

## PREHISTORY AND THE TOWER OF BABEL

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*In the absence of written records, archaeological finds are open to various interpretations. Answers proposed to such questions as "Where was the cradle of civilization?" and "Who built Stonehenge and similar monuments and when?" will depend on one's suppositions. This paper examines Genesis, chapters 10 and 11, and concludes that all people have their roots in Babel; that 100 years after the Flood, approximately 12,000 highly civilized, intelligent, knowledgeable people spread out from there; that they carried with them a religion based on the stars and a compulsion to build monuments.*

### Introduction

Where was the cradle of civilization? It was previously thought that culture diffused around the earth from a single source. Now various "finds" are leading some prehistorians to abandon that idea in favor of culture arising in various places independent of each other.

Schiller wrote about one recent find in Thailand, dated more than 5000 years ago, which included "a beautifully fashioned bronze socketed spearhead . . . half a millenium older than anyone suspected bronze had been made . . . found where the textbooks said it had no right to be."<sup>1</sup>

Another commonly held idea is that human culture evolved slowly from the Palaeolithic hunter and cave-man to the Neolithic farmer to the Bronze and Iron Age societies. In Britain, for example, the Neolithic peoples have been regarded as little more than barbarians. This view has been challenged by some, who after extensive study of megalithic structures such as Stonehenge, conclude that the level of technological expertise and conceptual thinking necessary to produce such works was far beyond that of a primitive neolithic farming culture.

This new view is not universally accepted. Daniel wrote that the new ideas present "extravagant and unconvincing claims" and that those who hold them are "no doubt bored by the prosaic account of megaliths to be got from archaeological research."<sup>2</sup>

Tyler, however, examines the new ideas, especially in the light of Stonehenge, and concludes that the evidence for them is "strong" and "compelling".<sup>3</sup>

What is the most reasonable explanation of prehistoric man?

This writer agrees with Tyler when he states, "The quest for explanations should not be placed in abeyance before considering the Biblical information relevant to the cultural achievements of early man and the way men came to inhabit different parts of the earth."<sup>4</sup> He then presents a picture of a highly civilized, intelligent and knowledgeable people that were spread abroad from Babel to set up similar societies elsewhere.

This paper examines some ideas suggested by Genesis chapters 10 and 11 and suggests how they relate to prehistory.

### Population Explosion

Before the Flood, Noah and his family were just eight members of a world population that could easily have numbered over a billion people. Just after the Flood,

Noah and his family became the total world population, a population numbering eight people. Those eight people must have felt a deep sense of being alone and thus had a great longing for children. That they started to fulfill that longing right away is indicated by the fact that the first recorded post-Flood birth was in the year they came out of the ark. (Genesis 11:10)

Several factors would have favored a rapid population growth. According to the table of nations in Genesis 10, large families must have been normal. Sixteen sons are listed for Noah's three sons. As each boy had a wife, Noah's three sons must also have had sixteen daughters for a total of 32 children, or just under 11 per couple. Eleven sons are listed for Caanan and thirteen sons for Joktan. How many daughters they each had is, of course, unknown. From these examples it seems reasonable to suggest that the average family had at least ten children.

A second factor favoring a rapid population increase was longevity. The first recorded death after the Flood was that of Peleg at 339 AF (years after the Flood). Thus it is reasonable to suggest that there were no natural deaths for at least 200 years AF.

Two other reasonable suggestions that would promote population growth are (1) the average marrying age was 14 and (2) the children were spaced two years apart.

In view of the above, what would the population have been in 100 years AF? In 200 years AF?

A yearly population growth chart has been made for years 1-100 AF, based on having three couples to start, each couple having 10 children spaced 2 years apart, the young people marrying at 14, and having their first child at 15. The following are four listings from that chart.

Years AF	Population
60	719
70	1490
85	4225
100	12008

The yearly average population growth from years 60-100 AF was 7.29%. At that yearly rate the population would have been over 13.5 million at 200 AF.

### Nimrod

Of Nimrod we are told that "He began to be a mighty one in the earth", and "the beginning of his kingdom was Babel". (Genesis 10:8, 10). Surely this information is telling us that Nimrod was the instigator and the leader of the Tower of Babel project, including the

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building of the city at the same time. As to how he became the leader, I suggest the following series of events.

Nimrod is listed last of the six sons of Cush, who was the first listed son of Ham. If indeed he was the youngest, including sisters, he perhaps was born around 40 AF. As he grew to manhood, he showed an aptitude for hunting, and eventually excelled at it, over and above all the others. At that time he must also have been pious towards God for it is said that "he was a mighty hunter before Jehovah." (Genesis 10:9) His powers at it earned him the admiration of the people so the people said, "even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter before Jehovah." (Genesis 10:9)

The adulation of the people turned his heart away from God and eventually gave him a strong desire to be the leader of the people. This, of course, would require turning the people away from great-grand-father Noah. Outright rebellion would have been counter-productive, so he waited for an opportune moment. It came, I suggest, one time when Noah gathered the people together and admonished them to follow God's command to spread out and "fill the earth".

Nimrod, knowing that the people really wanted to stay together, suggested the tower building project. The people accepted that idea enthusiastically and exclaimed, "let us make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered on the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4) Thus the people willingly followed Nimrod. His plans called for more than a tower, however. To insure His continued leadership, he had the people build a city of permanent dwellings and he subtly weaned the people away from Noah's God.

### The Prophet's Message

Jesus told us that Abel was a prophet. (Luke 11:50, 51) Prophets are special messengers sent by God to the people with His special message. Many times God told his prophets to write the message down and it is now a part of the Bible. In Abel's case, I believe that God had already written His message at Creation in the stars. To Abel He gave the signs of the Zodiac, telling him the name of each constellation and explaining its meaning.<sup>5</sup> The story in the Zodiac was then Abel's message to the people. Noah knew the message and preached it to the post-Flood people.

I suggest that it was the message in the stars that Nimrod corrupted in order to draw the people away from Noah and Noah's God. In a show of false piety he stationed his own appointed "priests" on top of the continually rising tower to "study the heavens" for the supposed purpose of more fully understanding God's message. But little by little the message was altered and fed to the people until by the time the tower was complete, it was primarily the stars that were being worshipped. In this way, I believe Astrology was born.

### The Tower—When?

I suggest that the Tower of Babel was started in 85 AF and the Dispersion occurred in 100 AF. Several considerations lead to such a conclusion.

Nimrod, as we have seen, was the leader of the pro-

ject. If he was born around 40 AF as suggested, it would have been around 60 AF when his power as a hunter was becoming known and his reputation as a "mighty" person would start to grow. In 85 AF, at around 45 years of age, he would be at the peak of his popularity. If the tower had not been started for another 25-50 years, Nimrod's influence would have waned, as others would have risen in popularity.

According to the population chart there were 4225 people living in 85 AF, of which 1490 were over 15 years of age. The group was still small enough to feel a sense of oneness, which held them together. However, if they had not soon been bound together in some unifying project, the rapidly increasing numbers of people would have forced them to split up into groups.

A third consideration is that if the Dispersion was in 100 AF, the project would have had to be started at least by 85 AF in order to get the tower built as well as a city. The people started from nothing. They had to make all their tools for digging, carrying, shaping bricks, etc. They had to build furnaces to fire the brick. All labor was hand labor; there was no machinery. And all this was done while crops were tended and hunting parties were bringing in meat.

The Dispersion date of 100 AF is derived from Genesis 10:25, "The name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided." According to the chronology of Genesis 11, Peleg was born in 100 AF. Peleg's father, Eber, was a prophet, for only God could have informed him of what would happen in his son's lifetime. Just before his son's birth he must have informed the people what God had revealed to him.

I believe that the prophecy, to be meaningful, would have to be fulfilled shortly after its proclamation. I also believe that it had a two-fold fulfillment. The first stage was in the year of Peleg's birth when the earth, i.e., the people were divided due to the confusion of tongues which scattered them abroad. The second stage, as written in a previous paper<sup>6</sup>, was 150 years or so later, still within Peleg's lifetime. This occurred when the rising waters due to the second emptying of the Canopy flooded land bridges, thus dividing the earth (i.e., the land masses) with water.

Biblical chronological studies by Bishop Ussher and Ozanne<sup>7</sup> lead them both to date Creation at 4004 B.C. Based on that figure the dates for the Flood and the Dispersion are then 2348-2347 B.C. and 2248 B.C. respectfully. Courville<sup>8</sup> has shown that the facts of archaeology do not demand those dates to be earlier.

### The Dispersion

A study of the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 reveals some interesting statistics.

Of the 70 names listed, 14 were descendants of Japheth, 30 of Ham and 26 of Shem. Of the Japhethite leaders, 7 were the first generation from the Flood and 7 were second generation. Of the Hamite leaders, there were 4 first generation, 24 second generation, and 2 third generation from the Flood. It is most likely that all the Japhethite and Hamite leaders were all born before 50 AF and thus were all over 50 years of age at the Dispersion.

Of the Shemite leaders, 5 were first generation after the Flood, 5 second generation, 1 third, 2 fourth and 13 fifth generation. Eber, the third generation from Shem, was born in 66 AF. (Genesis 11:14) and his son Peleg in 100 AF. Eber's son Joktan could have been born as early as 81 AF, the first of his 13 sons being born as early as 96 AF. Thus, only 11 Shemite leaders were old enough to lead a group away from Babel in 100 AF. The other 15 Shemite leaders undoubtedly split away from Eber's group in the years following the Dispersion.

Since only 11 Shemite groups left Babel, there was only a total of 55 groups that were dispersed. If the population in 100 AF was 12,008 as suggested, and the groups had equal numbers, there were then 218 people for each leader. The Japhethites numbered 3056, the Hamites 6550, and the Shemites 2402.

At least 15 of the 30 Hamite groups settled in the area from Babylon to Egypt; Nimrod built Babel, Nineveh and surrounding areas (Genesis 10:10-11), Canaan and his 11 sons settled the land of Canaan (Genesis 10:19), Casluhim became the Philistines (Genesis 10:14), and Mizraim settled Egypt (Genesis 10:11).

Apparently the 11 Shemite groups settled in the same general area which, if so, meant that at least 26 of the 55 groups that left Babel settled in the small area which we now call the Middle East. This certainly accounts for the rapid rise of the great civilizations in that area. It also accounts for the Hamites being the first world rulers.

With 26 groups, or just a little less than half of the dispersed people settling in a small area, only 29 groups, or a little over half the people had the rest of the world in which to spread out.

By the year 200 AF each group could have numbered over 245,000 and many would undoubtedly have split up, perhaps several times by then.

#### Brick vs Stone

"And they had brick for stone." (Genesis 11:3)

This statement tells us that when the builders of the Tower built with brick, they were using a substitute material. God's choice of building material for such a structure is stone. The above quote is significant in the light of Peter's statement about Christ that He "is the Stone which the builders rejected." (I Peter 2:7) He also says that believers are "as living stones . . . being built up into a spiritual house." (I Peter 2:4) God also expressed great displeasure when incense was burned on "altars of brick". (Isaiah 65:3)

In some way God must have informed the people at the same time as He confused their language, that religious monuments should be built with stone. This knowledge they carried with them as they dispersed and resolved to use only stone for future monuments lest they incur further wrath from the Almighty.

#### After Babel

The Dispersion from Babel was not a haphazard event; it was God-directed. Each group He wanted together received the same language. He put it in the mind of each leader what direction to lead his group

and how far; from Nimrod who kept his group at Babel to those who went halfway around the world and finally settled on a different continent or on an isle of the sea. Each group possessed the same technical knowledge and skills. They all carried with them the desire to build monuments (out of stone this time), and thus to "make a name" for themselves. They also carried with them a common religion, the corrupted version of God's message in the stars which Nimrod had turned into Astrology. This star-worship is what caused them to orient so many of the Megalithic monuments to the heavens.

Berlitz writes at length of present day discoveries of buildings, temples, walls, roads, ports, and cities which are under the waters of the continental shelves of America, primarily in the area of the Bahamas.<sup>9</sup> Obviously, the sea level was lower at the time of their construction, which time was immediately after the Flood.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the explanation for the existence of these under-water remains is that some of the groups that left Babel crossed the ocean and settled and built their stonework there.

#### Babel

Several other items of information that need a comment are given in the story of Babel in Genesis 11.

The tower was completed before God intervened. "And Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built"; i.e., it was already completed (vs 5). God then scattered the people, "and they quit building the city." (vs 8) If the tower had not been completed, it would have been stated that they left off building the city "and" the tower. Nimrod and his group had a completed tower and the city was already larger than their immediate needs so they quit working on it.

The total human population at the time of the Dispersion was living at Babel. This fact is emphasized three times. It was "there" that "Jehovah confused the language of all the earth". (vs 9) It was from "there" that Jehovah scattered them ". . . over the face of the whole earth." (vs 8) And again it is repeated that it was from "there" that "Jehovah scattered them abroad on the face of the earth." (vs 9)

God did not confuse the language at Babel because the people had refused to spread out over the earth. Rather, it was because if they had been allowed to stay together, "nothing which they have imagined to do will be restrained from them." (vs 6)

Our present knowledge and technology is such that there does not seem to be anything that we can dream of that we cannot find a way to do. There are those who believe that man should be allowed to do whatever he can think of. Others are scared that ability to do such things as tap nuclear forces, or manipulate genes, will have detrimental results or even destroy mankind. The Bible believer, however, takes comfort in the Tower of Babel incident. If God stopped mankind once when he reached the point where "nothing which they have imagined to do will be restrained from them", then surely when man again reaches that point God will again intervene.

### Summary

The first eleven chapters of Genesis contain much information which is useful for interpreting prehistory. They tell of a world-wide flood a little over 4300 years ago that destroyed the world and all people except for the eight persons who were saved by the ark. Thus, all that is now classified as prehistoric is *post-Flood*. Except for the eight Flood survivors, all the builders of the Tower of Babel were born after the Flood into a low technological society. Farming and hunting were the chief occupations. Necessary articles such as bows, arrows, spears, knives, tents, clothes, cooking utensils, etc., were hand made.

The eight Flood survivors had lived in a high technological and cultural society which produced metal objects and made engravings and musical instruments. They undoubtedly had taken such objects with them on the ark and passed along the knowledge of such things to the new generations. Thus the people were well qualified to conceive, design and produce things that they had never seen, not only a tower and a city, but the necessary tools and furnaces to fire brick, etc. In fact, it was just that ability to dream and to carry out the dream that caused God to scatter them over the face of the earth.

This then is the type of people that produced the earliest buildings and artifacts which we term prehistoric. As they were all knowledgeable and

capable, it is no wonder that evidence of advanced cultures in various parts of the world should make it appear that they each arose independent of each other. The people that spread out from Babel carried with them a compulsion to build monuments to make a name for themselves (a compulsion mankind has to this day). They also took with them Nimrod's new religion of the stars which is why so many monuments are oriented to the heavens.

### References

- <sup>1</sup>Schiller, Ronald, August 1980. Where WAS the "cradle of civilization"? *Reader's Digest*. U.S. Edition, pp. 67-71.
- <sup>2</sup>Daniel, Glyn, 1980. Megalithic monuments. *Scientific American* 243(1):85-90.
- <sup>3</sup>Tyler, David J., 1979—Megaliths and Neolithic man. *Creation Research Society Quarterly*. 16(1):47-58; see p. 48.
- <sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 56.
- <sup>5</sup>For a description of what the original message of the Zodiac may have been, see Morris, Henry M., 1974. Many infallible proofs. Creation-Life Publishers, San Diego. pp. 342-343.
- <sup>6</sup>Peterson, Everett H., 1981. The necessity of the canopies. *Creation Research Society Quarterly*. 17(4):201-204.
- <sup>7</sup>Ozanne, C.G., 1970. The first 7000 years. Exposition Press, Jericho, New York.
- <sup>8</sup>Courville, Donovan, 1971. The Exodus problem. Challenge Books, Loma Linda, California.
- <sup>9</sup>Berlitz, Charles, 1972. Mysteries from forgotten worlds. Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, New York. Chapter VI.
- <sup>10</sup>Reference 6, p. 203.
- Schmich, John E., 1979. The dispersion from the homestead of the race of man. *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 16(1):17-21, has also presented some thoughts on this matter. (Editor)

### Fossil Succession

(Continued from page 111)

- <sup>11</sup>Velikovskiy, Immanuel, 1955. Earth in upheaval. Doubleday and Co., Garden City, New York. p. 56.
- <sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 57 & 58.
- <sup>13</sup>Reference 8, p. 170.
- <sup>14</sup>Reference 9, p. 276.
- <sup>15</sup>Reference 8, p. 165.
- <sup>16</sup>Reference 9, p. 275.
- <sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 427.
- <sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 160, footnote.
- <sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 273 & 274.
- <sup>20</sup>Olson, E.C., 1965. The evolution of life. Mentor Books, New York. P. 240.
- <sup>21</sup>Simpson, George Gaylord, 1967. The meaning of evolution. Yale University Press, New Haven. P. 132.
- <sup>22</sup>Reference 2, p. 22.
- <sup>23</sup>Arnold, Chester A., 1947. An introduction to palaeobotany. McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York. P. 20.
- <sup>24</sup>1981. Dinosaurs as mothers. *Discover*, May, p. 12.
- <sup>25</sup>Reference 2, pp. 128 & 129.
- <sup>26</sup>Francis, Wilfred, 1961. Coal: its formation and composition. Edward Arnold Ltd., London. P. 9.
- <sup>27</sup>Twenhofel, William H., and Robert R. Shrock, 1935. Invertebrate paleontology. McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York. P. 21.
- <sup>28</sup>Reference 9, p. 26.
- <sup>29</sup>Rehwinkle, Alfred M., 1951. The flood. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis. Pp. 29 & 30.
- <sup>30</sup>Cordell, Robert J., 1972. Depth of oil origin and primary migration: a review and critique. *Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists* 56(10):2029-2067
- <sup>31</sup>Birdsell, J.B., 1972. Human evolution. Rand McNally, Chicago. P. 111.

- <sup>32</sup>Dodson, Edward O., and Peter Dossou, 1976. Evolution: process and product. D. Van Nostrand Co., New York. P. 4.
- <sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup>*Ibid.* See also Lull, Richard Swann, 1925. Organic evolution. Macmillan Co., New York. P. 103.
- <sup>35</sup>Reference 33, p. 4.
- <sup>36</sup>Reference 32, p. 114.
- <sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup>Reference 6.
- <sup>39</sup>Editor's note by Walter E. Lammerts to reference 6.
- <sup>40</sup>Reference 32, p. 110.
- (Editor's Note) Readers may wish to compare the ideas put forward by Hedtke, Randall, 1971. A geo-ecological explanation of the fossil record based upon divine creation. *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 7(4):214-221; and Northrup, Bernard E., 1974. Comments on the Stuart E. Nevins paper (post-flood strata of the John Day County, northeastern Oregon.) *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 10(4):205-207 and 228. I have no doubt that these men all reached their conclusions independently.

### VERSES FOR A CREATIONIST UNDER ATTACK

... let him alone, and let him curse, ... it may be ... that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.

—2 Samuel 16:11 & 12.