

# GENESIS 10:8-12 & 11:1-9

## Introduction

The Bible begins and ends by describing two prominent cities:

^ The first city is Babylon. You encounter Babylon in Genesis and in Revelation. In Genesis Ten and Eleven you read of Babylon's founding by a sinful man; in Revelation Seventeen and Eighteen you read of Babylon's founding by the Man of Sin. Nimrod establishes the former Babylon in his rebellion against God; the Antichrist *will* establish the future Babylon in his rebellion against God.

% The second prominent city is New Jerusalem. In Genesis Twelve, God calls Abraham out of his country and promises him that he will become a great nation. While "New Jerusalem" is not mentioned by name, Abraham is described in Hebrews 11:10 as looking "...for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The Book of Hebrews goes on to describe the city Abraham looked for as the heavenly city New Jerusalem - the city being prepared in heaven for the eternal habitation of those who love Him. The Bible closes in Revelation with a description of this same city, saying, (Revelation 21:1-2) "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Your destination is New Jerusalem! In the meanwhile, you are still in danger from Babylon.

The Apostle Peter closed his first letter saying, "She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you..." (1 Peter 5:13). This is a closing salutation from the Church in the city Peter was writing from. Peter was writing from Rome - but he said he was in "Babylon." Why would he do this? The first century Christians evidently felt that this world was a dangerous "Babylon" to them as they journeyed through it with their own hopes set on their future destination, New Jerusalem!

What city do *you* live in? You live in "Babylon." What city are *you* looking for? You are looking for New Jerusalem.

#1 You Are Living In Old Babylon -  
A City Whose Builder And Maker Is The Enemy Of God

Babylon is a huge subject in the Bible. In Genesis you see it's founding by Nimrod. In Revelation you see it's future founding by Antichrist.

Genesis 10:8 Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth.

Genesis 10:9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD."

Nimrod means "let's rebel."<sup>1</sup> He began to be "a mighty one" - a tyrant. "He was a mighty hunter *against* the Lord." Nimrod may have hunted game, but this phrase describes him hunting other men; not for sport, but to subdue them. He set himself against God by searching out men, subduing them, and bringing them under his own rule. The phrase, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter against the Lord," seems to have become a description of those who follow in Nimrod's ways: Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Napoleon, Hitler, and all those who seek to subdue and dominate others.

v There are also "little Nimrod's"; you encounter them throughout your lifetime, at work, at school, in the Church...

Genesis 10:10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Genesis 10:11 From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah,

Genesis 10:12 and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that *is* the principal city).

Nimrod established a confederacy of eight cities. He sought to rule the world from behind the strength of his walls. Men often put their trust in the strength of this world, only to inevitably find that the things of this world are passing away.

The New King James reads, "Calah (that is the principal city)." The phrase simply means that Calah was also a great city. You'll note that verse 10 indicates that "the beginning of his kingdom was Babel."

Babel, or Babylon, is described for you in detail in Chapter Eleven.

Genesis 11:1 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.

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

The word "journeyed" means "to pick up stakes." In compliance to God's word, men were living in tents and temporary dwellings as they went out to fill the whole earth. Coming to the plain of Shinar, they settled there against God's clear commandment.

v They made a good beginning, but they left off from following God's commands...

Genesis 11:3 Then 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.

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<sup>1</sup>Morris, The Genesis Record; Pink, Gleanings From Genesis.

There were no stones to build with. In their rebellion they developed a whole new technology and a new industry. They learned how to make and fire brick, and how to use a naturally occurring pitch, called asphalt or bitumen, as a cement. This asphalt is formed by the decomposition of animal and vegetable substances and is abundant even today in that region of the world.

v Men can be creative and inventive in their rebellion and backsliding...

v The beautiful city and its Tower were held together by decomposed slime...And it was all highly combustible...

The central feature of the city was its Tower, the Tower of Babel.

Genesis 11:4 And 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.

The Tower of Babel was not a stairway to heaven. It was a Temple upon which to worship the starry hosts of the heavens, and the spirits that the people believed were represented by the stars and the planets. It was certainly a Satanically inspired religion, an attempt by the devil to command and receive the worship that men ought to render to God.

We know something about the Tower being a Temple because other, lesser towers have been excavated. One such tower, called the Burs Nimrûd, is described by archaeologists as follows:

"The edifice...was built of kiln-burnt bricks, and the building rose in seven receding stages, in conformity with the [Babylonian] planetary system...The entire original height...would thus have been 156 feet...the different stages were colored after the hue of the planets to which they were respectively dedicated...On the seventh stage there was probably placed the ark or tabernacle...[which] must have nearly covered the top of the seventh story...The whole [structure] formed a kind of oblique pyramid."<sup>2</sup>

Extensive historical information exists documenting the Babylonian religion established at the Tower of Babel. Dr. Henry Morris, summarizing the information, writes:

"It was a monstrous system of evolutionary, polytheistic, pantheistic, spiritistic, astrological idolatry."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>J, F, & B, p. 124.

<sup>3</sup>quoted in my study notes on Revelation 17.

We know that the wife of Nimrod became the head of this religious system. She was known by the name Semiramis. She gave birth to a son who she claimed was conceived miraculously. This son, Tammuz, was considered a savior. Both Semiramis and her son were worshipped. She was depicted as the queen of heaven, seen holding her infant son in her arms. There was a priesthood which promoted the worship of mother and child. Among their practices was that of sprinkling holy water as a religious ritual. They also established an order of virgins who dedicated themselves to the Temple.

Genesis 11:5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.

Genesis 11:6 And 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.

Genesis 11:7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

Genesis 11:8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.

Genesis 11:9 Therefore 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.

"Babel" has various meanings. Some say it means "gate of god." Others point to it as an apt description of the confusion of languages - *babblings!*

v Some things have different meanings depending on your point of view...Much of the wisdom and knowledge men are communicating today is really only so much babbling from heaven's perspective.

Ancient Babylon was a metropolis with a mystery religion. The future Babylon, described in Revelation, is also a real metropolis with a mystery religion. Ancient Babylon was founded by a sinful man in rebellion against the God of heaven - a tyrannical hunter of men who formed a confederacy to rule the world. The future Babylon, described in Revelation, is founded by the man of sin in rebellion against the God of heaven - a tyrannical hunter of men who will form a confederacy to rule the world.

More to the point, however, is the danger you and I face from living in "Babylon" everyday! Peter and the first century Church understood that the whole world was "Babylon," a dangerous place for strangers and pilgrims on their way home to New Jerusalem.

Listen to this description of the saints who have preceded us to heaven:

Hebrews 11:13-16 "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But

now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."

Once heaven gripped their hearts, their thoughts were ever on their home there. Many of them were literally "strangers and pilgrims" - living nomadically in tents and wandering from place to place. Those who lived in this world's cities considered them "Babylon."

There are many dangers living in Babylon, more than we could list today. Here are just a few, from our text in Genesis Eleven:

v In Babylon, "they found a plain...and dwelt there" (v2).

Camping can be fun...but you really appreciate life's comforts afterwards! Your Christian life is like *spiritual camping*. You're not to get too comfortable in this world. In each of our lives there will be plains that tempt us to put up our tents in favor of something that seems more comfortable.

v In Babylon they said, "Come, let us make bricks..." (v3).

The city and its Tower would seem glorious, but brick manufacturing was no easy task. There is a certain pride we take in our own efforts that can become stumbling - especially if much of our time is dedicated to brick making activities that build nothing for the Kingdom of God.

v In Babylon they said, "Come, let us build ourselves...a tower whose top is in the heavens..." (v4).

The "Babylon" in which you live is filled with towers claiming to reach heaven. We call them religions. They are damnable false systems of works that ultimately worship Satan, leading multiplied millions of souls to Hades.

v In Babylon they said, "let us make a name for ourselves..." (v4).

The word for "name" is "shem" - the same as the name of Noah's son through whom God would send the Savior. God told Noah that He would bless Shem and his descendants; these men took that name upon themselves. There are many in "Babylon" who take for themselves the name "Christian," but who are not the spiritual offspring of heaven.

## #2 You Are Looking For New Jerusalem - The City Whose Builder And Maker Is God

The New Testament has a great deal to say about the New Jerusalem:

Hebrews 11:10 ...the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

Hebrews 12:22 ...the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...

Hebrews 13:14 ...here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.

John 14:2-3 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also."

It is fully and wonderfully described in Revelation Twenty-one and Twenty-two, coming down out of heaven as the eternal habitation of God's saints.

Here are just a few observations, in comparing New Jerusalem with what we've learned about "Babylon":

v Babylon was built on desert plain from fired bricks held together with slime. These cannot begin to be compared to the place and the materials Jesus is using to build your mansion in New Jerusalem! 1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

v In Babylon they built with bricks. While you await your home in New Jerusalem, *you* are a "living stone" - part of a supernatural building project here on earth, the Church of Jesus Christ. Rather than being held together by slime, God the Holy Spirit lives within you to produce a spiritual unity.

v The Babylonian religion depended upon the worship and ritual of the Temple atop their Tower. You worship God anywhere, in Spirit and in truth. The Name of the Lord is your strong tower:

Proverbs 18:10 The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.

v In ancient Babylon they proclaimed their own name. In our "Babylon" we have been commissioned as ambassadors to proclaim Jesus, the Name above all names.

Acts 4:12 "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

I prefer looking for New Jerusalem to living in old "Babylon"!

## Conclusion

God confused the language of men. He will one day restore mankind to a single language:

Zephaniah 3:9 "For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, That they all may call on the name of the LORD, To serve Him with one accord."

"Then" looks forward, beyond our own day, to the return of Jesus Christ to earth in His Second Coming. He will establish God's Kingdom of Heaven on earth for one thousand years, immediately preceding Eternity.

You can't help but think of the Day of Pentecost, when men from all over the known world were gathered together in Jerusalem. As God the Holy Spirit descended upon the Church, the believers spoke and "...the multitude came together...because everyone heard them speak in his own language" (Acts 2:6). God gave them a foretaste of the coming of the kingdom.

The whole phrase in Acts 2:6 reads, "...the multitude came together, and were *confused*, because everyone heard them speak in his own language." The confusion of languages was removed and men were confused! Peter took the time to open up the Scriptures to them and 3,000 were saved.

The things of God, especially concerning prophecy and the Last Days, are often confusing to the unbeliever. They need someone to open up the Scriptures to them. It may as well be *you!*