**Tower of Babel**  
*Genesis 11:1-9*

**Main Thought**  Mankind rebelled against God by building a STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN until the Lord came down and confused and scattered mankind.

**Prologue** (1-2).

- The unity of mankind was evident in ONE LIP and ONE WORD (literally).
- They were anxious nomads (lit. *pull up stakes*) as they moved east indicating spacial and spiritual separation from God like Cain (4:16) and Lot (13:11).
- They moved to the plains of Shinar (Mesopotamia) and settled there which was the theological opposite of FILL THE EARTH (9:1).

**Man Rebels** (3-4).

- Using their collective words, they condemned themselves (Luke 19:22).
- LET US reveals their HUMANISM apart from God (Psa. 2:1-6).
- Bricks (OVEN-BAKED [LONG LASTING], not sun dried [erodes in rain]), not stone (Egypt, Israel), were used in flat silted (no rocks) plains of Mesopotamia.
- Long lasting TAR (6:14; Ex. 2:3) was used for mortar (all collective federal buildings as in Ur), not typical mud mortar.
- COME, LET US BUILD reveals their willful resolve (Isa. 14:12-14) to construct a tower/temple – a ZIGGURAT or stepped pyramid (EGYPT). It was to reach to the heavens and literally be a “stairway to heaven” as in Jacob’s dream (28:12). They were attempting to enter the realm of the divine through human means (Eph. 2:8-9).
- In the New Testament, Jesus is our connection or stairway to heaven (John 1:51; 14:6).
- Just as the Nephilim made a name for themselves (6:4), so too those of Babel; but their legacy would be literally CONFUSION (BABEL) to this day!
- Like Cain, they built a city (4:17) rather than fill the earth (9:1). This city would be a world symbol of rebellion against God – Babylon (Rev. 18:2, 10).

**The Lord Rules** (5-7).

- God thoroughly investigates before acting (3:8-9; 4:9-10; 18:20-21). As man was ascending their staircase, God was descending (John 6:51; 1 Thess. 4:16).
- Man may plan, but God will determine the outcome (Prov. 19:21; Jer. 29:11).
- While they tried to make a NAME for themselves (Prov. 16:18), God wanted to make their NAME great as with Abraham (12:2) and David (2 Sam. 7:9).
- “Come, let us” reveals that God’s DIVINE COUNCIL (1 Kings 22:19-21; Dan. 4:17) has decided to CONFUSE their language to prevent future rebellions.
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost reversed this confusion (1 Cor. 14:33) as they understood in their own language (Acts 2:6, 8).
Epilogue (8-9).

- As men SETTLED (1), God SCATTERED over all the earth as planned (9:1).
- They named the tower Babel (Akkadian – babilu) – ‘gate of god’, but God named it Babel (Hebrew – babel) – ‘confusion’ in a clever pun.

Chiastic Structure, when charted as below, reveals the shape of the Greek letter CHI which when transliterated is the English “X”. It ironically forms the shape of a ZIGGURAT! The pattern reveals parallel thought and words starting from the outside to inside. The outside is labeled A and A’ (pronounced “A prime”) and moves inward toward the PIVOT marked X – “And the Lord came down”. Notice the identical and parallel Hebrew words. A through E reveal what man did whereas A’ through E’ reveal what God did – he reversed everything rebellious man did.

A All the earth (kol-hāʾāres) one language
B People settle together there (šām)
C Said to each other (rēʾēhû)
   D Come now, let us make bricks (ḥāḇâ nilbᵉnâ)
      E A city and tower
         X And the Lord came down
         E’ The city and the tower
   D’ Come now… let us confuse (ḥāḇâ … nāḇᵉḷâ32)
      C’ [Not understand] each other (rēʾēhû)
B’ People disperse from there (šam)
A’ Language of the whole earth (kol-hāʾāres)

Archaeological site of the TOWER OF BABEL (91 meters sq.).
Near the Euphrates River in ancient Babylon, Iraq.
It was one of many ziggurats in Mesopotamia.