

## THE CONFUSION OF LANGUAGES

In the Table of Nation in the tenth chapter of Genesis we find a list of the descendants of Noah through his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The list of offspring proceeds rather matter-of-factly until we come to an important character named Nimrod.

And Cush begat Nimrod: 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, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city. (Gen 10:8-12)

Nimrod's name is from the verb "let us revolt." He is said to be a mighty hunter (*gibbor tsayidh*) in the sight of the Lord, but the language has a dark meaning. He becomes a tyrant or despot leading an organized rebellion against the rule of Yahweh. He hunts not animals, but rather the souls of men. The region he settles in is now mostly modern Iraq--unusual for Ham--most of the sons of Ham went south to Africa or East to China. The people of Shem stayed close-in to the region where the Ark landed, the Japhethites headed mostly North and West. Genesis 10 continues with a list of the other descendants of Ham, then presents a list of Shem's lineage.

Chapter 11 resumes the account of Nimrod's Babylon:

"And all the earth had one language and one tongue. And it came about that in their wandering from the east, they came to a stretch of flat country in the land of Shinar, and there they made their living-place. And they said one to another, Come, let us make bricks, burning them well. And they had bricks for stone, putting them together with sticky earth. And they said, Come, let us make a town, and a tower whose top will go up as high as heaven; and let us make a great name for ourselves, so that we may not be wanderers over the face of the earth." (Genesis 11:1-4)

The appearance of the first city [after the flood, built by Nimrod] goes back in the story of Cain and Abel, when Cain went out and built a city. It illustrated the hunger of humanity to huddle together for companionship, even though they were not really ready to do it (as they still, obviously, are not ready to live together successfully in cities). God's final intention is to build a city for man. Abraham looked for "a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." But man was not yet ready for that. Now here they are, again ready to build a city to satisfy the desires of body and soul. There is nothing that does this better than for human beings to live together in cities. Cities are centers of commercial and business life where all the needs of the body can best be met. Also, cities are centers of pleasure and culture, where all the hungers of the soul can be satisfied: hunger for beauty, art, and music and all the ingredients of culture.

The tower, on the other hand, is designed to satisfy the spirit of man. Here we see, reflected in these two things, a fundamental understanding of the nature of man as body, soul, and spirit. All are to be satisfied in these two elementary needs, the city and the tower. A number of years ago, digging in the plains of Shinar, archaeologists discovered the remains of certain great towers that these early Babylonians had built. Some archaeologists have felt that they may even have found the foundation of this original tower of Babel. That is very hard to determine. But they did find that the Babylonians built great towers called ziggurats, which were built in a circular fashion with an ascending staircase that terminates in a shrine at the top, around which are written the signs of the zodiac. Obviously, the tower was a religious building, intending to expose man to the mystery of the heavens and the greatness of God. That, perhaps, is what is meant here by the statement that they intended to build a tower with its top in the heavens. They were impressed by its greatness architecturally, that is, it was a colossal thing for the men of that day to build and they may have thus thought of it as reaching into heaven. But they also unquestionably

were thinking of it as a means of communication with God, of maintaining contact with him. God is not to be left out, you see, in the city of man. He is there, represented by this tower.

However, the heart of the matter is made clear in these words, "let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Already a haunting fear had set in. They were conscious already of a disruptive influence in their midst, of a centrifugal force that was pushing them apart so they could not live too closely together and which would ultimately, they feared, scatter them abroad and leave them unknown, unhonored, and unsung, living in isolated communities where they would be exposed to great danger. The fear of this caused them to build a tower and a city. The ultimate motive is expressed in these words, "let us make a name for ourselves."

From that day on this has been the motto of humanity, "let us make a name for ourselves." I am always amused to see how many public edifices made a plaque somewhere on which the names of all the public officials who were in power when it was built are inscribed: the mayor, the head of public works, etc. "Let us make a name for ourselves," is a fundamental urge of a fallen race. It reveals one of the basic philosophies of humanism: "Glory to man in the highest, for man is the master of things." That is the central thought of humanism, glory to mankind.

The fact that this was a religious tower-and yet built to make a name for man-reveals the master motive behind religion. It is a means by which man attempts to share the glory of God. We must understand this, otherwise we will never understand the power of religion as it has pervaded the earth and permeated our culture ever since. It is a way by which man seeks to share what is rightfully God's alone. This tower was a grandiose structure, and undoubtedly it was intended to be a means by which man would glorify God. Unquestionably there was a plaque somewhere attached to it that carried the pious words, "Erected in the year \_\_\_\_, to the greater glory of God." But it was not really for the glory of God; it was a way of controlling God, a way of channeling God by using him for man's glory. That is what man's religion has always sought to do. It is a way of making God available to us.

Man does not really want to eliminate God. It is only sporadically and then only for a relatively brief time, that men cry out for the elimination of God. Atheism is too barren, too pessimistic and too morally bankrupt to live with very long. The communists are finding this out. No, we need "dear old God," but let's keep him under control. Do not let him get out of his place. "Don't call us, God; we'll call you." This is the fundamental philosophy of society. It is the tower of Babel all over again.

If you drop the first consonant of Nimrod's name and take the others M, R, D you will have the basic root of the god of Babylon, whose name was Marduk, and whom most scholars identify with Nimrod. In the Babylonian religion, Nimrod (or Marduk) held a unique place. His wife was Semiramis. (In Cairo, Egypt, the Semiramis Hotel is named after this woman.) Marduk and Semiramis were the ancient god and goddess of Babylon. They had a son whom Semiramis claimed was virgin-born, and they founded the mother and child cult. This was the central character of the religion of ancient Babylon, the worship of a mother and child, supposedly virgin-born. You can see in this a clever attempt on the part of Satan to anticipate the genuine virgin birth and thus to cast disrepute upon the story when the Lord Jesus would later be born into history.

This ancient Babylonian cult of the mother and child spread to other parts of the earth. You will find it in the Egyptian religion as Isis and Osiris. In Greece it is Venus and Adonis, and in the Hindu religion it is Ushas and Vishnu. The same cult prevails in various other localities. It appears in the Old Testament in Jeremiah where the Israelites are warned against offering sacrifices to "the Queen of Heaven." This Queen of Heaven is Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod, the original mother of the Mother and Child cult. The cult has also crept into Christianity and forms the basis for the Mariolatry that has prevailed in the Roman Catholic Church, where the Mother and Child are worshiped as joint redeemers. Alexander Hislop, an authoritative writer in this field, has written a book called "The Two Babylons," which should be of great interest if you desire to pursue this further. This idolatrous religion culminates at last in the Bible in the book of Revelation. There, a "great harlot" appears, whose name is "Mystery Babylon the Great," the originator of all the harlotries and false religions of earth. The essence of Babylonianism, as we understand from Scripture, is the attempt to gain earthly honor by means of religious authority. That is Babylonianism, and it has pervaded Christian churches, Hindu temples, Buddhist shrines, and Mohammedan mosques. Everywhere it is the element that marks falseness in religion—the attempt to gain earthly power and prestige by means of religious authority. That is what Nimrod began and what God will ultimately destroy, as we read in the book of Revelation.