

## Tower Of Babel

'This is the history of the generations of the sons of Noah and of Shem, Ham and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood ... (Two) sons of Ham were Cush and Canaan ... Cush became the father of Nimrod. He was a mighty one (powerful leader) on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord, therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord." The beginning of his kingdom was Babel ... in the land of Shinar (modern day south of Iraq near Kuwait). Out of that land he went forth into Assyria and built Nineveh (Genesis 10:1, 6, 8 to 11). By the time the Tower of Babel was under construction, Nimrod had moved on to build the great city of Nineveh, hundreds of kilometres north near modern Turkey, so he played no part in the Tower of Babel. Nimrod's leadership started there but he himself was not there. He had already left to build Nineveh. The Bible says there was no particular leader at the time of the building of the tower. The scriptures make it clear the tower was a joint effort – not ordered by any one person or king. Nimrod's name was not mentioned in regard to the tower's construction, however Nimrod was fully involved in the construction of Nineveh as the Bible states. If Nimrod was the king of Babel at the time of the construction of the Tower of Babel, the Bible would have stated that, but by the time of the building of the tower, Nimrod had already moved on.

'The whole earth was of one language and of one speech. As they travelled east they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they lived there. They said one to another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." They had brick for stone and they used tar for mortar. They said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top reaches to the sky, and let us make ourselves a name lest we be scattered abroad on the surface of the whole earth." The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built. God said, "Behold, they are one people and they have all one language, and this is what they begin to do. Now nothing will be withheld from them which they intend to do. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language so they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord Elohim scattered them abroad from there on the surface of all the earth. They stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there God confused the language of all the earth. From there, God scattered them abroad on the surface of all the earth' (Genesis 11:1 to 9).

There is a lot of archaeological evidence to prove the Tower of Babel certainly did exist. It was built about 4,200 years ago. The ruins lie between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in southern Iraq where the ruins of the city of Babylon are. The foundations of the tower have been found measuring over one hundred metres square, underneath the buildings King Nebuchadnezzar erected during his reign. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were discovered at the same time. The Tower of Babel was made up of baked bricks of straw and clay, held together with mortar and bitumen taken from Persia. An inscription written by King Nebuchadnezzar states the bricks were once, 'Enamelled in brilliant blue'. The name of the Babylonian Tower was Etemenanki, which translates as, 'House of the Platform of Heaven and Earth.' A clay tablet was unearthed giving the dimensions as one hundred metres high with a temple (to the false god Marduk) on the top. The destruction of the Tower of Babylon was written down and recorded at the time. It states, "The building of this temple offended God. One night He threw down what had been built, confused their speech and scattered the people abroad, impeding their progress." Another statement reads, "When all people were of one language, some of them built a tower to ascend to heaven but God sent storms of strong wind and overthrew the tower. He gave everyone his own language and for that reason the city was called Babylon, which means 'confusion'." The Tower of Babel had one solid central tower with a second on top of it and a third, up to eight. All eight towers could be climbed by a spiral staircase around the outside, and there were seats to rest for those who were weary from walking up.

The motivation to build the tower was not to glorify God but to advance themselves and their wicked Babylonian religion. Notice the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people and they have all one language, and this is what they begin to do. Now nothing will be withheld from them, which they intend to do" (Genesis 11:6). This statement reveals to us, God knew mankind had considerable abilities, talents, creativity and skills. Mankind were created in the image of God and He had created within them their ability to achieve great things. The problem lay with their motive. If they had built the tower to worship God, the outcome may have been different but their motive was to elevate their names or themselves around the known world. The action the Lord took to stop the building plan was to confuse their language. Doing that stopped communication and thus halted the building of the tower.

The Lord instructed His people to build several structures and He always gave the designs, dimensions and materials He wanted them to use. Altars (Exodus 20:24 & 25), Noah's Ark (Genesis 6:14 to 16) which still exists atop Mount Ararat, the Tabernacle of Moses (Exodus chapters 25 to 27), Solomon's Temple (1 Kings chapters 6 & 7), the Second Temple (Ezra and Nehemiah) where the Western Wall still exists, and the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:10 to 21) yet to be completed. The Lord did not tell the men to build then leave them to do it themselves. God is a great architect and was involved in every aspect of construction. Noah's

Ark was so exact, ships are still built using some of the details given to Noah. Not so the Tower of Babylon. It was designed by men and crumbled centuries ago. 'God sent storms of strong wind' to destroy the tower. Centuries later Jesus said, "Anyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain came down, the floods came, the winds blew and beat on that house and it fell, and great was its fall" (Matthew 7:26 & 27).

The destruction of the city of Babylon was prophesied years before it happened (Isaiah 13:1 to 22). Here are just a few verses from Isaiah regarding its desolation after destruction. 'Babylon will never (again) be inhabited, neither will it be lived in from generation to generation. The Arabian will not pitch a tent there, neither will shepherds make their flocks lie down there. Wild animals of the desert will lie there and their houses will be full of jackals. Ostriches will dwell there and wild goats will frolic there. Wolves will cry in their castles and jackals in the pleasant palaces. Her time is near to come and her days will not be prolonged'. The prophet Jeremiah (51:1 to 64) also prophesied the end of this city. Babylon was an important city during the rule of the Medes and Persians. Alexander the Great began to restore the city but died before his works were completed then the city declined dramatically. By the time Jesus came it was in ruins. Bricks taken from the ancient tower have been 'recycled' to build Baghdad and canals. A tiny little village exists in the southwest corner of where Babylon was. For centuries Babylon has been a desolate heap of mounds and the remains of ruined buildings, perfect for the wild animals to inhabit, just as Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied. The three highest mounds are the remains of Babel and Kasr. The tallest mound Amran, is the ruins of which was the temple of Marduk at the top of the Tower of Babylon. The business and residential district of the city was called Merkes. Looking at the ruins today, it is hard to imagine it was the hub of the Great city of Babylon, the city of luxury, extravagance and most tragically, child sacrifice. The Babylonian Empire lasted seventy years. Nebuchadnezzar (606 to 561 BC) ruled for forty-five of those years and was the real builder of the Babylonian Empire. The prophet Daniel was there from the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, through the reigns of five kings until Belshazzar and past the fall of Babylon (Daniel 1:6).

Amen and God bless you.

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