

Why Ancient Worldwide Ziggurat/Pyramid Complexes Support the Biblical Babel Account

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Abstract

Although the best-known feature of Babel in the Biblical narrative was the tower that Noah’s descendants began to build in Shinar, the Bible says that they were constructing a “city” there as well. No details are included of either the Babel city or tower. However, as this paper will show, the Tower of Babel was likely a ziggurat (stepped pyramid), and the city that accompanied the Tower was most likely composed of temples and various other religious structures. We infer this because around the world we see many ancient pagan religious complexes consisting of ziggurats together with temples and other buildings. The archaeological similarity of these far-flung ziggurats has been noted by many scholars, both Biblical and secular. It appears that after the Babel dispersion, far from learning their lesson when God intervened by stopping the work and confusing their language, men went on to build ziggurats and temple complexes wherever they settled all over the world. It is proposed here that these complexes were patterned after the original one that they had started to build back in Babel. These worldwide pyramid complexes constitute witness to the truth of the Biblical account and are compelling archaeological support for the authenticity of the Biblical story of Babel. The rebellion against God by Noah’s descendants at Babel cannot be overestimated in its profound effects on mankind. In showing evidence for taking the Babel story literally, as in this paper, the creationist worldview is supported.

Key Words: Biblical archaeology, city of Babel, pyramids, ziggurat/ pyramid complexes, ziggurats

Introduction

The worldview difference between young-Earth creationists and traditional evolutionists with respect to world his-

tory is nowhere more obvious than in the Biblical narrative of the city and Tower of Babel. Whereas creationists believe this account literally, the evolutionary view

is that it never happened, but is merely a myth, as primitive early men could not have built a structure as advanced as the famous Tower. Evolutionists are therefore confronted with the problem of explaining the existence of the many ziggurats around the world that bear resemblances to each other (we will look further into this below). Creationists, on

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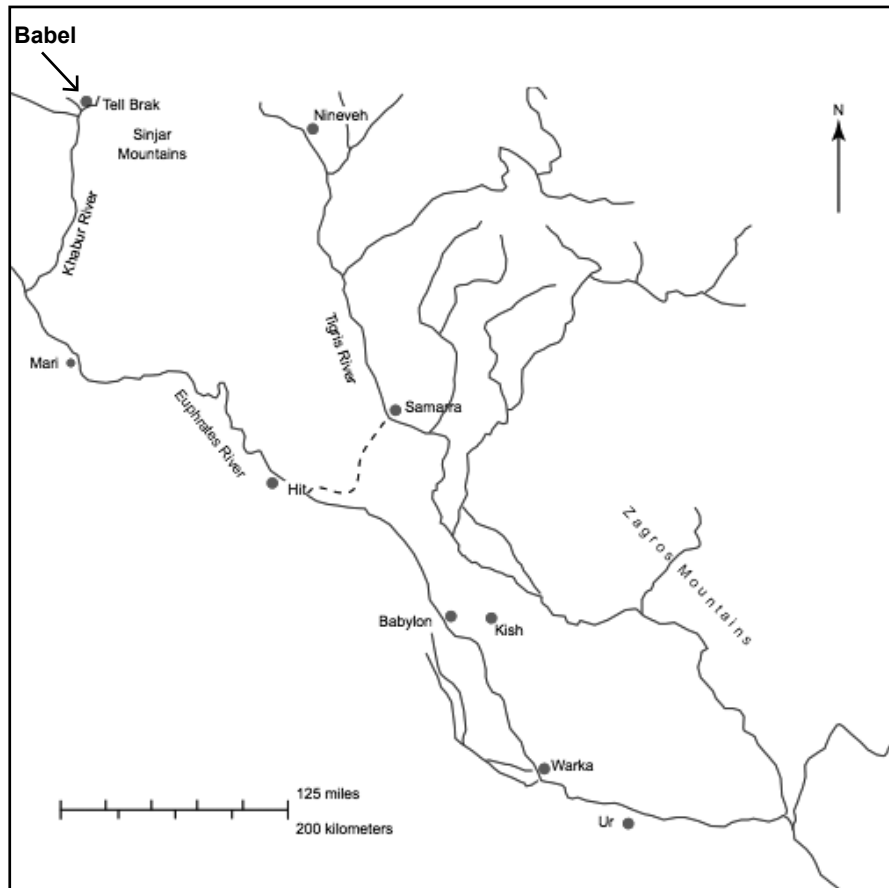


Figure 1. This map shows Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Babel was in Shinar, in the upper left corner near Tell Brak (see arrow). The dotted line is the escarpment that marks an ancient shoreline, dividing the north from the south. Babylon is in the south, in territory that was under water at the time of building the Tower of Babel. (Drawing is from Habermehl, 2011. Used by permission of *Answers in Genesis*.)

the other hand, can point to the Biblical narrative as a viable explanation for this similarity.

Background of the Babel Narrative

According to the Bible, God sent a worldwide flood that destroyed the entire Earth because of mankind's evil ways. Noah and his family came safely through the Flood in an Ark that God had instructed Noah to build (Genesis 6:11–22). After Noah and his family left the Ark, the group eventually migrated

to a plain in the land of Shinar (Genesis 11:2). There they began to build the famous Tower of Babel and its city (Genesis 11:3, 4). From Shinar, God dispersed them abroad “upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:8). Considering that God had taken extreme measures to stop the building project (Genesis 11:5–8), we might think that the people had learned their lesson and would fear further punishment from God if they ever tried such a thing as building another city/tower complex. But as we will show in this paper, quite the opposite happened. After the people

spread throughout the world, they eventually built these structures wherever they went. History does not tell us details on this.

Where Babel Was Located and When the People Dispersed

It is from Babel in Shinar that the people scattered in all directions because God had confounded (confused) their language (Genesis 11:7). Shinar was most likely located in the Khabur (Habor) Triangle in North Mesopotamia near Tell Brak. For an extensive treatise supporting this location for Shinar, see Habermehl (2011). Two of the points made in that paper are that South Mesopotamia, where it is traditionally believed that Babel was situated, was under water at the time of building the cities in Shinar; and also that Babel and Babylon are two different places. This shows the importance of crossing over information between archaeology and other disciplines such as geography and geology. See Figure 1 for a map showing where it is argued that Babel was located in North Mesopotamia.

There is disagreement among Bible scholars as to when the Babel incident occurred. The birth of Peleg is usually considered to be the time of the Babel dispersion, because of the statement that “in his days the earth was divided” (Genesis 10:25; 1 Chronicles 1:19). Some scholars dispute this, on the basis that it was actually the physical land that was divided in Peleg's day, not the peoples. For a discussion of this subject, see Fouts (1998, pp. 17–21).

The Babel dispersion date also depends on whether we look to the MT (Masoretic) or LXX (Septuagint) genealogies. Although traditionally creationists have used the MT timeline, in more recent times there have been some who argue that the LXX is the version that we should use (e.g., Smith, 2018, pp. 117–132). Based on Peleg's birth, this

puts the Babel dispersion around 2250 BC in the MT, or 2570 BC in the LXX, a difference of just over 300 years between the two. See Habermehl (2018a, Figures 3 and 4), for diagrams showing these dates on the MT and LXX timelines. However, the conventional (also called the standard secular) timeline in those figures shows the Babel dispersion at least 1.76 million years ago. Those who use conventional dates to look for the Tower of Babel do not realize this.

Dating of Ziggurats and Pyramids

The difference between the LXX and MT does not apply to the dating of anything from Terah (Abraham's father) on, except for the 40-year difference in I Kings 6:1 between the two versions. What does apply is the divergence between the Biblical and secular timelines, which could also be called their misalignment. (The question of synchronization of Biblical dates and standard archaeologists' dates is debated in creationist circles. See Habermehl 2013a, 2013b, and 2023 for discussion of this.) Table I shows correlation of some secular Egyptian dates to Biblical dates in the historical period.

How the standard timeline relates to the Biblical timeline is significant in this paper, because all dates of monuments published by archaeologists are based on the standard timeline, not the Biblical one. As shown in Table I, the secular and Biblical timelines merge roughly at 600 BC, and after that the standard archaeological dates are the same as those of our Biblical timeline. This means that any ziggurats and other structures dated before 600 BC will have two dates—the secular one and the Biblical one.

Are Ziggurats and Pyramids the Same Thing?

In this paper we will take the view that the two kinds of structures, smooth-sided

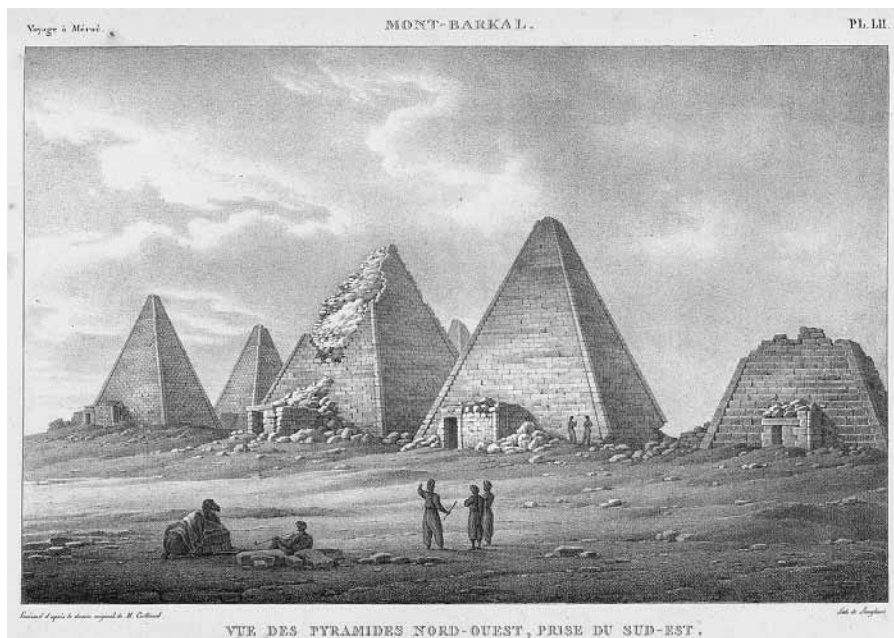


Figure 2. The pyramids at Jebel Barkal, Sudan (about two thousand years old), are examples of simple smooth pyramids. (Drawing: Frederic Caulliaud, 1826. Public domain.)



Figure 3. The Temple of Kukulcan (El Castillo) at Chichen Itza in the Yucatan, Mexico (built 600–1000 AD), is typical of a basic ziggurat, also called a stepped pyramid. The basic features are the layers of receding steps, with one or more stairways, and a shrine on top. Variations of this design are seen around the world. (Wikipedia: Photo by Pedro Marciano, August 2014.)

and stepped, are essentially the same with regard to their meaning and their descent from the Tower of Babel. See Figures 2 and 3 for photos of a smooth

pyramid and a ziggurat (stepped pyramid), respectively.

The common elements of the pyramid/ziggurat design are a square or rect-

Table I. Synchronization of Egyptian and Biblical dates. Because of the vagaries of the Egyptian/standard timeline, it does not correlate to the Biblical timeline in a straightforward way, as is shown below. There are two dates for the Exodus because the 6th and 12th Dynasties ran concurrently, and the Exodus takes place at the end of both dynasties (see Habermehl, 2013b). For a discussion of Solomon's date on the Egyptian timeline, see Habermehl (2018b). The timelines merge at the fall of Jerusalem, usually dated at 587 BC. Dates on the chart are approximate.

Person/Event	Egyptian (Standard) BC	Biblical Date BC
Abraham	3000	2000
Joseph	2650	1700
Exodus	2200/1800	1450
Solomon	1500	1000
Timelines Merge	600	600

angular base, with four sides oriented to the four cardinal directions. Unlike smooth-sided pyramids, ziggurats have multiple stories that get successively smaller toward their summit, one or more sets of stairs, and often a shrine on top. It is surprising how recognizable the basic ziggurat elements have remained up to fairly recent times, as we will see.

The world-famous (smooth) Egyptian pyramids at Giza are frequently

cited as examples of pyramids; indeed, the definition of a pyramid is often given as an Egyptian pyramid. For example, Lehner (1997) claims right on the cover that his work is a complete book of pyramids, but he does not mention pyramids anywhere else in the world other than Egypt and Sudan. A ziggurat is often defined as a Mesopotamian structure, as an internet search of "What is a ziggurat?" will show. Oddly, ziggurats in other

countries. (except the Saqqara stepped pyramid in Egypt) are not referenced by these sources.

"Pyramid" is used by some sources to refer to both the stepped and smooth structures. As an example, *Wikipedia's* page, 'List of Mesoamerican Pyramids' (List of Mesoamerican Pyramids, 2022), lists 51 pyramids; most, if not all, are stepped, and are therefore ziggurats. The article says that "in most cases they are not true pyramids." The accepted definition of a true pyramid by this writer is clearly a smooth-sided structure. Understandably, this is confusing.

What this all means is that, if a structure is called a ziggurat, we know that it is stepped. If it is called a pyramid, it can be either stepped or smooth. But the real question is whether there is a difference in meaning between the two. This is doubtful.

It has been pointed out that the Egyptians, who built the most famous smooth pyramids in the world, built at least one stepped pyramid first (e.g., the Saqqara pyramid of Djoser) (Tyldesley, 2009, pp. 32–34), and continued to call their smooth pyramids "stairways to heaven" (Bertman, 2003, p. 197). It would seem that the Egyptians did not distinguish in meaning between pyramids and ziggurats (see Step Pyramid, 2018).

Also, the line between ziggurats and smooth pyramids is not always clearly drawn. As an example, the Pyramid of the Sun in Teotihuacan (Mexico) is stepped, but the sides have a gentle incline, and the steps are not sharply delineated (Phillips, 2009, pp. 54–55) (see Figure 4).

Where Are Ziggurats and Pyramids Found Around the World?

If these structures are descendants of the Tower of Babel, they should be found in far-flung places, because the people migrated from Babel to all parts of the globe.



Figure 4. The Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan, Mexico—an example of a ziggurat with sloping stepped layers that are not distinct. The stairs are on the other side and do not show in this view. (*Wikipedia*: Photo by Mario Roberto Duran Ortiz, 2015.) (HJPD 2011)

Popular sources might lead us to believe that a limited number of ziggurats and pyramids are located in Egypt, South Iraq, and Central America. But these are only the most famous ones. There are as many as 30 countries where pyramids/ ziggurats are located, according to pyramid lists (see, e.g., Home In The Air, 2018).

This includes the United States, where secular scholars make an end run around the problem of pyramids by calling them “mounds.” (However, see Pluckhahn et al., 2016, pp. 345–363, regarding the shell ziggurat on Roberts Island, Florida, claiming that some scholars are starting to change their minds, and are using the term “pyramid.”) A well-known example of an American ziggurat is the enormous Monk’s Mound at the Cahokia Mounds site in Illinois (George, 2008, pp. 48–49), as shown in Figure 5. This mound is somewhat over a thousand years old.

How many ziggurats and pyramids are there worldwide? One pyramid hunter who has spent over ten years researching this question has come up with at least 1700 known ones (Yakovenko, 2014). However, he concludes that we don’t really know how many there are because many more may remain to be discovered. In support of this conclusion, a vast jungle area of Guatemala has been surveyed by LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging), and archaeologists claim that as many as 60,000 Mayan structures previously unknown are hidden under the canopy of trees, including an unknown number of pyramids (Gillan, 2018). Another pyramid has recently been discovered in Egypt (Hoare, 2020). For information on various kinds of remote technology that we now have for finding many more structures such as pyramids around the world, see Parcak (2019).

If we wonder how something like a pyramid could be still undiscovered, the answer is that it is easier for a pyramid to hide out than we might think. As



Figure 5. Monk’s Mound, a Pre-Columbian Mississippian culture earthwork, located at the Cahokia site near Collinsville, Illinois. The concrete staircase is modern, but it is built along the approximate course of the original wooden stairs. (*EN.Wikipedia*: Photo by Skubastev834, November 2007.)

mentioned above (Gillan, 2018), some are camouflaged by jungle. In some cases, pyramid-shaped hills are believed to be natural and not manmade; the Bosnian pyramids (Editors, 2017) are an example of this (more on these later). Some pyramids are buried; for instance, there is an underground pyramid in Peru that was discovered via satellite and other methods (Lasaponara et al., 2011). Some ziggurats are found beneath later religious structures built when conquerors brought a new religion with them. A famous example of this is the huge Mexican pyramid of Cholula that has a Catholic church, La Iglesia de los Remedios, sitting on top of it (McCafferty, 1996, pp. 1–17). This pyramid is by volume the largest in the world. Its base covers 39 acres (16 hectares), not including the complex of other structures around it. It is claimed that it was so big that the Spaniards did not realize that it was a pyramid when they built the church on what they thought was a hill.

This all makes it difficult to come up with the number of ziggurats/pyramids there actually are. We only know that there are a lot of them, and more may be discovered at any time.

One thing needs to be clarified: smooth pyramids are found only in Egypt and its southern neighbor, Sudan; these countries are therefore a small minority of the countries where pyramidal structures are located worldwide. Because the pyramidal structures in all other parts of the world are actually ziggurats, this leads us to believe that the original Tower of Babel was also most likely a ziggurat. The smooth pyramids were a later development in history, with the first Egyptian ones built in about 2600 BC on the secular timeline (Lehner, 1997, p. 15).

Other Ziggurats and Pyramids

Clearly in this paper we cannot discuss even a fraction of all the ziggurats/pyramids around the world, so a few examples will have to suffice. There appear to be some pyramids that date as early as the Ice Age. One of these is Gunung Padang, on the island of Java, where scientists believe there is a very early pyramid at the bottom of the multi-layered structure, dating as far back as 22,000 secular years (2100–2000 BC Biblical) (Deron, 2022). There are also



Figure 6. This modern Hindu Sri Siva Vishnu Temple in Lanham, Maryland, has a traditional gopuram tower with ziggurat characteristics over the entrance to the temple area. (EN.Wikipedia: Photo by Docku, July 2008.)



Figure 7. The Prasat Thom at Koh Ker, Cambodia, is a seven-tiered ziggurat. (Wikipedia: Photo by PsamatheM, December 2019.)

some large pyramid-shaped mountains in Bosnia that date during the Ice Age; we know that these are pyramids because they are oriented to the cardinal points,

i.e., the four main compass directions (Editors, 2017).

These early men must have had a powerful urge to produce pyramids.

Even shaped hills would have required an enormous amount of work, especially if faced with a hard material, as the Bosnian pyramids are claimed to be (New Investigation, 2019). Judging by the size of some of the pyramid-shaped mountains, we might wonder just how large the Tower of Babel was planned to be before God stopped its construction. There may be more meaning than we realize in the Biblical statement that the tower was to “reach up to heaven” (Genesis 11:4).

The gopuram towers of south India (built there in front of Hindu temples as late as the 17th century) (Kuiper, 2011, p. 317), show clear ziggurat characteristics. But this style of architecture lives on. A modern Hindu temple in Lanham, Maryland, USA, has a traditional Indian-style gopuram tower over the entrance to the temple area (Sri Siva Vishnu Temple, 2002) (Figure 6).

Two ziggurats that surprisingly look much alike are the 10th-century Prasat Thom at the Koh Ker temple complex in Cambodia (Figure 7) and the 8th-century Pyramid of the Niches at El Tajin in Southern Mexico (Figure 8). Built on opposite sides of the world within 200 years of each other, the similarity in their design has caused scholars to scratch their heads. There must be some connection, they are certain, but they cannot fathom what it can be. For more description of the Prasat Thom, see Zwingers (2008). For more on the Pyramid of the Niches, see Cartwright (2015).

Two further examples that are very similar but located geographically far apart are the 15th-century AD Candi Sukuh in Java (Figure 9) (Oey, 1997) and the seventh-century AD Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque in southern Mexico (Figure 10) (Phillips, 2009).

Ziggurat/Pyramid Complexes

Although the story of the Tower of Babel is renowned, there was another aspect of Babel that is less widely known. This



Figure 8. Pyramid of the Niches at El Tajin, Veracruz, in Southern Mexico. This ziggurat bears a surprising resemblance to the far-away one in Figure 7. (Wikipedia: Photo by AlehandroLinaresGarcia, January 2010.)



Figure 9. The Candi Sukuh is a Hindu temple in Java, built in the 15th century, and is the main structure in the complex. This truncated ziggurat bears an inexplicable resemblance to Mayan monuments. (Wikipedia: Photo by Anton Leddin, December 2007.)



Figure 10. The Temple of the Inscriptions ziggurat at the Palenque complex of structures in Chiapas, Mexico, built in the seventh century BC. (Wikipedia: Photo by Lousanroj, March 2013.)



Figure 11. This is an example of a ziggurat complex. The great Templo Mayor (the ziggurat at upper center with two shrines on top) was part of the Aztec City of Tenochtitlan. The model shown here is at the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. (Wikipedia: Photo by Thelmadatter, March 2008. Public domain.)

was the “city” that was being built in addition to the Tower (Gen 11:4). We note that in this verse it is the city that is mentioned first, giving it a degree of importance. The original Babel tower was not going to be a solitary structure. If the thesis of this paper is correct, that

the people later on went everywhere and built ziggurats as memories of the original Tower of Babel, we should find a “city” of some kind along with these towers. What was this city?

Again, we need merely look at the ziggurats/pyramids around the world for

our answer. We see that they are usually part of a religious complex of temples, shrines, altars, statues, and various other associated structures. We will choose some examples from the many available.

One of the ziggurat complexes in Mesoamerica is at Tenochtitlan, now

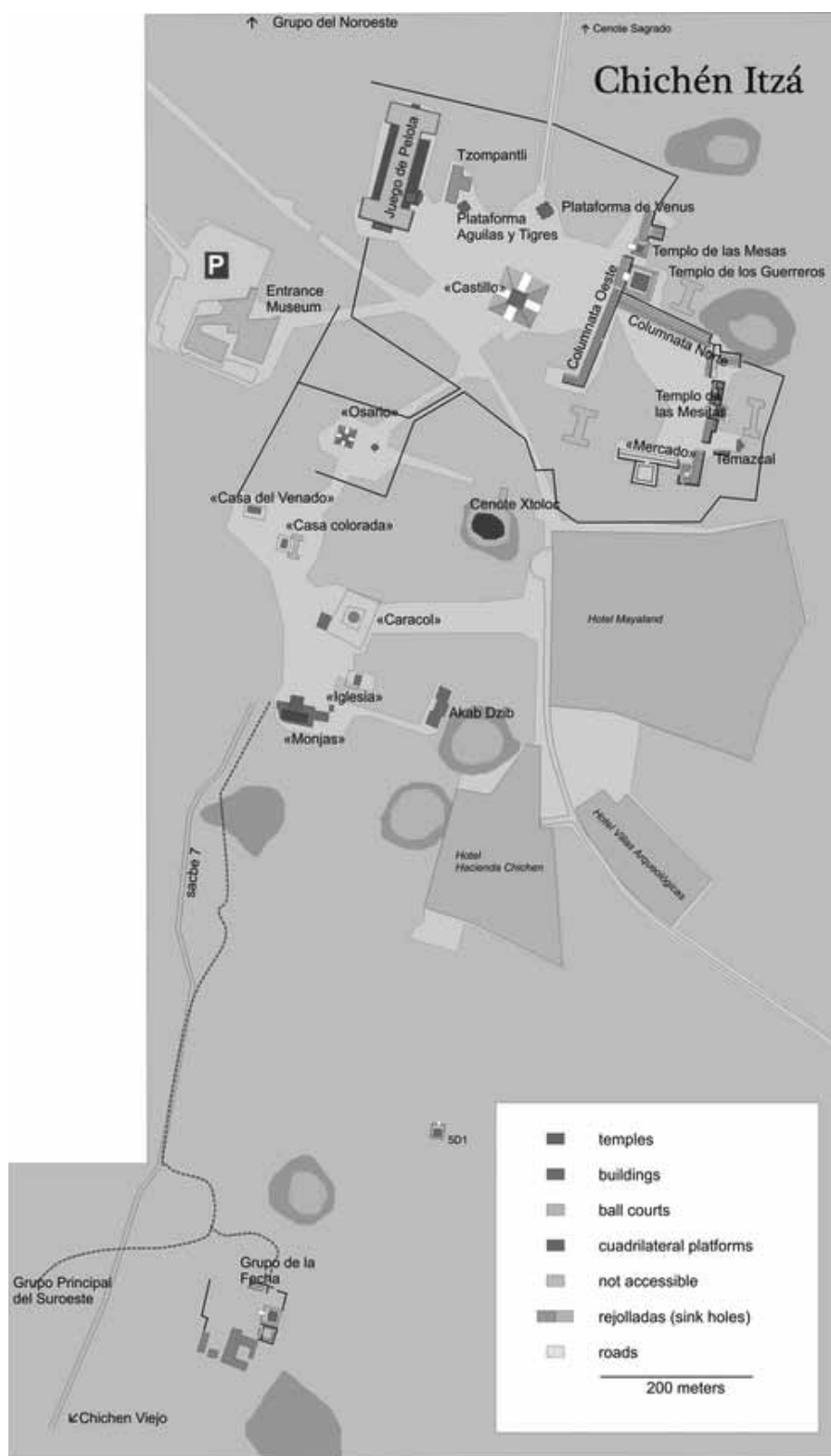


Figure 12. Diagram of Chichen Itza site complex, including the location of the famous El Castillo ziggurat shown in Figure 3.

in Mexico City, where the main structure was the Templo Mayor (see Figure 11) (Phillips, 2009, pp. 430–431). The other structures in the complex included several temples, a blood-drenched sacrificial stone, and other sacred structures. All of these were enclosed by a wall. Another example from this part of the world is El Castillo at Chichen Itza in Mexico, mentioned earlier, built about 9th century AD (Chandler, 2013, p. 254) (see Figure 10). It is located in a huge complex (see a map of the complex in Figure 12) that covers an area of at least 5 square km, packed with hundreds of smaller ziggurats, temples, and other buildings. Much of this site has not yet been excavated (Paxton, 2001, p. 98; Onstott, 2010, p. 338). The Caral pyramids of Peru are as old as the great pyramids of Egypt (about 2600 BC secular), and are considered to be part of the oldest civilization in the Americas; see Faram (2010) for information on this complex. In Guatemala, a large number of Pre-classic Maya sites have recently been located by LIDAR, dating from 1000 BC (secular) (Hansen et al., 2022). The authors describe complexes consisting of a pyramid plus other structures throughout this area.

The ninth-century Hindu Arunachalesvara temple complex in the Tamil Nadu area of India is one of the many Indian temple complexes (see Figure 13) (Bajwa and Kaur 2008, p. 1069). Das (2001) describes 68 of these Dravidian Hindu temples of South India. However, the real number of these is claimed to be many thousands in the Tamil Nadu state of India alone, not including Kerala and other states (List of Temples in Tamil Nadu, 2022). These South Indian temple complexes all have the tall gopuram towers with the ziggurat characteristics (mentioned earlier). The Palace of Sargon II at Dur-Sharrukin contains a ziggurat that is part of his palace complex (Figure 14). See Mark (2014) for further information about Dur-Sharrukin. There are about 25 zig-

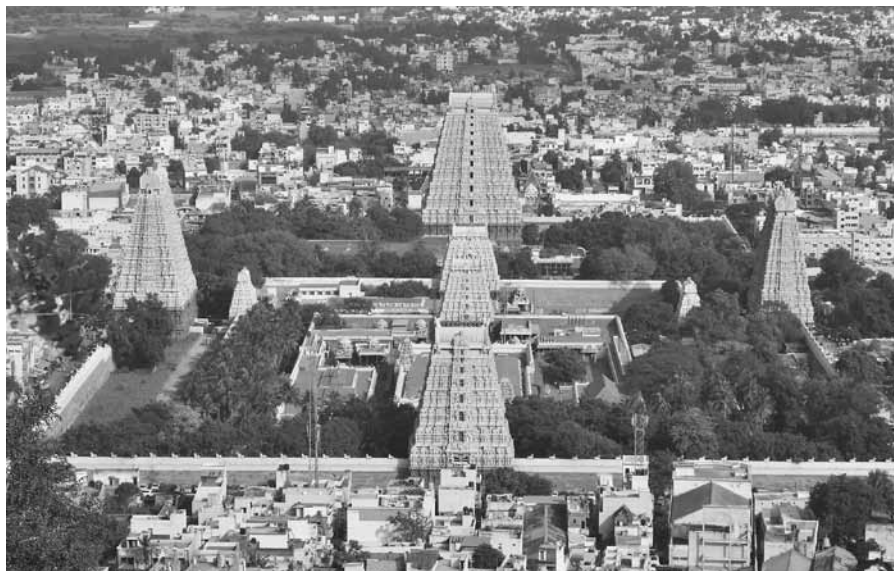


Figure 13. The ninth-century Hindu Arunachalesvara temple complex in the Tamil Nadu area of India is shown above with its six gopuram towers. The four large ones are over the four entrances; there are two smaller ones in the middle. These steep towers show characteristics of ziggurats with their stepped layers and shrine on top. (Wikimedia Commons: Photo by Adarsh Pidugu, February 2020.)

gurat known throughout Mesopotamia, dating from 2200 BC to 500 BC secular (Ziggurat Towers, 2020).

The extensive Giza complex in Egypt contains the famous smooth pyramids of Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure. In his book, Lehner (1997, pp. 18–19) devotes space to describing a standard Egyptian pyramid complex: besides the main pyramid there was usually a mortuary temple, entrance chapel, storage areas (called magazines), courts, halls, causeway, valley temple, etc., all enclosed by a wall.

The highest pagoda of the Bagan complex in Myanmar (Burma) has a ziggurat style that greatly resembles the ones in Figures 7 and 8 (see Figure 15). The terraces of the ziggurat are very clear; the round stupa on top of them is the equivalent of the shrine on ziggurats in other countries. It is 328 feet tall. The vast number of other structures around it form the remainder of the huge complex (for a photo view of this stunning complex, see Bagan, Burma, 2007).

Among other examples of pyramid complexes are: The Holly Bluff site, also called Lake George site, in Mississippi

(see Figure 16); the Etemenanki tower complex at Babylon (Parrot, 1955, p. 37); and the ancient complex at Ur (Ching et al., 2017, p. 35). Many more could be mentioned.

Wherever we look, we find that ziggurats/pyramids were accompanied by other structures that constituted a “city.” Based on the pattern of complexes like those mentioned above, it follows that the builders of the original Babel ziggurat must have been constructing a religious complex of buildings to go with their tower. In other words, the “city” that accompanied the Babel Tower was not meant for people to live in, the way we think of a city today. The city with its tower would have been the religious center for the Babel kingdom.

Although the MT only mentions that they left off building the city in Genesis 11:8, we would expect that the tower also would not have been completed, as the tower was part of the city complex. In any case, the LXX more specifically says in the same verse that they “left off building the city and the tower.” No indication is given as to how much of their build-

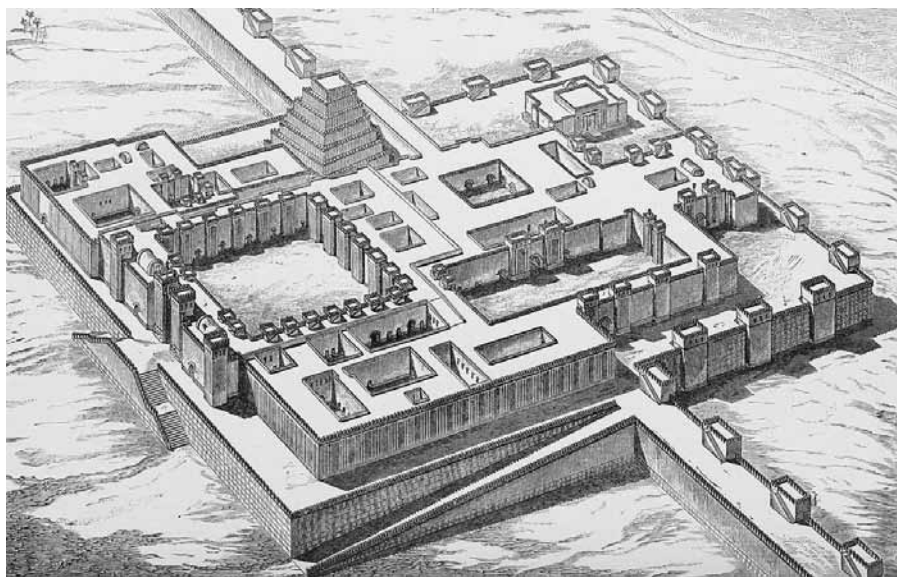


Figure 14. Drawing of the palace complex of Sargon II at Khorsabad, northern Iraq, with its ziggurat. (An Internet Archive Book Image, dated 1905. Public domain.)



Figure 15. The Shwesandaw Pagoda is the tallest of the 3500 pagodas, temples and other structures in Bagan, Myanmar (Burma), that occupy about 41 square kilometers. (Wikipedia: Photo by Jasonneppink, January 2013.)

ing project was completed before God interrupted it. This has implications for searching for the Babel ruins today.

The Religious Meaning of the Worldwide Complexes

God's displeasure with the Babel city-and-tower project is evident in the narrative of Genesis 11:5–9. He was concerned with what the people were planning to do, clearly actions that were against His wishes. A further clue is sup-

plied by Nimrod (see Nimrod's mention in Genesis 10:8–10).

Although it is often stated that Nimrod was the original instigator of the people's rebellion against God (e.g., Josephus, 1988, p. 35; Pentecost, 1995, p. 49), this belief cannot actually be supported from the Biblical text. The Genesis narrative indicates that it was a group decision to build the Tower ("...let us build us a city and a tower...let us make us a name...") (Genesis 11:3,4). The driving force behind the building

of the original Babel tower and city was therefore a group rebellion against God.

Before this rebellion took place, the people would have followed their ancestor Noah in worshiping God. The important indication here is Nimrod's name, which is widely claimed by scholars to mean "Let us rebel" or "We shall rebel" (Butler, 1991; Hendel, 2001, p. 218; Morris, 2003, p. 54). Nimrod would have received his name at birth as was the usual custom. The significance of his name had to do with something that occurred at the time he was born. We can conclude that the decision of Noah's descendants to rebel against God must have been made when Nimrod was born. From childhood, Nimrod would have grown up in the midst of the group's planning of the rebellion, designing of the city and tower complex, the beginning of its construction, and practice of their pagan religion. Eventually, when he became a mature adult, Nimrod became their leader (Genesis 10:10).

We would expect that the city they were building along with the tower was intended to support the ritual and administrative aspects of this religion. If so, this should be true of the many pyramid complexes in the world today.

And this is what we do see. Although it is outside of the scope of this paper to examine all the ziggurat/pyramid complexes around the world for their ties to religion, we will look at some here.

In Mesopotamia, the ziggurats were recognized as part of the religious complex that formed a sacred zone in the cities. The colors of their stories (from their base upward, white, black, red, purple, and blue) were considered to have religious significance. (See Margueron, 1965, p. 150; Oppenheim, 1994, pp. 172–173; Leick, 2001, p. 128.)

Egyptian pyramids were known for religious meaning. The king was a god, and the pyramid was the focus of a temple complex (Lehner, 1997, p. 20). In his classic book on Egyptian religion,

Breasted (1972, pp. 70–77) discusses the importance of the religious aspect of the pharaoh's pyramid complex.

In Mexico, an example is the site of Angamuco, Mexico, where LIDAR has uncovered a city under the jungle (Friedl, 2019). There are a couple of dozen pyramids; these are believed to be associated with various gods and goddesses, according to what is known of the religion of the Purepecha people who built them (Tompkins, 1976, p. 384). The Tucume pyramids of Peru had a mainly religious function (Heyerdahl et al., 1995). Multiple other examples can be cited.

Often writers somewhat confuse the issue by calling ziggurats 'temples.' Although many ziggurats do have a shrine of some kind on top, the temples are usually a separate structure in the complex. However, the basic religious significance of the complex is implied by this.

The sheer number of these structures, and the enormous amount of work that their builders put into them, tells us that ziggurats and pyramids were something important that was inherent in the worldwide pagan religions.

There is one more thing to mention here. One might suggest that a religion such as Buddhism could not have ziggurats that related back to Babel because the religion itself only developed later on, in the late 6th century BC (Vail, 2022). It appears that pagan religions developed religious structures from traditions that already existed in their various countries. The stupas of Myanmar (one is shown in Figure 15) are essentially the Buddhist-style dome sitting on a ziggurat base. That ziggurat base is most likely in the style of ancient structures in Myanmar or Indian history that have been lost to us (Buddhism originated in India). Indeed, we do not know how many very early versions of pyramids were built everywhere thousands of years ago, and have not survived. But logically we can expect that these must have existed; it is unlikely that the people built no zig-



Figure 16. An artist's conception of the Holly Bluff Site, sometimes known as the Lake George Site, a Plaquemine Mississippian culture ceremonial mound site in Yazoo County, Mississippi. Note the flat-topped pyramid in the center of the complex, dated to about AD 1350–1500. (Wikipedia: Herb Roe, October 2016.)

gurats for thousands of years and then suddenly started to build them.

How Do Unbelievers Explain Worldwide Ziggurats and Pyramids? (Not Very Well)

As noted earlier, explaining the architectural similarity of all these worldwide ziggurats/pyramids has been a problem for secular historians because of their belief that humans (*Homo sapiens*) evolved from lower species, most likely out of Africa (Rito et al., 2019). In the evolutionary worldview, the ability to design and build engineering marvels like these monuments has to have evolved along the way and only developed in relatively recent times in human history.

Ziggurats/pyramids do not fit into this mainstream worldview. That this feat of engineering should have occurred all over the world separately among the various peoples is off the edge of their scholarly thinking. They have been forced to resort to some rather far-fetched explanations for this phenomenon.

One idea is that a ziggurat is a natural concept that occurred to many peoples independently. A proponent of this concept is de Camp, who says that "if you set out to build an edifice several hundred feet high when architecture is in its infancy...you have to adopt a pyramidal form for the sake of stability" (de Camp, 1993, p. 62).

Another secular explanation is called the "diffusion principle;" i.e., if two peoples have the same idea, one group borrowed it from the other. This principle has been quite popular, presumably because it sounds good. Graf says that "...whenever we spot parallels and agreements in ritual and mythology, diffusion, however complex, is as likely an explanation as is parallel origin" (Graf, 2004, p. 5). A special form of the diffusion principle is offered by Schoch, who would have us believe that there were ancient seafaring ziggurat builders who traveled around the globe preaching the idea of building pyramids (Schoch, 2003, p. 3).

Because some countries with pyramids/ziggurats are not geographically far

apart (e.g., Egypt and Iran), we cannot prove that the idea of building similar structures in these places arose independently. But even then there are problems. The Saqqara pyramid in Egypt (dated 27th century BC secular) is considered to be Egypt's first pyramid. But was it? We cannot prove that there were no earlier ones, now ruined. The same argument applies to the earliest Mesopotamian ziggurat at Sialk, Iran, about 3000 BC in secular time (Raddato, 2021). There is also the question of the different religions practiced in these countries. As we have shown, religion was inherent in the meaning of the Tower of Babel.

It is understandable that scholars who deny the Biblical history of the Tower of Babel would look for explanations of widespread ziggurats like those cited above. This also helps us to understand the great resistance that has been shown by many modern secular archaeologists toward recognizing newly discovered pyramids/ziggurats as such, especially really ancient ones. While they recognize that men could build structures like ziggurats and pyramids within historical times, the more ancient ones go against evolutionary belief.

An example of this is the outright hostility that continues to be shown toward the huge pyramids that are being uncovered at Visoko in Bosnia. The *Wikipedia* page on these pyramids is written from an extremely biased point of view, quoting the European Association of Archaeologists who call these pyramids a “cruel hoax” (Bosnian Pyramid Claims, 2022). This same page even makes statements that are incorrect, such as that the excavations there since 2006 have shaped the main hill to look like a pyramid. Carbon dating of organic material gives a minimum secular age of around 30,000 BP for this structure (Moon, 2014, p. 97), much older than scholars can (or wish to) comprehend. I have been in correspondence with a Bosnian Pyramid volunteer who has tried repeatedly

and fruitlessly to get changes made on this *Wikipedia* page. All of his changes have been deleted immediately by the *Wikipedia* editors.

The huge structure (covering 15 hectares) of Gunung Padang in Java has received much the same treatment from archaeologists and from *Wikipedia* (Gunung Padang, 2022). Although this structure is very clearly manmade, a volcanologist claims it's an extinct volcano with some building on top. It may be as old as 28,000 years (secular). (For more information on this megalithic site, see Bachelard and Rompies, 2013; Dockrill, 2018; Dipa, 2024.)

From the viewpoint of simple logic, the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel as the original pattern of all these ziggurats/pyramids makes far more sense than the explanations and denials of unbelievers. The mathematics of probability could also be invoked to show that it is extremely unlikely that these similar structures around the world all evolved separately (for information on probability see, e.g., Pishro-Nik, 2014). Probability is a discipline that has been often overlooked in traditional archaeology and history, but there are places where it can be useful to creationist arguments. For example, probability comes up in finding the Exodus in the Egyptian timeline. Egypt totally collapsed twice in the same way, and historians have accepted this very unlikely scenario without questioning how unlikely this could be. For a discussion of this with respect to the Egyptian dynasties, see Habermehl (2013b).

Importance of the Babel Story for Biblical Apologetics

Many modern scholars do not accept the meaning of the Tower of Babel as a sign of rebellion against God. One belief is articulated by the famed Andre Parrot, whose writings about ziggurats are well known (Parrot, 1949, 1955). On the meaning of the Tower, he says

(based on a “growing conviction”), “Instead of a clenched fist raised in defiance towards Heaven, I saw it rather as a hand stretched out in supplication, a cry to Heaven for help” (Parrot, 1955, p. 9). If we should wonder how he could possibly get that interpretation out of the Biblical account, it soon becomes apparent that it is because he does not consider the Biblical story to be true history; he believes that the Genesis record of the Babel tower must have been written down in the ninth to eighth centuries BC, and was based on ruins of ziggurats found in South Mesopotamia (Parrot, 1955, pp. 15–17). His statement that the Babel story being a reference to these ruined ziggurats “is now accepted by almost all biblical scholars” unfortunately remains all too true in liberal circles. See, for example, Siff (2008), for another version of this belief.

There is an irony in this wholesale rejection of the historicity of the Biblical record, because in their own way all these “Biblical” scholars are following in the footsteps of those rebellious Babel builders of long ago.

In showing that the ziggurat complexes around the world offer strong support for the literal city and Tower of Babel of the Bible, we have in hand a powerful apologetic for answering these naysayers. It is the most important point of this entire paper.

Summary

We conclude that the many ziggurats and pyramids around the world, and their accompanying religious complexes, must have a common origin because of their design resemblances. That common origin must be the original Babel city and tower in Shinar. The early people would have dispersed in all directions from Babel, taking knowledge of the original tower/city design with them. This constitutes strong evidence that the Biblical story of Babel is literally true.

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