

General Church Education



# The Tower of Babel

Genesis 11:1-9

## Lesson 4

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

# The Tower of Babel

## Genesis 11:1-9

### Ideas for Parents & Teachers

This story portrays the idea that the Lord rewards the good and punishes the evil. Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden because they ate of the forbidden fruit. Cain was punished for slaying Abel. In this story, we see that the proud people who believed they could get to heaven without the Lord's help were scattered across the earth. Later children will more fully understand the deeper truth that the evil really bring punishment upon themselves by removing themselves from the Lord's protection, and that the Lord punishes no one. This theme lays the foundation for the future spiritual growth called regeneration.

Children can begin to grasp the fact that doing something wrong brings its own punishment. This is a good time to focus on self-responsibility in making choices. Children can also be led to understand that if they do something wrong, the Lord will still be with them, waiting to lead them, if they will let Him. The Lord rewards us with good and happy feelings, if we do what is right.

### Ideas for Children

- We should trust the Lord to protect us. (Divine Providence)
- The Lord promises rewards when people obey Him.
- The Lord can protect people if they are trying to be good.

### From the Writings

So far as people are in heavenly love—which consists in loving uses and goods and being moved by delight of heart when doing them for the sake of the church, country, human society, and one's fellow-citizens—so far they are led by the Lord, because the Lord is in that love and it is from Him. But so far as people are in the love of self, which consists in performing uses and goods for the sake of themselves, so far they are led by themselves; and so far as people are led by themselves, they are not led by the Lord. So far as people love themselves they separate themselves from the Divine, thus also from heaven. See *Heaven and Hell* 558

In the Ancient Church, everyone regarded charity as the essential. But in the course of time, many people started to divert worship to themselves and so set themselves above others. They said, "Let us build ourselves a city and a tower, and its head in heaven, and let us make a name for ourselves." Such people were like a fermenting agent, or like firebrands that start a fire. When the danger of profaning what is holy was near at hand, the state of this Church was, in Providence, altered. That is to say, its internal worship perished but its external worship remained. See *Arcana Coelestia* 1327

It is well known that 'Babel' means those who turn all worship of the Lord into worship of themselves, so that profanity exists inwardly while outwardly they do what is holy. *Arcana Coelestia* 4748

## The Tower of Babel

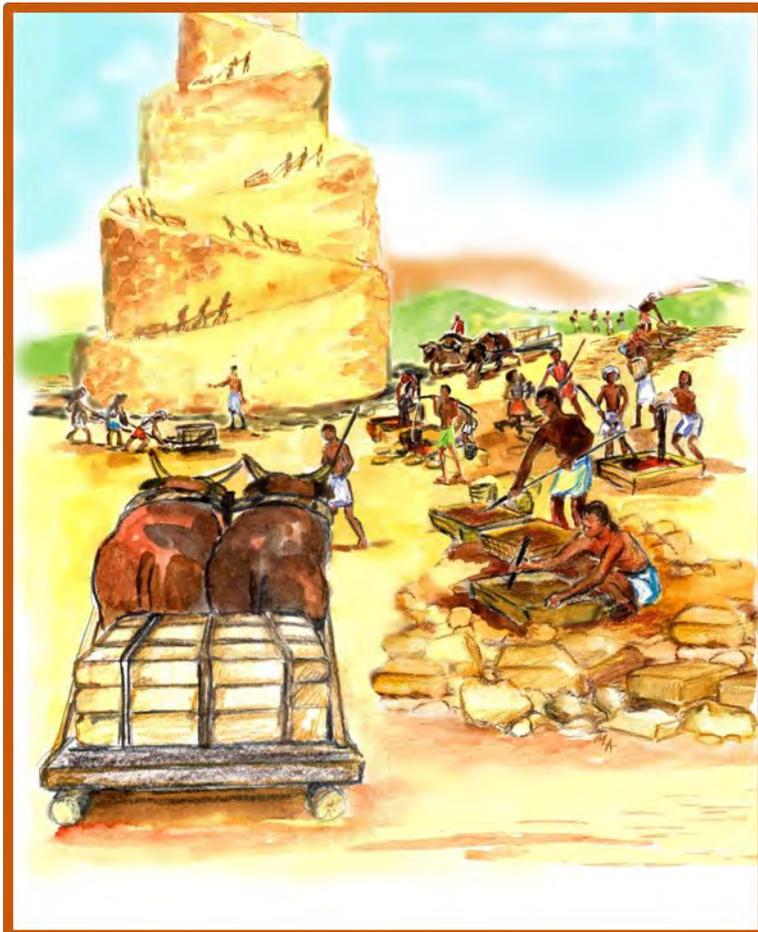
Have you ever been to a big city and seen the very tall buildings there? The tallest buildings are called “skyscrapers” because they go up so high into the sky. Perhaps you have taken the elevator to the top of a skyscraper and looked out from the observation deck. What do the streets and cars look like from so high up? They look very small, like little toys, don’t they?

### A Tall Tower

This story is about some people long, long ago who wanted to build an even taller building. It happened many years after the time of Cain and Abel. There were a great many people on the earth then. They were still living in the same general place that people had been since the beginning, and they all spoke the same language. They traveled to a plain, which is a low, mostly flat part of the earth, not high like a mountain area. It was here that they got a strange idea. Let’s read and find out what they wanted to do.

**Read Genesis 11:1-4.** What did they want to build? (A tower that reached all the way to heaven.)

What did they use as building materials? (Brick and asphalt—a dark, sticky substance.)



Why did they want to do this?  
(To make a name for themselves.)

They were determined they would build a tower to reach heaven and become great and famous. They thought only of themselves, not about serving the Lord and their neighbor.

When people “make a name” for themselves, they are very important and are known by many people. Usually people make a name for themselves by doing something spectacular or extraordinary.

This plan was certainly a spectacular one! In fact, it was such a huge project that you would think they would ask the Lord to help them. But, no, they

wanted to do it by themselves. They did not even want the Lord to know about it.

They thought they could get to heaven by themselves! So they made bricks by baking clay. Then they piled brick upon brick. The bricks were held together with asphalt, which is dark-colored and sticky, like tar, and oozes out of the ground. Soon the tower reached high into the sky. But no matter how hard they worked, their tower would never reach heaven. No one can reach heaven without the Lord! Let's read on and see what happened next.

**Read Genesis 11:5-9.**

What happened to the tower and the city? (They stopped building; it was not finished.)

What happened to the people? (Their language was confused, and they could not understand each other.)

Where did the people go? (They were scattered all over the earth.)

The word “babel” means a confusion of sounds or voices. It comes from this story. You can see that when people speak different languages or when they do not understand each other, they cannot work together.

## Cooperation

Can you think of a time when you could not work with someone? Perhaps you were playing with a friend and each of you wanted to do something different.

When people have different ideas about what to do, especially when they are selfish and think only of their own ideas, they cannot understand what other people want or why they want to do it another way. Even if they are speaking the same language, it is as if they weren't.



This misunderstanding sends them on their separate ways. They can no longer work or play together. But when people cooperate and work together, things go much more smoothly.

Cooperation brings angels to a group which makes working together fun. Did you know that wherever you go and whatever you do the Lord is with you? He is with every child and every grownup too. All of our life and power comes from Him.

The Lord protects us and guides us to make wise choices in our life. He wants us to obey Him so that we can live with Him in heaven one day. When we think about the Lord and pray to Him each day, it is easier to stop being selfish and start thinking of how we can be helpful to others. Then we can work peacefully with others.



### Discussion Questions

- Why do you think we all need the Lord to get to heaven? (Answers may include that we need to know and love the Lord because He made heaven, that we need to love the Lord and the neighbor or we won't be happy in heaven, or because all life and power comes from the Lord and we really cannot do anything good without His help.)
- What happened to the tower and to the people who set out to build it? (The tower was not finished, and the people became confused and unable to understand each other's language, so they scattered over the earth.)
- Why do you think it is important to try to cooperate with others when you are working or playing together? (Answers may include that when we cooperate we are trying to be unselfish and listen to the ideas of others, that the angels in heaven think of others and we should try to do so as well, or that when we do not cooperate, things do not go well.)

# Activity Overview | The Tower of Babel

## Recitation

Finish learning the recitation by heart.

The Lord is my Shepherd;

I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul;

He leads me in paths of righteousness, For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;

For You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil;

My cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23

## Songs

### *The Sun Shines in Splendor*

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-sun-shines-in-splendor/>

### *Stand Still, Sun!*

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-stand-still-sun/>

## Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Construct a Tower
- Activity 2 | Tower of Babel Cross Finish the Sentence
- Picture to color

## Additional Project Ideas

- Think of a time when you wanted to do something by yourself, but found it was too hard. Discuss why asking for help is a good idea, and why it is sometimes hard for us to do. We can remember that the Lord is always there to help us, no matter how difficult our problems feel.

## Activity 1 | Construct a Tower

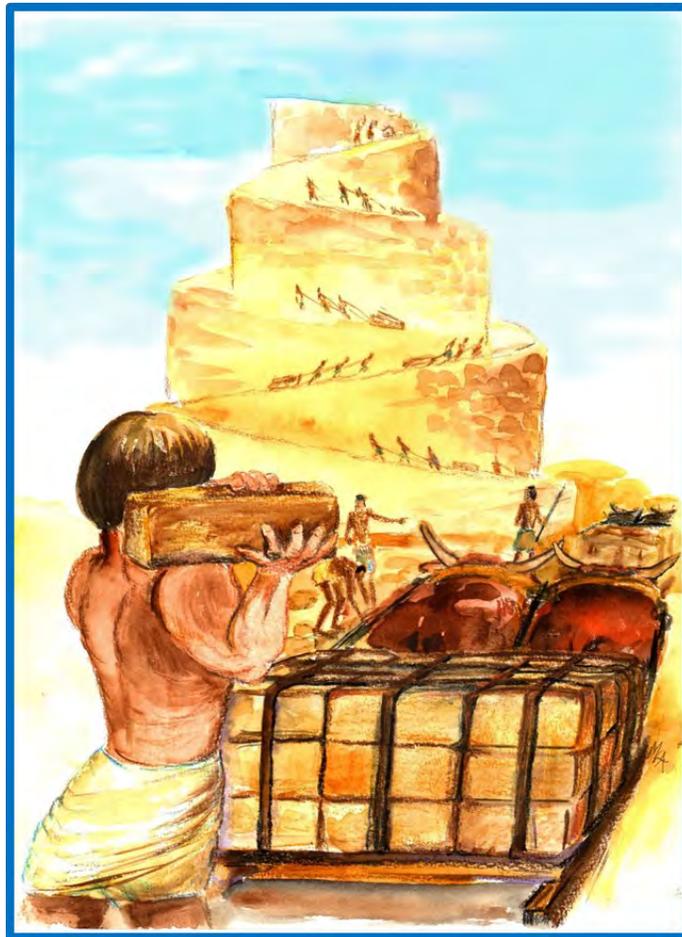
Make a “tower of Babel” using wooden or cardboard blocks with a family or group without talking.

### Supplies needed

- Wooden or cardboard blocks, or stackable containers

### Directions

1. Tell everyone you will be building a tower together. The goal is to make it as high as possible.
2. To begin with, everyone is allowed to talk about what they are doing.
3. After a while, tell everyone they can no longer talk. This represents the fact that people could not understand each other while building the tower of Babel.
4. After the tower is built talk about why it might have been difficult for the people in the story to finish building the tower.



## Activity 2 | Tower of Babel Finish the Sentence

Choose a word from the Word Bank to finish the sentence.

bricks	tar	work	finish	language	name
clay	speak	heaven	Babel	help	Lord

1. People wanted to make a \_\_\_\_\_ for themselves.
2. They forgot the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. They tried to build a tower to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. It was called the tower of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. They made a tower from \_\_\_\_\_.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ was baked into bricks.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ made the bricks stick together.
8. At first people spoke the same \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Later people did not \_\_\_\_\_ the same language.
10. They did not \_\_\_\_\_ the tower.
11. They could not \_\_\_\_\_ together.
12. We can not go to heaven without the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_.

## Activity 2 | Tower of Babel Finish the Sentence *Answers*

1. People wanted to make a name for themselves.
2. They forgot the Lord.
3. They tried to build a tower to heaven.
4. It was called the tower of Babel.
5. They made a tower from bricks.
6. Clay was baked into bricks.
7. Tar made the bricks stick together.
8. At first people spoke the same language.
9. Later people did not speak the same language.
10. They did not finish the tower.
11. They could not work together.
12. We can not go to heaven without the Lord's help.

