

NIMROD AND THE TOWER OF BABEL

GENESIS 10, 11

By Mike Burnham

In Genesis 10 and 11 we have the historical links which connect for us the time of Noah with the days of Abraham. They tell us why, how and where of the different nations and languages, and the cause which led up to god abandoning his dealings with the nations and singling out Abram to be the father of his chosen people Israel.

We are going to look at verses eight to twelve of chapter ten and verses one to nine of chapter eleven (which is a commentary of verses eight to twelve of chapter 10.)

Many of the characters brought before us in the Old Testament are types of one of two men--the Christ or the antichrist. One of those who foreshadowed the antichrist was Nimrod, Gen. 10:8. His name describes one of the basic characteristics of the one whom he typifies. "Nimrod" means "the rebel". Four times the word "mighty" is used to describe Nimrod, (three here and once in 1 Chron. 1:10), which reminds us of the one "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" 2 Thess. 2:9.

From v-6 we learn that Nimrod was a descendant of Ham, through Cush; in other words, he sprang from that branch of Noah's family on which rested the "curse", Gen. 9:25. As far as I know the descendants of Ham have always been in subjection to the descendants of Japheth and Shem except for a brief period when Babylon and Egypt were great powers but were reduced to subjection by the Persians who descended from Shem, and later by the Greeks and the Romans who were the children of Japheth.

Nimrod began to be mighty in the earth. He strived for pre-eminence, to be a leader and ruler over men. Was this in rebellion to the curse? Some believe so. He and his descendants were not going to be in servitude to anyone, they would rule instead, even against God and his purposes for mankind.

V-9 he was a hunter, its thought, in the sense that he preyed upon men, persuading them to obey his will and maybe killing them that refused, and thereby shedding innocent blood in the face of God. The Targum, on 1 Chron. 1:10 says; "Nimrod began to be a mighty man in sin, a murderer of innocent men, and a rebel before the Lord." Others believe that wild beasts were a real source of danger at the time and that Nimrod acquired a hero's reputation and became a proverb.

V-10 here is the key to the first nine verse of chapter eleven. In the language of that time Babel meant "the gate of God" but afterwards, because of the judgments which God inflicted there, it came to mean "confusion," and from here onwards this is its meaning. It's believed that here in Babel was where idolatrous worship was introduced. From here on in scripture Babylon stands for that which is in opposition to God and his people. It was a "Babylonish garment which led to the first sin in the promised land (Jos. 7:21) and it's mystery Babylon which is that religious system of the last days that has over the centuries opposed God and his people. We see the beginning of that system in Gen. 11:1-9 where man wanted to build a world empire where man was worshiped instead of God. It's the same system we see today in the new age movement and false religions, man trying to make himself a name, casting God out of his thoughts, his life and becoming fools. It's the same system the antichrist will use to get people to follow and worship him.

Gen. 11:1-4...another crisis had arrived in the history of the world. Once again, the human race was guilty of the sin of apostasy. In Nimrod and his schemes we see Satan's initial attempt to raise up a universal ruler of men. As the population grew opportunity arose for either of two courses of action: 1) systematic colonization and development of all parts of the earth, each with its own local government, in accordance with God's command (Gen. 9:1,6); or 2) establishment of a strongly centralized society which, with controls over resources and occupations, would soon be able to produce a self-sufficient civilization capable of controlling the entire world. Of course to Nimrod and his invisible conspirator, Satan, a self-sufficient society, under a powerful and brilliant leader, would be a society no longer dependent on God. And this was no doubt Nimrod's aim. "Go to" probably signifies the pronouncement of the decision. They used furnace-treated bricks instead of stone and the "slime" was probably a tarry material from the asphalt pits in the Tigris-

Euphrates valley. Archaeology has revealed that this type of brick and asphalt construction was common in ancient Babylon.