

Genesis 11:4

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/gen/gen-11/genesis-114/>

The people wanted to build a city and a tower in order to make a name for themselves. They did not want to be scattered over the whole earth, as God had commanded.

This was an organized rebellion against God. They built a city in order not to be dispersed over the face of the whole earth. Mankind was being defiant. They built a tower *whose top will reach into heaven* in order to make a name for themselves. We call buildings that “reach into heaven” “skyscrapers.” This is the same idea, the building would be very tall. (The initial buildings called “skyscrapers” were considerably shorter than the Tower of Babel.)

The people had two goals, *to build for ourselves a city*, and to build a *tower whose top will reach into heaven*. It appears the tower is an essential part of the object of building a city and a tower, namely to *make for ourselves a name*. They desired to be famous over the earth. Their specific objective is to avoid being *scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth*. This is in direct disobedience to God’s command in [Genesis 9:1](#). This plan to create a unity of purpose that is in direct defiance of God’s command represents human arrogance and wickedness. Babel and Babylon are used as an illustration of organized human defiance throughout the Bible. Even in Revelation, Babylon is called the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth ([Rev 17:5](#)) and likely represents the human activities organized in defiance of God in the last days.

Current historical and archeological evidence shows the Tower of Babel was most likely located at Eridu in Mesopotamia.

The tower was probably built in the form of a multistoried Ziggurat (raised area) similar to a pyramid or an ancient temple.

Ziggurats were regarded by worshipers as sacred mountains by which gods descended to earth. The symbolic sacred mountain played an important role in most pagan religions in ancient times. Both ziggurats and natural mountains were considered in the ancient Near East to be dwelling places of gods. They were believed to be the place where heaven met earth and where gods met humanity. The ziggurat was viewed as the center of the cosmos. The ziggurat

at Babylon was known as the e-temen-an-ki, “The House of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth” by Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar. The ziggurat was thought to be the physical means by which man and god might enter into direct contact with one another. In General, the Bible regards tall towers as symbols of human arrogance (i.e. [Isaiah 2:12-15](#), [30:25](#); [Ezekiel 26:4,9](#)).

The massive brick ziggurat became a pattern for temples and possibly the pyramids in Egypt. In 400 B.C., the Greek historian Herodotus visited and saw the Tower of Babel. He recorded it was almost 300 feet tall (Herodotus i.181). There have not been other archeological discoveries that match Herodotus’ descriptions. There was not a building this tall built in the US until the twentieth century, when the Flatiron building in New York topped 300 feet.

Their stated goal to *build a city and a tower* for the purpose of making *a name* for themselves. They had a clear objective, and began to achieve it.

Biblical Text:

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.”