

# Who's Building?

## **Genesis 11:1-9**

My head and heart have been drawn to the Tower of Babel recently. The passage describes the spectacular efforts and achievements of humans. We are told of human technology: brick making and bricklaying. And how our early ancestors used these bricks to settle the people into a city. We are also told of the first human advertisement campaign: "Come, let us build it and they will come." The "it" was a tower that would reach to the heavens—an ancient "sky-scraper" that would inspire people to dwell in that city.

God was impressed. He noted that there was nothing these humans couldn't do if they cooperated with one another. Now, there is some murkiness as far as Bible interpretation goes. The passage says that God confused their language, which resulted in their scattering. Some will tell you that this is an explanation for why we have different languages and cultures and so on. Others will say that it is about God feeling threatened by human solidarity and ingenuity.

None of that debate interests me (there's futility in it). Here is what piqued my head and heart: humans dreamed, schemed, and were in the process of achieving something great...and in a very short amount of time it was abandoned and came to nothing. Human technology and human effort seem so impressive (even to God) but all of that structure is a ready-to-crumble-to-nothing event in the blink of an eye.

A year ago (it seems longer than that) we could reflect on the state of our situation and take some pride. The American economy was incredible. Most people were looking forward to graduation, careers, weddings, vacations, etc. And in the blink of eye things have changed.

The concept I want us to get is this: whether it the American government, world economy, school, jobs, vacations, politics, medicine, ambitions, and so many other things...they are all human technology and human effort. Do we understand that? And these things can be so impressive and we can puff our chest up about our success. But, as we have seen, these proud, achievement towers are so weak and vulnerable (and I believe this is just a taste of how far we could fall).

There is a companion verse that the Holy Spirit has placed alongside this Babel Tower one. It is Psalm 127:1-2. Basically, if the Lord isn't the originator and builder, then whatever it is...is doomed. The message is simple and very, very profound.

Congregations, Christian families, and Believers must truly awaken to this reality. You do know the Church is susceptible too, right? I'll be honest: I see a lot of human effort in congregations, Christian families, and the lives of Believers. I see it in my life and I see it in the lives of those around me. And what becomes of all that "bricklaying"? It leads to the same thing we found in the Genesis story: confusion and scattering—waste.

# *Archdale Friends Meeting*

November 20th, 2020

The way forward begins with two questions. The first is, “What are we(humans) trying to build?” The second is, “What is God trying to build?” I think many are unwilling to honestly answer the first (most people are building things for themselves). I think many are terrified of entering into the second. Both are costly to the people following after God (don’t forget the “taking up the Cross” and “denying one’s self” demands of Jesus).

As the Gaither chorus goes, “kings and kingdoms will all pass away.” Our kings and kingdoms may be impressive, but they (and their economies, corporations, politics, intellect, institutions, traditions, and all the rest of human effort) are so rickety and easily torn asunder.

But the Kingdom of God will not end. Praise God! And the Church that Jesus established will not be overcome. Amen! I want to be a disciple who works alongside the Master in completing His plans and projects. I do not want to be someone who promotes a different plan, asking God to bless it, and laboring for nothing... only to create a monument to human unfaithfulness—waste.

Who’s building are you laboring and constructing? What does your heart of hearts say?

Prayer:

Lord, give me eyes to see the works of humanity for what it is. Keep me from the false charms and promises of these man-made structures and systems. Bring me to a place where I am seeking, seeing, and participating in Your ways and activities. Amen.

*Chad Riggs*