



**“GREAT EVENTS OF THE BIBLE --
THE TOWER OF BABEL!”**

Introduction:

- A. (Slide #2) Text: Gen. 11:1-9

- B. (►) This Is Another Event That Has World-Wide Impact Upon The Human Race! This Changed Social Interactions And Relationships Over The Whole Earth As Long As The World Exists!

- C. (►) The Events At Shinar Are Not TOO Long After The Flood.
 - 1. Dates Used By James Usher:
 - a. Creation -- 4001 B.C.
 - b. Flood -- 600th year of Noah --2348 B.C.
 - c. Babel -- 2234 B.C.
 - 2. Imagine -- Babel only 114 years after the Flood!
 - 3. Noah would have been 715; he lived 350 years after the Flood; thus, it would have been 235 years before Noah died!

- D. (►) The Phrase “Tower Of Babel” ” Is NOT A Biblical Term.
 - 1. These events occurred at Shinar.
 - 2. It is called the “Tower Of Babel” because the people sought to build a tower; the place was called “Babel” because God confounded their language!

- E. (►) Is There A Contradiction Between Genesis 10 and Genesis 11?
 - 1. Chapter 10 gives information about the descendants of Japheth, Ham, and Shem.

2. Many take 3 passages and claim there is a contradiction between Genesis 10 and Genesis 11.
3. Why is this accusation made?
 - a. Because in Genesis 10:5 the statement is made about Japheth's descendants: "From these the coastland *peoples* of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, **everyone according to his language**, according to their families, into their nations."
 - b. In Genesis 10:20 the statement is made about Ham's descendants: "These *were* the sons of Ham, according to their families, **according to their languages**, in their lands *and* in their nations."
 - c. In Genesis 10:31 the statement is made about Ham's descendants: "These *were* the sons of Shem, according to their families, **according to their languages**, in their lands, according to their nations."
4. People make the accusation, people ALREADY SPOKE OTHER LANGUAGES BEFORE the events at Babel. Gen. 11:6-9
5. This is a misunderstanding of Hebrew literary style that tells an events and the proceeds to give more detail. You see the same type of literary style in Genesis 1 and 2 -- Day 6 Adam was created; in chapter 2 we are given more detail of what happened on that day and see the creation of Eve.
6. In Genesis 10 and 11 we are given the descendants of Noah, 10:1-32; then in chapter 11 we see WHY those descendants were scattered throughout the earth!
7. Another amazing attempt to explain this is the concocted "Documentary Hypothesis" -- the supposed J, E, D, P idea that the Pentateuch was NOT written by Moses but rather is a compilation of the writings of 4 different authors! [They say 10:5 is from P (Priestly) and 11:1-9 is from J (Jawhist).
 - a. The problem with this concocted hypothesis -- the Bible debunks it!
 - b. In Mk. 12:26 Jesus said Moses wrote Ex. 3:1-3 "But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the *burning bush passage*, how God spoke to him, saying, '*I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*'?"
 - c. Luke in Acts 3:22 cites Moses as the author of Dt. 18:15 "For Moses truly said to the fathers, '*The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.*'"
 - d. And Paul in Rom. 10:5 affirms that Moses wrote Lev. 18:5 "For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, '*The man who does those things shall live by them.*'"
8. (Slide #3) Map Of The Migration Of Shem, Ham, And Japheth's Descendants.
 - a. Japheth -- 10:2-5; they were maritime people. 10:5; Europe, Americas

- b. Ham -- 10:6-20 they were around the Red Sea, along the Mediterranean Sea, and in the land of Canaan; Egypt; Africa
- c. Shem -- 10:21-31; Arabia, Asia

I. (Slide #4) The Tower Of Babel Text Examined.

A. (Slide #5) Noah And His Sons Exited The Ark.

- B. (Slide #6)** “Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. ²And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. ³Then they said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly.’ They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. ⁴And they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’ ⁵But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. ⁶And the LORD said, ‘Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. ⁷Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.’ ⁸So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. ⁹Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.”

C. Truths From The Text:

1. **(Slide #7)** All people on earth spoke the same language! 1
 - a. IMAGINE that being true!
 - b. Everyone could communicate with everyone else on earth!
2. **(►)** Men migrated to the Plain of Shinar. 2
 - a. **(Slide #8)** Map
 1. This is the area near the eastern end of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.
 2. This is in present-day Iraq.
 - b. This was in the Biblical Empire of Babylon.
 - c. This was the land of Nimrod’s kingdom [He was a grandson of Ham -- 10:8-12].
 - d. Gen. 10:8-10 “Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. ⁹He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, ‘Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.’ ¹⁰And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.”
 - e. Many think that Nimrod was the impetus for the tower.

3. **(Slide #9)** Their gargantuan (gigantic, colossal) plan: to build a city and a tower to heaven! 3,4
 - a. They started with plans to make bricks.
 1. They did not have much stone in the area; they began to make bricks from mud.
 2. They used bitumen, somewhat like pitch [like we would use cement], and for waterproofing the brick.
 - a. This is a material that can be found naturally; it is black and like tar or asphalt in our understanding.
 - b. It can also be found in our culture as a residue from petroleum distillation.
 - c. It was used as an adhesive, it was also used for a sealant and waterproofing.
 - b. Why did they make this plan?
 1. “⁴And they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’”
 2. There were 3 reasons:
 - a. (►) “Let us make a name for ourselves!”
 1. The Hebrew word means “renown, fame, infamy, glory!”
 2. They were going to be “the talk of the earth!”
 3. Everyone was going to know about their plan and accomplishment!
 4. That makes those who suggest that they were trying to escape another Flood in the future seem implausible!
 - b. (►) We are going to build a city and a tower to heaven!
 1. **(Slide #10)** What did that tower look like? Many assume that this was a ziggurat -- a stepped pyramid.
 - a. Why?
 - b. Because many of them have been found in archeology in that area -- in fact about 30.
 - c. What is interesting, there was not just one in each city; one city, Kish had 3.
 - d. They describe the ziggurat as a tomb for a god or a king.
 - e. Typically people did not live in these cities; they had public buildings administrative offices, granaries, and a temple -- the city was in essence a temple complex.
 - f. They were built with massive piles of mud in the center; the façade was made of baked bricks; steps led up to the top of the ziggurat; they were square; they ranged from 60’ per side to about 200’; these structures had steps up to the top.
 - g. On the top was a small structure to accommodate their god. It was NOT a place where the people went to worship; it was a place where supposedly the god

- was supposed to **come down** to the temple, receive worship, and bless his people.
- h. Thus many posited that this tower was tall; that the phrase “a tower whose top *is* in the heavens” is merely an idiom that means that it was of impressive height, and that the phrase “God came down” suggests that it really was a ziggurat!
 2. I believe that this is an interesting speculation; however, it seems to me to be pure speculation!
 3. The Hebrews did not have a word for “ziggurat;” but the Hebrew word “migdal” translated “tower” in Gen. 11:4 is a word that describes a tower of a fortified city or a watchtower. (It is used of an elevated place as a pulpit in Neh. 8:4)
 - a. **(Slide #11)** Artist’s rendition of the Tower of Babel - - Pieter Brueghel the Elder, 1563.
 - b. **(Slide #12)** Another artist’s rendition of the Tower of Babel -- From The Bedford Book Of Hours.
 - c. **(Slide #13)** Another artist’s rendition of the Tower of Babel.
 4. How tall have people speculated that the Tower Of Babel was?
 - a. Book of Jubilees -- 8,150’ or 1.55 miles
 - b. Giovanni Villani in 1300 posited 3.68 miles high
 - c. The 17th-century historian Verstegan said it was 4.7 miles high. He also said it was wider than it was high, more like a mountain than a tower.
 5. J.E. Gordan in a book entitled *Structures or why things don't fall down* said it could be built to 1.3 miles before they bottom bricks would start to crush; however, if the walls were tapered, they could have built it to where they would have begun to run out of oxygen and had trouble breathing before the walls would have crushed.
 - c. **(Slide #14)** “lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”
 1. They were comfortable; they wanted to stay together!
 2. Contrast that with God’s command to Noah and his family in Gen. 9:1 when they exited the Ark: “So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.’”
 3. God was not condemning building or urbanization; these people simply were rebelling against God’s plan and refusing to obey His command!
 4. Josephus described this as a hubristic [arrogant; excessively proud] act of defiance against God order by the arrogant tyrant Nimrod.

4. **(Slide #15)** God, seeing their plans, was terrible displeased! 5,6
 - a. The Lord “came down.”
 - b. He did NOT come down to find out what they were doing; He already knew that! He is omniscient!
 - c. Rather than living at the top of the tower; God comes in displeasure!
 - d. He will stop this rebellious and prideful plan they have devised!
 - e. Was He concerned that in their arrogant disobedience they might be headed into the same wickedness of their forefathers who were destroyed in the Flood?

5. **(►)** God’s stratagem to stop man’s plan -- He confounded men’s languages! 7
 - a. Why is it known as “Babel?” Because God confounded men’s speech which resulted in men spreading throughout the world.
 - b. He “confused” or “jumbled” their languages!
 - c. This action “stopped them in their tracks!”
 - d. **(Slide #16)** Thus the work could not continue!
 - e. **(Slide #17)** This event must have been totally terrifying!

6. **(Slide #18)** The result of confounding men’s languages: men dispersed throughout the earth! 8
 - a. Remember that in Chapter 10 the genealogies of Japheth, Ham, and Shem were given. From their descendants arose 70 nations; thus many assume that this is the origin of 70 different languages!
 - b. Watch this -- the Bible does not SAY that the tower was destroyed! Rather, it just says the people stopped building and were scattered across the face of the earth!
 - c. Many stories of tradition claim that it was destroyed; some say it occurred by a great wind; some claim that it was burnt; others claim it was swallowed into the earth;

II. (Slide #19) Great Truths From This Text.

- A. **(►)** When Men Seek To “Make A Name For Themselves,” They Put Themselves At Odds With God!

- B. **(►)** When Men Defy God’s Commands, They Put Themselves At Odds With Him!

- C. **(►)** Pride Is SO Destructive!
 1. Pr. 16:18 “Pride *goes* before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.”

2. I Jn. 2:16 “For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.”
 3. Js. 4:6 “But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘*God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.*’ ”
 4. Pr. 8:13 “The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.”
- D. (Slide #20) Oh How Easily Man Forgets! Never Forget God’s Punishments Of Sin!
1. Keep in mind that this occurs AFTER the Flood.
 2. It is about 114 years after the Flood!
 3. It seems that man has again turned to disobedience and rebellion against God!
- E. (►) Today We Still Face The Struggles Of The Consequences Of The Tower Of Babel!
1. It is suggested that in 2014 there were 6,900 distinct languages. Ethnologue gave the number of 7,106 languages in 2014.
 - a. About 2,000 of those languages have fewer than 1,000 speakers.
 - b. The largest is Mandarin Chinese -- there are 1,213,000,000 people in the world that speak that language.
 2. And yet, God provided a way for all that confusion to be overcome after Christ came into the world -- the Apostles and early Christians could speak in tongues (foreign languages) so people of all nations could hear the Gospel!
 - a. I Cor. 12:10 “to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another ***different kinds of tongues***, to another the **interpretation of tongues**.”

- b. Ac. 2:7-13 “Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?’ ⁸And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs--we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.’ ¹²So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’”
 - c. He intended for the Gospel to be made available to “all nations” Mt. 28:19; “to every creature” Mk. 16:15; “in all the world” Col. 1:6; “was preached to every creature under heaven” Col. 1:23.
- 3. Today we live in an AMAZING time with the internet, with translation programs -- what a great opportunity for people all over the world to learn the Gospel!

F. (►) Sometimes God Has To Nudge People To Obey Him!

- 1. The people of Shinar did not want to populate the world; they wanted to stay together!
- 2. The antitype is seen in Jerusalem in the First Century -- they Christians were SO THRILLED to see the miraculous events, to fellowship other Christians, and to rejoice in Jesus that they wanted to stay there and not return home!
 - a. However, His plan was to take the Gospel to “Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” This was the commission to the Apostles in Ac. 1:8
 - b. God finally used the persecution of the Church by Saul and other Jewish opponents to spread the Gospel throughout the world!
 - 1. Ac. 8:1 “Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.”
 - 2. Ac. 8:4 “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”
 - 3. Finally it went to Samaria -- Ac. 8:5-25 and to Gaza Ac. 8:26-40
 - 4. Then it went to the Gentiles -- Ac. 10
 - 5. And Paul on his Three Missionary Journeys took the Gospel to Asia and Europe!

3. And Christians today have to be prodded to take the Gospel outside the doors of our buildings, outside our homes, outside our comfort zones and spheres of knowledge -- to open up our mouths and tell the world about the Gospel!
 - a. I pray it will not require persecution to make us move!
 - b. I pray it will not take calamity to move us.
 - c. I pray we will cultivate obedient hearts that LONG for people to hear the saving message of Jesus and the Gospel!
4. Don't make God have to nudge you -- get up; be active, be busy, be about our Father's business! Lk. 2:49
5. Don't let comfort and your comfort zone stifle your evangelistic fervor, zeal, and outreach wherever you can do so in the world!!!!

G. God DID "Come Down!"

1. The ziggurats were built as a place for the gods of idolaters to supposedly "come down."
2. The Biblical message -- "God DID 'come down.'"
3. Yes, in Genesis 11, God came down in anger and stopped the arrogant attempt of Noah's descendants!
4. But, there is a real, living Godhead and One of Them DID "COME DOWN!"
 - a. Jesus Christ!
 - b. He left the glory, perfection, and fellowship of Heaven to come to this earth.
 - c. He live in a body of flesh; He lived a perfect life and offered Himself as the propitiation for sinners; He suffered a horrendous Death in order to shed His Blood and to offer it for man's sins!
 - d. He arose and ascended back to Heaven; His mission of providing redemption was accomplished.
6. He calls upon sinners to look to His mission, to see their personal need for a Savior, and to come to Him for salvation! Believe in Him, repent of sins, confess Him, and be baptized in order to be saved by His Blood!