
Lesson 23 — NIMROD and the TOWER of BABEL



“Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.”

[Genesis 11:9]

While the Table of Nations provides the general overview of how humankind spread out and settled in distinct language groups after the flood, the tower of Babel episode provides the up-close description about why it all happened in the first place. Like much of the early chapters of Genesis, the Scriptures provide minimal yet essential details about the tower of Babel that must be carefully examined to properly interpret the text. A surface reading of Genesis 11 will not do this passage justice. It is easy to miss the subtle nuances that later connect in substantial ways to the broader context of the Biblical narrative.

Before digging into the details of the tower of Babel, however, we first need to meet the rebel ruler who initiated and advanced this collective revolt against the Most High.

Nimrod — The Rebel

Nimrod, the great grandson of Noah, is an enigmatic character who is only briefly mentioned in Scripture. Although one can find an abundance of fascinating legends and ancient myths involving the character of Nimrod, most of these lack historical substance and should be read with caution. As faithful students of the Bible, we must never begin our interpretation with pagan myths or outside sources but rather first start with Scripture.

Having said that, Genesis provides enough information about Nimrod to establish a basic character profile, and the first clue is found in the meaning of his name. In Hebrew, Nimrod can be translated in verb form as — *“we shall revolt”* — or as a proper name that means *“The Rebel.”* Nimrod’s adversarial name helps identify both his nature and intent.

- ❖ Read Genesis 10:6-12. What can we learn about Nimrod from this passage? Apart from his name, what else would lead you to believe Nimrod was in rebellion against God?
- ❖ Read Genesis 6:1-4 and Genesis 10:8-9. How are these passages related?

The Archetype Antichrist

Although Nimrod is not explicitly mentioned in the tower of Babel episode in Genesis 11, he traditionally is considered the leader of the rebellion. Like the *Nephilim* before the flood, Nimrod was the first to become a “mighty man” after the flood. This Hebrew term — “*gibbor*” — primarily describes a giant warrior who “magnifies himself, behaves proudly — a bold tyrant.” The first reference to “*gibbor*” in Scripture is found in Genesis 6:1-4, which describes the giants (*Nephilim*) who devoured the inhabitants of the earth in violence. Nimrod also is called a mighty hunter, which signifies his violent exploits. Even the Septuagint [LXX], the Greek translation of the Old Testament, explicitly calls Nimrod a giant.

“Cush became the father of Nimrod; he began to be a giant upon the earth. He was a giant hunter before the Lord; therefore, it is said, ‘Like Nimrod a giant hunter before the Lord.’” (Genesis 10:8-9; LXX).

Whether Nimrod was a giant or not, he clearly was superior in strength and stature and used his power and dominance as the first rebel ruler after the flood. Nimrod became a tyrant king who conquered and consolidated his kingdom in pure defiance [*in the face*] of the LORD. He sought glory in making a name for himself. The Bible says his kingdom began in Babel (Babylon) and expanded throughout Mesopotamia to Assyria, where he built Nineveh. Nimrod’s connection to Babel naturally links him to the construction of the tower, but as we will see, the tower of Babel was much more than an ambitious building project.

Many Biblical scholars see a correlation between Nimrod’s rebellion at Babel and the final rebellion of the Antichrist at the end of the age, which is why Nimrod often is identified as an original prototype of antichrist. At Babel, Nimrod sought to establish an evil empire on the earth independently of the One True God. Babel was an attempt to create a centralized civilization by collectively concentrating every ounce of supernatural, satanic energy against the Most High. Once the LORD confused the languages and scattered the nations, all the occult power and knowledge at Babel was disintegrated and disseminated among the ancient pagan civilizations. The final kingdom of the Antichrist will be the recollection and re-concentration of all the powers of darkness, placing all satanic authority under one king.

- ❖ Read Micah 5:1-6. What does this passage describe? Who is the Ruler over Israel, according to verse 2? From where does the invader of Israel come? Who delivers Israel from the Assyrian? Has this been fulfilled in the past or is it yet future? Why or why not?
- ❖ Read Revelation 13:1-10 & 17:1-18. How is the end-times kingdom of the Beast described? How is the Beast and Babylon the Great connected?

A Temple of Idolatry

There are many interesting interpretations about the tower of Babel. Some believe it was a technological endeavor to build a massive skyscraper into outer space. Some even have suggested that perhaps it was a launching pad for a rocket to penetrate the heavens. But is that what was meant by the phrase, *“a tower with its top in the heavens?”*

Maybe we are missing the point altogether. There was no logical reason for Nimrod to lead a mission into outer space. The Tower of Babel had nothing to do with breaching the earth’s atmosphere, but rather it was man’s attempt to bring heaven down. The tower was designed to create an intersection between heaven and earth and open a gateway into the spirit realm. It was an open door to the “gods,” only the Most High God was not invited.

Babel was an idolatrous temple complex constructed for the purposes of summoning the evil spirits in the heavenly places. Instead of reaching into the heavens, the tower was about creating sacred space for heavenly beings to “come down,” much like they did prior to the flood (*Genesis 6:1-4*). It’s centerpiece was a man-made mountain — or a ziggurat. As we learned in our lesson on Eden, mountains and high places have always been associated with worship of the “gods,” which precisely was the purpose for the temple complex at Babel.



Pyramids of Egypt



Artist Rendering of Tower of Babel



Teotihuacan Ziggurat in Mexico

It is worth noting that ancient ziggurats and pyramids were constructed all over the world after the nations were dispersed at Babel. All of these pagan temples and occult rituals find their point of origin at Babel. Babylon was the blueprint for pagan idolatry.

- ❖ Read Genesis 11:1-4. What can we discover that provides clues about the motivation behind the Tower at Babel? How is Babel contrary to God’s command in Gen. 9:1,7?
- ❖ Read Genesis 11:5-9. Why was Babel such a threat to God’s plan for humankind? How did the LORD respond? What is significant about the LORD coming down to Babel?
- ❖ Read Isaiah 14:3-27. What two king/kingdoms are the primary subject of this oracle and how do they relate to Nimrod’s original kingdom? How is the language of this oracle similar to the language about the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11?

Divine Rebellion #3

We have learned that the Serpent rebelled in Genesis 3, as did the spiritual sons of God in Genesis 6, but the Scriptures speak of another supernatural rebellion in connection with the tower of Babel. While Nimrod initiated the rebellion on the ground, there was much more going on in the heavens. In mercy, the LORD delayed the self-destruction of mankind by confusing the languages and dividing up the nations, but also God judged the nations by placing them under the authority of rival gods. Instead of ruling with justice, these gods dealt corruptly with mankind and became cruel masters who perpetually have oppressed the nations in darkness ever since. These rebellious gods are the cosmic rulers, principalities, and powers of evil in the heavenly places [*Daniel 10:12-21, Ephesians 6:12*].

*“When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples **according to the number of the sons of God**. But the LORD’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.”* [Deuteronomy 32:8-9]

- ❖ Read Psalm 82. Who is God judging in this text and why? What will be the final punishment for these rebel gods and what will be the LORD’s inheritance?
- ❖ Read Acts 17:22-31. How does Paul connect pagan idolatry to the division of the nations at Babel? How does Paul demonstrate that only Jesus is the hope of nations?
- ❖ Read Deuteronomy 4:19-20. What can we learn from this passage?

Reclaiming the Nations for Christ the King

Around the same time that the LORD disinherited the nations and handed them over to rebel gods, the Bible says that the Most High chose to create for Himself a nation of His own — Israel. Beginning with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the LORD faithfully has worked through His people to accomplish His purposes and provide His blessings to the entire world — the greatest being Christ Jesus the Lord!

- ❖ Read Genesis 22:15-18 and Galatians 3:7-9. How is the calling of Abram God’s response to the rebellion at Babel? How is God’s promise to Abram being fulfilled?
- ❖ Read Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 2:1-13. What parallels exist between the Tower of Babel and Pentecost? How is the Great Commission of Christ meant to reverse Babel?