

The Rise and Fall of Humanism

(Genesis 11:1-9)

I. The **Founder** of Babylon (10:8-10)

Nimrod, whose name means “let us rebel” is the first man to be called “mighty,” (10:8). The words “mighty one” literally mean a mighty or powerful tyrant.

Biblical parallel to Nimrod – Herod “the great”. “The great” refers to him as a builder, but he was a terror and a tyrant. Nimrod was “mighty” but wicked.

Genesis 10:9, “He was a mighty hunter before the Lord.” The phrase “before the Lord” could also be translated “against the Lord.” These verses refer to his prowess in hunting – not animals, but the souls of men that he will use in building his kingdom of Babylon.

II. The **Foolishness** of Babylon (11:1-4)

God had told them to scatter (Genesis 9:1 – “fill the earth”) but they settled (11:2 – “they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there,” and 11:4 – “let us build... lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”)

Not only did they build a city, but they “**built a tower whose top is in the heavens.**” (v.4) Now they were not really trying to build a tower that would reach all the way into heaven. They had more intelligence than that and knew that was impossible. This literally translated says, “They built a top unto or with the heavens.” The little preposition “with” is a preposition of accompaniment or representation. In other words, they built a tower so that the top of it would “represent” the heavens.

III. The **Focus** of Babylon (11:5-6)

They were united in culture, language and purpose (v.6).

All the way back in the early history of man, right after the flood, there was a hue and cry for a “New World Order.” The Bible name for it is Babylon. Babylon is one of the two prominent cities listed in the

Bible, the other being Jerusalem. Babylon is the city of Satan; Jerusalem is the city of God. Babylon is the seat of wickedness; Jerusalem is the seat of holiness. Babylon is the capitol of hell; Jerusalem is the capitol of heaven. **Babylon in the Bible represents man's attempt to rid the world of God.** In fact, let me give you a new name for an old city. **Babylon today is what we would call humanism.**¹

IV. The Fall of Babylon (11:7-9)

Hebrew word for Babel or Babylon, בְּבֶל, means "confusion" (by mixing) and is derived from the Hebrew word, balal, which means "to mix, mingle, confuse, confound". The word Babel, in the language of the Babylonians, means "gate of the gods."

Psalm 127:1, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it."

Thomas Paine, an agnostic, wrote *The Age of Reason*, a book which ridiculed the Bible as God's Word and the very need for God Himself. Then he asked Benjamin Franklin what he thought of it. Benjamin Franklin told Thomas Paine: **"Tom, when a man spits against the wind, he spits in his own face."**

Tony Evans says about this passage, "If confusion is running your life, if you're confused when you wake up in the morning, confused when you look in the mirror, confused when the rest of your family joins you at the breakfast table, if you're confused when you go to work, if you're more confused when you come back home, if your middle name is confused, then something in your life is being lived independently of God."²

Applications for Today:

1. Anything that you try to do without God, ultimately ends up in confusion³. God wants your plans to be in submission to His plans for your life. Take the time to listen to God's will and pursue it.

2. God always gets His way. Here the people were building something that looked like it would be accomplished. However, one action from God caused this unified group to cease their work. **Daniel 4:17, "The Most High rules in the kingdom of men."**

3. Sin separates us from one another. Christ brings us back together. **Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."**

4. Man's attempt to get to God always fails. Their "gate of the gods" is not the way to heaven. Today, men and women attempt to get to God through **religious effort, good works and morality**. These ultimately fail (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). God's provision is Jesus, Who is described as **"the Way"** (**John 14:6**) and **"the Door"** (**John 10:9**).

¹ James Merritt, "The Higher The Climb, The Longer The Fall," Genesis 11:1-9.

² Tony Evans, "A Declaration of Independence," Genesis 11:1-9.

³ This principle came from James Merritt.