

GENESIS

Lesson 20

The Tower of Babel, Genesis 11:1-9

The story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis Chapter 11 is an important story in the early chapters of the book. However, we need to remember that God did not place that story here because of the tower itself. So, if it's not solely about the tower, then what is the purpose? We will be pursuing the answer to this question in this lesson, i.e., why is the story of the Tower of Babel in the Bible?

Our first step will be to consider both the tower and the people of Babel. If you do any research or study about the tower, you will discover many theories regarding (1) where it was built, (2) its construction, (3) its height and dimensions, and (4) its purpose.

What does Genesis Chapter 11 tell us about each of these four things?

1. Where was the tower built? (see Genesis 8:4 as well as Genesis 11:1-2)
2. What material was used to build the tower? (see Genesis 11:3)
3. What was the height of the tower at the time that God confused their language? (see Genesis 11:4-5)
4. What was the purpose of building the tower? (see Genesis 11:4)
5. Let's refresh our memory here. Do you recall what God's intended purpose was for the survivors of the Great Flood, i.e., the descendants of Noah and his sons? (see Genesis 9:7)



Wes Husted & Dr. Carol Kobbs (co-Director of Tall el-Hammam excavation). Wes is holding a 25-lb mud brick, similar in consistency to those probably used in the construction of the Tower of Babel.

So, we see from the above passages that the people were attempting to avoid doing God's will, which was to have them multiply and fill and earth. Instead, they were building this tower as a way of keeping everyone in one central location and not "scattered over the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4)

Continuing our study:

6. What did God observe when, "the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building?" (see Genesis 11:5-7 and 1 John 2:16)

7. God knows that confusing their language will rid them of their worldly pride. Read Genesis 11:7. Who is identified as having confused their language? How does that description compare to what is asserted in Genesis 11:8-9? In verses 8-9, who is the source of confusing their language?

8. After their language was confused, did anyone scatter them, or did the people scatter on their own? (see Genesis 11:8-9)

9. Where does Genesis 11 tell us that all of the people, who are now speaking many languages, went when they were scattered? Did this affect the language of the whole world? (see Genesis 11:9)

In summary then, we can see that this lesson entitled the Tower of Babel isn't about where it was built, or how high it was, or the date on which the event happened. In fact, it is worth noting that the LORD did not destroy what they had built, neither the tower nor the city. This lesson is about following God's will and not man's. It is about seeking out the LORD's wisdom and not mankind's. While endless debates will continue regarding the veracity of the tower story, how high it was, what shape it was, or how big it was, these arguments are only a smoke screen. We know from what we see around us today that the story is real, and that what is important for us as believers to see is that mankind's desire is, and has always been, to put itself above God.

We also see that God is unchanging, and His word will always accomplish His will. Isaiah 55:11 tells us that "...my word that goes out from my mouth; it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." Furthermore, Jesus tells us that he is not of this world. As followers of him, our challenge is to keep ourselves from the ways of this world and to be constantly seeking his will.

We have seen in this lesson that rebelling against God brings judgment. This is as true today as it was in the days of Tower of Babel.

Have a great week, everyone!

In Christ, **Wes**