In order to understand this story, there are a few background facts we need to know.

1. The story of the Tower of Babel occurred just a few generations after Noah's flood; some 100 to 150 years later. By this time the population of the world had expanded considerably from just eight people. One writer suggest that there were more than 30,000 people living on the earth at the time.

2. In those days everyone spoke the same language (11:1). This fact is crucial to understanding this passage of scripture.

A careful student of scripture may wonder how the whole earth was divided into competing tribes and nations, each with its own language or dialect (see 10:5). The answer is that Moses has flip-flopped the narrative in order to highlight the essential problem of the human race.

Chronologically, the Tower of Babel comes before the scattering of the nations in Genesis 10, but Moses reversed the order to emphasize the high cost of rebelling against God. Events are arranged THEMATICALLY rather than CHRONOLOGICALLY. We are told in 10:31-32 that the people were divided by clans and languages and spread out over the earth after the Flood. So, the events in 11:1-9 proceed some sections of Chapter 10, and now the Bible goes back and gives details about a certain part. (Remember that in a similar way, Genesis 2 went back to explain details of the sixth day of creation recorded in Genesis 1.

Genesis 10 tells us WHERE the descendants of Noah scattered, and Genesis 11 tells us WHY.

3. The people of Genesis 11 lived in Shinar, another name for Babylon which is around the area of modern Baghdad, Iraq.

4. The tower they built was religious in nature. Sometimes, when this passage is taught, it is implied that the people were trying to build a tower all the way to heaven. That's probably not accurate. It seems more likely that they were building a tower that would bring heaven down to earth.

The “tower” that they built at Babel was what was known as a “ziggurat,” which were built primarily for religious purposes. A ziggurat was like a pyramid except that the successive levels were recessed so that you could walk to the top on “steps.” At the top was a special shrine dedicated to a god or goddess.

-Archeologists have excavated several of these large structures, many of them are tied to the early development of astrology. At the top of many of the towers was an alter surrounded by the
signs of the Zodiac, making it an enormous symbol of man's attempt to control the universe apart from God.

- The word “Babel” means in part, “the gate of the gods”.

I. Man's Rebellion – 10:8-10; 11:1-4

The man behind this effort was Nimrod, a descendant of Ham. Nimrod was a “mighty champion.” In 10:10, we are told that he has a “kingdom”. Up to this time we do not read about anyone having a kingdom. He seems to be the first ruler and dictator in history. He made himself a one-world ruler. He was the first Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and Saddam Hussein in history.

- The name Nimrod means “we shall rebel.” He was a mighty hunter before the Lord (10:9). The word “before” literally means “against”. He was a mighty hunter against the Lord.

He was a man in defiance of God. He wasn't a hunter for animals. He was “a hunter of the souls of men”. He was a rebel against God and sought to turn those he ruled over away from God as well. He is a type of the work and aim of Satan.

The word “Babel” means “confusion”. So, it was a tower, but it was more than a tower. It was a massive, united effort to bring humanity together wholly apart from God. The builders of the tower had two purposes: (1) To make a name for ourselves; (2) that we might not be scattered.

1. “To make a name for ourselves”

The tower builders were very clear about what drove them - “let us make a name for ourselves”. We want to be remembered for our accomplishments. We say, “He's made a name for himself.” - They wanted to make a name for themselves so that others would admire them. In their pride, they wanted a monument to their own greatness. They wanted to leave a legacy to their greatness. They thought they were Big Shots, but they were only Little Squirts.

Every generation builds its own towers. Whether these are actual skyscrapers (the Sears Tower, the Twin Towers, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Trump Tower in New York City), or mega – corporations or the mega – church, often say the same: “We will make a name for ourselves.

We are all tempted to build monuments to ourselves, such as prestigious titles, impressive assets, a business, or anything we do to impress people. These are not wrong in themselves, but when we get involved in anything that draws us away from God and draws attention to ourselves, we are building our own Tower of Babel. When we draw attention to our self rather than to God, we do the opposite of what God told us to do.

**Mat 5:16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

2. The people were resisting God's command to scatter and repopulate the earth.

They not only tried to DEFY God; they tried to DEIFY themselves.
Three times in this passage we find the words “Go to, (Come) let us.”

-“Let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly” Again we see the pride and desire for greatness in the use of the word “us.”

-“Let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens.” There was no divine blueprint because Babel wasn’t of the Lord.

• First, there was disobedience; then pride; then rebellion; then a desire to create another religion; an alternative to Jehovah.

II. God’s Response – 11:5-9
We come to the third, “Come, let us”, and the speaker is the triune God. God knows all things and is present in all places. So He doesn't literally have to leave one place in order to check what's happening somewhere else. Moses says that God actually had to “come down”, or swing low, to see their tower. They thought they were scaling the heights. The fact was that they were still so far below God's height, that it was a very long descent from God's level to theirs. Some of our modern skyscrapers may look impressive from the ground, but if we flew over them in a plane, they would look like Lego buildings. The tower of Babel may have impressed its builders, but they and their tower remained puny in God's eyes.

God was not threatened by man's corporate potential - “Oh no, if they band together, what shall I do?” Instead, He was troubled by what would happen to humanity if the human family was left unchecked. They would build up a delusion of self-sufficiency through their false religion. They would throw off God and attempt to rule the universe. So the hammer of God fell (11:7-8).

- God decided to confuse their language so they couldn't communicate and thus sabotage their defiant plans. That is why it was called Babel, which means confusion of voices or languages. It was God's love, mercy, and grace that caused Him to bring judgment upon the people. God said, “If I do not stop them now, their sin will become greater and thus their punishment will be greater. Therefore, God “confounded their language” and scattered them abroad.”

After the flood, human history focused on two cities: Babylon and Jerusalem. Babylon was the city of confusion, while Jerusalem was the city of peace. These two cities represent two systems:

• Jerusalem is mentioned about 350 times in the Bible and represents the godly system. From Jerusalem the temple was built and the worship of the Israelites was directed to God. When Christ returns to earth to establish His world Kingdom, He will rule the world from the city of Jerusalem.

**Isa 2:2** And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

**Isa 2:3** And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in
his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Isa 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

• Babylon is mentioned about 125 times in the Bible and refers to the satanic system. Throughout scripture, Babylon appears hostile against everyone and anything representing God.

The Day of Pentecost was a reversal of Babel. One language was spoken, but every man heard in their own language.

A parallel may be seen between this incident in the O.T. and one in the N.T. In the N.T., the people of God are told to “fill the earth” with children of God (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). But after believers received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they still didn't leave the city of Jerusalem. They were enjoying the spiritual unity and felt no urge to leave. Because they refused to scatter into the world as God had commanded, He permitted a persecution to come upon the church, which caused them to scatter (Acts 8:1,4).

We must be faithful to carry the Gospel to every person in every place.

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