



# The First Skyscraper

**TEXT:** Genesis 11:1-9; 1 Corinthians 3:9-15

**SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 55:6-9

**KEY VERSE:** Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. — Jeremiah 17:5

## RESPONSES

1. Genesis 11:3 says, “they said one to another.” Obviously they left God out of their plans. The students should be made to realize the importance of including God in all their plans. James 4:13-17 gives us some key words—“If the Lord will, . . .”

2. Verse 4 tells us that they desired to make themselves a name, and they wanted to prevent their being scattered over the face of the whole earth. Here is an opportunity to point out that God pays particular attention to men’s motives and their desires to obey or disobey Him. The class should realize that pride figured strongly in the motives of these people. Proverbs 16:18 says, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” The second reason given in verse 4 was in conflict with God’s command to Noah and his posterity (Genesis 9:1). The men of Babel wished to concentrate their power and kingdom as a people, rather than do as God had instructed, to repopulate the earth. Men’s desires often result in an attempt to rationalize away God’s Word by wresting Scripture out of context, and by explanations which, in essence, say God didn’t mean what He said. If our plans are in conflict with God’s Word, we can be sure they will meet with disaster.

3. God himself visited the people at Babel. The students should understand that God is vitally interested in how each one builds his spiritual house, so interested, in fact, that He visits people individually by His Holy Spirit, speaking to each one’s conscience. He also visits them at times through Christians who preach to them the Word of God. His Holy Spirit witnesses to each soul as to what the truth is. Discuss with the class other ways in which the Lord makes His visits known to man.

4. In this case, the Lord chose a simple non-violent means of terminating the Babel project—confusion of tongues. Discuss with the class how the subsequent scattering of the people accomplished God’s twofold purpose. It imposed restraint on man’s ability to consolidate his defiance of God, and accomplished the command given to Noah and his sons to repopulate the earth. This is a chance to point out that if a Christian’s plans seem to be blocked, he should take a second look at them to be sure of God’s guidance. As Christians, we should not make it difficult for God to accomplish His purpose in us. See Philippians 2:13.

5. God furnishes the foundation of our spiritual house (1 Corinthians 3:11), which is Jesus Christ. Here is an opportunity to teach salvation from sin through faith in Christ. God’s part

It is astounding that, with Noah still alive about one hundred years after the Flood, the people of the earth should so lose their fear of God that they did not hesitate to join themselves in a project defying Him. Building a tower and concentrating their population instead of spreading out and repopulating the earth as God had commanded (Genesis 9:1), demonstrated their independent spirit and resistance to God. Because of their disobedience, God intervened and confused their language, thus preventing the world from again being given over totally to sin and lawlessness. God’s Word is our blueprint for building our spiritual house. Deviation from this blueprint will result in the same confusion and disaster experienced by the people of Babel.

1. Who did the people of Babel consult with as they made plans to build a city and a tower? Who should they have approached about the matter? Why?

2. Note here two reasons why the men of Babel decided to build a city and a tower whose “top may reach unto heaven.”

3. Who visited the people as they attempted to build the city and tower at Babel, and why? Is God interested in our plans today? Why or why not?

## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

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4. What action did the Lord decide to take regarding the building project at Babel? Why?

5. As Christians, we are co-laborers with God in building our spiritual house. List several things which show God's part in this labor. List several things which show our part.

6. In 1 Corinthians 3:12, the writer mentions various materials which one might use to build his spiritual house. Note here several Christians' experiences and Christian character attributes which he may be referring to as "gold, silver, precious stones." Now contrast these with what you think the writer may mean by "wood, hay, stubble." See John 17:17; Acts 2:39; Galatians 3:2-3; 5:22-23; Hebrews 6:1; James 1:22 and 1 Peter 1:5-7.

7. Explain what you feel the word *fire* refers to in 1 Corinthians 3:13.

8. How is it possible to lose the heavenly reward which we might have gained in our service for Christ? And how is it possible to be assured of that reward?

is His grace imparted at salvation. Our part is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ with all our hearts, having confessed and repented of all our sins. We must co-labor with God in order to be kept from sin. Our part is to study and apply God's Word to our lives, and to do as Jesus said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." God's part is to give His peace and power, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

6. The students should recognize that sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost are precious stones in one's spiritual house, without which it cannot be completed. Sanctification brings a special unity with Jesus Christ and God's purposes into the life. The baptism provides the Christian with power to witness for the Lord. The character attributes of Galatians 5:22-23 and 1 Peter 1:5-7 are part of the gold and silver with which the spiritual house can be overlaid. Mark 16:15 and Revelation 12:11 further remind us that witnessing for Jesus is an indispensable part of one's spiritual house. Galatians 3:2-3 reminds us that trusting in one's own works, proceeding with spiritual pride and self-righteousness, is to build with "wood, hay or stubble." Explore with the students other concerns such as priorities, lukewarmness, and carnality. Any deviation from God's blueprint, the Bible, is using these latter materials.

7. The word *fire* is most often used to mean "trials and temptations," but in this case it refers to the final testing time when Jesus returns to earth. Extend your students' thinking to include God's special revelation regarding the motives back of what one does in His service. It is possible to be doing many of the right things but with self at the center instead of giving all glory to Jesus Christ. See 2 Corinthians 13:5.

8. Use this as a wrap-up by turning to Matthew 7:21-23, and also 1 Samuel 16:7. The students should realize that God knows our thoughts and our motives as well as all our actions. Obedience is the key factor in our lives. If we fail to obey we will someday hear those words, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." If our spiritual house is to withstand the "fire" it must conform day by day to God's Holy Word. Should we find through prayer and Bible study, with self-examination, that we need to improve, Christ has promised to reveal even this to us. See Philippians 3:15. Let us be sure that we are adding "gold and silver" to our Christian character daily so that, should Jesus come at any moment, or we be called suddenly to leave this world, we will be greeted with the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

## YOUR WRAP-UP

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## SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Imagine the people of Babel living today. How would you explain to them the way to be happy?

What is the meaning of the word *babble*, as used in our language today? Relate this definition to our lesson.

Is there proof of the tower of Babel in the world today? What is that proof?

Can you think of things that would be different if the tower of Babel had never been built?

Why did the men of Babel want to build a city and a tower?

What did God do to the men of Babel as a result of their disobedience?

What is the meaning of verses 13 and 15 of our 1 Corinthians text?

In the ANSWER story, Mark made a suggestion for a quicker route to school. Was it a good idea? Why or why not?

## THINGS TO DO

Have someone start to tell your students a story, then switch into a foreign language (or use a tape). This will help to illustrate the confusion which resulted when the language was suddenly changed at Babel.

Draw a tower with windows, taping a square of paper over each window. Under each square, write a question concerning the lesson. Let each child pick a window and answer the question.

Take a recipe to class. Ask your students to help you alter it "just a little." For example: put in six eggs instead on one, powdered sugar instead of flour (it looks the same, doesn't it?), salt instead of sugar. Then ask what the result will be. This helps to illustrate that we should not attempt to do things in our own way and ignore God's plan.

Have the students do drawings to represent things in which people of our day may take pride. For example: a book to represent education and religious knowledge,

a building to represent a business or home, a church to represent church attendance, money to represent good works, and books on etiquette and manners to represent good living habits.

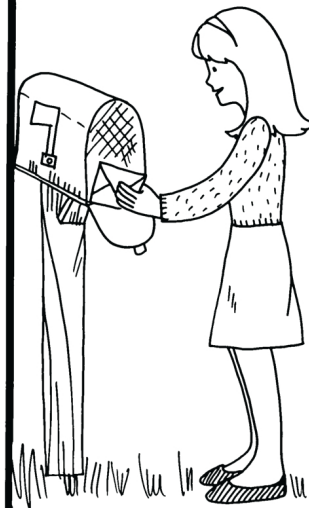
At the end of the lesson give each student a piece of paper and a pencil and have him write in his own words the story that was presented to him and what he has learned during class time.

To illustrate the consequence of the pride and disobedience of the men of Babel, have the students name as many different languages and dialects as they can. Stress the fact that, although we speak different languages and come from different backgrounds, God can still speak to each heart and wants us all to love and obey Him.

## Answers for ANSWER

### A Letter of Hope

Pretend you lived long ago when the people decided to build the tower of Babel. Write a letter to the people and tell them what you think of the idea of building the tower. Let them know the true and only way they can be happy.



Dear People of Babel,

Sincerely,  
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