

## The City of Man

Genesis 11:1-9

1/13/08

### Intro

After the flood, the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth began to multiply and settle in farther places and began to settle and build cities.

The sons of Ham included Nimrod who is mentioned in Genesis 10 as a great hunter who was the one who built Babel, the city we are studying today.

This is also the place in scripture where we read of man building a tower to reach into heaven. God responds by confusing their language and scattering them over the earth.

There is a tremendous amount of personal application in these verses as we see the heart of man and the desire to make a name for themselves rather than trust God and His provision for their lives.

### **I. A Question of Motive**

- When they come to the plains of Shinar which is in Iraq today, they decided to settle and build a great city with a tower that reaches into heaven.
- Their motive is clear, “Let us make a name for ourselves.”
- If they’re scattered abroad across the earth they will become obscure and they would rather build something so great that they will be remembered as the great ones who reached into heaven.
- But this is not what God asked them to do. After the flood, they were told to multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.
- They reject God’s desire for their lives and decide to make a great name for themselves.

### A. Don’t be a Nimrod

- As the population was expanding, so also was their technological achievements.
- They had discovered how to create bricks that were hardened in a furnace. That allowed for engineering feats that were unknown till then.
- In ancient Babylonian archaeology there have been many great towers discovered called Ziggurats. These are ascending levels of foundation with exterior staircases which lead to a shrine at the top with the signs of the zodiac inscribed on the sides.
- Scribes have written that Nimrod was the leader of Babel and the first to create his own empire.
- Nimrod is seen in history as a tyrant who formed the first empire and sought the power to control as much as possible. As a mighty hunter, he became powerful.

### **Illus – spear fishing vs. waiting with a pole.**

- The desire to draw the people with one language to become one people is a picture of the end times where there is much emphasis on a one world government that takes the place of God.
- Nimrod becomes a picture of the man who thinks he is a self-made man.

### **App – those who are self-made must ask themselves – what part exactly did they make.**

## B. Consider John the Baptist

- You might wonder what this story has to do with John the Baptist. Actually, it has everything to do with him because the story is about making a name for themselves.

**Illus – Jesus said that of all people who lives up to His time, there was none greater than John the Baptist...**

**Matthew 11:11, “Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!”**

- In other words, John the Baptist was greater than Nimrod or any of the great men of old.
- What made him great was that he knew God’s role in his life...

**John 3:29-31, “He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all,”**

- John knew that he had been given a great privilege to be able to make a path before the Messiah, but also knew that he was unworthy to even untie the sandals from His feet.

**Illus – Have you seen those football players who will kneel and give thanks when they make a touchdown?**

**What a contrast to those who showboat their greatness, when the real heroes are the ones battered and bruised back on the line of scrimmage.**

- But what is also important to understand is that Jesus made a most intriguing statement when he then compared John to those of the church...

**Matthew 11:11, “Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”**

- What does that mean? It means that though John was great as a man, the church is the bride of Christ.

## **II. Be a God-Made Man**

- “God did make me,” someone might respond. If we are created by God, should we not also look to Him to make our life what He desires it to be?

### A. Let God make your name

- They decided to “make a name for themselves,” rather than believe that God knew what He was doing when He sent them to “fill the earth.”
- What we need to do is to trust that God is the strength of our lives.

**Psalm 73:23-28 God is the strength of my life.**

**Philippians 4:11-13, I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in**

**prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**

- “God will make a way, when there seems to be no way. He works in ways we cannot see, God will make a way for me,” Don Moen wrote.
- Trusting that God will make your name is to trust that God is working in and through your life to accomplish His purposes in your life.

**Illus – God made a way for me to golf with Bob Gilder, professional golfer on the Champion’s Tour.**

**I asked him to give me some tips after watching my swing. “Do you think I have potential?” I asked.**

**“Don’t quit your day job,” he responded. “Seriously, being a professional golfer is not all it looks, but God has a purpose in my being here.” I later found out that he leads a bible study on the tour with other golfers.**

B. Trust in God’s provision

- God’s plan from the beginning was to bless mankind with that which was good. He made a beautiful garden and let them have their fill of everything good.
- But the story of mankind is the story of man’s failure to trust God and enjoy what God has provided.

- Instead, people want to decide for themselves what is “good,” even if it’s against God’s will.
- We need to be willing to trust in God’s provision and that what God does is “good.”
- **“Let us make a name for ourselves,”** is a basic urge of fallen man. It speaks of one of the basic philosophies of humanism, “glory to man in the highest.”

**App – no doubt this was a religious structure, but built to make a name for man – and to control God.**

**Man doesn’t really want to be rid of God; atheism is too barren and too morally bankrupt to live with very long. No, we need God, but many people want to keep God under control. “Don’t call us, we’ll call you,” is the approach of many.**

- Vs 4 – Let us build this tower lest God scatter us over the face of the earth. No, let’s do things our way.
- They wanted to approach God on their terms, to have God available at their discretion – to control God – to keep God safe.
- That’s what religion does, it shares the glory which belongs to God alone and tries to keep God safe.

**Illus – Chronicles of Narnia; “of course He’s not safe, He’s a lion, I say.”**

**Romans 10:6-9 Who shall ascend to heaven to bring Christ down?**

C. There is a city made by God

- This could be called the tale of two cities.
- Babel, which means, *Gateway of the gods* and in Hebrew *confusion*, becomes Babylon and represents spiritual idolatry.
- Babylon is seen in Revelation as representing the world system. It is finally destroyed at the end of the age and heaven rejoices!

**Revelation 18:1-4 Babylon is fallen.**

- But there is a city that is God's provision. Even Abraham was looking for the city which has foundations and whose architect and builder is God.
- In truth, man is made in God's image and is already the glory of God's creation. He made man to rule and reign, but inside the purpose and provision of God.

**App – but the very solutions man works out on his own end up creating more problems that he had to begin with.**

- If we could trust that God's way, God's provision, and God's purposes are blessed of God and therefore the best and most glorious!

**Revelation 21:1-5 The New Jerusalem**