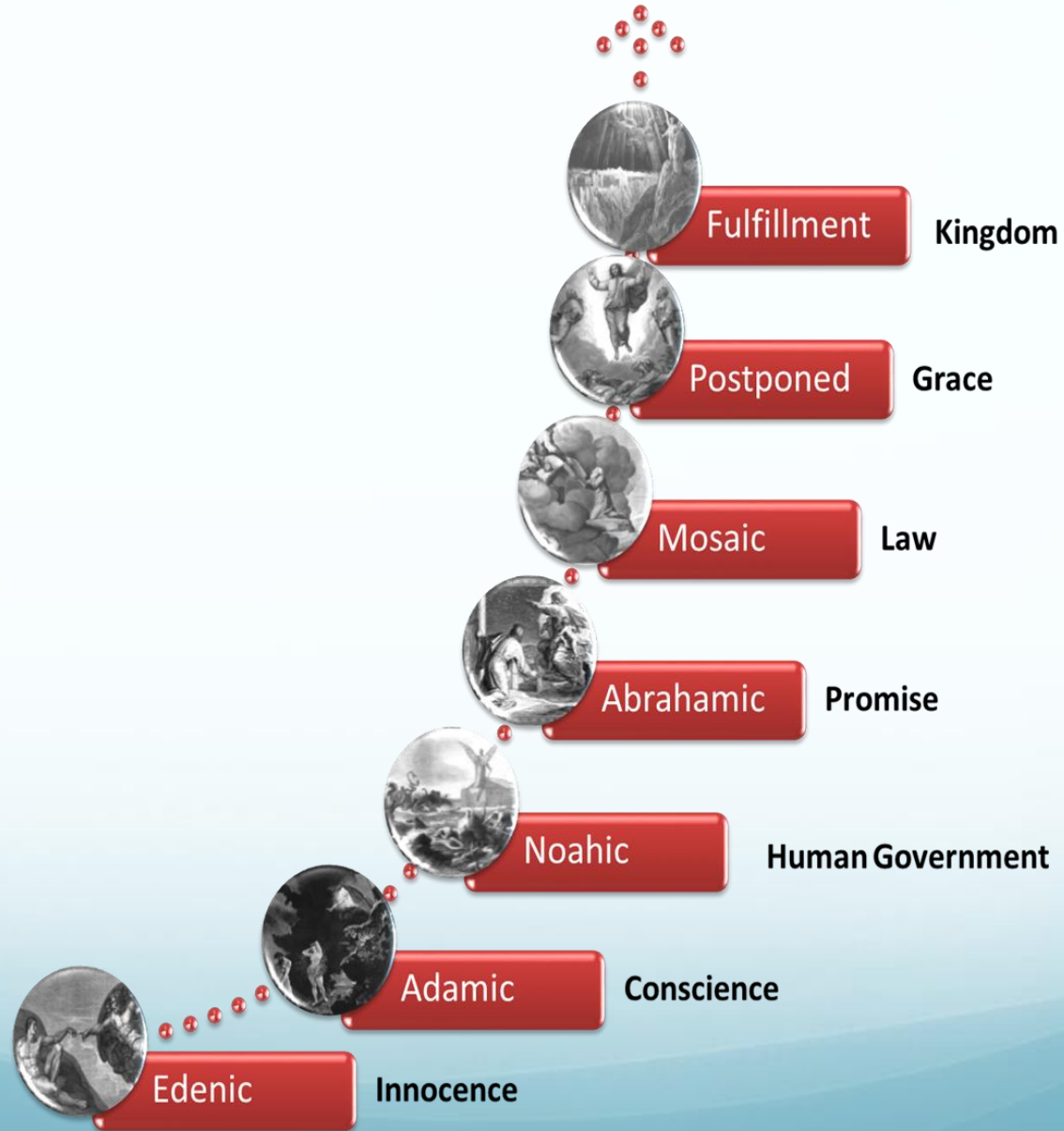


Genesis 11 Outline

- This section describes the confusion of all things.
- I. **The Sin** (11:1–4): All human beings attempt to unify themselves for their **own glory**.
- II. **The Sentence** (11:5–9): God scatters them by confusing their language at the tower of Babel.
- III. **The Settlement** (11:10–32): A history is given of Shem's descendants. Shem is the ancestor of Abraham.

- H. L. Willmington, *The Outline Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Ge 11:1–32.

Review of Covenants in the Bible



Review (Cont.)

Noahic Covenant (Genesis 8:20 – 9:17)

Parties to the Covenant

- God and Noah as the representative for mankind

Conditions of the Covenant

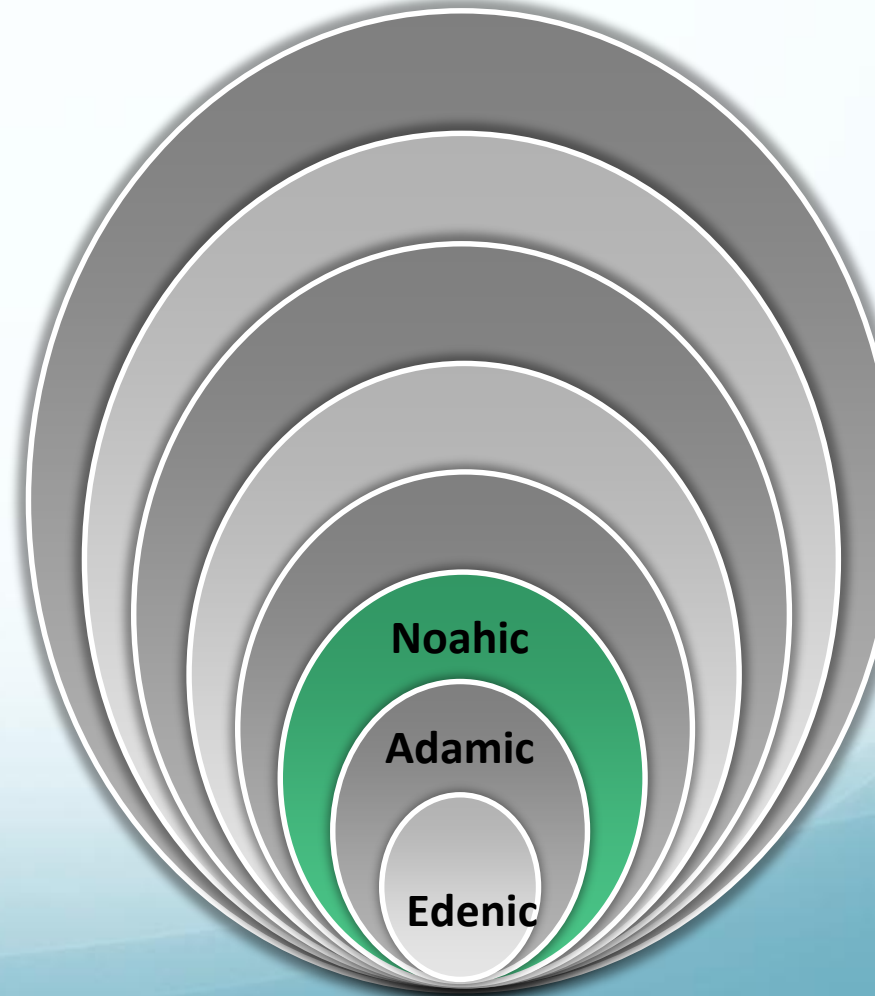
- Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth
- Man to be feared by animals
- Mankind allowed to eat meat
- Mankind not to eat or drink

blood

- Institution of capital punishment
- Never again a universal flood

Token of the Covenant

- Rainbow



Expectations of Covenants

Edenic responsibility

Be fruitful and multiply

Women to help man

Subdue harmonious Earth

Rule over animals

Every plant for food

Serve God and guard Eden

Not to eat of tree

The curse for unbelief

Pain in childbirth

Authority struggle

Earth antagonistic to man

Man irresponsible to animals

Plants of field for food

Expelled from Eden

Spiritual death to physical death

Noahic responsibility

Be fruitful and multiply

Institute government

Seasons are introduced

Man feared by animals

Meat for food

Fill the earth

Capital punishment

Johnston's Reading of Genesis 11



Genesis 10–11

- Sinful origin of the nations necessitating Israel's unique birth and redemptive purpose to these nations
- Gen 11:1-9 occurs first and Genesis 10 occurs second (Gen 10:5, 20)

prior 2 points from Andy Woods P. Points

- But chapter 10 has already divided the nations according to peoples and tongues. “Territories,” “clans,” “nations,” and “languages” occur three times, though not always in the same order (10:5, 20, 31). Probably 11:1–9 explains how the arrangement in chapter 10 came about. Genesis often goes outside the chronological order to arrange the material thematically

Ross, Bible Knowledge Commentary, p.44

Chronology of Genesis 10-11 (Cont.)

- Fruchtenbaum says it well, “Genesis 11:1-9 follows the Law of Recurrence because it explains how the dispersion of Ch. 10 took place. In Genesis 10, the Nations are already dispersed. How did they get that way? The answer is: by the events of Genesis 11. It also helps to explain why Nimrod later left Babel (Babylon) and went to Assyria. It also explains exactly what happened in the days of Peleg.”

The Chiastic/ Antithetical Parallelism Structured Account of vv. 1-9

Everything that mankind proposed in the first half (Gen. 11:3–4) was disposed of in the second (vv. 5–9), almost an undoing or reversal of their activity, even to the extent of parallel expressions.

- Allen P. Ross, Genesis, in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 44.

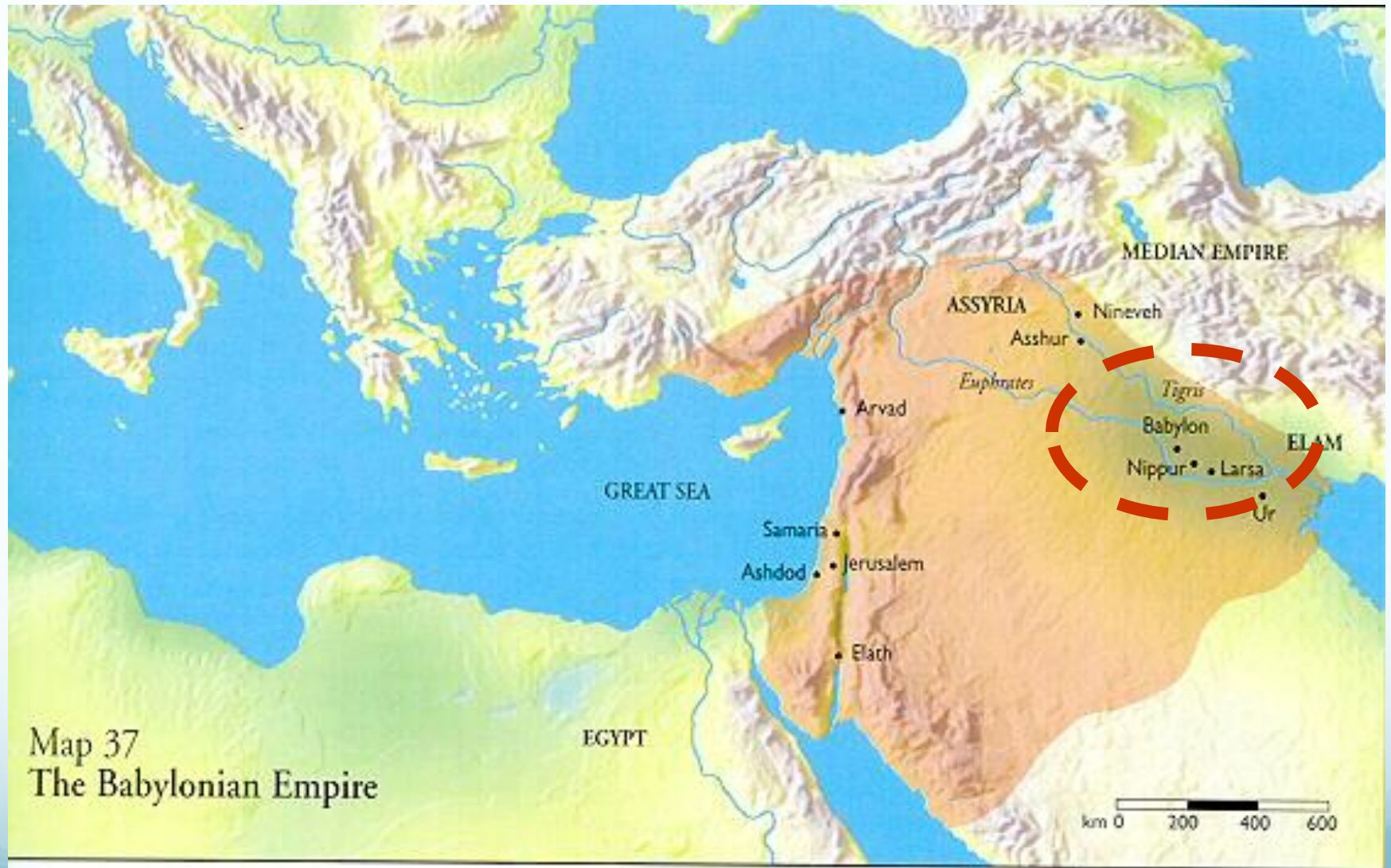
Antithetical Structure of Genesis 11:1–9

- A All the earth had one language (kol-hā'āreš šāpā 'e'āt) (1)
- B there (šām) (2)
- C one to another ('iš 'el-rē'ehû) (3)
- D Come, let's make bricks (hābâ nilbenâ lebēnîm) (3)
- E Let's make for ourselves (nibneh-lānû) (4)
- F a city and a tower ('îr ûmigdāl) (4)
- G And the Lord came down to see (wayyēred YHWH lir'ōt) (5)
- F' the city and the tower ('et-hā'îr we'et-hammigdāl) (5)
- E' that the humans built ('šer bānû benê hā'ādām) (5)
- D' Come, let's confuse (hābâ ... wenābelâ) (7)
- C' everyone the language of his neighbor ('iš šepat rē'ehû) (7)
- B' from there (miššām) (8)
- A' (confused) the language of the whole earth (šepat kol-hā'āreš) (9)

Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9)

- Narrative (Gen 11:1-2)
 - Discourse (Gen 11:3-4)
 - Transition (Gen 11:5)
 - Discourse (Gen 11:6-7)
- Narrative (Gen 11:8-9)

taken from Andy Woods' power point on Genesis



Review of Nimrod

- “Nimrod uses naked aggression in founding his empire”, *Waltke, p. 168*
- Might so great becomes so great, became proverbial in Israel (10:9)
- The name “Nimrod” comes from the Hebrew word meaning “to rebel”, and may have been assigned to him later in life. *Fruchtenbaum, p. 212*
- Many options of historical figures: Sargon the Great, Naram-sin, and many pagan god’s like Marduk, Gilgamesh, ...even Greek gods such as Orion, Ninos.
- 1 Chronicles 1:10 & Micah 5:6 are verses that mention Nimrod as the “mighty hunter”
- Verse 9 deals with relationship toward God: “mighty hunter before the Lord”the terminology implies antagonism; and opposition to God. *Fruchtenbaum, p. 213*

Nimrod Review (Cont.)

- Rabbinic interpretation , the phrase a “mighty hunter” means he snared men with his words & incited them to rebel against God. The phrase “before the Lord” is taken to mean to provoke God.
- Genesis 10:10-12: Nimrod builds empire in 2 stages
- First stage: land of Shinar, which is Babylon (Babel) on the Euphrates, thus planting the seeds of the future Babylonian captivity , also Erech, Accad, & Calneh
- Genesis 10:11-12: Second stage: the land of Assyria (land of Nimrod, Micah 5:6)
- Four cities built in Assyria: Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, & Resen
- Nineveh was capital of Assyria located on the Tigris River 2 hundred miles north of Babylon, thus planting seeds of the Assyrian Captivity

Verses 1-4

- “whole earth” & “same language” (11:1, 4 , 8, 9 [2x])
- Represents the whole earth tainted & united in sin
- Unity in language & habitation on the earth
- East: plain of Shinar; 50 miles south of modern day Baghdad
- Babel=Babylon: hotbed of idolatry & false religion
- Bible mentions Babylon 280X, second only to Jerusalem (300+X)
- Babylon easily be called “City of Satan”
- Became the source of the world’s religious evils

1-4 (Cont.)

- “plain in Shinar” meant good for cultivation, & Shinar=Babylonia
- They were resourceful: made bricks, since Mesopotamia didn’t have stones
- Verse 4 reveals the sinful/prideful/self worship heart
- Comparison to preceding “self-centeredness”
- Adam & Eve desired to “be like God” (Gen. 3:22)
- Sons of God (if you take the Seth view), desired to go outside of marriage commands (6:1-2, 4)
- The story provides a striking contrast between human opinion of its self-achievements and God’s viewpoint of such endeavors. Matthews, *The New American Commentary*

Verse 4 (Cont.)

- Here in 11:4, the tower builders seek meaning & fame & attempt to transgress to the dwelling place of God
- “build a city” desire to do so was prior to flood Gen. 4:17
- Now full fruition of desire of Nimrod to “build his kingdom” 10:10
- “A tower....whose top will reach into heaven”
- Or literally “with it’s peak into heaven”
- Babylon in Hebrew, Babel, means “the gate of God”
- Purposes: Astrology, signs of the zodiac; this act marks beginnings of false religion & idolatry

Verse 4 (Cont.)

- Revelation 17:5 is clear on identity of Babylon as “the mother of the harlots,” the mother of all false religious systems
- “Ziggurat Mountain” was the type of “tower” built here



“Tower” (Cont.)

- These towers served in mythopoeic thought as a gate to heaven
- Humanly created mountain gave access to heaven & served as a convenient stairway for the gods to come down into their temple & into the city
- Ziggurat Larsa named “The House of the Link Between heaven & Earth”
- Most famous discovered Ziggurat in Babylon, “The House of the Foundation of Heaven & Earth”
 - Ziggurat’s had small shrine on top, painted with blue enamel to blend with the celestial home of the gods
 - “to the heavens” shows they are vying with God Himself

First, there is a specific connection of this story with the account of the building of Babylon, recorded in the Akkadian Enuma Elish, tablet 6, lines 55–65.

When Marduk heard this,
Brightly glowed his features, like the day:
“Construct Babylon, whose building you have requested,
Let its brickwork be fashioned. You shall name it ‘The Sanctuary’.”
The Anunnaki applied the implement;
For one whole year they molded bricks.
When the second year arrived,
They raised high the head of Esagila equaling Apsu.
Having built a stage-tower as high as Apsu,
They set up in it an abode for Marduk, Enlil, [and] Ea.
In their presence he was seated in grandeur.
(ANET, pp. 68–69).

ALLEN P. ROSS

A Relevant Theological “Bunny Trail”

- “heresy in Christianity usually come from within”, J. Vernon McGee
- Babel origin of mother-child cult
- A lot of extra-Biblical tradition
- Nimrod’s wife, Semiramis, had a son named through an alleged “miraculous conception,” named Tammuz
- According to tradition Tammuz killed by wild animal & then resurrected
- From this legend, this practice spread to rest of the world, with different names (see next slide for chart from Woods)

Spread of the Mother-Child Cult

	Mother	Child
Assyria	Ishtar	Tammuz
Phoenicia	Astarte	Baal
Egypt	Isis	Osirus/Horus
Greece	Aphrodite	Eros
Rome	Venus	Cupid
Roman Catholicism	Mary	Jesus

Mother-Child Cult (Cont.)

- Roman Catholic “Mary to Jesus” heresies
- “Immaculate Conception”
- In order for Mary to be an appropriate habitation for Christ, God had to preserve her from the corruption of original sin
- Officially defined A.D. 1854 Pope Pius IX
- “the most blessed virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace & privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was reserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly & constantly by all the faithful.”

Roman Catholic view of Mary (Cont.)

- Mary is “the Mother of God”
- “As the mother of God, Mary transcends in dignity all created persons, angels & men, because the dignity of a creature is the greater the nearer it is to God.....as a true mother she is related by blood to the Son of God according to His human nature”
- Mary as “Co-redeemer & Mediatrix”
- “Mary’s very agreement to bear in her womb the human-divine Messiah shows a cooperation on her part with (and a taking part in) the divine plan of humankind’s redemption”
- 2nd Vatican Council: “the knot of Eve’s disobedience was united by Mary’s obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith” Comparing Mary with Eve, they claim: “death through Eve, life through Mary”

Roman Catholic view of Mary (Cont.)

- Mary is often portrayed as offering her son to the Father on Golgotha....hence it is argued, Mary played a pivotal role in the redemption of humankind.
- Mary is thus referred to as “co-redemptor”
- Roman Catholic apologist Mark Miravalle argues, “the prefix co does not mean equal, but means with. When Mary is called co-redemptrix, this is not to imply that she is on a level of equality with Jesus. Rather, she shared with her son in the saving work of redemption for humankind”
- “Mediatrice of grace”while Jesus is mediator between man & God; nevertheless, Mary holds a secondary mediatorship that is subordinate to that of Christ”
- “Mary is the mediatrix of all graces by her cooperation in the Incarnation; and is the mediatrix of all graces by her intercession in Heaven”
 - The last several slides used the information from Ron Rhodes book, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with Catholics*

Verse 4 “let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth”

- “name” connotes fame & progeny, these builders are futilely attempting to find significance and immortality in their own achievements”
Waltke, p. 179
- Another correspondence is reflected in the great pride of the builders. One of the purposes of the Babylonian creation epic at its composition was to show the preeminence of Babylon over all the cities of the country, and especially the supremacy of Marduk over all deities.
 - Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 240.

Verse 4 (Cont.)

- “They had a desire for a city, a desire for a tower, and now they had a desire for a name and reputation. This desire, too, existed before the flood (4:17). Here is the birth of humanism, something that is human-centered, with all the wrong motivation from pride”, Fructembaum, p. 222-223
- The motivation “lest we be scattered abroad the face of the whole earth” is a blatant act of rebellion against God in violation of the Noahic Covenant in Gen. 9:1 & 9:7, which commanded them to scatter throughout the world
- Waltke’s words ring true for this, “these proud sinners, like Cain, fear both a loss of place (i.e. existential meaning) in their isolation from God & perhaps from one another (4:14). Like Cain, they find their solution for meaning in an abiding city rivaling God” p. 180

Verse 5-9

- “The Lord came down to see the city”
- Since God is omnipresent & omniscient, this was no surprise
- This account is an anthropomorphism, a figure of speech ascribing human actions to a non-human
- This account emphasizes the greatness of God & the puniness of man by comparison
- The expression *came down* is only one of the corporeal phrases commonly found in the Pentateuch, and it means that God, as a righteous Judge, wished to investigate the matter thoroughly
 - U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part II, From Noah to Abraham, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1997), 244.

Verses 5-9 (Cont.)

- V. 6: 2 observations: they are “one” people, meaning one in rebellion against God’s commands
- “one language” again a unifying fact of these “rebels”
- “nothing they purpose to do will be impossible for them”
- God is exposing that humanity’s sin in building the tower is its refusal to live within God-given boundaries
- *Will not prove too hard [בְּצִרָה; yibbāṣēr; literally, ‘be cut off’, ‘be withheld’] for them]—that is, it will not be beyond their capacities.*
 - U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part II, From Noah to Abraham, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1997), 245.
- Rabbinical int.: “with such unity, they will enthrone idolatry for all time so that no man will be able to turn to the worship of the true God”

Verse 7: “let us go down and confuse their language”

- Judgment trip this time: to thwart evil man’s purpose
- The word “us” the plural pronoun, is used, implying a plurality in the Godhead
- Rabbinical interpretation of “us” is God was talking to the angels
- The plural forms ‘let us go down’, ‘let us confuse’, are to be explained in much the same way as ‘let us make man’ (Part I, pp. 55 f.). Here, too, the correct interpretation is that it is the plural of exhortation.
- Part I U. Cassuto, From Adam to Noah, English translation, Jerusalem 1961 (A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part I)

Verse 7 (Cont.)

- let us confuse” (v. 7), indicating the divine reversal of their lot. Here “confuse” (*bālal*) sets up the following pun concerning the name of the site (“Babel”). Confusion of language results in an absence of “understanding” that in turn condemns their project.
 - K. A. Mathews, Genesis 1-11:26, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 485.
- “Furthermore, the exact form of the word “confuse” in this passage is the reverse of the word for brick.....which is certainly not coincidental”
- “It shows that any human endeavour that contradicts God’s will is an utter exercise in futility”
 - Sarfati, p.661

Verse 8-9

- When read later as a commentary on Mesopotamian empires, the Babel story showed that the will of God superseded the designs of Gentile rule. They had not a heavenly directive, but rather a heavenly disgust.
 - K. A. Mathews, Genesis 1-11:26, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 485.
- Once “scattered,” the people of the plain can regain only through submission the security that Adam and Eve once enjoyed in the garden. That resignation to the command of God can come about only through the appointed patriarch Abram, who is called from among their own: Shem → Peleg → Abram. It was true of later Israel as well that the Gentiles must submit to the rule of God through an appointed vessel—Israel and its king

Verse 8-9 (Cont.)

- “The reason it was called Babel is because Jehovah did there confound the language of all the earth. This is an example of a paronomasia, a word play between two words of different origin but having similarity in sound”, Fructembaum, p.225
- “This is the origin of the multi-language world”
- “The one world language will be restored in the Messianic Kingdom (Zeph 3:9)

A Summary & Relevant Observations from Dr. Woods & Tim LaHaye from *The Popular Encyclopedia of Bible Prophecy*

- “According to Genesis 11:5-9, God frustrated this worldwide apostasy by confounding the builders’ language, thus inhibiting them from communicating with one another. God’s action had a purpose. Satan could lead humanity away from the truth more easily if only one government existed & this single government happened to fall into the hands of anti-God forces. However, with the existence of multiple nations, those nations that reject anti-God agendas can work together to restrain evil to some extent. Consequently, since the Tower of Babel incident, God has decreed that humanity be ordered according to national boundaries rather than global government (Deut. 32:8; Acts 17:26).

Woods & LaHaye Summary (Cont.)

- “However, Satan’s purpose throughout history has been to subvert this divine ordering of nations and bring the world back together so that he once again can have unlimited control of it through one man (Hitchcock, p. 43).
- Thus, Satan’s ambition may have always been to bring man back to Babylon under his authority. The fact that human rebellion could one day cycle back to where it all began comes as no surprise because of numerous parallel themes running through the books of Genesis and Revelation

A “Modern Day” Tower of Babel



Some Wiersbe Takeaways

- Babylon= world system that opposes God
- Hates Jesus Christ
- Appeals to the baser appetites of human nature
- Babylon= the opposite of the heavenly Jerusalem, city of the saints (Heb. 12:18ff)

Wiersbe Takeaways (Cont.)

- What humanity can't achieve by "proud towers" Jesus Christ achieved by dying on a humiliating cross
- All who trust in Him (Gal. 3:27) will share heaven together, regardless of race, nation, language, or tribe
- The world system calls "uniformity", inwardly it's tearing things apart

Wiersbe (Cont.)

- In one sense, Pentecost (Acts 2) was a reversal of Babel, for the people present in Jerusalem at Pentecost heard the praises of God in their own languages (Acts 2:1-12)
- Each person must make a choice. Will we identify with Babylon or Jerusalem, the worldly prostitute or the heavenly bride

An Excellent Summary Statement from Dr. Waltke

- “Thus society apart from God is totally unstable. On the one hand, people earnestly seek existential meaning and security in their collective unity. On the other hand, they have an insatiable appetite to consume what others possess. Because of this tension, the United Nations is doomed to frustration and failure in its quest for peace without the Prince of Peace.”
- **AMEN!!!**

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