



Rice Memorial MBC

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Pastor Michael Hansberry, Southern District Moderator

Rice Memorial Missionary Baptist Church

Apostle Walter F. Camp, Presiding Senior Pastor
Pastor David K. Baker III, 2nd Presiding
802 W. 15th, Little Rock, AR 72202, 501-301-8181

www.RiceMemorialBaptistChurch.org

Scattering the Nations

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **September 29, 2013**

Worship with us at **3201 Mary St** until we rebuild our sanctuary at 802 W. 15th,
... We're just behind Kaufman's Lumber Company in Little Rock Arkansas

Genesis 11:1-9

Introduction: This chapter gives an account of the inhabitants of the earth before the confusion of tongues at Babel, of their speech and language, which was one and the same, and of the place where they dwelt, Gen. 11:1,2 and of their design to build a city and tower, to make them **a name** and **keep them together**, which they put in execution, Gen. 11:3, 4 of the notice the Lord took of this affair, and of the method he took to put a stop to their designs, by confounding their speech, and dispersing them abroad upon the face of the earth, Gen. 11:5-9 then follows a genealogy of Shem's posterity down to Abraham, Gen. 11:10-26 and a particular relation is given of **Terah**, the father of **Abraham**, and his family, and of his going forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, in order to go into the land of Canaan, and of his death at Haran by the way, Gen. 11:27-32.

(Source: biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/)

Genesis 11:1, And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech (counsel).

NOTE: The whole earth-all mankind was of one language, in all likelihood the **Hebrew**; and of one speech-articulating the same words in the same way. It is generally supposed, that after the confusion mentioned in this chapter, the Hebrew language remained in the family of Heber. The proper names, and their significations given in the Scripture, seem incontestable evidences that the Hebrew language was the **original language** of the earth-the language in which God spake to man, and in which he gave the revelation of his will to Moses and the prophets. "It was used," says Mr. Ainsworth, "in all the world for one thousand seven hundred and fifty-seven years, till Phaleg, the son of Heber, was born, and the tower of Babel was in building **one hundred years** after the flood, Genesis 10:25;;11:9. After this, it was used among the Hebrews or Jews, called therefore the Jews' language, Isaiah 36:11, until they were carried captive into Babylon, where the holy tongue ceased from being commonly used, and the **mixed Hebrew** (or **Chaldee**) came in its place." It cannot be reasonably imagined that the Jews lost the Hebrew tongue entirely in the seventy years of their captivity in Babylon; yet, as they were mixed with the Chaldeans, their children would of course learn that **dialect**, and to them the **pure Hebrew** would be **unintelligible**; and this probably gave rise to the necessity of explaining the Hebrew Scriptures in the Chaldee tongue, that the children might understand as well as their fathers. As we may safely presume the **parents** could not have forgotten the Hebrew, so we may conclude the children in general could not have learned it, as they did not live in an insulated state, but were mixed with the Babylonians.

(Source: *The Adam Clarke Commentary* classic.studylight.org/com/acc/)

Genesis 11:2, *And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar (plain in Babylonia); and they dwelt there.*

NOTE: This is the great plain upon which Nimrod built **Babylon (confusion; Babel)** and other cities. The Septuagint reads **Babylonia** here for **Shinar**. It is the land wherein were situated the great cities of Babylon, Erech, and Akkad. In Zechariah (Zechariah 5), there is the vision of the ephah basket with a woman in it (probably the image of a goddess) symbolizing Wickedness (Zechariah 5:8); and when Zechariah asked where she was being taken, an angel revealed to him, that, They bear the ephah to build her a house in the land of Shinar: and when it is prepared, she shall be set there in her own place (Zech. 5:11). This prophetic revelation shows that it was the establishment and enthronement of wickedness in Shinar that constituted the great error visible in this event at **Babel**. In all ages to come, **Babylon** would be the symbol of civilization in its corporate organization opposed to God in pride, arrogance, and defiance. It was literally true that the cancer that began here at the tower of Babel was to form a metastasis (spiritual change) in every great city of the earth for all ages to come, making **Babylon** the **Mother of harlots** and **abominations** of the earth, not merely in the religious connotations of the current dispensation, but also in the political developments ever afterward from the foundation of Babylon. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic. studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Genesis 11:3, *And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and **SLIME** had they for mortar.*

Slime defined 2564, bitumen (as rising to the surface).

Bitumen, mineral pitch; a black, tarry substance, burning with a bright flame; Jew's pitch. It occurs as an abundant natural product in many places, as on the shores of the Dead and Caspian Seas. It is used in CEMENTS, in the construction of pavements, etc.

NOTE: The absence of building stone on the plains of Shinar led to the perfection of the brick industry, thus providing materials for the ambitious project contemplated. The word for slime here is [~hemar], that is bitumen or asphalt. This was a different substance from that used in preparing the ark for Moses, or that Noah used to caulk the ark. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic. studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Genesis 11:4, *And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven...*

NOTE: The Babylonians called such a tower a **ziggurat**, an immense tower shaped like a pyramid, rising in terraces, and crowned with a temple, which was regarded as an "**entrance to heaven.**"

In the light of the nature and use of such towers as subsequently revealed, there can hardly be any doubt that **paganism** and **idolatry** were intimately associated with the tower mentioned in this passage, despite the fact of there not being a word in the text concerning it. Many have discerned this. The construction of the tower of Babel was actually the dethronement of God and establishment of paganism as their system of worship. There were extensive collateral developments in connection with the tower. There was the change of government into a military dictatorship with cruel and oppressive power, and also the creation and promulgation of a **priesthood** which constructed right there in Babylon a pantheon of pagan gods and elaborated paganism into a religious system that was to prevail throughout the world until the Edict of Theodosius outlawed such things in **389 A.D.**

That tower (**ziggurat**) mentioned above has been described as follows: The most conspicuous feature was a huge pyramidal tower, in seven terraces from the temple area. The seven stories represented the seven **planetary deities** The ascent of the tower was a meritorious (deserving of reward or of notice, regard, fame or happiness.)

approach to the gods; and the summit was regarded as the entrance to heaven.

The same writer also declared, "That the tower of Gen. 11 is a **Babylonian ziggurat** is obvious on every ground." We may inquire as to "Who did all this?" But the Scriptures record none of the names of the perpetrators. The traditional account handed down by **Josephus** carries the stamp of truth in the simplicity that says, "It was **Nimrod** who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God; he was the **grandson** of **Ham**, the son of **Noah**. Josephus also affirmed that Nimrod had taught that it was cowardice to submit to God, and wrong to praise God for benefits, because it was through the courage and daring of MEN themselves that all blessings and benefits came! Such a doctrine as this has been the bible of evil world rulers in all generations.

(Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/*)

NOTE: Whatever their design might have been, it is certain that this temple or tower was afterwards devoted to **idolatrous** purposes. **Nebuchadnezzar** repaired and beautified this tower, and it was dedicated to Bel, or the sun.

(Source: *The Adam Clarke Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/acc/*)

Genesis 11:4 ...and let us make us a **NAME**, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

Name defined 8034 shem pronounced shame a primitive word (perhaps rather from 7760 through the idea of definite and CONSPICUOUS position; an appellation, as a mark or memorial of individuality; by implication honor, authority, character.

Conspicuous, clearly or extensively known, perceived or understood. Hence, eminent (EXALTED in rank); famous; distinguished; as a man of conspicuous talents;

NOTE: 1. Of those pre-Christian Gentiles, Paul declared three times that, God gave them up (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). The rapid increase and degeneration of paganism were also recounted by Paul. It began by man worshipping himself (or, an **image** of himself), but it swiftly moved downward in cycles until men were worshipping reptiles and creeping things!

Thus, we understand the events of Babel as man's **substitution** of himself for God as the object of worship and devotion. In all probability the ancient tradition that **Nimrod** himself was **deified** and **worshipped** as Merodach or Marduk in Babylon, and that his wife Semaramis received divine honors would appear to be founded in fact.

The **deification** of Roman emperors in the Christian era and their hatred of God were only the eventual developments of the tragedy at Babel. (Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/*)

Genesis 11:5, And the LORD **came down** to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

NOTE: The fact that no individuals being mentioned in this account and its action being mentioned as something that "the children of men" did, shows that God considered this event as a **rebellion** of all mankind against Himself. The willingness of mankind, generally, to receive the arrogance, pride and conceit of those people as their chosen way of life, and the perception of God that the cancer that began there would spread continually throughout the whole world fully justified the heavenly interference with it. God would also call **Abraham**, who was commissioned to be the head of a "chosen race," who would preserve the knowledge of the true God until the revelation of the Messiah.

Came down to see... This speaking of God in terms that are related to the conduct of men was most natural, there being, in fact, no other way that knowledge of the true God could be conveyed. This is called **anthropomorphism** (The representation of the Deity under a human form, or with human attributes); and this passage is loaded with it.

(Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/*)

Genesis 11:6, And the LORD said, Behold, the **people** is **ONE (united)**, 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.

NOTE: If we have properly understood the motives and purpose underlying this evil venture, what God **foresaw** was that if their wickedness had been left unhindered the true knowledge of God might easily have been totally removed from the earth. The establishment of the people of **Israel** as **a witness** of God on the earth also aided effectually in frustrating the devices of Satan which were, at the moment, proving successful. In fact, at that future time when "Satan shall be loosed for a little while," there will then occur exactly what was in the process of occurring here.

The silly notion expressed by some to the effect that God feared mankind as a rival is absolutely unworthy of any believer. Whatever fears (prospect of future evil, accompanied with uneasiness of mind) God had in this situation, they were those fears (concern) for the future of the race of men which God accurately **foresaw**.
(Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Thought 1. Here, the benefits of being "united" are clearly seen, which is why God inspired Paul to write to the church at Corinth to be sure that we understand the "UNITY" he wants.

1 Corinthians 1:10-11, Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be **no divisions** among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are **contentions** among you.

Genesis 11:7, Go to, **let us** go down, and there **confound (mingle [confuse])** their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

NOTE: The thought here is simply that God had a remedy for human arrogance and conceit. He would do two things: first, He would thwart the spread of the wicked virus by confounding the languages; and He would also **call out** and **separate** a people to **Himself** who would keep themselves from idolatry and who would live as a continuing witness of the **true God** and His holy Name throughout the long dark ages of pre-Christian Gentile darkness then beginning its awesome descent upon the family of Adam.

Regarding the wonder of HOW God confounded the languages, we simply have no information whatever. The will of God alone was sufficient to produce the conditions that He desired to appear. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Genesis 11:8, So the LORD **scattered them** abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

NOTE: God's interference with evil was successful. Of course, having endowed humanity with the freedom of the will, God would never compel people to obey Him, but as an inducement to encourage them toward the right decisions, He would forever see to it that, "**The way of the transgressor is hard**" (Proverbs 13:15).

(Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Genesis 11:9, Therefore is the name of it called **Babel (confusion)**; because the LORD did there **confound (mingle [confuse])** the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

NOTE: Here is the story of how **Babylon** got its name, a name which has been on the tongue of all generations, and a name that memorializes eternally the dramatic event that produced its name.

(Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)