They wanted a world empire of human origin. But since this is God's world, the only way that we can properly understand it and enjoy it is when we operate according to his rules!

Notice their efforts:

- (1) 11:3 BRICKS

- (2) 11:3 MORTAR
- (3) 11:4 MAKE a NAME for ourselves
- (4) 11:4 NOT be SCATTERED

God commanded them to SPREAD throughout the earth. (Genesis 9:1). Instead they settled.

There is a Problem of Thinking that we can RULE the EARTH without God!

In 1972, Francis Schaeffer, 1972 wrote about our society with near prophetic authority. He recognized that America was departing from our Christian foundation. He saw what was happening in Europe, and knew that America was headed down the same path. We removed God from the public sphere, and therefore lawlessness would follow. He wrote *“Without a transcendent source for meaning and law, societies move into either anarchy or authoritarianism, such as Marxism”* (Schaeffer, “How Should We Then Live”).

Schaeffer was saying that without a God-centered, moral foundation, society would crumble and revert to either anarchy or oppression.

We are living through this transition right now! It is seen in the current Occupy Wall Street movement. This movement represents the BEGINNING of ANARCHY in America! Mayors and politicians have allowed lawlessness to reign and entire parks, streets and neighborhoods have been taken over. Similar movements were often seen in Europe, but it has now come to America, and it will only get worse.

We have decided that we don't need God. As one person said, God is a perfect Gentleman, and he will not stay where he is not welcome! I am reminded of what Spurgeon once said to his aspiring young students of preaching: *“If any among you think you can accomplish anything apart from God, all you will get from Him is the opportunity to try.”* Spurgeon.

America is living through the result of our decisions to leave God out of the picture. The result is that we will descend either into anarchy, or oppressive control. This has been the case throughout human history. Only a God-centered society has the potential to enjoy freedom.

In conclusions, we still see the BABEL EFFORT in our own world today. The cry for one-world governace is stronger than ever, and will increase until it reaches its culmination in the coming Tribulation period.

One month ago, Pope Benedict called for the formation of a one world governing agency with a unified approach to religion and economics! *“The Vatican called Monday for radical reform of the world's financial systems, including the creation of a global*

political authority to manage the economy.” Associated Press, 10/24/2011

As noted in the FINANCIAL TIMES, 2008, *“So, it seems, everything is in place. For the first time since homo sapiens began to doodle on cave walls, there is an argument, an opportunity and a means to make serious steps towards a world government.”*

This is the spirit of **ANTICHRIST**, and it will come in full force in the end times.

Revelation 13:8 *“All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.”*

Revelation 13:17 *“so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.”*

There is coming a day when there will be one world government, and even one language.

When Will the GOLDEN AGE COME? It will come when GOD COMES DOWN!

It will come in Christ’s Kingdom

ONE LANGUAGE! Zephaniah 3:9–11 (ESV) *““For at that time I will **change the speech** of the peoples to a **pure speech**, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering. On that day you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain.”*

The call to you and I is HUMBLE ourselves before God and accept his offer of love.

Isaiah 2:10–11 *“Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty. ” “The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.”*

The LIE: “We can reach God”

The TRUTH: “We can commune with God ONLY when HE REACHES US!

John 15:16 *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”*

1 John 4:9–10 *“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ” “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”*