

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

Society and religion are interwoven. What I mean is ... when you look at what a country believes, it forms their standards and their agenda. For example, you look back on the ancient religions of Rome and Greece, with their temple priests and priestesses shamelessly promoting prostitution, because that was the kind of permissive religion the people wanted. Another example is the period beginning in the late eighteenth century in Europe known as *The Enlightenment*. It was defined as the time of scientific, political, and philosophical awakening. It was the 'Age of Reason' which introduced Darwin's *The Origin of the Species* and challenged the Church's traditional role. It questioned such topics as the place of God, the divinity of Jesus, the authority of the Bible, creation ... and it produced from the universities clergy who pandered to the will of the progressive elite. Basically, you become what you believe, and what you choose to believe forms your standards and your agenda.

Not *too* long ago, - in the United Kingdom, God's Word was the foundation of our laws. The Christian God was clearly distinct from the gods of other religions. His Name was holy and held in the highest esteem. His special day was separate and different from the other six days. The family unit was the foundation of society. The idea of going out and killing an innocent person because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time was thankfully a rare incident ... and the slaughtering of little babies in their mother's womb would have been abhorrent. Open adultery was not commonplace, neither was 'living together' ... and marriage was 'until death do us part' ... And to say the holy union of marriage was something other than between a man and a woman would have been incredible. The ordinary person would not have sunk so low as to take from another what didn't belong to them ... and anything you had, you worked for. And it used to be, a person's word was their bond. ... Of course, it wasn't all perfect, but it was not anything like what we have today!

When you think of how far we have travelled from where we used to be, without any regret or apology, our society has abandoned God and denounced His Word ... and we are reaping how sin is a reproach and a disgrace to any nation (Prov. 14:34). While we have made great strides in technology, science, medicine, and many other areas, the country is reaping what it has sowed.

How do we get out of it? Well, we need to take more control ... and ‘up pops’ the climate change cult demanding we have to save the planet before it is too late. ... Where is God? *Who?! ...* There is no God. We are the masters of our destiny ... and false anaemic religion follows pathetically behind.

Let’s look and learn from what happened in the past ... **Gen. 11:1** And the whole earth *[erets]* was of one language, and of one speech. **2** And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar *[country of two rivers, Euphrates and Tigris]*, and they dwelt *[settled]* there *[with no intention of moving on]*. **3** And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime *[tar, bitumen]* had they for mortar. **4** And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *[summit]* may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad *[dispersed]* upon the face of the whole earth. **5** And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. **6** And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one *[all the people were united in a confederacy, cf. Gen. 10]*, and they have all one language *[saphah]*, and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained *[batsar, like untended grapes, they will grow out of control]* from them, which they have imagined to do. **7** Go to, let us go down, and there confound *[confuse]* their language *[saphah]*, that they may not understand one another's speech *[saphah]*. **8** So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth *[erets]*: and they left off to build *[stopped building]* the city. **9** Therefore is the name of it called Babel *[confusion]*, because the LORD did there confound the language *[saphah]* 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 had taken, **Gen. 11:2** And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east. ... Going back to when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, they were sent away 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 killed his brother Abel, **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, and the eastern road out of Eden was busy!

As time elapsed and civilisation ‘developed’, people became wiser in their own counsel, and they were desperate to renounce anything to do with God. So, He sent the Flood. After the Flood, the old habits resurfaced and the people became as bad as ever! The problem was exacerbated because communication was so easy for everyone everywhere spoke the same language (Gen. 11:1) ... It was easier to do their business, spread their wickedness and the world became as bad as it was before Noah and the Flood.

Even in Noah’s family, sin did its damage. Sometime after the Flood had subsided and normal services had resumed Noah came in from a hard day’s work, lay down in his tent, **Gen. 9:21** And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. ... Drunk and uncovered ... For whatever reason, his son, - Ham, - entered his drunken father’s tent, and oogled at his father *uncovered*. (This was before underwear.) ... Any decent person would immediately have averted their eyes, and left, but not Ham for at the very least he stayed there *gawping* at his naked ‘uncovered’ five-hundred-year-old father! ... What kind of a sick perverted individual would do such a thing? And then what kind of a son would go and boast to his brothers of what he did to their father? ... It is even more vile when you discover what the phrase, ‘seeing the nakedness of’ means ... Lev. 20:17 explains, **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.*

That is how sordid this was! Ham had a wife and children in his own tent ... but he went into his father's tent and abused his old naked father. After he had told his brothers, they, ²³ 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. ... Then when Noah awoke and discovered what his son Ham had done, he condemned him, ²⁵ And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. ... Although, what was Noah doing getting drunk?!

Why did Noah curse Canaan when it was Ham who saw him naked? The simple answer is that Ham's entire family was condemned because they all had become such a despicable household, - from father Ham to the youngest child. We are then told about Ham's sons and grandsons, **Gen. 10:6** And the sons of Ham [*were*] Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. ... Beginning with his eldest son, Cush, ⁷ And the sons of Cush [*which means 'black', 'dark'*], Seba [*which refers to drinking*], and Havilah [*(Gen. 2:11; 25:18, inhabited by the Ishmaelites; I Sam. 15:7-8, inhabited by the Amalekites), named after the land of Havilah in the Garden of Eden where there was an abundance of gold and precious stones, - that was this son's greedy aspiration ... to be as rich as he could, and trying to achieve what no longer could be achieved*], and Sabtah [*'striking', belligerent*], and Raamah [*'horse's mane' ... a horse trader*], and Sabtecha [*'striking', belligerent*]. ...

What a family! But the worst was left to the last, ⁸ And Cush begat *Nimrod* he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was actually Noah's great-grandson, whose name means 'rebellious', and he was one of the mightiest men on earth at that time ... He was one of the class of 'mighty men' like in Genesis 6:4 upon whom ⁵ 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. ⁶ And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. ... The like of Nimrod was the reason God sent the Flood! These were a repetition of those earlier *wicked* times!!

Nimrod was a hunter, and the word (*tsayid*) shows he enjoyed and lusted after capturing his prey. Killing and defeating came natural to him. He established a great empire, built upon his infamy. His empire included 'Babel' in the land of Shinar, Babylon. He later extended his kingdom into Assyria where he built the sinful city of Nineveh. Everything he was involved in was blatantly against God. Nimrod's contemporaries were always moving eastward away from Eden ... intentionally as far away from God as they possibly could manage!

Since they first set out on their journey, they had accumulated an array of shameful and immoral practices, such as bigamy, in direct opposition to God's clear instruction of monogamy, - one man and one woman (**Gen. 4:19** And Lamech took unto him two wives). Murder had also become acceptable and 'the norm' (**Gen. 4:23** I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. ²⁴ If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold). Even the descendants of righteous Shem had been affected because their standards had dropped and they were marrying the descendants of Cain (Gen. 6:2), - they should not have, but they did. Morality was at its all-time lowest, and Nimrod was leading the way in this debauchery and God-defiance. ... Even before the Ten Commandments were written, he and his people had broken them all! And as they travelled further from God, their intentions became increasingly evil, and next we discover they fell into the same trap as Adam and Eve who listened to the serpent, about reaching *upward* and being as God. ... That was **their direction**, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven (Gen. 11:4). They wanted no more God, no

more mention of Him. They wanted Him to go away and leave them alone, ‘to do their own thing’ ... Sound familiar?

Then, to achieve their aspiration, they devised an ambitious plan, and here is **THEIR DESIGN**, ⁴ 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. Let us all get together in a union of peoples, and let’s do this! We do not need outside interference, least of all, from God. God has no place among us for we do not want Him! We can do it on our own. Let’s do it before we get dispersed all over the place.

Understatement ... These people were staggeringly ambitious! No wonder they travelled so far in a relatively short period of time! They had dreams which inspired them to become the masters of their destiny. They were enterprising and enthusiastic, and Shinar was where they intended ‘planting their roots’. That was where they were going to settle, and they were going no further.

But that in itself was rebellion against God for He had commanded through Adam for mankind to be fruitful, and multiply, and *replenish the earth* (Gen. 1:28). However, they had torn up God’s rulebook, and the land of Shinar was as far as they were prepared to go. They had no intention of going further. Let’s get rid of God, and life will be a whole lot better for we shall be in control!

And the kingdom they set up in Babel, ruled over by Nimrod (Gen. 10:10), 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 became even greedier! So, they give themselves the most ambitious project to be able to boast even further. ... They

devised a plan to do what nobody thought possible, - they decided to build a magnificent city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven (v.4). The first skyscraper! This would make them a great name and they would be the envy of the nations! They would climb to the summit of the tower, - when completed, - and survey all their kingdom, as far as they could see. Nobody would ever topple them from their lofty position ... This was **their design** ... of these united nations in rebellion against God. ... And every conceivable sin was flaunted 'out in the open', and they would not stop until they had built this tower reaching up to the skies ... and taking over from God.

Their Direction ... Their Design ... Ah but ... THEIR DISRUPTION

8 the LORD scattered them abroad from thence [*there*] upon the face of all the earth ... The builders were saying, "Let's go up!" ... And God replied, "Let's go down!" ... It does not pay to test God! It benefits no society being a rebel against Him, and God knew exactly what was going on! ... And notice the recurring ... **5** the LORD ... **6** the LORD ... **8** the LORD ... **9** the LORD ... the LORD ... These industrious rebels had gotten it all wrong! ... **Ps. 2:1** Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? **2** The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD ... Why do they do that?! They do it because they inherently despise Him, and that is what was happening in Shinar ... from royalty down to the ordinary person in the street! They were desperate to get rid of God., ... They did not take into account, however, **Ps. 2:4** He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. ... They were boasting about building a *tower*, when *He* had made the mountains, and the valleys, and the oceans, and the rivers, and the sun, and the moon, and stars ... and the little baby in the womb. They were making plans over which they had no control but, in their foolishness, - the fool says in his heart there is no God (Ps. 14:1), - they reckoned they were greater than God!

They had no excuse (Rom. 1:21) for they *knew* there was a God, but they tried everything in their power to close Him down and shut Him out. They knew the danger, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth (Gen. 11:4). ... They *knew*, but they were determined not to believe! ... And God *did* scatter them. And He also did something unheard of by confusing their language so they could not understand each other. ... and God threw the whole lot of them into turmoil (v.8) ... *You don't argue with God and succeed!*

We could continue studying how Babel developed into Babylon, and the barbaric Babylonian Empire. We could trace it through the Bible and see how man's rebellion culminates in it becoming the seat of the future Antichrist ... But that is another study. For now, we want to get what is going on around us in focus. Jesus warned, **Mt. 24:4** Take heed that no man deceive you ... and how do you do that? By keeping to God's Word, **11** many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. **12** And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. **13** But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. Peter, similarly, **II Peter 2:1** there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. **2** And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. ... **19** While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption. And Paul, **II Tim. 4:3** the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.

So, what do we do? ... We try to patiently watch and wait, **Heb. 12:1** seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, **2** Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. ... Aren't you glad you study God's Word for He reminds us He is going to win, as He did at Babel. So, don't lose heart for we know how the story ends, and we are assured we are more than

conquerors through Him Who loved us (Rom. 8:37). ... Watch the view, not from the tower, but from *above* the tower ... With God's promises, don't look down or around, ...but keep *looking up!*