

**Timeline of Truth – God Scatters Rebellious Mankind (Genesis 11:1-9)**

<p><sup>1</sup> Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.</p>	<p><b>Original Circumstance – One Language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same language, same vocabulary, same dialect</li> </ul>
<p><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.</p>	<p><b>Mass Movement – Sticking Together</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population began in the region of Ararat ((8:4)</li> <li>• Shinar is around modern day Iraq.</li> </ul>
<p><sup>3</sup> Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake <i>them</i> thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar.</p> <p><sup>4</sup> And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top <i>is</i> in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."</p> <div> </div> <p>Merrill F. Unger's reconstruction of the Tower of Babel.</p>	<p><b>Preventative Plan – Build a Tower</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inferior materials (metaphorical of inferior spiritual)</li> <li>• <i>The narrator and readers know that these are an inferior substitute for stone (Is. 9:10). NNIBD</i></li> <li>• <i>This is human initiative apart from God (Ps. 127:1). As such, the activity is evil and sinful. NNIBD</i></li> <li>• 4 Stated Goals:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make a city</li> <li>○ Make a tower "whose top is in the heavens"</li> <li>○ Make a name for ourselves (self glory)</li> <li>○ Prevent our scattering (ignore God's directive)</li> <li>○ (No overt dethroning of God, or "flood insurance.")</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>The major purpose of these defiant builders lies in the word which represents the climax of their endeavors: "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." This word breathes defiance of God. After the Flood God had bidden Noah (9:1) and his sons "to replenish the earth." This, of necessity, involved spreading abroad. These Babylonian builders were sensing that now, as their inner oneness of purpose was lost—for they were no longer one in the fear of God—they might sooner or later scatter after all. They preferred to remain a closely welded unit and to refuse to obey God's injunction. The tower was to provide the rallying point and to be at the same time a token of their oneness of purpose. So it, of necessity, becomes the symbol of defiance of God. EOG (LEUPOLD)</i></li> </ul>
<p><sup>5</sup> But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.</p>	<p><b>Divine Diligence – God Is Aware</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To people the tower is a skyscraper (Deut. 1:28), but to God it is so small that He must come down from heaven to catch a glimpse of this tiny effort. NNIBD</i></li> </ul>
<p><sup>6</sup> And the LORD said, "Indeed the people <i>are</i> one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.</p>	<p><b>Divine Diagnosis – God Is Involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>God has to step in to prevent mankind from seizing yet more power for themselves and going beyond the limits of their creaturehood (Gen. 3:22; 11:5–8). NNIBD</i></li> </ul>
<p><sup>7</sup> "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."</p>	<p><b>Divine Solution – God Takes Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>As long as the medium of one language is theirs, just so long will they be able to carry through reasonable though ungodly projects that they may happen to take in hand. God discerns that similar undertakings will follow upon this one. "This is the beginning of their doing" means that more will be undertaken after this first enterprise. "From nothing that they devise to do will they desist." If, however, the only unity which they still possess is disturbed—the unity of language—then all such ungodly endeavors of the future will be cancelled. EOG (LEUPOLD)</i></li> <li>• <i>Unable to communicate, they drifted off in little groups to all points of the compass and thus achieved the filling of</i></li> </ul>

	<p>the earth that God originally had ordered. Evidently that judgment took place before the scattering reported in chapter 10 could have taken place (cf. 10:5, 32). As people scattered, work on the tower and city were no longer feasible. The repeated use of Yahweh in the Hebrew of this passage underscores God’s mercy and redemption. In confusing their language and in scattering them, God prevented men from devising greater corporate mischief and thus injuring themselves further. GENESIS (VOS)</p>
<p><sup>8</sup> So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.</p> <p><i>The story of Babel is important for several reasons.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It explains the beginning of and reason for the various languages of mankind.</li> <li>2. It probably explains the origin of the “races” within humankind.</li> <li>3. It demonstrates the inclination of fallen man to rebel against God and to try to provide for his needs in his own way rather than by trusting and obeying God.</li> <li>4. It illustrates that rebellion against God results in (a) broken fellowship with God and man, and (b) failure to realize God’s intention for man in his creation, namely, that he rule the earth effectively.</li> <li>5. It provides the historical background for what follows in Genesis. Abraham came from this area. [ Tom Constable. (2003; 2003). Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible (Ge 11:1–9). Galaxie Software.]</li> </ol>	<p><b>Divine Results – Scattered Humanity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the author was intending right along to treat of this confusion of tongues appears from 10:25, where in connection with Peleg it is mentioned that “in his days was the earth divided.” EOG (LEUPOLD)</li> <li>• The time of this event is about one hundred years after the Flood, since Peleg (10:25) receives his name, which signifies “division,” in memory of this event, and Peleg was born 1757 after the Creation, and so one hundred years after the Flood (1656). If it be thought that one hundred years is too short a time to allow for the increase of the human race to sufficient strength to be able to undertake a work of such magnitude, the computations of Keil have shown that the human race might have grown to a total of about 30,000 persons on the supposition that the families ordinarily had about eight children, a reasonable assumption for those times. Besides, it must be recalled that practically the whole human race participated in this project. EOG (LEUPOLD)</li> <li>• If, then, the account as a whole shows the confusion of tongues to be the outgrowth of human presumption and disobedience, the practical lesson of the story must be primarily this, that the present resultant confusion that is upon us must serve as a constant reminder of the inclination of the human heart to arrogance and disobedience. The multiplicity of languages upon the face of the earth is a monument not to human ingenuity but to human sin. EOG (LEUPOLD)</li> <li>• Most likely groups of people (families) spoke the same languages, and scattered accordingly.</li> </ul>
<p><sup>9</sup> Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.</p>	<p><b>Summary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Babel</b> derives ultimately from an Akkadian word that means “gateway to God.” A similar Hebrew word, <b>balal</b>, means “confuse” and provides the author with a useful wordplay that stresses God’s confusing of the builders’ languages and His scattering of them throughout the earth (Gen. 11:9). NNIBD</li> <li>• The first ziggurat at Babylon was built by Shar-kali-sharri, king of Akkad in the latter part of the 23rd century B.C. Archaeologists understand that this ziggurat was destroyed and rebuilt several times across the centuries. It apparently lay in ruins from some time around 2000 B.C. to around 1830 B.C., at which time a forebear of Hammurabi (1728–1636 B.C.) founded or rebuilt the city named Bab-ilu or <b>Babel</b>. BEB</li> </ul>