# Babel

GENESIS 11:1-9

2 “I have loved you,” says the LORD. But you say,
“How have you loved us?” “Is not Esau Jacob's
brother?” declares the LORD. “Yet I have loved
Jacob

3 but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill
country and left his heritage to jackals of the
desert.”

4 If Edom says, “We are shattered but we will
rebuild the ruins,” the LORD of hosts says, “They
may build, but I will tear down, and they will be
called ‘the wicked country,’ and ‘the people with
whom the LORD is angry forever.’”

5 Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say,
“Great is the LORD beyond the border of Israel!”



## NIMROD AND HIS COURT

GENESIS 11:4 · LET US MAKE A NAME

MARTEN VAN VALCKENBORCH
THE TOWER OF BABEL · CASTLE OF GAASBEEK
PUBLIC DOMAIN



**THE PLAIN OF SHINAR**

GENESIS 11:2 · THE EUPHRATES IN BABYLONIA

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1 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.

2 And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

3 And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.

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

# Making a Name nine occurrences



| REFERENCE | WHO MAKES IT | FOR WHOM | KEY PHRASE (ESV) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Genesis 11:4** | the builders | themselves | “let us make a name for ourselves” |
| **2 Samuel 7:9** | God | David | “I will make for you a great name” |
| **2 Samuel 8:13** | David | himself | “David made a name for himself” |
| **1 Chronicles 17:8** | God | David | “I will make for you a name” |
| **Nehemiah 9:10** | God | himself | “you made a name for yourself” |
| **Isaiah 63:12** | God | himself | “to make for himself an everlasting name” |
| **Isaiah 63:14** | God | himself | “to make for yourself a glorious name” |
| **Jeremiah 32:20** | God | himself | “you have made a name for yourself” |
| **Daniel 9:15** | God | himself | “you have made a name for yourself” |

GOD 7 · DAVID 1 · THE BUILDERS 1

# Let Us Brick Bricks Genesis 11.03

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הָבָה נִלְבְּנָה לְבֵנִים וְנִשְׂרְפָה לִשְׂרֵפָה

*And they said to one another,* “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.”

“MAKE BRICKS” · **לבן**

נִלְבְּנָה לְבֵנִים

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| VERB | נִלְבְּנָה H3835B | to make bricks · *nilbenah* |
| NOUN | לְבֵנִים H3843 | bricks · *lebenim* |

LITERALLY

let us brick bricks

“BURN” · **שׂרף**

וְנִשְׂרְפָה לִשְׂרֵפָה

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| VERB | וְנִשְׂרְפָה H8313 | and let us burn · *wənisrepah* |
| NOUN | לִשְׂרֵפָה H8316 | to a burning · *lisrefah* |

LITERALLY

and let us burn a burning



# THE TOWER OF BABEL

GENESIS 11:1–9

MARTEN VAN
VALCKENBORCH THE ELDER
1595

OIL ON PANEL
CASTLE OF GAASBEEK
PUBLIC DOMAIN

Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was … a bold man, and of great strength of hand. … He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power.

He also said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to **drown the world again**; for that he would build a tower **too high for the waters to be able to reach**! and that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers!

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

5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which
the children of man had built.

6 And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they
have all 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.

But what did these **vain and presumptuous** men intend? How did they expect to raise this lofty mass against God, when they had built it above all the mountains and the clouds of the earth’s atmosphere?

What injury could any spiritual or material elevation do to God? The safe and true way to heaven is made by **humility**, which lifts up the heart to the Lord, not against Him; as this giant is said to have been a hunter against the Lord.

ESV · CC BY 4.0

9:1

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and **fill the earth.**”

11:4

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

All of those factions intended to build the tower for the sake of idol worship. It is written here: **“And let us make a name for us,”** and it is written there: **“And make no mention of the name of the other gods.”** Just as there, the connotation of ‘name’ is idol worship, so too here, the connotation of ‘name’ is idol worship.

*here* — Genesis 11:4 · *there* — Exodus 23:13

attributed to R. Natan, tanna, mid-2nd c. AD

**11:04**

*pen-nāfûṣ*

פֶּן־נָפוּץ עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ

“lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth”

**11:08**

*wayyāfeṣ YHWH*

וַיָּפֶץ יְהוָה אֹתָם מִשָּׁם

“And the LORD dispersed them from there”

**11:09**

*ûmiššām hēfīṣām*

וּמִשָּׁם הֱפִיצָם יְהוָה

“and from there the LORD dispersed them”

ROOT פוץ pûṣ — *to scatter, be dispersed*

7 Come, let us go down and there confuse their language,
so that they may not understand one another's speech.”

8 So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face
of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the
LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from
there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the
earth.

# The Names of the City four names, one given

AKKADIAN · SUMERIAN · HEBREW

| NAME | WHAT THE NAME CLAIMS | IN THE RECORD |
|---|---|---|
| **Bābilim** AKKADIAN | “Gate of the god” · ká-dingir-ra | Enūma Eliš V 129 re-reads the name as **bītāt ilī rabûti**, “houses of the great gods.” Here it is built by **bənê hā-’ādām**, the sons of man. |
| **Etemenanki** SUMERIAN | “House of the foundation of heaven and earth” | The ziggurat’s ceremonial name. Left unfinished. |
| **Esagila** SUMERIAN | “House whose head is raised up” | After the confusion the building stops. Nothing is raised. |
| **Babel** HEBREW | בָּלַל · bālal, H1101A · “to mix” | The name they are given — not the name they chose. |

BĀBILIM · ETEMENANKI · ESAGILA · BABEL

A. R. GEORGE, HOUSE MOST HIGH (1993) · ENŪMA ELIŠ V 129 · TAHOT

4 “When you bring a grain offering baked in the oven as an offering, it shall be unleavened loaves of fine flour **mixed** with oil or unleavened wafers smeared with oil.

5 And if your offering is a grain offering baked on a griddle, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, **mixed** with oil.



# The Confusion of Tongues

GENESIS 11:7–9

Wood engraving, 1866
Gustave Doré · engraved by Charles Maurand

LA GRANDE BIBLE DE TOURS
PUBLIC DOMAIN

9 “For at that time I will change the speech of the
peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call
upon the name of the LORD and serve him with
one accord.

10 From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers,
the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my
offering.