

BABEL: Implications and Evidence of Early Advanced Culture

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THE INTRODUCTION

Most world almanacs list 193 independent countries in the world.¹ Linguist John Oller Jr. claims that there are 6912 distinct languages with 94 different language families in the world today.² Where did all these nations and these many languages come from? The answer to this question is unknown to the secular world. Their best explanation is that all these must have come as a result of many years of evolutionary development. But the best answer is given to us by revelation, the account of Babel in Genesis 11.

The secular world does not view the account of the Tower of Babel as historical. Even most believers do not consider Babel as important as other major events, particularly in the book of Genesis. However, like the Flood and the Fall of mankind, the impact of Babel continues to influence our world even today. In fact, Babel has far-reaching implications. Babel explains the origin of national entities as well as our struggles to communicate with those from other cultures. I am reminded of this each year that I go to Ukraine to teach. Without a translator, I am close to useless there.

The Summary

Our responsibility as Christians is to recognize every secular perversion of the truth and replace it with God's worldview so that our thinking reflects God's thinking. Such is the case with the biblical account of Babel, the first civilization after the Flood. Babel is not a myth or a legend passed down by word of mouth. Babel is a major historical event. Only by understanding Babel and its place in history can we have the correct perspective and proper worldview about every other event in world history. Only then can we refute the evolutionary concept that cultures, nations, and languages gradually developed over vast periods of time.

¹ "How Many Countries Are In The World?", <http://www.worldatlas.com/nations.htm>.

² John W. Oller, Jr, "More than Pie", *Answers Magazine*, Vol. 3, No.2, (April-June, 2008), 53-55.

We must begin any study of ancient history with the book of Genesis. We will begin by expounding the passage in Genesis 11, viewing it as a real event in time. First we will need to establish the context of the passage by looking at the early chapters of Genesis, especially Genesis 10. Chapter 10 actually goes with 11:1-9 and is essential in understanding the narrative. The two chapters go together.

After the exposition we will draw very important implications from the passage. These implications tell us much about God Himself, the origin of languages, and the origin of the nations. The implications even tell us much about God's broader plan for His creation even reaching into the future. The nations fit into this broader plan of God. There will actually be a replay of the Babel story in the future, as predicted by the prophets.

The secular world has imposed a worldview upon all, such that the church has lost a biblical understanding in many areas of the culture. We as believers have allowed the secular world to take over some of these areas of thinking. We have accepted a secular interpretation of science, history and even language. That is why we have allowed the public schools to basically force a false theory of science on our children, the theory of evolution. There are Biblical answers to all areas of thinking. Some implications can be drawn from the account of Babel that can restore a biblical worldview in some particular areas. We will attempt to restore a biblical worldview on language itself and on the nations.

A final implication of the Babel account is its apologetic value for today. The historical account of Babel gives us an apologetic against the evolutionary worldview that cultures gradually developed over vast periods of time. The issue is whether the short time frame of the Bible fits real history. Archaeological structures and artifacts indicate that cultures developed rapidly over a short time rather than over long evolutionary eras and that their technology was advanced rather than primitive. A study of every aspect of early civilization supports the biblical account.

The Approach

The wide spectrum of approaches to the interpretation of the early chapters in Genesis extends from the mythological to the theologically conservative. Only the far end of the conservative

spectrum, a literal interpretation of Scripture, accurately reveals God's thinking. Sadly, even the majority in evangelicalism does not take the early chapters of Genesis literally but imposes on the text a twenty-first century, evolutionary worldview. For most, science, not a literal exegesis, is the final authority for understanding the text. Instead, we must take God at His Word and depend on Scripture's full inspiration (plenary and verbal) and complete inerrancy (including all matters of history and science). To choose to accept Scripture's inerrancy only as it pertains to issues of theology is to ignore much data that only God can provide. Any subjective view of God's Word distorts the whole of Scripture.

An interpretation of all available data is always part of the process of historical science. Even knowing the importance of this foundational principle, secular science, particularly historical science, excludes data derived from any sources outside the natural realm, an approach that distorts real science. Good scientific practice should include all relevant data, including divine revelation, God's exposition on reality. Since Scripture is truly inspired, an accurate evaluation of all areas of life demands that Scripture's contribution to any issue be taken seriously.

A major characteristic of historical science is that interpretation of available data is always a part of the process. All interpretive conclusions concerning the past events are highly influenced by the assumptions made concerning the past. Therefore, the assumptions concerning things in the past must be evaluated along with the scientific conclusions drawn from that data. This is where conservatives will differ from the conclusions of the secular scientist who would exclude revelation.

True science should give priority to data from divine revelation since God is the only eyewitness to leave an account of ancient history. God's response to Job is pertinent here, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38:4) The events in the early chapters of Genesis, especially the Creation, the Fall of mankind, the Flood, and the scattering at Babel, must be evaluated using all available traces left by those events. Obviously, because of the Flood's comprehensive destruction, data about events before the Flood is limited; therefore, logically, Scripture, inspired by God, the only eyewitness, becomes our primary source of historical information.

The physical data or traces left by an event must be carefully interpreted. The assumptions underlying the physical data must also be evaluated. The interpretation of data will be reliable only if the assumptions are sound. Data from revelation must also be carefully interpreted. A proper interpretative or hermeneutical approach to the data is essential. The best approach is a grammatical-historical-contextual hermeneutic³ whose major aim is to determine the author's intended meaning. In the case of Genesis, Moses' willed meaning was intended for his audience, the children of Israel before they entered the Promised Land.⁴

A major conservative assumption about the past is that the physical world has not always been the same as it is today. Some of the physical laws and even constants accepted by scientists today were different before the Flood; therefore, we cannot use them to evaluate the time before and immediately after the Flood and be confident of our conclusions. Because we cannot scientifically evaluate conditions before the Flood and because God's Word is inerrant and trustworthy, we are wise to reject all uniformitarian assumptions about the past and defer to Scripture.

Because the physical data on Babel is limited, we will give priority to the biblical record. That framework will allow us to best understand Babel and its consequences.

THE EXPOSITION OF GENESIS 10-11

The early chapters of Genesis, especially Genesis 10 through 11:9, establish the context of the Babel passage. Genesis 10 and 11 should be studied together because they provide the complete account of Babel. Genesis chapter 10, which uses the Table of Nations to give the results of the nation's scattering at Babel, sets the foundation and groundwork for chapter 11, the account of the Babel event. We should not be surprised at this lack of chronological order since Moses presented other texts in Genesis thematically rather than chronologically. For example Genesis 2,

³ The standard hermeneutical textbooks present this approach, such as the following: Roy B. Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation* (Colorado Springs, Co: Victor, 1991), Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970), and Dr. William W. Klein, Dr. Craig L. Blomberg, Dr. Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1993).

⁴ Moses may have composed the Book of Exodus while in Egypt or later in the wilderness after the Exodus. The book gave the children of Israel their background history so they would understand their place in God's plan.

a more detailed account of God's creation of mankind in His image on Day Six, comes after his account of Day Seven. Also, Moses gave Cain's genealogy in Genesis 4 but went back in time in 4:25 to give Abel's. Thus, Moses presented the Table of Nations first to emphasize the far-ranging effects of Babel.

The Context of Genesis 10-11

The scattering at Babel occurred after the first three major events of world history, God's Creation of all things, the Fall of mankind, and the worldwide Flood. The first eleven chapters of Genesis can be described as Primeval History.

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| 1. | The History of Creation | Genesis 1:1-2:3 |
| 2. | The Early History of Mankind | Genesis 2:4-3:24 |
| 3. | The Early History of Civilization | Genesis 4-9 |
| 4. | The Early History of the Nations | Genesis 10-11 |

The term history emphasizes that Genesis records actual historical events, events more important and certainly more accurate than those recorded by secular historians. Though our culture views the biblical record as mythology and ignores it, we can and should defend the historicity of these events.

The History of Creation (1:1-2:3) records God's creation of all things from nothing, with the creation of mankind as the central focus. God created all things in six days. On the seventh, He *rested*. Did omnipotent God need to rest? Of course not. With a few words, He had created everything perfect. In His omniscience, He had embedded into creation everything mankind would need for the rest of human history. And so He stopped creating. He was finished because all was *very good*. His completed creation could not be improved. God's creative beginning for mankind is the foundation for all world history.

God created man in His image and gave him the two-fold purpose of generating families and subduing and ruling creation. He was to populate the earth and harness its resources by utilizing God's delegated sovereignty.

The Early History of Mankind (2:4-3:24) began in the Garden of Eden, a sinless and perfect environment. In the Garden, the Lord God commissioned man to exercise his life's purpose of populating and ruling. God tested man, allowing him the freedom to serve Him in voluntary obedience. Sadly, our progenitor failed to revere His Savior, choosing instead to violate God's one prohibition. Satan deceived the woman into disobeying her Creator, but the man deliberately chose to break God's only prohibition. All the fruit in the Garden was freely available to him, but he wanted more. He wanted what belonged only to God. The consequence of his self-centered decision, his rebellion against his Creator, brought death and every imaginable suffering on all creation. Instead of being *very good*, all creation was now cursed, radically changed. The environment took on a new but negative condition, moving from organization to disorder. Now, the environment, so perfectly created for mankind's benefit, would resist his subduing and ruling.

The Fall of man radically affected the rest of world history as God dealt with the issue of sin by beginning to reverse its effects, a process that will be completed only at the end of world history. Thankfully, along with His judgment, the Lord God began His program of redemption for all mankind (Genesis 3:15), beginning with Adam and Eve, the very ones whose willful self-absorption created the need. World history can be summarized as God's dealing with the damage caused by Adam's original sin (Genesis 3).

The few events recorded in the Early History of Civilization (Genesis 4-9) vividly reveal the new flawed nature mankind acquired through his fall from sinless perfection. Mankind's history began with Cain and Abel, the first offspring of sinful Adam. Note that God's mandate to *be fruitful and multiply* was still in place; however, every aspect was now fraught with pain and suffering. In willful rebellion, the first child born of sinful parents disobeyed God's commands for worship, ignored God's gracious intercession, and eventually killed his own brother. In a short time, man's new sinful nature had turned simple fruit eating into outright murder. Sin's perversion would quickly degenerate and infect all others.

The Early History of Civilization records man's folly in rejecting his Creator's grace in always providing deliverance. Sin beget sin even as God's grace abounded. By Noah's time, sin had so

infected the planet that God had to intervene with worldwide judgment to save mankind. His judgment, the worldwide Flood, was the third major event of world history. Out of the tragic civilization spawned by sin, God saved Noah and the seven believers in his family. From them, He instituted His next provision to help curtail man's sinful nature, nations.

The Early History of Nations (Genesis 10-11) divides naturally into two parts, the origin of the nations and the scattering of the nations. After the flood, mankind with his sinful nature inherited from Adam continued his moral rebellion, eventually gravitating to Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). As with all rebellion, God graciously intervened in judgment, in this case scattering the nations throughout His sin-flawed creation.

God called Abraham out from all the nations to beget a people through whom He could more effectively deal with the rest of the nations. Through this one man, God formed His chosen nation, Israel. The rest of Genesis from chapters 12 to 50 records the Patriarchal History, an accurate historical account of Israel's four patriarchs and their families.

The Origin of the Nations - Genesis 10

Genesis 10-11 can be titled the Early History of Nations because the origin of the nations is recorded here. Genesis 10, commonly known as the Table of Nations, presents more than a genealogy. Through it, God shows His gracious preservation of the family of *righteous* Noah. From Noah's three sons, Japheth, Shem, and Ham, God chose to continue His plan to deliver mankind from sin. From the chaos generated by both degenerate mankind and the Flood, God created nations to bring a semblance of order to His creation.

The Table of Nations records the origin of the many people groups that existed during Abraham's time. Abraham and his descendants would have had considerable interaction with these nations. Moses wrote to the second generation of Jews after the exodus from Egypt. They were about to enter the Promised Land and needed to understand their place in world history and their future under the Abrahamic Covenant. The Table of Nations reminded them of God's care of fallen mankind and gave them confidence to trust Him to fulfill His promise to Abraham about ownership of the Land.

The Family of Japheth - Genesis 10:1-5

The Table of Nations begins, *Now these are the records of the generations of Shem, Ham and Japheth.*⁵ In orderly fashion, Moses listed their descendants. The uniqueness and orderliness of the record cannot be overemphasized. Even higher critics admit the remarkable accuracy of the Table of Nations.⁶ Moses wanted to be sure his readers understood that this was an historical record that correctly gave the origins of the ancient world's different people groups. The God who had preserved these people and their record could be trusted to preserve these Israelites as they entered the Promised Land.

The narrative before the Table of Nations (Genesis 7-9) dealt with Noah and his three sons. Now Moses chronicled Noah's sons and the sons born to them after the Flood. Moses gave the genealogy of Japheth, Noah's eldest son, first. Japheth's sons were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javen, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

The Family of Ham - Genesis 10:6-20

Genesis 10:6 begins the genealogy of Ham, Noah's youngest son. His direct descendants were Cush, Mizraim, which is Egypt, Put, which is Libya, and Canaan. Because Ham and his progeny tended to rebel against God, his descendants would impact the children of Israel dramatically and disastrously. In keeping with his emphasis on the Fall of mankind and its consequences, Moses emphasized one of Cush's sons, Nimrod (10:8-12). Many scholars suggest that he was the leader of the rebellion at Babel. Historian Josephus, who lived at the time of Christ, identified him as the founder of Babylon, which in the Bible epitomizes national ungodliness.⁷ Note also that Moses drew attention to the Canaanites (10:15-19) since they would be especially important to his readers, who were about to enter their land to destroy them.

⁵ All quotations are from the New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

⁶ Henry Morris quotes William F. Albright on the high regard for the Table in Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record: A scientific & devotional commentary on the book of beginnings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970), 245.

⁷ Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988), 244.

The Family of Shem - Genesis 10:21-32

The record of Shem, Noah's middle son (10:21-31), is at the end of the genealogy because Shem's descendants eventuated in Abraham, the focus of God's plan for mankind. Of Shem's sons, Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram, Moses emphasized Eber because the Hebrews and eventually the nation Israel descended from him. In the fifth generation after Shem, the descendants of Arpachshad extended to the sons of Eber.

Verse 25 in Shem's genealogy, *Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided*, is of particular interest because in Peleg's time *the earth was divided*. Scholars offer two main interpretations of this phrase. One is that the earth was divided geologically. A better view is that the dividing referred to the scattering of the people groups at Babel. This view has been the dominant view of Jewish and church history.⁸ Language differences divided everyone into groups and caused them to scatter all over the known world. This view is best since it fits the context of Babel.

Verse 25 is also of interest because Genesis 11:10-26 gives the time frame for the descendants from Shem to Abraham. Moses' not giving a time frame for Babel would be unusual because every other significant event in Genesis can be given a date relative to all other events. We can logically assume that Moses emphasized Peleg to give us an approximate date for Babel. Taking the Genesis chronology as accurate, theologians calculate that Peleg lived between 100–340 years after the Flood. Combining chronological data from the Book of Genesis with dates from secular history, especially Harold Hoehner's chronological calculations, we can date the Flood at 2487 BC.⁹ We can deduce that the Babel incident occurred closer to the Flood, only 100 years after it (c2380 BC), because this conservative timeline agrees with the short time frame indicated in Scripture. This date is similar to Bishop Usher's. With this chronology, Abraham entered the land of Canaan in 2060 BC, setting the stage for the inception of God's chosen nation.

⁸ Kurt Wise, "Egypt or Babel: Which Came First", *Answers Magazine*, Vol. 3, No.2, (April-June, 2008), 32.

⁹ Harold Hoehner presented a complete chronology of biblical events in his "Biblical Chronology" course offered at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Verse 31, *These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, according to their nations* (10:31), the end of Shem's genealogy, is similar to the conclusion of Japheth's and Ham's records. Each genealogy included not simply descendants but also their families (ethnic groups), many with different languages. These peoples formed nations that were also scattered over various lands.

The final verse of the Table of Nations is similar to those in the individual genealogies of the brothers. *These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood* (10:32). In this final verse, Moses interpreted the text for us. The record encompassed *the sons of Noah*, their genealogies, and the nations that came from those sons. Moses emphasized that the people *were separated* or scattered *on the earth after the Flood*. The nations, first mentioned in this chapter, resulted from the dispersal of the people at Babel.

The Spread of the Nations

Now that we have considered the main points of the Table of Nations, let us briefly trace in broad strokes the final locations of these nations after the scattering at Babel. Japheth's descendants primarily migrated west, possibly northwest from the land of Shinar, the location of Babel. The Germanic peoples probably trace their lineage back to Gomer, as well as do most Europeans. Javan eventually begat the Greeks. The Russians to the north were descended from Tubal. Though still under debate, most scholars believe the eastern peoples descended from a combination of Japheth and some of Ham's descendants. The Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian races may be a combination of these descendants though we cannot be dogmatic.

Ham's descendants migrated primarily south of Babel, Mizraim to Egypt, Put to Libya, and Cush possibly to Ethiopia. In fact, all African cultures probably came through Cush or a combination of Cush and Put, thus accounting for Africa's unique ethnicity. The Canaanites occupied the land of Canaan, important because Israel would ultimately try to displace them when God gave them the land.

Shem's son Aram begat the Aramians and his son Asshur, the Assyrians. The Persians probably came from Elam. Arpachshad's descendants included Abraham.

The Table of Nations lists seventy names. These seventy make up the different ethnic groups scattered from Babel. All together this gives us a look at where all the nations were in the time of Abraham. These were just the direct descendants of the three sons. There would be descendants from them who are also listed in the table of nations.

The Purpose of the Table of Nations

What was God's purpose in listing the Table of Nations? First, He committed to writing the accurate origin of the nations, nullifying the world's desire to deny His existence through the evolutionary theory.

Second, He used the Table of Nations to prepare the children of Israel to enter the Land. They would know the ethnic relationships of the peoples with whom they would have contact. They would also know that they were different from the peoples already residing there who had a legacy of abandonment of God.

Third, the Table of Nations revealed Israel's unique origin from Shem to Abraham. God is a God of order and had carefully produced His chosen nation in a way that made them uniquely His, unlike all other people groups. They needed to remain separate from all those without the unique lineage begat through Abraham's love of God and God's faithfulness to Him. In many ways, Genesis chapters 1-11 are introductory to Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel, the subject of the rest of the Old Testament and the eventual end of world history.

Finally, the Table of Nations reinforced the unity of humanity, a theme developed by the Apostle Paul while teaching in Athens (Acts 17:24-28).

²⁴ The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; ²⁶ and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of

the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,²⁷ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;²⁸ for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'

By presenting God's worldview, Paul refuted the worldview of the philosophers of his day, an evolutionary worldview promoted with different, more modern details even today. His biblical philosophy of history refuted the world's anthropology, their view of mankind's origin and history, and their many gods. He clearly presented God as the Creator. In verse 26, Paul declared that *He* [God] *made* from one man, Adam, every nation of mankind. Thus, through Paul, God gave us New Testament confirmation of the history recorded in Genesis 10 and 11. Moses gave us the historical record of God's creation of the nations while Paul gave us the inspired interpretation of those events.

Paul's teaching in Athens continued, *having determined their appointed times and boundaries of their habitations*. The nations did not just happen or evolve. Chance and luck are impossible because God is omnipotent. He orchestrated a plan for the nations that is broader than we can imagine. He is sovereign over all things and purposed mankind *to live on the face of the earth*, not in one section of Shinar but on *all* the earth. To fulfill His plan, He determined every nation's precise position in time and history. The history of every nation is under His sovereign control. He determines which nations survive, which fall, and the perfect timing for both within His plan. Just as He determined every nation's geographical boundaries, He also determined the length of their power, *the times*, and the extent of their influence. All are part of sovereign God's grand plan and part of the biblical worldview.

In review, the Table of Nations is very important for several reasons.

1. The Table of Nations is the only authoritative recording of the origin of nations, people groups, ethnicities, and languages. Secular history and anthropology provide no creditable account of these origins, and archaeological evidence is meager. God's Word stands firm in the accuracy of its details and the scope of its content. The Table contradicts the prevailing evolutionary framework, which is theory based on opinion with no scientific foundation.

2. The Table of Nations reflects the distribution of nations during Abraham's time and the beginning of the Jewish nation through him.¹⁰ In fact, the Table shows that Abraham's family tree began with Noah's son Shem. This genealogical record sets the stage for God's plan for mankind through Abraham and the favored nation that would come from his loins. Even higher critics admit the remarkable accuracy of the document.

3. The Table of Nations is an historical document that also has theological significance because it traces the entire human race to one family, that of Adam and Eve. In Acts 17:26, the Apostle Paul emphasized that everyone in human history has Adam as his ultimate source. One aftermath of the Flood was that all mankind also comes from Noah. This biblical view contradicts the cultural views that have evolutionary thinking as their foundation. We are not haphazard, unrelated products of primordial ooze or a big bang. Instead, we all come from the same gene pool. We all are of the same race, the human race. We have many ethnicities within that one race, but all humanity is united by a common ancestor. Any theology that does not hold to this fundamental tenet has a secular worldview and is dangerously wrong.

The Table of Nations has significant theological underpinnings. Just as we are all related to Adam and Eve in their fall and sin so also we all have access to the same salvation God graciously afforded them. Just as we are all related to Noah so also we are beneficiaries with him of God's amazing grace in judging sinful mankind and at the same time providing a way of deliverance. So the Table is more than simply an historical document but has theological significance.

4. Moses wrote Genesis as an historical narrative. The Table of Nations is important because it provides evidence of the historicity of the early chapters in Genesis.¹¹ Secularists view these early chapters, including the story of Babel, as mythical. The details of the Table fit known ancient history better than their varied and flawed explanations of the origin of nations and languages. Its historical data helps us trace backgrounds, ethnicity, and nations.

¹⁰ H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1942), 355.

¹¹ John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1975), 135.

5. The Table of Nations shows that God had begun fulfilling Noah's prophecies about his descendants (Genesis 9:25-27).¹² *So he [Noah] said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers."*²⁶ *He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant."*²⁷ *May God enlarge Japheth and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant."*

The Scattering at Babel - Genesis 11:1-9

Moses' historical narrative about Babel divides easily into two parts, the Rebellion of the Peoples (11:1-4) followed by the Judgment of the Lord (11:5-9).

The Rebellion of the Peoples - Genesis 11:1-4

Moses began his divinely inspired account by stressing the unity of the people at Babel. They had the same language and vocabulary (11:1). They lived together in the same general area, the land of Shinar (11:2). They worked in unity to build a tower to heaven.

The passage begins, *Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words.* Genesis 11:1 reveals that the whole earth, which means all mankind, spoke the same language. They also used the *same words*, indicating a shared grammatical structure and a singular vocabulary. Everyone associated sounds and perhaps even written symbols with specific concepts. The text does not identify mankind's original language, though scholars suggest Hebrew or some proto-Hebrew language.

Verse 2 introduces us to a unified people living in relatively close proximity to each other in a land called Shinar. *It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.* Geographically, most scholars locate this land in the Fertile Crescent of the Tigris-Euphrates River Valley (Mesopotamia), which is present-day Iraq. The text says that *they journeyed east*, indicating that they had come from the headwaters of the Tigris or Euphrates River, traveling south and east at some time after Noah disembarked at Mount Ararat.

¹² Ross, 230.

Genesis 11:9 indicates that they chose to settle together at Babel, which was probably located at the same site as ancient Babylon. If so, it was 55 miles due south of present-day Baghdad.

Note that this rebellious people traveled east. In the Bible, going east seems to indicate going away from God, an act of arrogant rebellion. Adam and Eve went east out of the Garden of Eden. Cain went east when God banished him from Eden. Lot moved east to Sodom.

Genesis 11:3-4 summarizes the defiance of the people living in Shinar. *They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar.* ⁴ *They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."* Verse 11:3 emphasizes their willingness to work hard while verse 11:4 focuses on their rebellious desire for independence from God.

Pre-Flood mankind had high intellects that produced advanced technologies. They used advanced construction technologies to build cities (4:17) though in doing so they violated God's command against living together, first given to Cain, who continued in rebellion and built cities anyway. Think of the pyramids that remain mysteries of construction even today—and they were built later than the tower in Babel. Pre-Flood mankind created sophisticated musical instruments (4:21) and bronze and iron implements (4:22). The implication is that a full range of technologies existed both before and immediately after the Flood.

Do not be fooled by the evolutionary theory that early man lived in caves, spoke in grunts, and wallowed in ignorance. Because the perfect environment of original Creation was only generations removed from them, Noah's family would have known many advanced technologies and would have brought them into the new world after the Flood.

Genesis 11:3 mentions materials and construction technologies. The thorough burning of bricks probably refers to kiln-dried bricks, superior to the sun-dried bricks used by later generations and a further indication of their superior technology. Though technology is not bad in itself, the

wrong use of it is offensive to God. In the same way, an advanced culture does not necessarily please God, only obedience to His commands and a right relationship with Him.

After the Flood, mankind became arrogant, pleased with his ability to “improve” his environment. He relished his independence from God and openly rebelled against Him. Self-centeredness and pride ruled in Shinar. Note the prominence of the second person plural pronoun in their thinking. “*Let us make bricks*” in verse 3 and in verse 4 “*let us build,*” “*for ourselves,*” “*let us make,*” “*for ourselves,*” and “*lest we.*” They focused on their own abilities, forgetting that God had given them everything, including those talents and intellect.

Their desire to build a city showed their intention to live in a permanent settled community in defiance of God’s command to fill the whole earth. Mankind organized together to build a structure for his own benefit and glory, not only independent of God but in defiance of His will. The phrase “*to reach heaven*” indicates that the tower had religious or spiritual overtones, perhaps a desire to show they could reach the gods. Their words may be hyperbole as in Deuteronomy 1:28 or 9:1¹³ but still are expressions of rebellion. They also possibly were seeking immortality apart from the gift of God’s eternal life. Cities and towers are not in themselves evil. Evil usage makes them evil. Eventually, God Himself will build a city, the New Jerusalem (Hebrews 11:10, Revelation 21:16).

The Babel tower and the religion associated with it would have helped unify the culture. Sadly, that very unity encouraged their independence from God. Genesis 11:3-4 clearly reveals their two-fold motivation in building the tower at Babel. They self-centeredly desired to “*make ourselves a name.*” In pride, they wanted a city to serve their own autonomous desires, not God’s righteous plan. Secondly, they desired to replace or share in God’s own glory.¹⁴ Thirdly, building a settled community and a unifying tower as a center for idolatry signified their direct rebellion against Creator God. God had clearly revealed His will and purpose for mankind in the creation mandate to both Adam (Genesis 1:28) and again to Noah (9:1). *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”* Clearly, mankind was to

¹³ Leupold, 386.

¹⁴ Mike Martin, “The World in Revolt”, *Answers Magazine*, Vol. 3, No.2, (April-June, 2008), 25.

build families and subdue and rule over the entire earth. By delegating sovereignty of the world to mankind, God showed that He wanted them to divide (scatter) under His sovereign direction. Man was to fill the earth, but those in Babel chose to build a self-centered community.

The people of Shinar chose to contemptuously rebel against their Creator. Their words “*lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth*” reveal that they understood His plan, His punishment for their own plan, and yet were willing to defy Him. They thought they did not need Him. He could do nothing to them that they could not easily fix. Arrogance and its accompanying sins had infected not only each individual but their collective thinking as a people.

The Judgment of the Lord - Genesis 11:5-9

The second part of the passage (11:5-9) begins with the Lord’s evaluation of their sins (11:5-6), includes a description of the judgment itself (11:7-8), and ends with the results of His judgment (11:9).

In verse 11:5, *And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of Man had built*. Why did the Lord come down? Was he ignorant of their actions on earth? Could He not see that far? Had they taken Him by surprise? We know that God is God, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. To think that any knowledge is beyond Him is to blaspheme His holy character. Yet throughout Scripture, we see this literary device, known as anthropomorphism. An anthropomorphism portrays God in human terms that we can visualize so that we can understand and relate to Him. Already in Genesis God is pictured as a person questioning Adam after his sin (3:9), questioning Cain about his anger and response (4:6), and observing the sin of Noah’s generation (6:5, 11-12). God is pictured as coming down to observe the sin of Sodom (18:20-21). Through an anthropomorphism, God condescends to our level, presenting a visual picture of the biblical concept of His personality. In fact, in the ultimate act of grace, eventually He did *come down* literally, became Man, and saved us from these very sins. In grace, knowing our frailties, the Lord always stoops down to us, bringing us all we need to come to Him. This verse explains the beginning of the Lord’s evaluation of the rebellion of mankind, of His coming down to help

the people of Babel. His righteousness would not allow Him to withhold justice any longer, and so He came down in grace to bring judgment and a way of deliverance.

God loved the people of Shinar just as He loves all people. In a magnanimous display of kindness and compassion, He came to these people who were trying desperately to live without Him. Ironically, their tower fell far short of reaching heaven; thus, He had to stoop far down to meet them in their time of need. They thought they were self-sufficient, needing nothing. Omniscient God knew their true condition. *You say, "I am rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked"* Revelation 3:17. God always knows our true needs and *comes down* to provide for them, either in judgment as with these unbelievers or in blessing through testing and provision. God knows our needs, whether judgment or provision, and gives us that which is best for us.

In verse 6, *The LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them."* The text again emphasizes the unity of the people through the unity of their language (11:1-2). This unity, developed through a willful abandonment of God, had the potential for greater evil that would infect the whole world, recreating the depravity of the pre-Flood generation. Always aware of the wickedness of man's heart and the extent of that wickedness, the Lord intervened, as He had with the Flood, to prevent continued worldwide corruption. *"This is what they began to do."* Their rebellion was only the beginning of their evil plans. Their potential for evil was unlimited unless God stepped in to stop it. God does, however, restrain their sin. He intervened to prevent man from falling under a single tyrannical leader.¹⁵

"Now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them." Not only were they in spiritual rebellion but they had also begun using technology to advance their evil. Science and technology had reached its highest level since before the Flood. This was not primitive man, but man reveling in his culture and education. Today we do not have enough data to understand fully the extent of the technology of that day but it appears to be very high technology. While

¹⁵ Martin, 28.

technology itself is amoral, it can be used for good or evil. Because man is sinful, he is inclined to use everything in creation, including technology, to further his rebellion against God.

Verse 11:7 continues the historical account of God's judgment of rebellious Babel (11:7-8).

"Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." With this verse, Moses moved from the Lord's evaluation of man's rebellion to His judgment of it. Note the word *Us*, reminding us of Genesis 1:26. *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image..."* Moses emphasized that this was an intra-Trinitarian communication. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit made this evaluation together. While this is not an explicit statement of the Trinity, it hints at the concept of the Trinity that would be fully developed in the New Testament.

Clearly, God saved mankind by confusing the languages, but what does that mean? Though we cannot know scientifically, since speech and language are expressions of thoughts, we can deduce that God altered their brains so that their thinking processes were expressed in different mental formats. Perhaps the minds of the rest of the unbelievers were altered such that their thoughts and speech sounds were associated with different objects and different actions. Brain function was affected so they were not able to understand one another's speech. We can reasonably assume that the original language was Hebrew or its forerunner and that the believers living at that time retained the Hebrew language.

Secular linguists believe that language evolved as man evolved, beginning with grunts or simple utterances. We know that language did not originate in man but in God Himself. God created everything *very good*; therefore, Adam and Eve were created understanding God's perfect language and using it effectively in worship of Him.

In essence, by thwarting their global communication, God disrupted their ability to use their technology for their own evil purposes. His judgment did not destroy them, their technology, or their tower but instead exposed their arrogant self-reliance as impotent and gave them the opportunity to repent and turn to Him. He came down that they might truly come up to Him in humble acceptance.

If you want to put a stone age into the historical timeline, this might be the spot. Man's inability to communicate led to a loss of his advanced technology and the beginning of a time of ignorance. Without a complete understanding of the proper construction of dwellings, they may well have gravitated to caves and other simple shelters. They could not rely on the expertise of others because they could not understand them. They would now need to expend most of their energy on simply surviving. How simple but brilliant was God's plan to save mankind from its own evil genius!

Verse 11:8 succinctly describes God's brilliant judgment. *So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.* The Lord was the One who accomplished the scattering. Though the confusing of the languages was His primary tool for that scattering, the Lord may have used other means as well. The text is unclear. But the emphasis is clear; the Lord did the scattering. In spite of their efforts to remain together united against Him, in spite of their arrogant assertion of superiority to Him, He scattered them. God accomplished His will regardless of man's rebellion. God would continue to be sovereign over world history.

Their greatest fear, expressed with such arrogance (11:3), was realized. They were no longer united. Mankind's global independence from God was broken, not to be seen again until the unifying leadership of the antichrist in the Tribulation. How simple but brilliant was God's plan to save mankind from its own evil genius!

God turned the place of unity into a place of dispersion.¹⁶ He judged mankind much as He did in the Flood but used a different means to effect equally beneficial results. It could be said that Babel was God's judgment on a one-world system, on man collectively organizing in rebellion against Him. His judgment resulted in the peoples and nations recorded in the Table of Nations.

Note that the city is the emphasis in this historical narrative. The tower is only one element of that story. Moses referred to the city five times but to the tower only twice. The city is what is

¹⁶ Ross, 247.

mentioned in verse 11:4 when the plans were laid for its building. The tower was simply the focal point. In verse 11:5 the Lord came down to observe both the city and tower. Though the Lord came down to observe both the city and tower, verse 11:8 mentions only the city being stopped, and verse 11:9 names the city as the origin of the scattering.

Moses emphasized God’s judgment through several deliberate contrasts in the two parts of the passage (11:1-4 and 11:5-9). The biblical text contrasts man’s arrogant rebellion with the Lord’s gracious judgment. Allen Ross sees a deliberate structuring of the two parts in antithetical parallelism.¹⁷ Note God’s clear contrasts when put side by side in chart form:

Man’s Rebellion (11:1-4)

- Their tower reaches into Heaven (4)
- They said, “*Come ...*” (3, 4)
- Same language (1)
- “*They said to one another*” (3)
- Human action (3-4)
- “*Lest we be scattered abroad*” (4)
- “*Let us make for ourselves a name*” (4)
- “*whole earth used same language*” (1)

God’s Judgment (11:5-9)

- The Lord came down from Heaven (5)
- God said, “*Come, let Us go down ...*” (7)
- Confused their language (7, 9)
- “*They may not understand one another*” (7)
- Divine action (8)
- “*The Lord scattered them*” (8, 9)
- “*Its name was called Babel*” (9)
- Scattered over the whole earth (9)

Though mankind refused to obey the Lord’s design and desire, the Lord accomplished His own will through the scattering. Apart from God, man fails, but Almighty God does not need man to fulfill His plan and purpose.

Genesis 11:9, the final verse describing this major historical event, explains the results of the Lord’s judgment at Babel. *Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.* For our benefit, God memorialized their rebellion. The city will forever be known by a name that characterizes the babbling their rebellion brought on them. In Scripture, especially in Genesis, names carry significance. So here the Hebrew name Babel

¹⁷ Ross, 235.

(babel) sounds much like the Hebrew verb for confuse (balal) used by Moses in verses 11:7 and 11:9. This linguistic similarity further suggests that the original language of the world was Hebrew.

Ironically, rather than gaining a great name as they desired (11:4), God gave them a name that will always be associated with judgment. They sought immortality apart from God. He gave them judgment. In an act of unimaginable grace and power, that judgment would allow them to have eternal greatness if they chose to humble themselves under His mighty hand and believe in the promised Messiah. Even at the height of their arrogant rejection of Him, He treated them with mercy by giving them a means of deliverance from their sins. Even so, their name Babel hints at derision. God always wins. He may give us time to come to Him, time that causes us to believe in our superiority, but He always wins. Holiness always triumphs over evil in the end. This judgment brings the origin of all the various languages in the world.

The second result of the Lord's judgment was the scattering of all people groups around the world, His command to them after the Flood. Instead of continuing to enjoy the same language over the *whole earth* (11:1), they were scattered throughout the *whole earth* with diverse languages, unable to communicate easily with each other, unable to easily unite again in rebellion against their Creator. Eventually, each language group united to form the various nations of the ancient world as recorded in the Table of Nations of chapter 10. One of those nations, Babylon, became the prototype of all nations, cities, and empires that exalt themselves in prideful abandonment of God.¹⁸ *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap* (Galatians 6:7). Babel illustrates that this divine Truth applies to nations, not just individuals.

In his commentary on Genesis, Allen Ross commented that God will subjugate the proud who rebel against His will.¹⁹ That was the application that God expected the original readers to draw from this passage. To find *rest* in the Promised Land, Israel had to understand that any disobedience would bring the severe consequences always incurred by rebelling individuals and

¹⁸ Ross, 248.

¹⁹ Ibid.

nations. Their pride and strength could not save them from the evil that inhabited the Promised Land. Unless they trusted omniscient, omnipotent God, unless they obeyed Him exclusively and completely, their nation would fail as surely as had Babel.

Babel is a pivotal event in both human history and the Bible. Before Babel, God dealt with mankind through His interactions with individuals who loved and, therefore, served Him. Adam, Enoch, Noah, and even Noah's three sons had special relationships with their Creator. After God separated mankind into many nations, He focused on one individual, Abraham, to produce His own nation. From Abraham to Pentecost, Israel was the center of His plan, the *apple of His eye*. (Zechariah 2:8) Because God is forever faithful, He will eventually fulfill every promise to them, just as He did to Noah and the inhabitants of Babel.

At Babel, God rejected the world system devised by man by calling Abraham out from it. He entered into a covenant with Abraham that guaranteed that his descendants would form a nation, own a particularly blessed piece of land, and be a blessing to all other nations. That nation became the focus of God's overall plan for the deliverance of the world.

The Abrahamic Covenant set the parameters for the rest of world history. Only by understanding God's permanent covenant with Abraham can we understand world history because every event relates in some way to the nation Israel. Through that one nation, God continued unfolding His redemptive plan for all mankind. Through that nation, He blessed all the nations. Because of the rebellion of the world at Babel and because of the faith of one man, Abraham, God chose to glorify Himself among the nations through His own chosen nation, Israel. From the nations, God raised up His own nation as His own possession and His own instrument for ruling the earth.

Through God's decision to scatter the people of the world and focus on one nation, all of humanity has already been blessed beyond measure. First, through the nation Israel, we have the Scriptures. Second and most profoundly, from the nation Israel came the Messiah, beginning the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham and assuring us that the rest of His promises would likewise be fulfilled (Galatians 3). Without doubt, in the future, as prophesied, all Israel will bow before their King, Jesus Christ, who will rule on the throne of David.

Babel introduced another key nation, ancient Babylon, setting up a conflict between it and God's nation Israel that will last throughout human history. In Scripture, Babylon epitomizes one-world government in opposition to God. Omniscient God set up ancient Babylon as the forerunner of the final totalitarian governmental world system (Revelation 13, 17-18) that Christ will judge at His Second Coming. Thus, Babel introduced the story line that extends until eternity between God's chosen nation and Satan's. All human history revolves around this epic struggle between two nations and between God's plan and Satan's.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF BABEL

The Sovereignty of God

A major theme of virtually every book of the Bible and especially of the Book of Genesis is God's sovereignty over all things. By sovereignty, we mean that God is the absolute ruler and ultimate authority in the universe. The Psalmist succinctly ascribed sovereignty to God. *The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all* (Psalm 103:19). As Creator, the Lord God is sovereign over Satan (Job 1-2) and all angelic creatures (1 Samuel 16:14, Acts 12:11), over the physical realm (Psalms 104, 147), over history, including every event both individually and nationally (Daniel 2:21, 4:25, 35), and certainly over each individual (Proverbs 16:9, Romans 8:28-30). Not one electron in the universe is not subject to His sovereign control.

Genesis emphasizes that God has been sovereign over man from the beginning. After mankind's Fall into sin, He sovereignly promised to redeem fallen mankind (Genesis 3), the plan for all the rest world history. His sovereign control is evident in His worldwide judgment of the Flood, an historical event of undeniable individual and collective impact. In the Babel event, He demonstrated His sovereign control of man's intelligence, ability to communicate, and plans. He is the Creator of and, therefore, the Sovereign over all nations. Because *the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations* (Psalm 22:28), He effects their rise and fall. Nothing has ever happened or ever will happen that God does not either initiate or allow; therefore, He is sovereign over all world history. Wonderfully, because He is God, His sovereign will is to provide the best for those who love (obey) Him (Romans 8:28).

The Origin of Languages

Another implication of the Babel event is that God is the sovereign Author of the languages of the world, not language singular as at the time of creation but languages plural. Predictably, secularists tend to advocate evolutionary theories for the origin of languages, all flawed and many contradictory. Secularists would see languages changing as people separated and became isolated from each other. But Linguist John Oller says that current knowledge refutes the secular explanations for the origin of languages.²⁰ Only God's Word has been preserved throughout the years and can be trusted to give an authoritative record of the origin of languages. Man did not develop them. They came as a result of God's judgment, His intervention in the affairs of mankind to prevent man's destruction of himself and all civilization.

To understand the origin of languages, we need to develop a biblical foundation, a biblical worldview for language. As followers of God and students of His Word, we should ground our thinking in every area of life, whether culture, history, science, morals, politics, everything, on a well-thought-out biblical worldview. Therefore, a biblical foundation must set the parameters for our language study. The following parameters form this foundation.

1. Before we discuss language itself, we should note that God communicates. He is not silent as the worldview of our culture assures us. The first mention of communication is in Genesis 1:3 even before the creation of mankind. "*And God said ...*" God was the first communicator; therefore, all language is derived from Him. In an especially interesting and revealing passage in the creation account (Genesis 1:26), God spoke these words. *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image ..."* To whom was God speaking? Some theologians posit that He spoke to the angels, but God created us in *His* image, not in the image of angels. Other theologians assume God was using a majestic plural as do kings and queens when they refer to themselves. Most likely, this deliberate use of *Us* hints at the triune nature of God, a divine plurality further revealed throughout Scripture. The members of the Godhead, God the Father,

²⁰ Oller, 54.

God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, communicate with each other. Charles Clough describes it as intra-Trinitarian communication.²¹

Interestingly, omnipotent God also communicates without words. Psalm 19 wonderfully declares God's unique ability to clearly communicate His glory through the heavens and in writing. He can also reveal *His invisible attributes, eternal power and divine nature* through the creation (Romans 1:20). Without doubt, God initiated communication with mankind and continues that communication, though no longer verbally since His entire communication for mankind is contained in the completed canon of Scripture, our Bible.

2. God's verbal skills are so beyond ours that He was able to speak creation into existence, beginning with *Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light* (Genesis 1:3). Note God's sovereignty. He spoke and was immediately obeyed. Language is not trivial but extremely powerful when spoken by Almighty God. Throughout the six days of creation, God spoke the universe into existence (Psalm 33). On several days, He spoke more than once. He did not create using natural means but rather by His omnipotent power, by speaking everything into being out of nothing. And all creation was perfect because sovereign God's communication was perfect.

3. So what was the ultimate origin of language? Not Adam, even though he was the first man. Man did not begin grunting and slowly refine his grunts into a vocabulary, a crude description of the evolutionary theory of language. No, all communication began with God; therefore, language began with God.

God separated elements of the creation and gave His creation names, indicating elements of language theory. Beginning on Day One when He separated the light from darkness (1:4), He set up categories of thought. He did so even before He created the human mind! God distinguished each part of His creation, giving them separate identities by naming them. He named the light and the darkness (1:5); *God called the light day, and the darkness He called night*. On Day Two, He separated the waters above from those below and named the expanse Heaven (1:7). These

²¹ Charles Clough develops the origin of language in his Biblical Framework course. Several of those ideas have been incorporated in this paper.

fundamentals of language were not formulated by linguists but were from the beginning from the mind of God Himself.

4. On Day Six, God built language into man. He gave Adam, the prototype for all human beings, a brain that could formulate ideas, physiological parts that could utter sounds and expressions, and auditory parts that could receive communication from others. Our ability to communicate using language is part of being created in the image of God, not the product of a long evolution. One of man's first functions was to use the language that God had built into him.

5. The creation account in Genesis 2 suggests that God created man with a fully functioning language. He communicated with man (2:16-17), and man responded appropriately (2:23). God gave man the responsibility of naming the animals by following the pattern He had established, a further sign of man's comprehensive language skills (2:19-20). The naming process required recognizing distinguishing characteristics and using those traits in formulating a name. Not only could man make observations, but he could also formulate complex thoughts. From the beginning, man had the ability to distinguish characteristics, form categories, and give easily identifiable names. Thus began science, specifically biology and zoology.

This naming process was a form of sovereignty. The one giving a name has sovereignty over the one named. God is sovereign over light, darkness, and time, over the heavens and earth, and over all living creatures that inhabit them. God delegated limited sovereignty to mankind as part of the creation mandate. Adam exercised that sovereignty in naming the animals.

6. As was true of all creation, language was corrupted by man's sin. Note that Satan's plan to seduce mankind began by introducing doubt about God's communication. He twisted God's words and deceived the woman. Satan showed himself to be the originator of all lies (John 8:44), a corrupted form of communication. Man failed to trust the communication of God and trusted the lies of the evil communicator instead.

After the Fall, not only was man's thinking damaged as evidenced with faulty ideas (3:8, 10), but he also used language to blame others for his own sin (3:12). The distorted and corrupted

language that began in the Garden and continues today is not neutral. Language either communicates truth or lies, the divine viewpoint or the satanic. God expects us to study the language of His Word so we can discern the difference in all other forms of communication.

7. God judged man's corrupt, distorted use of language at Babel when He confused the languages. Initially, God instituted one language (11:1), but man's desire to band together in rebellion against Him brought the judgment of varied languages and, with it, the inability to communicate freely and clearly around the world (11:9). Varied languages did not result from the evolution of various isolated cultures as the secular evolutionary worldview insists; instead isolation resulted from God's sovereign decision to confuse the languages because of man's sin. Varied languages came as a direct action of God. In the future, God may reverse that judgment and again allow us to speak a common language. He may have given us a glimpse of that change on the day of Pentecost. Ultimately, in the Millennial Kingdom, He may reverse the consequences of Babel when He reverses all the effects of sin.

This biblical foundation for language is the beginning of a biblical worldview on language. Every linguist should make the Bible the foundation of his study of the science of language.

Chronology as it Affects the Origin of Nations

Another implication of the Babel story relates to the origin of the nations. The Babel account records the first mention of nations in Scripture, an important aspect of a broader understanding of a biblical foundation for the nations.

The worldwide flood of Noah's time is significant. Mankind had a new beginning with his family; therefore, we know all cultures, nations, and ethnic groups began after Noah's family established the new world. The Babel narrative makes it clear that individualized civilizations, cultures, and nations did not originate until after that judgment. Therefore, the development of varied civilizations must fit in the short time frame between Babel and Abraham. Most secular historians, archaeologists, and even most Christian scholars have trouble believing that such advanced cultures could develop in such a short time. Only Christian scholars who adhere to a literal translation of God's Word understand the perfection of the Garden of Eden and its impact

on the rapid development of these advanced cultures. Mankind has never been more advanced in his thinking and knowledge than in the Garden of Eden. After the Fall of mankind, every subsequent generation has corrupted some aspect of that knowledge.

We must understand biblical chronology if we are to understand the development of the nations. A timeline will help us visualize the biblical history after the Flood and Babel. Since a complete chronology can be derived from the Book of Genesis, this timeline focuses on the descendants after the Flood. From this chronology, we see considerable overlap among the descendants from Noah to Abraham. The dating in Genesis 5 and 11 and the date for the beginning of the Flood in Genesis 7:11 indicate a short time frame from the Flood to the birth of Abraham, 352 years later.

By tracing the biblical chronology backwards, starting with 1Kings 6:1, a tie-in to a known historical event can be established. Most Bible scholars accept the date of 965 BC for the completion of the temple of Solomon, noted in 1Kings 6. Using that accepted date, Harold Hoehner traced events back to the Exodus and then to the Book of Genesis to derive every other date in Genesis.²² From these calculations, we deduce that the Flood occurred in 2487 BC and Abraham was born in 2135 BC, a year after the death of Noah.

Most historians have based their ancient historical chronology on the Egyptian and Sumerian king lists.²³ The old Egyptian chronology used for generations to correlate ancient history has confused many historians and Bible scholars because it contradicts the Genesis chronology. The Egyptians and Sumerians seemed to purposely stretch their histories in order to give the impression of superiority.²⁴ More recent scholarship has questioned the validity of the Egyptian chronology and the accuracy of most previously accepted dates. Beginning with the work of Russian Jew Immanuel Velikosky²⁵ in the 1940s, a revised chronology proposes an overlap of several Egyptian dynasties rather than the traditional sequential chronology. Others, including archaeologists David Down and John Aston, have advocated this revised system of dating.²⁶

²² Hoehner, "Biblical Chronology" class notes.

²³ Kurt Wise, 32.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Immanuel Velikovskiy, *Ages in Chaos*, Vol.1, (London: Abacus, 1973).

²⁶ John Ashton and David Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs: How Egyptian Archaeology Confirms the Biblical Timeline* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006).

Those who have much invested in the old chronology naturally oppose this new, more accurate chronology because it allows ancient civilizations to logically and easily fit into the biblical chronology.

Because the Bible indicates that Shem lived through most of Abraham's life, they may well have communicated, even regularly, though we have no record of it. Noah's three sons and their immediate descendants would have been viewed as almost god-like because of their long lives and their vast pre-Flood knowledge. John Pilkey wrote,

“The high longevities of Noah's immediate family combined with the gentile Pentecost of human government to make that family the most astounding aristocracy the world has known. Nothing in human experience can compare with it short of the Christian Apocalypse ... During this period, all but one of the 25 dynasties of the Sumerian King list and the first 12 dynasties of Egypt ran their course. Shem outlived most of them ... This era of the cohabitation of the earth by men who were virtual 'gods' alongside men of more obvious mortality parallels the future Millennial Kingdom when resurrected saints will coexist with mortal humanity in building the greatest civilization history has ever seen.”²⁷

All early civilizations, cultures and nations descended from Noah's three sons. From them, the extensive technology and experience of the pre-Flood culture would have been passed on to the emerging civilizations.

On this timeline some major events can be plotted. The Ice Age commenced after the Flood.²⁸ This event is significant because it influenced the scattering and settling after Babel. Though this event puzzles secular historians, an existing Flood model of creation science scientifically explains it.

The first culture with considerable archeological evidence is the Sumerian Empire, which occupied the lower Tigris-Euphrates River valley in present day Iraq, the location of Babel. If all nations and cultures came as a result of Babel and if the calculated biblical chronology is correct, the Sumerian Empire began after Babel. The Egyptian civilization emerged at about the same

²⁷ John Pilkey, *Origin of the Nations* - *Kingship at its Source* (San Diego, CA: Master Book Publishers, 1984).

²⁸ Michael J. Oard, *An Ice Age Caused by The Genesis Flood* (El Cajon, CA: Institute for Creation Research, 1990).

time. Indeed, according to Pilkey, the first twenty-five dynasties of the Sumerians and the first twelve dynasties of the Egyptians emerged early, between Babel and Abraham.²⁹

These few examples of the most important early civilizations illustrate that the short biblical time frame is reasonable. Even though most archaeologists and historians accept the traditional Egyptian chronology, evidence supports the rapid development of early civilizations within this short time frame. I will discuss some of the evidence of early advanced technology in these and other early cultures below.

The Origin of Nations - Acts 17:24-28

Why are there nations? Where did they come from? Where do they fit into God's sovereign plan? Much as we did for languages, we can now develop a foundation for the nations using a biblical worldview and the biblical chronology. This foundation will set the parameters for our understanding of the biblical concept of the nations. Predictably, secularists base their theories about the origin of nations on an evolutionary framework. However, nations did not occur because man evolved but because God intervened at Babel. The Babel rebellion introduced a new era into world history, the history of the nations. The Babel narrative is an authoritative record of the origin of the nations.

1. The nations are rooted in God's purpose, not in man's evolution. Because Genesis 1 sets the foundation for all things, we will begin there. God's purpose as found in the creation (dominion) mandate (Genesis 1:28) was for mankind to build families (*be fruitful*) and manage the earth (*subdue and rule* it). God intended man's dominion to grow in size and scope from families to tribes and eventually to nations. He desired that nations exercise limited sovereignty over different geographical areas as mankind spread over the face of the earth. Sin damaged the nations' ability to fulfill all God intended. God is omniscient and omnipotent, however, and uses flawed nations just as He does flawed individuals to fulfill His plan. Babel shows that nations are not simply the result of families growing into tribes and ethnic groups, and then evolving into nations and that the purpose of nations is not to simply serve mankind but to fulfill God's ultimate plan. Sovereign God always brings His plans and purposes to fruition.

²⁹ Pilkey.

2. The nations resulted from God's judgment, not from man's creative mind. Had mankind obeyed the creation mandate, the nations would have come about in another way. The Apostle Paul explained that all nations were *made*, created, from one man *to live on all the face of the earth* (Acts 17:24). That one man probably refers to Adam, but all men are also descended from Noah. Mankind's common origin in Adam and Noah unites him; his rebellion against God at Babel divided him into nations.

3. The nations are under God's sovereignty. God not only created the nations but also orchestrates their entire history. Even though God has granted limited sovereignty to nations and governments (Romans 13:1-4), He remains the ultimate Sovereign of all creation. The nations are not autonomous. They do not exist independently. No nation can do anything outside of God's permissive will. All nations rise and expand or decline and fall as God determines. Paul continued in Acts 17:26 *"... having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation."* The text makes clear that God determines the *times* of the nations, their histories. The odd quirks of world history confirm God's sovereign control of the nations. He determines which leaders live and which die, which plans succeed and which fail. Certainly, holy God is not the Author of their evil, but He uses even their evil for His ultimate purposes. The text specifies that God determines the *boundaries of their habitation*, even their geographical extent.

4. Not only is God sovereign over nations, but He accomplishes His purposes through them. Paul added that purpose in Acts 17:27, *"that they would seek God."* God works through nations to create environments in which everyone has the opportunity to seek Him, to come to know Christ as Savior. Nations permit circumstances that God can use to reveal Himself through man's conscience and through the creation (Romans 1:19-20, Psalm 19). Might this not be God's main purpose for creating nations? (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

5. God blesses and curses nations based on their relationship with the nation Israel. The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:3) determined and still determines the extent and longevity of each nation. History records the rise and fall of nations depending on their treatment of Israel.

Because Israel was the focus of world history from Babel to Messiah's first advent, all nations were blessed when Israel was faithful to God. When Abraham defeated the armies of Chedorlaomer, the kingdom of the king of Sodom was restored (Genesis 14:16-24). When Joseph led Egypt according to God's plan, not only the Egyptian Empire but also the entire world benefitted (Genesis 38-50). When God revealed His law to Moses, that law blessed all who obeyed it (Exodus 20). During the reigns of David and Solomon, Israel subdued and ruled much of the earth, in some measure fulfilling God's intent for a nation. They illustrated to all other nations the blessings they would receive if they worshipped God. Sadly, Israel soon moved into idolatry, precipitating its decline. Because Israel's leaders abandoned God and His wise instruction, the nation eventually collapsed.

6. God used the nations to discipline His own nation, Israel, when they moved into idolatry and violated the Mosaic Covenant. Beginning with Jacob's sons before they were even a nation, the family's sins placed them on the verge of collapse. The early chapters of Exodus relate God's use of Egypt to discipline them in preparation for the formation of the nation. After the ten Northern Tribes of Israel fell into rampant idolatry, God raised up Assyria to take them into captivity, clearly as discipline. Babylon took the Southern Kingdom of Judah into captivity, completing the destruction of the entire idolatrous nation in 586 BC. Based on biblical eschatology, this destruction is not final. Today, God is re-gathering the nation in their ancestral land, probably in preparation for Israel's ultimate salvation and kingdom.

Gentile nations have been dominating world history since the destruction of Israel in the Old Testament. After the Babylonian Empire conquered Israel, the Medo-Persians conquered the Babylonians, then the Greek Empire conquered the Medo-Persians, and then the Roman Empire dominated them. Today, during the time Jesus described as "*the times of the Gentiles*" (Luke 21:24), God continues to use Gentile nations to achieve His purposes. The Bible speaks of a future empire, probably a revived Roman Empire, that God will use in the last days to discipline His people Israel for the last time. God is preparing the nations to bring final discipline, the great tribulation, upon Israel in order to bring His chosen people to national salvation.

7. Though God has set Israel aside temporarily during the Church Age, He continues to bless the nations. Instead of blessing them through Israel directly, God blesses them through Israel's Messiah. He continues to desire that all men have the opportunity to seek Him (Acts 17:27). We are to take the gospel message of salvation through Israel's Messiah to all the nations (Matthew 28:19-20). Individuals in the nations now have the evangelistic responsibility that God originally gave His nation Israel.

8. The nations have a significant place in God's design for history, including future history. Scripture informs us that while believers from the nations (Matthew 25:31-46) will enter the Millennial Kingdom, believing Israel (Matthew 25:1-30) will be the predominate nation in that kingdom. At the end of the 1,000-year kingdom, the unbelievers from all nations will revolt and be judged (Revelation 20:7-9), ending world history.

9. The nations will also be represented in the eternal state through individual believers, who will be glorified in Him and fulfill their ultimate purpose. Revelation 21:24-26 suggests that we may retain something of our ethnic identities in eternity. *The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.* ²⁵ *In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;* ²⁶ *and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.* So the nations have a significant place in God's design for history, including the future history.

From this brief overview of the nations in God's plan, we can conclude that Babel is very important. It is at Babel and the Table of Nations where the nations have their origin. There is another implication relating to the nations that can be drawn from the Babel account. It is a negative implication that involves the world system.

The Beginning of the World System - Revelation 17-18

An ominous implication from the Babel narrative relates to both history and eschatology. In Scripture, Babylon, the evil spawn of Babel, epitomizes one-world government in opposition to God. Because of their antipathy to God and His plan, Babylon and the nations that have inhabited that area have been the primary enemies of God's nation, Israel.

Babel was Satan's first attempt to institute a one-world government in opposition to God. The people at Babel were the first to collectively rebel against God when they organized under one powerful political leader, possibly Nimrod (Genesis 10:8), to deliberately disobey God's clear commands to Noah (Genesis 9:1). They organized economically by gathering their resources to build a monstrous tower to house their one-world religion. That tower was probably a religious temple.

Throughout history, nations have attempted to establish a one-world totalitarian system. Daniel predicted four such one-world empires, beginning with Babylon, that would dominate much of the times of the Gentiles (Daniel 2 and 7).

In the end during the Tribulation, Babylon will be the final totalitarian world system to attempt to annihilate all Israelites (Revelation 13, 17-18). Only at the Second Coming of Messiah and the establishment of His final kingdom will the evil Babylonian world system receive final judgment. The King of kings and Lord of lords Jesus Christ Himself will completely and eternally annihilate the land, its evil system of anti-God thinking, and its wicked followers. God will have used their evil to advance His gracious plan for all mankind and so their reign of terror will finally come to its end—at the right time and exactly as God prophesied.

In Revelation 17-18, under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, the Apostle John predicted the destruction of *mystery Babylon*. We might describe this as the destruction of Babylonianism. This imagery is drawn from the long and evil history of ancient Babylon with its roots in Babel itself. Revelation describes *mystery Babylon* as the final one-world empire, a totalitarian worldwide system. This empire will combine political, economic, and religious one-worldism under one evil and powerful dictator, the antichrist.

Babylonianism will be defeated at the end of the Great Tribulation when Messiah returns to establish the ultimate and final kingdom, a one-world empire led by the sinless and righteous King of kings. While the focus of Babel and all its one-world clones has been self-worship, the focus of the Millennial Kingdom will be the worship of the one true God.

The Apologetic Value of Babel

The biblical worldview is in clear conflict with the worldview of our culture. Most of the early events recorded in Genesis are considered mythical by our culture, which believes in an evolutionary explanation for everything. The biblical worldview holds that the events recorded in Genesis are just as much a part of the historical record as any recent events.

A major assumption of the evolutionary worldview, that ancient history spans long ages, directly conflicts with the biblical time frame. Their world history and interpretation of archaeological data omits much existing evidence that fails to support their conclusions. Even though the evolutionary idea of a slow development of cultures, civilizations, and nations dominates the interpretation of the archaeological data, much archaeological evidence suggests a rapid development over a relatively short time. Most modern scholarship either overlooks or ignores all data that supports the biblical worldview.

The biblical worldview shows mankind from the beginning with high intelligence, high capability, and high technology. Much of this was retained after the Flood. Even though the confusion of languages at Babel disrupted technology, man was able to recover to an extent and develop rather quickly. This suggests that all early history fits within the short time frame presented in Genesis. The following data also indicates a close relationship between all early cultures, a view radically different from the evolutionary one.

THE EVIDENCE OF EARLY ADVANCED CULTURE

Since Babel is an historical event, evidence should show that mankind carried common technology and culture from one original source to locations all over the world. Indeed, evidence confirms that mankind came not just from one family but also from one culture. Technology spread from Noah's family to Babel and subsequently was carried worldwide when God scattered mankind in judgment. Don Landis wrote, "Ancient cultures all over the world show links of intelligence in areas of architecture, religion, mathematical abilities and astronomical

understanding.”³⁰ Charles Hapgood wrote, “There are curious connections and comparisons that can be made between the ancient sciences of Greece, Egypt, Babylonia, and China.”³¹

The Pre-Flood Artifacts

The evidence for the Genesis Flood in the geological record is highly debated. By far the majority of geologists support an evolutionary interpretation of the geological column. They believe that each of the sixteen geological layers down to the Cambrian layer was formed over millions of years. Most deny that the column indicates any evidence of a worldwide flood. Recently, however, Flood geology has begun gaining credibility. Flood geology proposes that the Genesis Flood laid down every layer of the geological column down to the Cambrian layer, over days, not over millions of years. This Flood theory has far more evidence to support it than the traditional evolutionary interpretation of the column.

If Flood geology is correct, the Genesis Flood laid down all worldwide coal layers and oil deposits since they are above the Cambrian layer. Therefore, the Flood buried any artifacts found in any layer above the Pre-Cambrian layer. These artifacts, though few in number, show the advanced level of pre-Flood technology.

Though most pre-Flood archaeological artifacts were destroyed by the turbulence of the catastrophic Flood, a few artifacts have been found in coal layers. For example, a brass bell composed of an alloy of copper, zinc, tin, arsenic, iodine, and selenium and with an iron clapper was found in a coal layer in West Virginia.³² A symmetrical cast iron cup with two spouts was found at a coal mine at Wilburton, Oklahoma. A hammer with a head of 96% iron was also found in an Ordovician formation near London, Texas.³³ A metal bar with teeth, that seemed to be built to mesh with the teeth of a wheeled gear was found in a coal seam in the

³⁰ Don Landis, *The Genius of Ancient Man: Evolution's Nightmare*, (Green Forest, AR: Master Book Publishers, 2012), 20.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

³² “Odd Things in Wrong Places”, http://www.6000years.org/frame.php?page=stuff_in_coal.

³³ “London Hammer”, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Hammer.

Chernogorodskiy mines from the Khakasis region north of Mongolia.³⁴ It showed every evidence of human manufacture.

These pre-Flood artifacts are difficult to explain using evolutionary assumptions. How can manmade items be found in strata that was laid down millions of years before they claim man evolved? On the other hand, the Flood geology theory perfectly explains the layers of strata and the artifacts found in them.

Post-Babel Sophisticated Architecture

Remains of 4,000-year-old sophisticated architectural structures can be seen all over the world. Even using the modern engineering technology, their design and construction are difficult to fathom. Ancient cultures had to have used highly advanced technologies.

Archaeologists have uncovered several pyramid-like structures called ziggurats in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, showing that tower building was a common practice after Babel. Was one of those the Babel tower? A tower uncovered at Etemenanki near the Babylon was built soon after Babel and probably dedicated to the Babylonian god Marduk.³⁵ Its base is 90 meters by 90 meters so archeologists estimate its height to have been just over 90 meters,³⁶ another indication of the technological advancement of the people at the time of Babel.

Archeologists have excavated a ziggurat in Ur, Abraham's birthplace as well as in ancient Sumer. Ziggurats also remain in Iraq and Iran, pagodas, in Japan, and thousands of mounds, in the US. Obviously, neither the idea of tower building nor the advanced technology necessary to build them were eradicated with the scattering of people. Instead these technologies were carried with them.

³⁴ Brian Thomas, "Possible Human Artifact Found in Coal", <http://www.icr.org/article/possible-human-artifact-found-coal/>.

³⁵ Ross, 238. Loupold, 392.

³⁶ Ross, 238

Some of the most impressive Babel-like structures are the pyramids in Egypt. One pyramid was built for Pharaoh Zoser, ca. 2667 to 2648 BC, possibly in the time of Terah, Abraham's father.³⁷ Therefore, advanced technology remained even years after the Babel event. Even the Stepped Pyramid at Saqqara, which evolutionary thinking considers an early attempt at pyramid building, is sophisticated. It contains intricate internal passageways, a burial shaft, a tomb chamber, and additional chambers. The total length of its internal tunnels is estimated to be about 3.5 miles. The pyramid, which measures 410' by 354' at the base and 203' in height, is composed of cut stones rather than mud bricks. Rather than being an evolutionary predecessor to the more famous pyramids, the Stepped Pyramid was possibly patterned after the ziggurats in ancient Mesopotamia, which reflect back to the tower at Babel.

The three Great Pyramids of Giza were probably built in the fourth Egyptian dynasty in about 2100 BC, less than 300 years after Babel. The Great Pyramid of Khufu, the most impressive of all, measures 751' at the base and 479' in height. An estimated 3 million blocks were used in its construction.³⁸ The 50,000 blocks at the base are cubical, measuring 3.28' and weighing an average of 2.5 tons, with the largest stones weighing 15 tons. The flatness of the base indicates an advanced understanding of survey technology.

Pyramids existed not only in Egypt but all over the world, evidence that these technologies came from the same source, the tower at Babel. Over 1,000 pyramids have been found in Mexico alone. The third largest pyramid in the world is thirty miles north of Mexico City, Mexico, in Teotihuacán. This Pyramid of the Sun has a smaller Pyramid of the Moon, both of which are aligned with the astronomical positions of stars and planets. At Teotihuacán, Mexico, archaeologists have uncovered highly sophisticated pyramids that date from the pre-Aztec and pre-Toltec period of about AD 100.³⁹

A Mayan pyramid in the Yucatan at Chichen Itza dates from AD 600-900. Over a thousand pyramids have been found in Guatemala. Other ancient pyramids have been excavated in Italy, Sudan, Greece, and even in China. The similar tower-building technology was apparently carried

³⁷ Ashton and Down, 15-16.

³⁸ Ibid. 39.

³⁹ "Teotihuacan", <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teotihuacan>.

to different locations as the peoples were scattered. Even though these pyramids are not as ancient as those in Sumer or Egypt, they serve to show that tower building and its technology persisted long after Babel.

Obelisks (stele), another impressive structure, have been found in Egypt, Peru, Sudan, Italy, India, France, Poland, Brazil, Assyria, Turkey, and even Israel.⁴⁰ The most famous are the obelisks found in Egypt, about 29 found in all. The obelisk built by Hatshepsut in Egypt at the Karnak Temple is especially impressive. Obelisks show not only advanced cutting technologies but also an ability to transport, raise, and place long, slender stones in stable positions that have remained for thousands of years.

These are examples of the most impressive structures but there are also other structures that show sophisticated technology. For example, stonehenges in Britain, Egypt, Brazil, Sweden, Netherlands, Armenia, Israel, and the United States exhibit similar architectural prowess⁴¹ as do megalithic underwater structures off the coastlines of Lebanon, Greece, Japan, India, and the Yucatan.⁴² Evidently, different peoples carried the architectural techniques used at Babel as they scattered around the world.

Ancient Astronomical Knowledge

Ancient cultures around the world also shared sophisticated astronomical knowledge. Many of the structures discussed above were built to align with constellations, individual stars, and/or the summer or winter solstice. Don Landis wrote that these peoples “used the stars practically, for time-keeping and travel, as well as religiously, aligning their monuments and buildings to different heavenly phenomena and constellations.”⁴³

One of the best-known structures with clear astronomical alignment is Stonehenge, near Salisbury, England. Not only is the alignment of interest but also so also are the huge stones, 30’ tall and weighing about 25 tons each. These massive stones were not cut on site but moved great

⁴⁰ Landis, 64-66.

⁴¹ Ibid, 65.

⁴² Ibid, 71.

⁴³ Ibid, 48.

distances in some unknown way. Obviously, ancient cultures had the mathematical and engineering skills needed to produce structures that aligned perfectly and lasted for thousands of years.

In the Yucatan at Chichen Itza, an ancient Mayan observatory called El Characol contains small openings that align with Venus at different points in its orbit.⁴⁴ In Chankillo, Peru, another calendar-related structure has thirteen large pillars through which the rising sun shines so that each month of the year is identified precisely.⁴⁵ Obviously, ancient cultures had sophisticated astronomical knowledge and the ability to build structures that aligned with heavenly bodies.

Ancient High Technology Instruments

Ancient artifacts showing advanced technology have also been discovered. The Antikythera Mechanism, assumed to be a computing device, was found on a second century BC Roman merchant ship in an archeological underwater site off the Greek island of Antikythera. Its thirty bronze gears, corroded over the ages,⁴⁶ could predict the movements of the sun, moon, planets, and twelve signs of the zodiac.⁴⁷

Long before the Vikings, ancient cultures sailing the oceans were able to calculate their location on the planet.⁴⁸ The ancient Egyptians carved and polished rock crystals into lenses, both convex and concave. Knife handles in Peru have writing on them so tiny that they can be seen only through a magnifying glass. What advanced technology did they use to produce such small writing, and how did they read the writing?

The Chinese invented movable type in AD 1045, writing paper and seismograph in AD 132, and the first mechanical clock in AD 725.⁴⁹ Even though these dates are not ancient, they are

⁴⁴ “El Caracol -The Observatory of Chichen Itza”, <http://www.atlasobscura.com/places/el-caracol-chichen-itza-mexico>.

⁴⁵ “Chankillo: A 2300-Year-Old Solar Observatory in Peru”, <http://www.ancientpages.com/2015/09/02/chankillo-a-2300-year-old-solar-observatory-in-peru/>.

⁴⁶ “Antikythera mechanism”, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antikythera_mechanism.

⁴⁷ Landis, 49.

⁴⁸ Donald E. Chittick, *The Puzzle of Ancient Man* (Newberg, OR: Creation Compass, 2006), 81.

⁴⁹ Landis, 47.

consistent with the theological view that ancient man was not primitive as in the evolutionary model but highly intelligent and able to produce sophisticated technology.

Most of the massive structures discussed above, lead us to wonder how those structures were built. What mechanical devices did they have? Did they use levers, gears, wheels, pulleys, and/or other mechanical devices? There had to be technology to not only cut the stones, but to transport them and, then place them in the pyramids for example. Archaeologists do not have answers to these questions but admit there must have been sophisticated technology.

Ancient High Technology Knowledge

Not only have ancient technological instruments been uncovered but also evidence of advanced knowledge. Some of this evidence comes from the same locations discussed above.

Arthur Custance wrote the following about the first known civilization by archaeology, “What is now fairly clearly established is that civilization, the arts and trades, and organized city life, with the division of labour, social stratification, a leisure class, written records, and so forth, began, in so far as the Middle East is concerned, with these Sumerians.”

Custance then described some of their technology,

“The Sumerians knew what percentages of metals to use to achieve the best alloys, casting a bronze with 9 to 10C% of tin exactly as we find best today; their pottery was often paper-thin, tastefully shaped and decorated, and with a ring like true china evidently having been fired in controlled-atmosphere ovens at quite high temperatures. Their methods of production led very early to a measure of automation including powered agricultural equipment that was in the strictest sense ‘mechanical’; the control of quality production was early established by systems of inspection; their factories were highly organized, and price and wage controls were established by law. They developed loan and banking companies with outlandish interest rates, yet still legally controlled; their record keeping and postal systems were evidently efficient, mail even being carried in envelopes.”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Arthur Custance, *Noah's Three Sons*, Part V, Chapter 3, p. 1-2, http://www.custance.org/Library/Volume1/Part_IV/Chapter3.html

Returning to ancient Egypt, there is evidence of some technology that puzzles archaeologists and Egyptologists today. Many reliefs carved on structures in ancient Egypt contain pigments that have remained bright for thousands of years. In Luxor, Egypt, on the walls of the Temple of Hatshepsut, one of the few female pharaohs, bright red, white, blue, and yellow were used to represent the gods Isis, Horus-Ra, and Amun-Ra. Many of the ceilings have brightly colored skies with stars. None of these colors were artificially enhanced. Even today, we do not have the technology to produce paints that will last hundreds of years, much less 3,000 years. Egyptians also used advanced chemistry technologies to produce cosmetics. They produced mummies that have been preserved for thousands of years. Their mummification process remains a mystery even today.

Even modern archaeologists and engineers do not know how the great ancient structures were actually constructed. The Great Pyramid at Giza, Egypt, built by Pharaoh Khufu (2589-2566 BC) during his lifetime, contains approximately three million stones, ranging in weight from 2.5 to 15 tons. With reasonable assumptions, a simple calculation can determine the production rate required to accomplish the task. Assuming workers labored 72 hours per week and took forty years to build the pyramid, they would have needed to place an average of twenty immense blocks every hour. First, those blocks had to be cut from a quarry upstream of the Nile River, transported by boat down the Nile, unloaded, transported to the pyramid site, and then the placed with precision. The handling of 2.5-ton blocks so many times is not an easy task. And that does not include site preparation or construction of the outer casing stones.⁵¹ That is an unimaginable production rate even using modern technology. The base of the pyramid occupies 13 acres and is precisely level within a tolerance of 7/8 inch. That precision cannot be accomplished today without sophisticated survey instruments, an additional indication of the advanced technology of the pre- and post-Babel world.

Another technology we still do not understand is the production and placement of the stones for these massive structures. Great precision can be seen at the remains of outer casing surfaces of pyramids that formed a very smooth external surface. The Bent Pyramid, seventeen miles south of Cairo, Egypt, has stones so precisely cut and placed that even a sheet of paper cannot be

⁵¹ The second pyramid at Giza, also built by Khafre, has the remains of white limestone casing stones at the top.

squeezed between the stones. Such precision could not have been achieved using a primitive method such as chipping with hammers and chisels.

Other examples of sophisticated stone cutting are found all over the world. In Bolivia, near the border with Peru, Puma Punku, an ancient temple complex, is part of a larger archaeological site known as Tiahuanacu and dates from before the Inca civilization, possibly as early as the first century AD.⁵² The megalithic stones there, some measuring 26' long, were precisely cut and polished to exact tolerances. The stones' surfaces have no visible variations or gaps. Each block is unique in size and shape, including H-shaped blocks. They were not only individually cut, but various designs and holes were cut and drilled into each of the blocks. The blocks were cut from quarries, possibly as far as sixty miles from the site, and a large door-like single stone, called the Gate of the Sun, weighing over 100 tons, was aligned astronomically. All indicate advanced technologies.

Sacsayhuaman, near Cuzco, Peru, also has cut stones so precisely that even a piece of paper cannot be slid between the blocks. These stones are very different in that they are irregular in size and shape. One stone is estimated to weigh 300 tons. The walls that surround the huge stones date from about AD 900. Their purpose is unknown. Even today, archaeologists and engineers are puzzled by the technology needed to build these structures.⁵³

A more familiar site for megalithic stones is Easter Island. Though these figures are well known and often studied, their advanced construction methods remain poorly understood.

What mechanical devices did these ancient cultures design to be able to build such immense and complex structures? Did they use levers, gears, wheels, pulleys, and/or other mechanical devices known now, or did they use more ingenious ones? What technology did they employ to cut the stones, transport them, and put them into place? Though modern evolutionary science has no answers, they admit that ancient technology must have been sophisticated. Because we know that

⁵² The Mystery of Puma Punku's Precise Stonework, <http://www.amusingplanet.com/2015/05/the-mystery-of-puma-punkus-precise.html>

⁵³ Chittick, 194-195.

Scripture presents only historically accurate facts, we know that these advanced technologies originated in Babel and were spread around the world when God scattered the people.

Another ancient site in Peru illustrates other technologies. An area on the coast of Peru, sixteen miles S.W. of the village of Nasca and twelve miles S.E. of Palpa, is famous for its miles of lines in sand that form large geometric drawings called pictographs. These designs depict dogs, monkeys, birds, spiders, hummingbirds, fish, sharks, orcas, jaguars, lizards, and humans that are not recognizable from the ground but are clearly revealed from the air or nearby mountains. Some of the pictographs are huge, including a hummingbird that is 175' by 310'. Several lines are so long, over five miles, that they had to be constructed over hills, indicating the use of survey technology as well as trigonometry and other advanced mathematic calculations. The designs are aligned with astronomical bodies, indicating they understood astronomy.

The purpose or significance of these pictographs is unknown. A large Peruvian-German research collaboration directed by Isla and Markus Reindel of the German Archaeological Institute believes that the designs were produced around 200 BC and used for religious ceremonies. Reindel says, "Our idea is that they weren't meant as images to be seen anymore, but stages to be walked upon, to be used for religious ceremonies."⁵⁴ Others have proposed that the designs were constructed for the gods to look upon from above.⁵⁵ Whichever, these ancient people were not primitive as postulated by evolutionists but used many technologies that we do not fully understand even today.

These examples serve to demonstrate that ancient man was not primitive but had technology that even today, we still do not fully understand.

Ancient World Maps

Archeologists have also uncovered evidence that ancient people had sophisticated knowledge of geography, navigation, surveying, and cartography. Existing old maps appear to have been based on much older originals. Though Scripture does not give details of the travel of the people from

⁵⁴ Nasca Lines, *National Geographic Magazine*, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2010/03/nasca/hall-text>

⁵⁵ Nasca culture, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nasca_culture

Babel, extra-biblical evidence shows that mankind explored the world. Researcher Rene Noorbergen, who has studied early cultures after the Flood, wrote,

It is very apparent from the generation list of the sons of Noah that the post-Flood peoples spread rapidly across the surface of the earth. ... It also becomes obvious that in order for the Genesis 10 genealogy list to be composed, there must have been an advanced degree of communication among all these people. Someone living during the colonizing of these distant lands had the ability to correspond with all the descendants over a relatively long period of time ... otherwise the composition of such a detailed listing as the 'Table of Nations' would have been impossible. This communication between remote regions presupposes an early knowledge of geography. In fact, there is ample evidence that not long after the Deluge, the descendants of Noah carried out an extensive survey of the entire globe, mapping and charting every continent.⁵⁶

Charles Hapgood analyzed two world maps available to medieval navigators, the *oronteus finaeus* map (AD 1532) and the Piri Reis map (AD 1513). The existing portion of the Piri Reis map shows the Antarctic shoreline before being covered by the icecap generated by the catastrophic events of the Flood, confirming that an ancient source was the basis for this map. His research suggests that early cultures had worldwide travel and commerce.

The evidence presented by the ancient maps appears to suggest that in remote times, before the rise of any of the known cultures, of a true civilization, of a comparatively advanced sort, which either was localized in one area but had worldwide commerce, or was, in a real sense, a worldwide culture. ... In astronomy, nautical science, mapmaking and possibly ship-building, it was perhaps more advanced than any state of culture before the 18th century of the Christian Era ... Mapping on such a scale ... suggests both economic motivations and economic resources. Organized government is indicated. The mapping of a continent like Antarctica implies much organization, many exploring expeditions, many stages in the compilation of local observations and local maps into a general map, all under a central direction.⁵⁷

These maps show that ancient cartographers had extensive knowledge of geography, navigation, surveying technology, and spherical trigonometry.

⁵⁶ Rene Noorbergen, *Secrets of the Lost Races*, Norcom Publishing, Collegedale, TN, 1992, p. 94, quoted by Donald E. Chittick in *The Puzzle of Ancient Man - Evidence for Advanced Technology in Past Civilizations*, (Newberg, OR: Creation Compass, 2006), 56-57.

⁵⁷ Cited by Charles Clough in his Biblical Framework I course, Charles Hapgood, *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings: Evidence of Advanced Civilization in the Ice Age*, 1966.

Post-Babel Worldwide Commonality

As we have seen, ziggurats, pyramids, and similar complex structures were built all over the world. They are similar not only architecturally but also in their alignment with heavenly bodies; therefore, we can reasonably assume that the many technologies needed to build large pyramid-like structures were carried by people who came from the same place, Babel, and settled in different locations all over the world.

Other commonalities also exist. Cultures around the world, including in Babylon, Sumer, Egypt, Greece, Phoenicia, and Cambodia, have their own stories about Creation. Every story, including the most famous creation story, the Babylonian version, *Enuma Elish*, has enough similarities with the Genesis Creation account to indicate a common origin. Jonathan Gray commented, “According to the evidence, at first they (ancients) all generally believed in one Creator who had made mankind. They also believed they had rebelled against him and were guilty of breaking his laws.”⁵⁸ Again, we can reasonably assume that all cultures were aware of the creation event and carried that memory with them as they settled in different locations across the globe.

At least 150 stories of a worldwide flood have been found, including in Sumer, Babylonia, Persia, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Russia, the East, North and South America, and many Pacific islands. The most famous account is the *Gilgamesh Epic*. Again, these stories have enough similarities with the Genesis Flood to prove a clear relationship and to suggest that the real historical universal Flood left an impression on all who saw its consequences.

Though Babel is not mentioned in as many cultures as the Creation and Flood, ancient Greece, Burma, Congo, Mexico, and India have stories about the scattering and/or about Babel as the origin of language.⁵⁹

There are also many examples, a few discussed above, of other technologies that exist all over the ancient world. There is a shared astronomical knowledge, engineering technology, and other scientific knowledge. Andrew Tomas made this insightful comment, “History shows that the

⁵⁸ In Landis p. 75

⁵⁹ Ibid, 77

priests of India, Sumer, Babylon, and Egypt as well as their confreres on the other side of the Atlantic—in Mexico and Peru—were custodians of science.”⁶⁰

THE CONCLUSION

What can we conclude from all this data?

- Babel was a real historical event with immeasurable historical significance. It was one of the most important events of world history.
- Babel has anthropological significance because it gives us an authoritative record of the origin of all nations and all languages.
- Babel has scientific significance because it shows that evolution lacks evidence. No culture was primitive in the early generations of mankind as evolution posits. Instead, archeology shows that man had sophisticated scientific knowledge before and immediately after the Flood. Later, primitive cultures resulted from degeneration, from man’s sinful depravity.
- Babel has technological significance. The scientific knowledge available at Babel produced cultures with advanced technological capabilities, which resulted in the rapid development of great cultures and civilizations around the world. Ancient technology was so advanced that even today we cannot ascertain many of the architectural and production techniques they used.
- Babel has theological significance. At Babel, God showed that He is sovereign over all He created, including all history. When archaeology is interpreted accurately from a biblical worldview, God’s sovereign control throughout history is obvious. He has a plan for history that cannot be thwarted by man’s rebellion against Him.

Biblical history, not evolution or secular history, is the foundation for all history. Only when we begin with biblical events and build our historical deductions from them can we accurately interpret historical events, scientific data, and cultural truths. Babel is one historical event that allows us to interpret history accurately.

⁶⁰ Andrew Tomas, *We Are Not the First*, (Souvenir Press Ltd., 1971), 124, cited in Landis, 47.