Tower of Babel

Genesis 11:1-9

Bible Memory Verse

Proverbs 16:18 MSG

First pride, then the crash—the bigger the ego, the harder the fall.

Bible Story

Thus far in the unfolding story of God and his people, human beings have been thwarting the Lord God, our Creator, from the beginning of time—Adam and Eve's disobedience, the murder of Abel by Cain, and the worldwide Flood in response to rampant evil. Things aren't looking good for a turn-around.

> *"Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.*
>
> *"They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the earth'" (Genesis 11:1-4).*

I wonder if God was wondering what in the world are these humans going to do next. Yeah, I know that God already knew what they were going to do. But it seems like the story just keeps getting worse. Mankind is continually disobeying God at every turn. The Lord wanted the people to scatter throughout the earth and be fruitful and multiply. Instead, people wanted to congregate in a city, where they could make a "name" for themselves. They wanted to make themselves like God.

> *"But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. The Lord said, 'If as one people speaking the same language they have*

begun to do this, then nothing will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.'

"So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it is called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4-9).

As the story goes, God eventually got what He wanted—the people were scattered over the earth via a plethora of new languages.

Life Application

The Lord said: "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them" (Genesis 11:6). Interesting. God seems to think that if mankind all got together as "one people" then they could accomplish anything. Interesting. I wonder if God understands the power of people bonded together in unity? I wonder if God knows what is possible for humans to accomplish when they are unified toward a common purpose, a fused goal? Maybe the salvation of the world...?

Perhaps that is a life application of this story: We are the church—a group of people bonded together in unity to witness the resurrection of Jesus and live out the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. Perhaps God knows the power of people working together in unity to accomplish no less than the Gospel, the saving knowledge and communal practice of the new-covenanted-people-of-God. However, the church does not make a name for itself. The church makes a name for the name that is above every name—Jesus Christ.

Review Questions

1. What did the people gather together to build? A city and a tower that reaches to the heavens.
2. Why did they want to build a city and a tower? To make a NAME for themselves.
3. What did God do to stop the city and tower building? He confused their language.
4. Where did everybody go? They scattered throughout the earth.

Coloring Sheet

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