

God Scatters the Nations

Key Verse: “So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.” —Genesis 11:8

Selected Scripture: Genesis 11:1-9

AFTER THE FLOOD HAD begun to recede, Noah waited for God to tell him it was safe to leave the ark and begin a new life. (Gen. 8:15-19) A world [an age] had come to an end, but not the earth. Now a new world was beginning, and Noah's sons went in different directions to start new settlements.

One of the great-grandsons of Noah, through his son Ham, was Nimrod (Gen. 10:6-10), of whom it is said, “He began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel.” The phrase “before the LORD” has the meaning of sinning against the LORD, as had been the condition of those alive before the flood: “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.” (Gen. 6:11) It was under Nimrod's direction that a tower was to be built as the center of his newly emerging kingdom, a kingdom that would eventually become known as the Babylonian Empire.

Based on the evil character of Nimrod, it is apparent that this tower was to be a center of his power. With all the people at that time speaking only one language

(Gen. 11:1), it would be easy for Nimrod to keep his subjects within a small area of his empire and have them wholly given to idolatry in a social order that was full of iniquity. Its wealth and magnificence would bring a corresponding moral degradation, as its people would become worshippers of false gods.

Seeing this emerging new evil on the earth, and how Nimrod intended to keep his subjects from moving to populate new areas, God intervened to disrupt his plans. (vss. 5,6) By confounding their speech (vs. 7), God erected an effective barrier to prevent them from combining for the accomplishment of their own selfish or sinful purposes. God had covenanted with Noah to never again destroy mankind through calamities such as another flood, and he was not about to permit the seed of human rebellion to get out of control again so quickly.

While the people referred to their city as Babel, “the gate of God,” to God and to those searching to understand his plans expressed in the Bible, the extended name “Babylon” has come to symbolically represent “confusion,” specifically that of Christendom, with its many distortions of God’s Word. “Upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” (Rev. 17:5) So great is the evil of this system that we are told it will eventually be utterly destroyed: “A mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.”—Rev. 18:21

Our Key Verse points out that the confounding of their speech resulted in the people being scattered abroad. This scattering of the people into new areas of the earth is in harmony with God’s stated design to have mankind multiply and fill the earth. (Gen. 1:28) No evil is strong enough to change God’s plans! ■