

The Tower of Babel¹

Genesis 11

The sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, spread abroad on the earth after the flood. Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.²

As people migrated from the east, they found a plain and settled there. They said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn³ them thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.

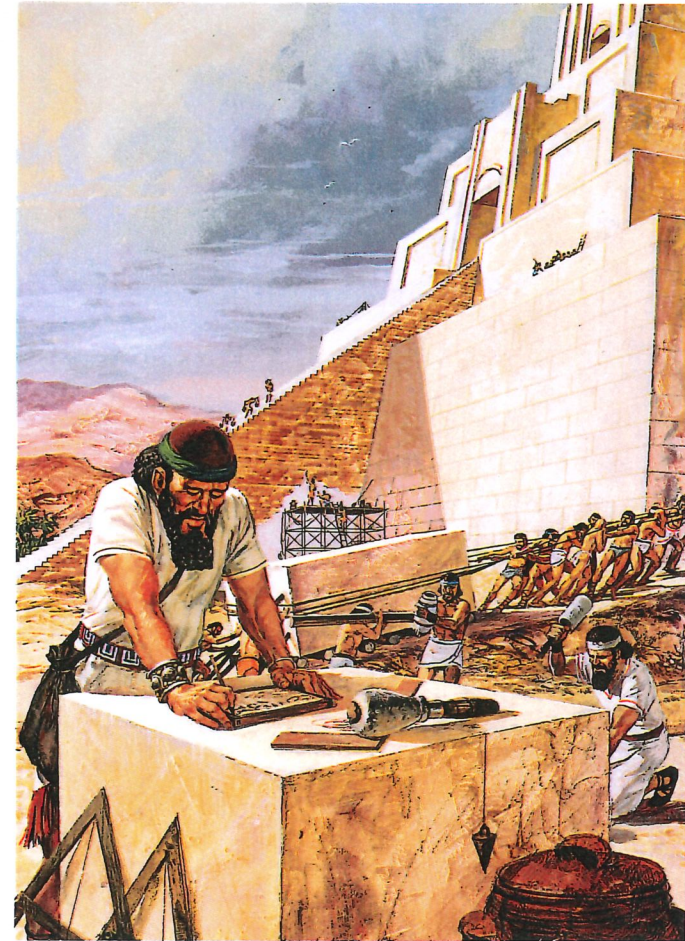
Then, they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name⁴ for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

The LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.”⁵

So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore, its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth.

Explanatory Notes

¹Meaning confusion. ²With only one language, everyone could understand one another and speak to one another. ³They heated the bricks made of clay until they were as hard as stone. ⁴They were proud and wanted fame and honor; the flood had not destroyed sin. ⁵Without a common language, joint effort became impossible.



“Let us make a name for ourselves.”

For Reflection

1. Why did the people want to build a tower?
2. How did the many languages of the world come into being?
3. God became angry with the people for trying to make a name for *themselves*, by their own doing. What name has God given us, by His doing?

Words to Remember

He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. *Luke 1:51*