

Genesis 10,11...Nimrod and his spiritual legacy

Matthew Henry on Nimrod...

Nimrod is here represented as a great man in his day: He began to be a mighty one in the earth Whereas those that went before him were content to stand upon the same level with their neighbours, and though every man bore rule in his own house yet no man pretended any further, Nimrod's aspiring mind could not rest here; ***He was resolved to tower above his neighbours, not only to be eminent among them, but to lord it over them.***

The same spirit that actuated the giants before the flood (who became mighty men, and men of renown, Genesis 6:4), now revived in him, so soon was that tremendous judgment which the pride and tyranny of those mighty men brought upon the world forgotten. There are some in whom ambition and obsession with dominion seem to be bred in the bone; such there have been and will be, notwithstanding the wrath of God often revealed from heaven against them.

I. ***Nimrod was a great hunter...Nimrod was a mighty hunter “against the Lord”, so the LXX treats this passage; that is,***

1. **He set up idolatry, as Jeroboam did, for the confirming of his usurped dominion.** That he might set up a new government, he set up a new religion upon the ruin of the primitive constitution of both. Babel was the mother of harlots.

2. **He carried on his oppression and violence in defiance of God himself, daring Heaven with his impieties, as if he and his huntsmen could out-brave the Almighty, and were a match for the Lord of hosts and all his armies.** As if it were a small thing to weary men, he thinks to weary my God also, Isa 7 13.

II. ***Nimrod was a great ruler:*** The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, v. 10. Some way or other, by arts or arms, he got into power, either being chosen to it or forcing his way to it; and so laid the foundations of a monarchy....

III. ***Nimrod was a great builder.*** Probably he was architect in the building of Babel, and there he began his kingdom; but, when his project to rule all the sons of Noah was baffled by the confusion of tongues, out of that land he went forth into Assyria (so the margin reads it, v. 11) and built Nineveh, etc., that, having built these cities, he might command them and rule over them.

Observe, in Nimrod, the nature of ambition.

1. **It is boundless.** Much would have more, and still cries...Give, give!
2. **It is restless.** Nimrod, when he had four cities under his command, could not be content till he had four more.
3. **It is expansive.** The spirit of building is the common effect of a spirit of pride.
4. **It is daring, and will stick at nothing.** Nimrod's name signifies rebellion, which teaches us that tyrants to men are rebels to God, and their rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

Richard Phillips comments...

“The most significant feature of the line of Ham occurs in four verses that highlight the famed career of Nimrod, a descendant of Cush: “Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man” (Gen. 10:8). The word for “mighty” (Hebrew, gibbor) may have a positive or negative connotation. Since “Nimrod” means “rebel,” there is little doubt that in this case “mighty” has the connotation of “despot.” Thus, when verse 9 describes the man as “a mighty hunter before the LORD,” the idea is that he wickedly hunted and conquered men. Like Cain before him, Nimrod was a builder of cities, which chapter 11 will associate with man-centered idolatry. He was the first great conqueror–civilization builder, whose prideful exploits were flaunted in the face of God.

Nimrod is representative of the Hamitic line because of his warlike ferocity and self-exalting pride. His name became a symbol for the Cushite tendency “to rise up against, and to attempt to overthrow, all existing order.”⁸ Genesis 10:9 says, “Therefore it is said, ‘Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.’” ***The first city that he conquered became the biblical rival for the city of God:*** “The beginning of his kingdom was Babel,” together with “Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar” (Gen. 10:10).

Not content with that achievement, Nimrod conquered the nearby area of Assyria, building the warlike and evil city of Nineveh, “the great city” (v. 12), together with the surrounding outposts of “Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah” (vv. 11–12).

Babylon and Nineveh would particularly feature in the holy warfare of the Hamitic peoples against God’s covenant people, Israel. They represent the city of man pitted against the city of God...

Both Assyria (Nineveh) and Babylon would conquer the tribes of Israel, carrying God's people off into exile, and they would both be destroyed by God in retribution. Babylon provides the Bible's primary symbol for secular pride and debauchery raised up in defiance of God.

This entire world system will finally be cast down forever when Jesus returns...God's people are not to imbibe of the spirit of pride and pleasure exemplified by worldly Babylon.

Richard Phillips. "Genesis."

Precepts Austin on Nimrod...

<https://www.preceptaustin.org/revelation-topics-babylon>

The earliest mention of Babylon and the region it occupies, the land of Shinar, is found not long after the global flood: Cush begot Nimrod...He began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD."

And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Caleh and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city). (Gen. 10:8-12 cf. 1Chr. 1:10)

It was Nimrod who established a kingdom at Babel. In fact, this is the first mention of the concept of kingdom in Scripture. In a very real sense, Nimrod was the first king. And in order to be a king, one needs to have subjects and a realm. This implies centralization in a way which ran counter to God's command following the flood: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 9:1, 7 cf. Gen. 1:22, 28). Reading between the lines, we can already see the seeds of rebellion...

Although Scripture is not overtly negative concerning Nimrod, his involvement establishing the first kingdom and initiating a building project which resulted in a severe judgment from God (the introduction of languages) clearly indicates his sinful ambitions.

Babylon has from its inception symbolized evil and rebellion against God. It was founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:9), a proud, powerful, God-rejecting ruler. Babel (Babylon) was the site of the first organized system of idolatrous false religion (Gen. 11:1-4).

The Tower of Babel, the expression of that false religion, was a ziggurat; an edifice designed to facilitate idolatrous worship. God judged the people's idolatry and rebellion by confusing their language and scattering them over the globe (Gen. 11:5-9).

Thus the seeds of idolatry and false religion spread around the world from Babylon, to take root wherever these proud rebels and their descendants settled.

There is also abundant tradition concerning the rebellion of Nimrod.

Josephus records...

‘Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah,— a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God as if it was through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny,—seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence upon his power. He also said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach! and that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers!’ Source...Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

According to the Sages, Nimrod was the primary force behind this rebellion. The Jewish Midrashim explain his sinister motive. He planned to build a tower ascending to Heaven and, from it, wage war against God.

The Targum of Jonathan says, “From the foundation of the world none was ever found like Nimrod, powerful in hunting, and in rebellions against the Lord.”

The Jerusalem Targum says, “He is powerful in hunting and in wickedness before the Lord, for he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them, ‘Depart from the judgment of the Lord, and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod!’ Therefore as it is said, ‘As Nimrod is the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the Lord.’ ” The Chaldee paraphrase of I Chronicles 1:10 says, “Cush begat Nimrod, who began to prevail in wickedness, for he shed innocent blood, and rebelled against Jehovah.”

In the founding of Babel was the foundation for what would later flower as Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar and figure so highly in the events of Scripture, especially the book of Daniel which we have seen is key to understanding much of the book of Revelation.

Another negative connotation concerning Babel may be seen in Isaiah concerning the king of Babylon:

Take up this proverb against the king of Babylon . . . How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms?' (Isa. 14:4, 12-16)

The connection between Satan (here Lucifer) and Babylon is seen in this proverb which begins with the human king in view, but soon goes far beyond what could be said of the human king to identify the spiritual power motivating the king (cf. Eze. 28:12). Since Satan has been active in the affairs of the world since the creation of mankind, it is no surprise to find his influence in the realm of corrupt kings and kingdoms extending far back in history. Portions of the proverb, "Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms", appear to speak of the ultimate king of Babylon at the time of the end, the Antichrist:

Isaiah thus makes the Babylonian monarch speak according to the ideas of his people . . . and at the same time reflects the satanic spirit of self-deification to appear in fullest development in the last king of Babylon, the Antichrist (Rev. 13:8f)

Source...Precept Austin

**J Hampton Keathley III on Nimrod and Babylon...and their
Spiritual Legacy (Excerpts)**

Babylon's Biblical Beginnings

Babylon comes from the Hebrew Bab-el...In Hebrew Bab-el means "confusion."

- ***Genesis 10-11***

Babylon is first found in Genesis 10 in the table of nations. Here Moses traces the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

We have here the Japhethites, those least connected with Israel, then he traces the Hammites, those responsible for a great deal of sin and trouble in the world, and then the line of Shem, those who became Israelites.

Moses traces the descendants of Ham, those responsible for a great deal of trouble for Israel throughout her history...

Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord" ***And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar (Gen. 10:8-10).***

Babel is the first reference to Babylon and its beginnings. Nimrod is recorded as the founder of Babel, later called Babylon (Gen. 10:10; 11:2-3, 5, 9). Nimrod's nature and character are seen in both his name and in his actions as described in Genesis 10:8-10 and in his origin in Babylon.

His name means "Let us revolt or rebel." It didn't have this meaning to the Babylonians, but this is the biblical meaning by context and by the form of the word.

In Genesis 10:8 he is called "a mighty one," and in 10:9 "a mighty hunter before (against) Yahweh." Genesis 10:10 gives us the result. A kingdom is formed as a result of his tyranny or the exercise of absolute force (10:9-10). God's ideal of a king is a shepherd who leads his people under God and in God's plan. Nimrod was against God and His plan and formed his own kingdom by force.

This kingdom originally consisted of Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar, southern Babylon above the Persian Gulf and along the Euphrates River.

He was the son of Cush, the son of Ham (Gen. 10:6, 8)...a Hamite upon which no blessing was pronounced in contrast to Shem and Japheth, the other two sons of Noah. This shows us that God recognized in the Hamites a greater proneness toward godlessness and rebellion...

Nimrod was a rebel from beginning to end. As the first king of Babylon, he had within him the nature and character that would exist in the Gentile nations throughout history and especially in the final form in the Tribulation—tyranny and apostasy.

Genesis 11:3-4 records the out-and-out rebellion of the people of Shinar against the plan of God, undoubtedly under the leadership of Nimrod (cf. 10:10). Their rebellion is seen in their attempt at building a city and tower that would reach to heaven, i.e., high in the sky. The purpose of this was to make a name in defiance against God’s plan of nationalism (11:4f). Under God’s direct orders, man was to scatter and replenish which meant the establishment of nations divided by geographical boundaries and family ties or races (9:1)...

Ancient history reveals that it was common practice to build huge mounds or towers called ziggurats made of sun dried brick. One such ziggurat was discovered at Erech, a place in Nimrod’s kingdom going back to about 3,000 B.C. These were sacred temple towers dedicated to heathen deities often in connection with astrology, the zodiac, and the mother-child cult. “Ziggurat” means “pinnacle, mountain top.”

It seems quite clear then, that this tower stood for rebellion against God, rejection of Him, His plan of salvation in the coming Redeemer (Gen. 3:15), and a rebellion against nationalism. It was the first attempt at world unity apart from dependence upon God. Here was an attempt at a man-made world unity by means of force...

God judged this act with the confusion of tongues which automatically created nationalism by the linguistic differences. So where nationalism was to be perpetuated by obedience to God’s command (Gen. 9:1), by geography through scattering, and by differences in races or families, now linguistic differences were added to force nationalism on the heathen world to enforce God’s original plan (Gen. 11:8).

Because of God’s judgment, the descendants of Noah stopped building the city (11:8) and its name was called Babel, a short form for Balbel from Balal “to confuse.” Babel really means confusion...

This became the central city of Babylonia even beyond the time of Alexander the Great. The Apostle Peter may have written from here (1 Pet. 5:13). However, its greatest glory was during the time of Nebuchadnezzar 600 years before Christ.

Cyrus the Mede captured the city from the Chaldeans, Alexander the Great in turn captured it from Medo-Persia, and both made it their capitol. From this you can see its importance to the Gentile world powers and how it stands in opposition to Jerusalem and the purposes of God.

Important to the study of Babylon and its origin is the origin of its religion and idolatry which spread from Babylon to surrounding nations and beyond. This will be discussed below.

- ***Genesis 14***

After we are introduced to Babylon in Genesis 10 and 11, Babylon disappears briefly from Scripture, but appears again in Genesis 14. Here is one of those accounts we have generally missed, but it is a very important account in the overall teaching of the Bible about Babylon and it becomes the beginning of what can be considered as “The Tale of Two Cities.”

Sodom and Gomorra were attacked and defeated by a confederation of kings and taken captive. This included Lot, the nephew of Abraham. Two things are particularly significant here:

First, Sodom and Gomorra were located in the land of Canaan or Palestine probably at a spot that is now under the southern end of the Dead Sea. But where is this? It is a part of the land God had promised to Abraham in the Abrahamic covenant which had its beginnings in Genesis 12:1, recorded for us, significantly so, right after the account of the tower of Babel.

Second, in the beginning of the chapter the kings are described for us. ***Dr. Charles Dyer points out that historically, the leader of these kings that came in against the land, a land that God had promised to Abraham, was a man by the name of Chedorlaomer, king of Elam. But note who Moses lists first. Amraphel king of Shinar which is the land Babylon. The NIV has a notation in the margin regarding the name “Shinar,” “that is Babylonia.”***

It seems that by mentioning this king first, we see who Moses viewed as the real leader of this confederacy. Here is God’s perspective on this invasion.

What's interesting after Abram defeats these kings is what happened when coming back into the land. He stopped at a place called Salem which later came to be known as Jerusalem. There Abram received a blessing from Melchizedek, King of Salem. Melchizedek means "king of righteousness" and in the Bible, he is a type of Christ (Heb. 7:1f). So, beginning in Genesis 14, we see in seed form what Dr. Charles Dyer called, "The Tale of Two Cities."

Historically, we can summarize Babylon's early history in Genesis with the following:

First, we have the rise of the city of the ungodly, Shinar or Babylon which had its beginnings not only in rebellion against God, but in an attempt to be like God.

Second, we see this city intruding on the land which God had promised to Abraham through whom the Messiah would come.

And third, suddenly brought into this narrative is the city of Salem, later to become Jerusalem, with a king who is a type of Christ, whose name means king of righteousness, and who meets Abraham and gives him a blessing.

Fourth, right after this, we have God Himself appearing to Abraham to reinforce His covenant with Abraham with specific boundaries given in connection with the land of promise and victory over the inhabitants of the land (cf. 15:1, 18-21).

- ***Isaiah 36-37***

Babylon then disappears from the book of Genesis and the next place we find her mentioned in an historic way is in Isaiah 36-37. Here Hezekiah King of Judah is faced with invasion and is threatened by Sennacherib King of Assyria.

In this passage we find Hezekiah reading the terms of surrender from Sennacherib, but Hezekiah turned the matter over to the Lord and was delivered.

However, in chapters 38-39 we have a lapse of faith by Hezekiah. Because of this, Isaiah the prophet predicted that all he had stored would be taken to Babylon where some of the King's sons would become officials of the palace of the King of Babylon. This was a prophecy of the Babylonian captivity which took place about 100 years later.

Hezekiah's descendants represented the Davidic kingdom and the line of Messiah. Their city, Jerusalem, was the place of the temple with the Shekinah glory. This represented the presence of God and was the place of God's worship. All of this represented God's reign and kingdom on earth. What does this mean?

(1) Through the Babylonian captivity, Nebuchadnezzar invaded the land, destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple, and deported Judah's king.

(2) This was a product of God's judgment against Israel for her continued disobedience as He had predicted through the prophets, but nevertheless, the first kingdom that man had started, Babylon, literally attacked and destroyed the kingdom of God on earth. From this point in history, there has not been a king from the line of David sitting on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

In a sense, though temporary, this is the triumph of mankind over God's kingdom. The book of Daniel pictures this in the statue with King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon as the head of gold. This statue as described for us in Daniel 2 represents what our Lord referred to as "the times of the Gentiles" spoken of earlier.

So historically we see three things about Babylon:

(1) It begins as the place of man's rebellion through tyranny and a united world effort which God judged by the confusion of languages.

(2) It's also the instrument that seeks to take away the land promised by God to His people, the Israelites,

(3) and it is the kingdom that destroys or at least disrupts God's kingdom here on earth and starts the times of the Gentiles, the time of Gentile domination.

The Origin of Babylon's Religion

Ancient records indicate that Nimrod had a wife named Semiramis who was the founder and first high priestess of the Babylonian mystery religion. She gave birth to a son named Tammuz, whom she claimed was conceived miraculously. This son was considered savior of his people and in effect was the first false Messiah—a counterfeit of Genesis 3:15 and God's promise of a Savior. The son was to have been killed by a wild beast, but brought back to life.

The religious system of Semiramis had many secret rites in the worship of its idols. These were called mysteries (secrets) into which new members had to be initiated. When the initiates were initiated they were given a cup containing a mysterious drink made of wine, honey, water and flour. This represented the doctrines of the cult, but these also made the participant intoxicated and prepared for what the participant was about to see, hear and do. These rites involved consecrated male and female prostitution and the most sordid sexual immorality carried out in connection with its idolatrous worship. The fornication is both physical and spiritual (Rev. 17:2-5).

The rites incorporated the worship of the mother (who was called “the queen of heaven”) and the child. While the rites varied, and the idol images often varied from country to country as the cult spread from one location to another, they all contained one central feature, the worship of the goddess mother and her child. Often the names changed, but no matter where you went, pictures and images of a mother with a child in her arms were found. (See the study on Rev. 14.)

The religious system which began in Babel (or Babylon), became the mother, the source of all pagan religions of the world. This is the reason she is called “Mother of Harlots” (Rev. 17:5). This system spread to Greece, Egypt, Italy, Phoenicia, Israel, India, Asia Minor and Europe. ***Canaan was full of this iniquity and is one of the reasons God commanded Israel to destroy its inhabitants. Their failure to do so led to Israel’s own downfall and involvement with the Babylonian system.***

Babylonianism Today

But what about the present? Now we come to information which will link the past with the present and help us to identify Babylonianism today. This will also help us to identify the religious city of 17:18 which, because of its Babylonianism, is symbolically called Babylon.

Linked with the central mystery of Babylon—the worship of the mother and child—were many other lesser mysteries which will have many familiar sounds. These include:

The Doctrine of Purgatory

The doctrine of purgatorial purification after death was seen first in pagan Babylonianism. It involved the same extortion and theft of the poor to get the dead cleansed and into a higher state. Prayers and supplications were offered by the priest but only after great fees were collected.

The Doctrine of Extreme Unction

In the pagan Babylonian system the dying were anointed for their last journey. This was done in the name of Bee?l-samen, “lord of heaven” and “lord of oil,” the anointed one.²⁰⁵ In James 5 anointing, by contrast, is to be done medicinally, with a view to health, not death.

The Doctrine of Festivals of Ancient Babylonianism

- *Yule Day*

Yule means “infant,” thus, the day of birth. In Egypt the son of Isis, the Egyptian title for the queen of heaven, was to have been born at the end of December. Long before they were introduced to Christianity, Anglo Saxons celebrated a “Yule Day” and this was preceded by “A Mother’s Night.” The Sabaeans of Arabia likewise celebrated a birth festival on the 24th of December. This was the birth of their moon god, “Lord Moon” which in the East was called “Meni” (Isa. 65:11). A special tree and a yule log were both involved with this festival. The yule log represented Nimrod, the dead stock of Nimrod, cut down by his enemies, and the tree represented Nimrod come to life.

- *March 25*

Long before the birth of Christ pagan Rome honored Cybele, the mother of the Babylonian Messiah, with a special day, March 25th, nine months before December 25th. Today in Rome this is called “the Annunciation of Mary.”

- *Easter*

Easter was another name for Astarte or Istar, which were other names for the queen of heaven. This festival in ancient Babylonianism was a 40-day weeping period for Tammuz just prior to the festival of Astarte (or Istar or Easter), who was said to have received her son back from the dead; for it was taught that he was slain by a wild beast (boar). To him the egg was sacred, depicting the mystery of resurrection.

Fifteen hundred years before Christ the hot cross buns of Good Friday were used in the worship of the queen of heaven, the goddess of Easter. They were even called “the boun,” i.e., “bun” (Jer. 7:18). They were first offered, then later eaten.

The egg can be traced back to the fable of the mystic egg of the Babylonians. “An egg of wondrous size” is said to have fallen from heaven into the River Euphrates. The fishes rolled it to the bank where the doves having settled upon it, hatched it.

Out came Venus who afterwards was called the Assyrian goddess or Astarte, the queen of heaven. So the egg first was a symbol of Astarte or Easter, the queen of heaven. Thus you can see the background for lent, the 40-day period prior to Easter, and the Easter festival. Some simply adopted the egg and applied it to the resurrection of Christ. In the very early church there was the celebration of the Passover on Friday before the resurrection, but it was not called Easter.

- *The Nativity of John the Baptist*

One of the grand and original festivals of Tammuz, the child of Semiramis, was observed in June. In fact, June was called by his name in some places. Other periods had been devoted to the commemoration of the death and reviving of the Babylonian god for various reasons in different countries, but the month of Tammuz appears to have been the primitive date of this festival. As a result, this date and festival still had a firm hold on the people in various parts of the Roman world, so the papacy came up with a solution. John the Baptist was born six months before Christ, which according to their festival for Christ's birth was December 25, so June would be John's birth month. One of their many sacred names for Tammuz was Oannes. This was just perfect because in Latin, the sacred language of the church, John was Joannes. Thus, this festival was continued and suited both Christians and pagans alike.

- *The Feast of Assumption*

This is the teaching that Mary saw no corruption, but was in body and soul carried up to heaven and is now invested with all power of heaven and earth. This too, goes back to Babylonian mystery.

The Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration

This doctrine of Rome did not come out of mistaken use of Scriptures such as Acts 2:38, but from Babylon itself. The baptism was by immersion and was a part of the initiation rites of Babylonianism. It was a rather rough process along with the other parts of the initiation and if one survived, then he was admitted to the knowledge of the mysteries. It took real courage to submit to these rites. The motivation, please note, was regeneration and pardon of all sins! Babylonianism spread all over the world and it touched all nations. Thus, as you would expect, baptismal regeneration was even found in Mexico before Roman Catholic missionaries ever arrived, as well as in India and among our Anglo ancestors.

Source...<https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18>