

“Genesis 11:1–9”

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I gave a presentation titled “Genesis 11:1-9.” Here are some of the scriptures that I read.

Brief mention of Nimrod

Before we get to Genesis 11, let’s take a quick look at Genesis 10 and the mention of Nimrod. Nimrod is mentioned in four places in the Bible and two of them are in Genesis 10.

- Genesis 10:8—Nimrod (who came from the genealogical line of Noah, Ham and Cush) “began to be a mighty one on the earth.”
- Genesis 10:9-11—Nimrod was called “the mighty hunter before the LORD.” His kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad and Calneh. He was also involved with Assyria.
- 1 Chronicles 1:10—Nimrod “began to be a mighty one on the earth.”
- Micah 5:6—This verse mentions “the land of Assyria” and “the land of Nimrod.”

Building a city and tower

In Genesis 11, we read about the Tower of Babel. Notice a glimpse of the story.

- Genesis 11:1—The whole world had one language.
- Genesis 11:3-4—The people wanted to build a city and a tower (“whose top is in the heavens”) to avoid being scattered.

Lord’s personal interest

- Genesis 11:5—The LORD “came down to see the city.”

Couldn’t the LORD see them from heaven? Didn’t the LORD know what was happening in His creation?

Please don’t get distracted by the wording. This wording was not reflecting the limitations of the LORD. I believe this wording is reflecting the personal interest of the LORD in the situation.

LORD'S solution

- Genesis 11:6—The LORD'S conclusion was that the one language was not helping them to follow His instructions.
- Genesis 11:7-9—The LORD decided to confuse their language and to influence them to scatter.

View of Josephus

Let's notice what the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus said about Nimrod and the tower of Babel. The following excerpts are from Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, chapter IV (from page 30).

Josephus wrote that Nimrod influenced the people to become dependent upon themselves and upon him—instead of upon God.

"He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God, as if it were through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny—seeing no other way of turning men from fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power."

Josephus wrote that Nimrod would deal with God, if God wanted to bring another flood upon the world.

"He also said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a town too high for the waters to reach! And that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers!"

Josephus wrote about Nimrod and the tower.

"Now the multitude were very ready to follow the determination of Nimrod, and to esteem it a piece of cowardice to submit to God; and they built a tower, neither sparing any pains, nor being in any degree negligent about the work; and by reason of the multitude of hands employed in it, it grew very high, sooner than anyone could expect; but the thickness of it was so great, and it was so strongly built, that thereby its great height seemed, upon the view, to be less than it really was. It was built of burnt brick, cemented together with mortar, made of bitumen, that it might not be liable to admit water."

Josephus wrote about separating the languages.

"When God saw that they acted so madly, he did not resolve to destroy them utterly, since they were not grown wiser by the destruction of the former sinners; but he caused a tumult among them, by producing in them [diverse] languages; and causing that, through the multitude of those languages, they should not be able to understand one another."

Josephus wrote about the confusion.

“The place wherein they built the tower is now called Babylon; because of the confusion of that language which they readily understood before; for the Hebrews mean, by the word Babel, Confusion.”

Communication increasing

Have the languages stayed apart? Not at all.

What is happening in the world?

Knowledge and communication are rapidly increasing (Daniel 12:4).

Remember the lesson of tyranny

Do you remember how Josephus described Nimrod as changing the government into tyranny?

Have you noticed the history of governments exhibiting tyranny in the world?

Certainly, the disciples in the early New Testament church had to deal with the tyranny of the Roman empire.

- Caesar Augustus (who reigned from 31 B.C. to 14 A.D.) was mentioned in Luke 2:1.
- Caesar Tiberius (who reigned from 14 to 37 A.D.) was mentioned in Luke 3:1 and was the Caesar at the time of John 19:12.
- Caesar Caligula (who reigned from 37 to 41 A.D.) does not seem to be mentioned in the Bible.
- Caesar Claudias (who reigned from 41 to 54 A.D.) was mentioned in Acts 11:28.
- Caesar Nero (who reigned from 54-68 A.D.) was the Caesar that Paul mentioned in Acts 25:8-12; Acts 25:21; and Acts 26:32.

Prophecy about tyranny

- Revelation 13:2—The dragon is going to give a beast his power, his throne and his authority.
- Revelation 13:11-12—Another beast will appear that will exercise all the authority of the first beast.

Role of the Son of God

- Matthew 20:25—The Son of God taught against rulers lording it over people and against important people exercising authority over people.
- 1 Corinthians 15:24-28—The Son of God will put an end to the rule, authority and power of this world.