

Tear Down Your Babel (abridged)

By Tim Jennings

Few of us openly dismiss the importance of God's word. We gladly affirm its truth and authority, yet our minds are easily captivated by human wisdom and our hearts by impressive results. Before long, the old Book is quietly set aside for something that seems more relevant, practical, or exciting.

Do not be deceived. The desire to build life without complete trust in God lives within us all. We long to secure our own future and control our own destiny because we are often unsure that God's way is enough. So we begin listening to the wisdom of the world. "Surely," we reason, "there must be something to what so many successful people are doing." Without realizing it, God's voice becomes muffled beneath the noise of human wisdom.

Why are we so tempted to improve upon God's ways? The answer is found on the plains of Shinar, where the broken ruins of Babel still testify to the end of human pride.

After the flood, Noah's family stood alone on a cleansed earth. God reassured them with His covenant and commanded them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 9:1, 7). Yet obeying that command proved difficult. Dangerous animals, harsh terrain, disease, and uncertainty made scattering across the earth seem frightening.

Then they found the fertile plain of Shinar. Instead of continuing outward, they settled there. They developed durable building materials and proposed building a city with a great tower (Gen. 11:4). "Let us make a name for ourselves," they said, fearing they would otherwise be scattered and forgotten. Their project, later known as Babel, appeared practical, safe, and wise.

But what humanity called wisdom, God called rebellion. Their tower that supposedly reached heaven was so insignificant that "the Lord came down" to see it (Gen. 11:5). In mercy, God confused their languages and scattered them across the earth. They sought security by gathering



together, but God dispersed them. They sought a lasting name, yet even their words became unintelligible.

Babel reveals two attitudes that continually tempt us to elevate human wisdom above God's word.

Fear hinders obedience. Noah's descendants feared the unknown, and their fears seemed reasonable. Yet reasonable fears never justify disobedience.

The same struggle confronts us today. We fear losing our children, so we soften biblical truth to keep them close. We fear declining churches, so we pursue popular strategies instead of cultivating hearts for the lost. We fear that wholehearted service to Christ will demand too much of our time, relationships, comfort, and resources, so we settle for compromise. It all appears sensible, but God still calls His people to trust Him.

His commands remain challenging. Jesus says, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15). He calls us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (Mark 8:34-35). Those commands are intimidating, but disciples choose obedience over security

because they trust the God who provides.



Pride produces disobedience. "Let us make a name for ourselves" is still the anthem of our culture. It drives careers, possessions, recognition, and even religious ambition. We all long to be remembered.

Yet no name we build will outlast the glory of God. Every human monument eventually crumbles

beneath the sands of history, but everything done for His glory endures. Pride loses its power only when we stand in awe of God's greatness.

Fear and pride built Babel, a monument to human wisdom marked by confusion, futility, and emptiness. Its ruins still call us to tear down our own towers, bury our pride beneath God's glory, and cast our fears upon His faithful care. God has given His people a world to reach and a holiness to pursue. It is time to leave the plains of Shinar behind and move on.