

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Rev. Harold C. Cranch

Lesson: Genesis 11:1-9

You remember the story of Noah and how, because Noah obeyed the Lord, and did all that the Lord asked him to do, the Lord saved Him from the great flood which covered the whole earth. He, and his family, and animals of every kind went into the great ark that he built in obedience to the Lord's command. Then the Lord closed the door, and protected them during the time of flood, and finally brought them to safety on a high mountain, while the waters went away. And after they had come forth from the ark, and worshipped the Lord, and given thanks that He had saved them from the flood, they went out into the land. They and their children raised food to eat, and took care of their flocks and herds. And the people once more flourished on earth. They wandered around the country until they found a beautiful place in which to live. This was in the land of "Mesopotamia" which means the land between the rivers. It was a very fertile land, and they grew vegetables and fruits, and all the food that they needed.

But gradually, after many, many years, people again turned away from the Lord. They forgot how the Lord had cared for them, and saved them from the flood of falsities that had destroyed the people before them. They became proud and selfish. Now in that country, men built houses out of bricks, for there was no stone there. They made big bricks out of mud, and dried them in the sun. Then they would put them together using a kind of asphalt, or bitumen, which is called slime in the Word. They used this as mortar to bind the bricks together.

Now after they had forgotten the Lord, and learned to depend on themselves, they still remembered the teaching that heaven was a wonderful place. They wanted to go to heaven, but they did not want to turn to the Lord, and ask His help. They wanted to get into heaven their own way. And so they decided that they would build a tower, and its top, the head of the tower, would reach right up into heaven, and they could climb in by that way. Now today we know that you cannot build a tower that will get you into heaven. But in those days they thought that heaven was a place high up, and if their tower was high enough it would surely get there.

So, without asking the Lord to help them, without praying to learn what the Lord wanted them to do, they began to build. They worked hard together, building the tower. But they did not build because they loved the Lord. They did not build because the Lord had told them to, the way He told Noah to build

the ark. They built because they were proud of themselves, and they wanted to make their own way into heaven, without the Lord's help. They wanted to keep this a secret from the Lord. But they were really very, very foolish. The Lord knows all things. The Lord is with men always. And so in this story it is said that the Lord saw what they were doing, and He decided that they must be taught a lesson. So while they were working together He changed their language so that they did not understand one another. When they talked together they did not know what the others were saying. So it is said that He confounded their language, and they began to quarrel and fight, and finally they went away to all different parts of the world, because they could not understand one another and live together.

Now this is the story of the Tower of Babel. For Babel means a confusion of tongues—different languages—so they could not understand. It was like a babble of sound and so later the city was called Babylon. The thing that was wrong above everything else was that they were proud, and they were making this tower as a monument to their own wisdom and glory, and they were shutting the Lord off from their lives. This was foolish and evil, for everything that is good comes to us from the Lord, and everything that is bad or evil, we make for ourselves.

It is foolish for us to do things from ourselves. We should try to do what the Lord wants us to do, and then we can be happy and successful. And we cannot keep anything secret from the Lord. We do not want to because the Lord loves us and wants to enjoy giving things to us, and helping us, and making us happy. We would be very foolish if we turned away from His love and made ourselves unhappy and evil. If we do not keep things secret from the Lord He can help us, and make everything that we do good and useful, and a real source of happiness in our life. So we must remember the lesson of the tower of Babel and never turn away from the Lord's leading to try to get to heaven by any other way than that what the Lord intends.

If we are humble; asking the Lord's help, trying to do His commandments and doing what He wants us to do, and if we go to His Word to read it to try to understand it and obey it, we will be able to do everything that the Lord wants us to do.

We should go to Him for wisdom and help and guidance, so that we may learn from the Word what he wants us to know so that He can be with us. And we will learn—we won't have to try to go to heaven by another way. We will not need a tower of Babel, for by obeying the Lord we will be following His way to heaven. This is a most important lesson. If we will learn it, then the Lord can be with us to give us understanding, wisdom and power—power to walk in the path of His commandments, power to overcome all the forces of evil until we reach heaven itself and find eternal happiness. *Amen.*