

# (Genesis) Genesis 11:1-4

by J. Vernon McGee

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*J. Vernon McGee's sermon on Genesis 11:1-4 explores the Tower of Babel as a symbol of humanity's rebellion against God and the desire for unity apart from divine instruction.*

**Duration:** 8:21

**Scripture:** Genesis 11:1-9, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Genesis"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of the Tower of Babel from the book of Genesis. The Tower of Babel was not simply a structure to protect against floods, but rather a symbol of rebellion against God. The people of Babel wanted to build a center of unity and a rallying point to defy God's command to scatter and populate the earth. The Tower was a religious structure, a ziggurat, where they worshiped the sun, moon, and stars instead of the Creator.

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## Transcript

Now, we come to the 11th chapter, and we come here to what I sometimes have called the greatest tongue movement on record, and that was the Tower of Babel. Now let's move down in this, because I won't get very far, but I will get a little ways. And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech.

I do not know what language they spoke at that time. A friend of mine, a fellow Texan, a preacher in Texas, he told me, he said, you and I probably are the only two that really know what they spoke before the Tower of Babel, and that was Texan. Well, I'll be honest with you, since then I've come to the conclusion it could have been something else.

But what the language was, I don't know. And I believe whatever that language was will be the language that will be spoken in heaven. I think it's going to be a much better language than we have today.

They'll have better nouns and verbs and adverbs and adjectives. Now will you notice, and the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass as they journeyed from the east, apparently man was moving toward the west.

That they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Now that is in the Tigris, Euphrates Valley. And they said one to another, go to, let us make brick and burn them throughly.

And they had brick for stone and slime had they for mortar. Well, down in that area there's no stone, and so they made brick. And that in and of itself reveals something about the building.

It's not, shall I say, a sort of a phony building. Well, according to that then, practically all the buildings in our cities today are that way made of brick. And that's the type of building material, I guess, that's more popular than any other kind today.

And yet the brick was used there because of the practicality of it. It was a necessity. Now notice what they did.

And they said, go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven. And let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. Now you'll notice that I have emphasized that business of us.

They've got a bad case of perpendicular Aedas. Let us make us a name. And this is to be a rallying place for man.

I think the sole purpose of this was to be a rallying place for man. And I'm going to go into a great deal more detail next time. But the Tower of Babel was a ziggurat.

And there are many ruins of them in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley. I have a picture of the ruins of the one in Ur of the Chaldees, where Abraham lived. And it was made of brick, solid, and around it was a runway that went to the top.

And apparently on top of it was an altar on which in certain instances they offered human sacrifice. Later on, their children were offered in a red-hot idol. All of this was connected with the ziggurat later on.

But at this time, they make a tower, and it's to reach to heaven. Now, don't get the impression that they're trying to get their feet out of water. They're trying to build above flood stage.

That's not even the thought at all. The whole thought is that they're attempting to build something that is a rallying point for man against God. That's what the Tower of Babel was.

It was rebellion against Almighty God. Now, friends, last time I only got down through the third verse of the 11th chapter of Genesis. And if you have your Bible, we'll pick up at the fourth verse.

Now, I did read verse 4 last time, but I want to begin there today. And this is the Tower of Babel that man built. It was built, as we saw, of brick and slime, not of stone and mortar.

To begin with, it wasn't down in that valley. And I read now verse 4. And they said, Now, the emphasis here is upon us. Let us, let us.

You notice a bad case, as we said last time, of perpendicular Aedas. But apparently it was Nimrod that led in this movement. He was the builder of Babel and evidently the Tower of Babel.

And it was to be a place for him to rear a world empire that is opposed to God. And in order to realize his ambition and make his dream come true, there are two factors and features that are essential. He needed a center of unity, a sort of headquarters, as it were, a capital, a place to assemble, a place to look to, as it were.

And that was the city of Babel. And then there had to be a rallying point, not just geographical but psychological, that which gives motive or reason, a spark, an inspiration, sort of like a rally around the flag boys or a song or a battle cry. Remember the main, remember Pearl Harbor.

There must be some impelling and compelling motivation, must be a monument. Lenin's tomb is where communism meets. And in that day, it's the Tower of Babel.

And the Tower of Babel, let us make us, is defiance and rebellion against God. Let us make us a name over weaning ambition. Now, let's see what the Tower of Babel was not.

It was not a place for man to go in time of high water. He wasn't building above the flood stage. That's a very trivial and, I think, puerile interpretation.

After all, Lenin's tomb is not a place to go when the Volga River overflows. This tower revealed the arrogant, defiant, and rebellious attitude of man against God. God said to man, scatter over the earth and replenish the earth.

Man said, nothing doing. We're not going to scatter. We're going to get together.

We're through with you. And the Tower of Babel was against God. Now, it's not just a symbol.

It's not non-religious. It was religious. It's a ziggurat.

All through that valley, as we've indicated, the ruins remain today. As I told you, I have a picture of the ruins of the ziggurat that was at Ur of the Chaldees. And this was the place where they worshiped the creature rather than the Creator.

They worshiped the sun, moon, and stars. There was a runway on the outside of it. It was more or less solid.

Some were round. Some were square. But this runway led to the top.

And on top, they worshiped the sun, moon, and stars. After all, when you could see the sun, moon, and stars, you're not going to have a flood. And God had been pretty mean to send a flood, according to them.

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