

The Most Important Events of the World

Part 3: The Tower of Babel

Dora Beck

Table of Contents

[Bibliography](#)

[The Tower of Babel](#)

Bibliography

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The Tower of Babel

If you were to write down all the languages that ever existed, the list would be very long indeed. In Africa, for instance, there are more than one thousand languages. In Asia, there are many times this number.

Could anyone learn all these languages? Many are proud to speak three, two, or even one foreign language fluently. To learn a foreign language properly requires a lot of time, patience, and effort.

For Noah and his grandsons, there were no problems communicating, for everyone spoke the same language at this time in history. There was a common means of understanding. Do you remember who these men were? Noah was a man of God, and his sons were called Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Noah's sons survived the worldwide Flood with their families, because they had obeyed the command of God and built a big boat called an ark. God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. This is what they did. The descendants of Noah increased rapidly, so that the earth's population was renewed in a short period of time.

On this page, there is a verse from the Bible in different languages. Study the different languages, and try to find the verse written in English.

to make fire-baked bricks. To produce and bake the millions of bricks needed was very hard work, so everyone helped each other. Using these bricks, together with tar cement, they built their tower.



The builders, who designed the tower during long hours of discussion and planning, moved busily around the site. Everything had to be studied carefully and thoroughly for the project to be a success. They imagined that their finished work would bring them fame, prestige, and glory.

As soon as all the preparations were completed, the people began working together. They were eager to build their long-awaited city.

They made great progress and worked quickly, because they could understand each other so well. There were no arguments or misunderstandings. They all spoke the same language.



Everyone was proud to be living in the city, each in his own dwelling.

Now the time came to begin building the tower. All were excited about this, for they thought the top of the tower would reach up into heaven. They wanted to climb up into heaven and meet with God. We will certainly do this, they said to one another. Everyone was sure of that.

They imagined that they could reach heaven by their own intelligence, activity, and determination.

What vanity! These little men wanted to prove to the Almighty God that they could reach heaven without His guidance.



The tower had a large and heavy foundation. Thousands of men worked hard to complete the big project, the likes of which had never been seen before.

As the tower got higher and higher, the people became more and more proud. Their pride knew no bounds, and in their arrogance they began to wonder, Who can imitate us? Who is as intelligent, activity, invention, or hardworking as we?

They were determined to let no one stop them from finishing their project. Because they wanted to reach this goal, they worked with eager enthusiasm and great determination.

Soon we will finish our magnificent work, and no one will be able to match it! They said to one another proudly, with their noses in the air.



This lofty tower will give us a great and honourable name, all through the earth. This great structure will be a gathering place for us and will prevent us from becoming scattered.

They decided to stay in that place, against the will of God who had commanded them to fill the earth.

And how did the Almighty and All-knowing God react to the plans and efforts of these proud descendants of Adam?

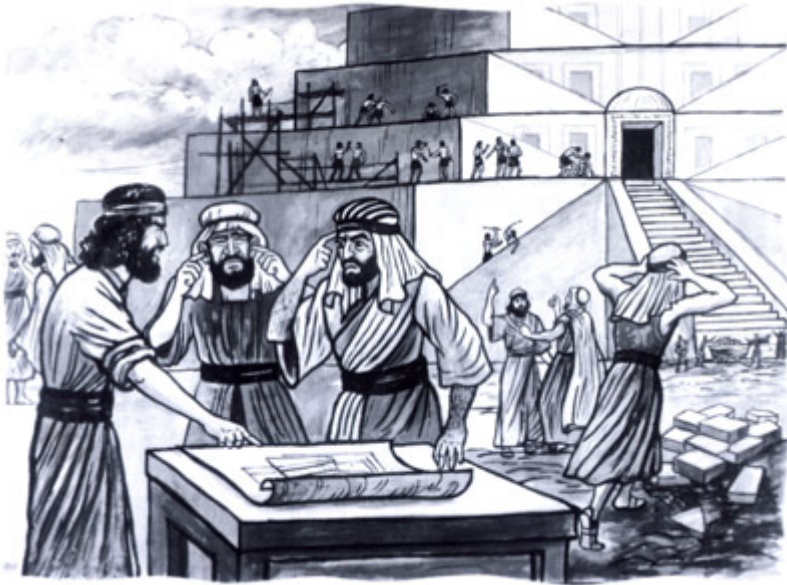
We read in the book of Genesis: The Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. God came down to see their work of pride and arrogance, since it was the means by which mankind was trying to get to heaven. What seemed a great project in the eyes of the people was just a small tower to God.

God saw that man was no better after the Flood than before; everyone still did only what he thought was right in his own eyes. They made their own decisions and did their own deeds, without considering the will of God.

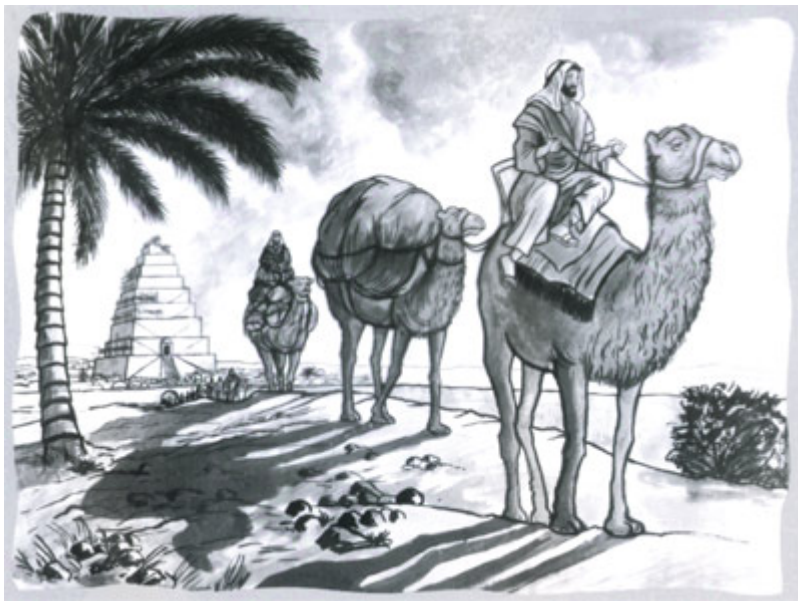


God was angry. He interfered in their work, punishing the pride of humanity. He wanted to keep His creation from going astray into full godlessness and vain pride.

God said, "Come let us go down and confuse their language so that they will not understand each other." All of a sudden, each of the workers on the tower spoke a different language. None could understand the other! The workers could not understand the instructions of the supervisors. The architects told the builders what to do, but the job was done wrong! The supervisor became very angry. No one could communicate with his neighbour, so all cooperation ceased. The work came to a standstill.



God Himself confused their language. They were no longer able to work together on a single project, and the families began drifting apart, leading isolated lives. Those who could understand each other, having the same language, decided to leave that place and travel to other lands where they could start their lives once again.



So, the grandchildren of Noah left this place and moved, as was the will of God, to other parts of the world. Each group settled in its own land according to its own language and genealogy. This is how the different nations began.

Today, if one has difficulty learning a foreign language, one should remember that God caused the many differences that exist, because He was angry at man's pride.

Do you know where this tower was built? It was at Babel, in present-day Iraq. It is located southwest of the city of Baghdad which still exists and can be visited today. The meaning of the word Babel is "confusion" because God confused the proud people by causing them to speak many different languages instead of one. Then He scattered them throughout the earth.

The hope of these people was to stay together and build an empire, which was against the will of God. They wanted to make a great name for themselves instead of exalting the name of God. But

God the All-Powerful spoiled this plan, putting an end to the selfishness and disobedience.

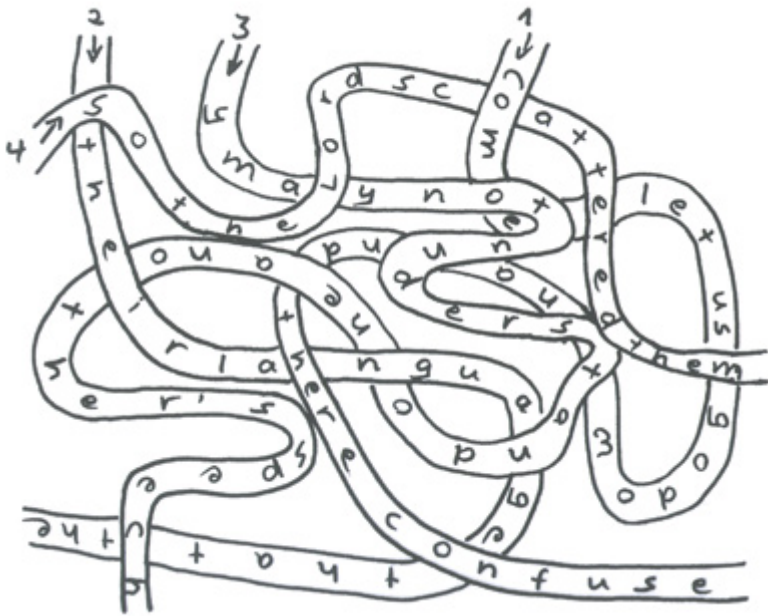


Confusion always results when man wants to do something against God in order to be more like Him. People then cannot understand one another; they fear other people and become enemies. Because God did not want to leave the world alone, He sent Jesus Christ, meek and Humble. When we listen to Jesus, at whatever time or place, and believe in Him, our hearts and minds are changed. Only then can we overcome the confusion of Babel and live with others in cooperation and understanding. Only then can joy and peace prevail once again.

If we dwell in the will of God, we will dwell with His blessing.



Look in this picture for the words to form the appropriate verse for this story, and write it down on this page. (Genesis 11:7,8)



Quiz

We hope you have enjoyed reading this story. Below are some questions about it. When you have answered them, mail them to us.

1. Why was life easier for Noah's sons than it is now for us?
2. When did the people settle and stop their travelling?
3. What did the people want to build?
4. What building material did they make?
5. What was the aim of the great building project?
6. Why did God interfere in their work?
7. Why were they unable to continue?
8. What was the name of the place where the tower was built?
9. What does the word Babel mean?

10. How did confusion and hostility among human beings take place?

11. What was God's reaction regarding the pride of man?

12. How can we remain in the blessing of God?

Do not forget to print your full name and address clearly on your answer sheet as well as on the envelope. Our address is:

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