



In the Beginning

A study of Genesis Chapters 1 - 11

Christian Life Assembly

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The Journey 2018

In the Beginning

- **Genesis 11:1** Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. **2** It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. **3** They said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.” And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. **4** They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” **5** The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. **6** The Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. **7** Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” **8** So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. **9** Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.



In the Beginning

- Genesis 11:3 They said to one another, “***Come, let us*** make bricks and burn them thoroughly.” And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. 4 They said, “***Come, let us*** build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”
- Mankind has plans – mankind wants to build a city, create their own security, make a name for themselves, and stay together.



In the Beginning

- Genesis 11:7 ***Come, let Us*** go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech.
- But God has another plan, His plan is aimed at constraining and restraining the sinfulness of man.
- Mankind says, “come, let us” and God's answer is no, “let Us”.



In the Beginning

- The “come, let us” statements are almost comical – mankind thinks he is great, thinks he is in control, and thinks he is the center of things.
- What is almost funny is that God uses their own words to stifle them – they say, “let us” and God says, no, “let Us”.
- **When God chooses to act there is nothing that mankind can do to resist His work** – at this point in history God was not about to let man have an easy run at doing further harm to His creation.



In the Beginning

- Verse #4 is riddled with the desires of men – it reads, “They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”
- The men of Babel have (4) objectives stated in verse #4.
- Not surprising at all is that none of their stated objectives are ones they would have been glad to achieve even if God had let them.



In the Beginning

- The (4) objectives of mankind at Babel were:
 - Build a city.
 - Build a tower to reach into heaven.
 - Make a name for themselves.
 - Stay together.



In the Beginning

- Why build a city? Because generally speaking, cities are where high concentrations of people produce high concentrations of art, music, entertainment, food, fun, and the like.
- But what else also comes in high concentrations in our cities?
- High concentrations of sin and crime are common in the cities of our day -



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“Crime rates are much higher in big cities than in either small cities or rural areas. This paper explains this connection by using victimization data, evidence from the NLSY on criminal behavior, and the Uniform Crime Reports. Higher pecuniary benefits for crime in large cities can explain at most one-quarter of the connection between city size and crime rates. Lower probabilities of arrest and a lower probability of recognition are features of urban life, but these factors seem to explain at most one-fifth of the urban crime effect. Between one-third and one-half of the urban effect on crime can be explained by the presence of more female-headed households in cities.”

The National Bureau of Economic Research



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It is overwhelmingly clear that, at least in the United States, bigger cities have higher crime rates than smaller cities, small towns, or rural areas. The data is so clear on this that it is amazing anyone would assert otherwise. Here are the violent crime rates for 2009-2013 as per Table 16 of the FBI's annual "Crime in the United States" report. The pattern is not hard to identify. You are about 2.5 times more likely to be a victim of violent crime in a city of more than 250k than in a small town of less than 10k.

www.quora.com



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- The National Bureau of Economic Research concludes that the abundance of financial targets, the reduction in the likelihood of being identified, and a weakened family structure all play a role in urban crime.
- I would offer that higher concentrations of people accelerates everything from economic development to the perfection and proliferation of sin.
- In business it's "follow the money", in cultural degradation, it's "follow the opportunity to sin".



In the Beginning

- Genesis 9:7 “As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.”
- At least implied in God’s command is that of spreading out over the entire earth.
- At least implied in verse #4 is this – “if we don’t stay together and become great we will be scattered and not be great”. (not God’s objective for man to be great)



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- The next objective was to “build a tower” – if theologians are correct that Nimrod was the leader of the rebellion at Babel, then we should examine his motive.
- The historian “Josephus” asserts that Nimrod was interested in out maneuvering God just in case God ever send a water judgment again.
- Nimrod’s plan was to have a tower to run to that would be higher than the apex of the flood of Noah’s day.



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- The phrase, “a tower whose top will reach into heaven” has been construed to mean that the people in Genesis 11 were dumb enough to think such a feat were possible.
- I believe such thinking sells short the intellectual capabilities of humanity at the time.
- It sort of presumes that mankind had just recently ascended from the caves and actually thought they could reach heaven.



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- It is not a sin to be stupid, but it is a sin to be so arrogant that one thinks he can out smart God and escape judgment.
- Nimrod, and the people he led, were on a mission to protect themselves from the God who had now proven Himself to be both willing and able to judge sin.
- The unbelieving man wants nothing to do with a God who judges sin. A God who loves is okay, but not a God who holds us accountable.



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- The next objective of verse #4 was “let us make for ourselves a name”.
- The quest for the praise of men has no bounds – it seems to have been a coveted asset throughout history.
- Our current culture craves “likes” and “retweets” as a means of quantifying the approval of friends, relatives, and followers.



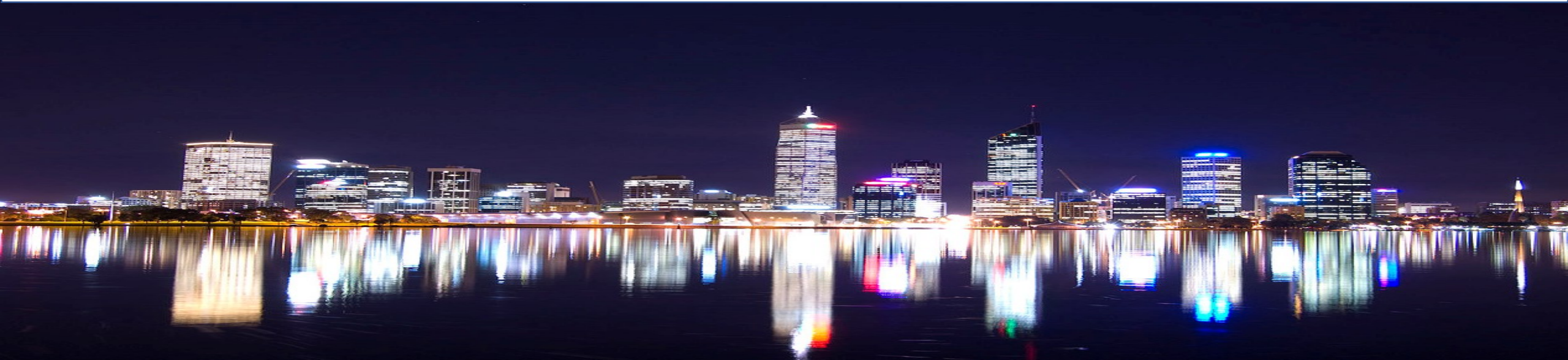


Man likes to have his name on large buildings.





Cities are testimonies to the accomplishments of man.



In the Beginning

- John 12:42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 *for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.*
- It would seem to be a special kind of stupid that one would actually crave the approval of men over the approval of God.
- But, it is by no means rare – the people at Babel were such people and all too often, so are we.



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- The people at Babel wanted to make a name for themselves when they should have been exalting the name of God.
- It is only about 100 years from the flood and already mankind has gone from everyone (Noah and his family) being O.T. Saints to what seems like a majority being unbelievers.
- How does that happen? It happens because, as the saying goes, God has no grandchildren.



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- Far better for us now, and in eternity, that we would find satisfaction in praising God as opposed to being praised by men.
- Do not look to the world to validate that which God has already validated.
- Psalm 139:14 I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.



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- And the 4th objective was that they wanted to avoid being scattered around the world.
- “otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth”
- It would seem they wanted the security of staying together as one people in one place – perhaps seeking the security that comes in numbers.



In the Beginning

- There is a great temptation to think that we are safe from harm if we have a great security system and strong locks on our doors.
- To think that we are in a safe provisional position if we have great investments and perhaps a pension.
- To think that we are safe physically if we exercise and take vitamins, but none of the above actually provide anything more than a measure of security.



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- Proverbs 21:31 The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory belongs to the Lord.
- You can only armor up a horse so much before it becomes useless in battle – at some point you must take risk or be immobile.
- We can, and should, prepare for life, but all the while knowing that our security is in Christ alone.



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- Genesis 11:6 The Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.”
- At Pentecost, God took 120 Jews who had one language and supernaturally gave them various other languages.
- What happened at Pentecost in an instant, had a prototype from the past - Babel.



In the Beginning

- We often consider the creation of God and think of the sun, moon, stars, the animal kingdom, and even the wonder of the human body.
- But we rarely speak of the human mind in the same context - but we should!
- God gave Adam and Eve a language to speak that was extensive – evidenced by Adam’s naming of the animals.



In the Beginning

- Imagine that moment at Babel – the whole world is united in rebellion against God and all of sudden they could not understand each other.
- A new language - complete with a full vocabulary - in an instant - at the command of God.
- We are not told how many languages were introduced, but it would fair to assume that God splintered the world sufficiently to weaken any remaining rebellion.



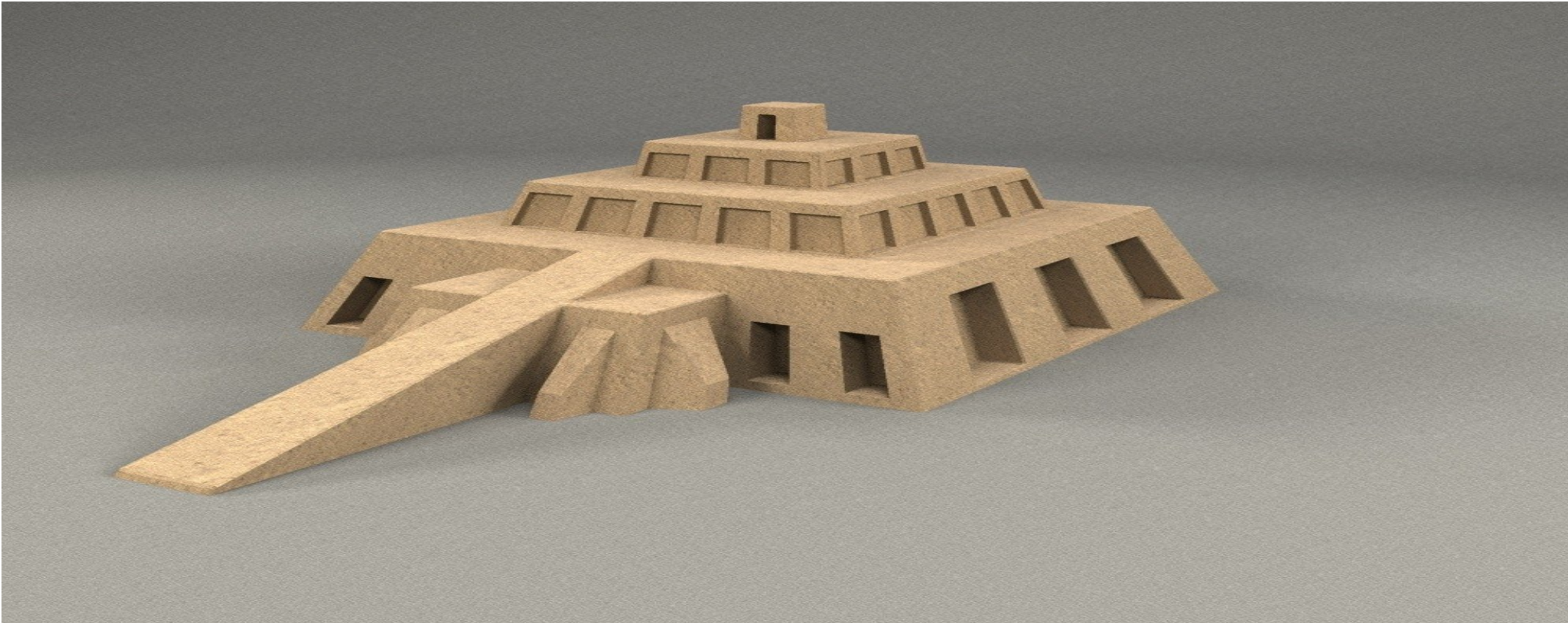
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- Genesis 11:8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. 9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.
- The attitude of the people at the tower of Babel was one that wreaked of, “wanting to live apart from God driven by personal ambition and personal pride”.
- Even the location was nearly the same as the first rebellion in Eden. (Shinar)



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- The people of Babel, led by Nimrod, began to build a ziggurat – which probably would have looked something like this.



In the Beginning

- The ziggurat would serve multiple purposes:
 - Social – a place for the people of the city to meet and do commerce.
 - Religious – it was thought to be a ladder for the “gods” to ascend into the heavens.
 - Psychological – it would be impressive and showcase the accomplishments of mankind.



In the Beginning

- There are some things that just do not change:
 - Mankind is sinful and chases after sin.
 - God is jealous over His creation – people and all else.
 - God will not just stand by and watch mankind destroy himself.



Questions

