

## THE VIEW FROM ABOVE THE TOWER (Gen. 11:1-9)

What a week it has been! You would have to look long and hard to find anything like it in history! It's embarrassing. Yet, it's easy to say it is all the politicians' fault ... but, we voted for them! We are living in desperate times reminiscent of Judges 21:25, *every man did that which was right in his own eyes*. ... There is no respect for the political process and when the political process has become *so* damaged, sinister powers emerge, civil unrest erupts, and those who would seek to exploit are emboldened. Lest you despair, remember the wise words from King Solomon, **Prov. 19:21** *There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand ... and *that's* what we shall see this evening.*

King Solomon also said, **Ecclesiastes 1:9** *there is no new thing under the sun ... and it is true for we are in the times similar to Gen. 6:5 when GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ... Remember also how Jesus referred to those years before the Flood, **Lk. 17:26** as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. <sup>27</sup> They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage ... That's what's happening today, on a larger scale!*

How long can God 'stand back' without intervening? Let's read how an ancient society 'advanced', **Gen. 11:1** *And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. <sup>4</sup>And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. <sup>5</sup>And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. <sup>7</sup>Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. <sup>8</sup>So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. <sup>9</sup>Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.*

Notice the direction these people took, **Gen. 11:2** *And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east. ... Let's go back to the beginning. When Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, they began eastward, **Gen. 3:24** So he [*God*] drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims ...*

Then, after Cain had killed his brother Abel, [Gen. 4:16](#) Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. ... Travelling east indicated travelling away from God.

As civilisation ‘developed’, and became wiser in their own counsel, they defied anything to do with God, and He judged them with the Flood. After the Flood, with the new generations, the old habits re-surfaced and the people became as bad as ever they were! The problem was exacerbated because communication was so easy for everyone everywhere spoke the same language ([Gen. 11:1](#)) ... It was easier to spread their vile and the world became no better than before Noah and the Flood.

Here is an example from Noah’s own family ... a Godly family, but sin also affects Godly families. Sometime after the flood had subsided and normal services had been resumed Noah came in from a hard day’s work, lay down in his tent, [And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was \*uncovered\* within his tent \(\[Gen. 9:21\]\(#\)\)](#). For whatever reason, his son, - Ham, - entered his father’s tent, and saw his father *uncovered*. (This was before underwear.)

Now, any decent person would immediately have averted their eyes, but instead, Ham *oogled* his father. What kind of a sick individual was he *gawping* at his naked five-hundred-year old father?! ... But he didn’t stop there, for he went further and he took advantage, [22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.](#) ... What kind of a pervert would go and boast to his brothers about such a thing?! ... It is even more sickening when you understand what he actually did. [Lev. 20:17](#) explains the phrase, ‘seeing the nakedness of’, [Lev. 20:17 And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness; it is a wicked thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people: he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity.](#)

... Ham, - who was married for he had brought his wife with him in the ark, - went into his father’s tent, and ... [22 ... saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.](#) [23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.](#) ... Ham had gone in and committed a lewd and perverse sordid sexual act with his father ... Then when the drunken Noah awoke and found his son had abused his body, he cursed him, [25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.](#) ... That is what was going on in those days too!

... We are then given a brief genealogy of Ham's descendants, **Gen. 10:6** *And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.* **7** *And the sons of Cush ...* **8** *And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth ...* **10** *And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel ... in the land of Shinar [*'country of two rivers'*]. The land of Shinar is Babylonia, Chaldea ... and this was the furthest point eastward so far. It was the greatest distance geographically from when Adam and Eve left the presence of God in Eden ... and these people, therefore, were as far away from God as they possibly could manage!*

Travelling further away from God, they had managed to accumulate an increasing array of sinful practices, for example, bigamy (**Gen. 4:19** *And Lamech took unto him two wives*) and attempting to justify murder (**Gen. 4:24** *If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold*). Also, the descendants of righteous Shem had allowed their standards to drop and so they had married the descendants of Cain (**Gen. 6:2**). Morality was at its lowest, **Lk. 17:27** *They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage ...* They were enjoying their lifestyle and they had no notion of giving it up! ... Notice also, there was no 'Lord's Day' for every day was the same. And then, their intentions were not only to reach eastward ... but their intentions also developed into reaching *upward* ... to take God's place! ... **Their direction.**

**THEIR DESIGN** **4** *let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.* These people were staggeringly ambitious! No wonder they covered so much ground in a relatively short period of time! They had dreams and aspirations which inspired them to become the masters of their own destiny. They were enterprising and enthusiastic, and. Shinar was as far as they intended going.

But that, in itself, was disobedience to God for He had given the command to our first parents, - and for mankind, - *to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth* (**Gen. 1:28**). But no, these people had their plans which did not include anything God had previously instructed. Shinar was as far as they were prepared to go, and they did not want to be *scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth*. Life was good, and God was shut out!

And they set up their own kingdom in Babel, ruled over by the rebel Nimrod (**Gen. 10:10**) ... and everything was working well for them. They became industrialised, and they were producing the greatest building supplies.

Business was booming, the economy was soaring, and they were doing really well! In fact, they were doing so well, they give themselves the most ambitious task to ‘show off’ and boast about their abilities. ... They contrived a plan to do what nobody ever thought possible, - they decided to build a magnificent city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven. This would make them a great name and they would be the envy of the nations! ... This was **their design** ... and it included getting as far away from God as they possibly could. To rule God *out* of their lives! ... Every conceivable sin was encouraged to be flaunted ‘out in the open’, and they would not stop until they had built this tower up to the sky. **Their Direction ... Their Design ...** But they didn’t reckon on this ...

**THEIR DISRUPTION** v.8 the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth ... The builders were saying, “Let’s go up!” ... And God replied by saying, “Let’s go down!” ... It does not pay to go against God’s will! It benefits no society being a rebel against God for God knew exactly what was going on! ... And notice the recurring title ... v.5 the LORD ... v.6 the LORD ... v.8 the LORD ... v.9 the LORD ... the LORD ... Here is the reminder, **I Sam. 2:2** There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee. ... *God is sovereign!*

This psalmist decried the people of his day, **Ps. 2:1** Why do ... the people imagine a vain thing? <sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord ... *That’s* what was happening in Shinar. They were working to get rid of God, ... they did not know it, but here is what He was doing, <sup>4</sup> He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. ... They are boasting about building a lousy tower, but what about the mountains God made, and the oceans, and the rivers ... what about when He made the sun and the moon and stars ... and the tiny little baby in the womb? They considered they were on a par with, - if not greater, - than God!

They believed they had ‘progressed’ more than any previous generation ... *without God*, - they did not need Him but, at the same time, even though they tried to get rid of Him out of their minds, they couldn’t because they knew, - and they admitted it in Gen. 11:4, - they were in danger of being scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. ... It is as Paul wrote, **Rom. 1:20** ... they are without excuse

They knew God would scatter them ... and scatter them He did! And He also did something which was completely unheard of. ... He confused their language so they could not understand each other. ... These people in Shinar

had ‘poked fun’ at God by speaking about Him in derogatory terms ... blissfully unaware they were accountable to Him.

What happened next? Well, God *barged* in *uninvited* and their project came to an end. He did to them the very thing they were afraid He would do, <sup>8</sup> the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth ... God always gets His way! ... Remember their defiance, <sup>4</sup> Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, ... and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. ... *You don't argue with God and succeed!* He always gets His way!

We could continue to study how Babel developed into the city of Babylon, which became the seat of the most powerful empire of its day, the Babylonian Empire. We could also trace it through the Prophets and into the Book of Revelation and see how, - once again, they will ‘build’ themselves up, and Babylon will rise again to become the seat of the Antichrist, and then the Lord will defeat them, **Rev. 17:6** *these shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings. ... That's another study, but for now, we are looking forward to **Rev. 21:2** the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband ... the great announcement which heralds, <sup>3</sup> Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. ... It's not the *tower*, but the *tabernacle*, we are looking for!*

In a sense, Pentecost 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), - there was no confusion of tongues on that day ... it was as if there was only one language once again. And that is how it will be when all the Redeemed are gathered **Rev. 5:9** *out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ... and we shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9). ... As Zephaniah also prophesied, **Zeph. 3:9** then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.*

Aren't you glad you study God's Word for He tells you how it is all going to end up! So, don't lose heart with what is going on around us for we know how the story ends, and we know *Who* wins. ... Watch the view from *above* the tower, and don't look down, but keep *looking up!* Amen.