

TEACHER BACKGROUND & PREPARATION SHEET For Teacher Study Only – Not Read Aloud

LESSON IDENTIFICATION

Week #: 7 Date: February 15, 2026 Lesson Title: The Tower of Babel: God's Authority & Plan Primary Scripture Passage(s): Genesis 11:1–9 Bible Timeline Placement: After the Flood (Genesis 6–9), before God calls Abram (Genesis 12)

PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON

Children will learn that God is the loving authority over all people and nations, that human pride leads people away from God, and that God's plans cannot be stopped. This lesson prepares the way for God's promise to Abram and helps children understand why the world has many languages and nations. The lesson points forward to Jesus, who unites people from every nation.

BOOK & PASSAGE BACKGROUND

Book Name: Genesis Traditional Author: Moses Approximate Date Written: Around 1400 BC Original Audience: The people of Israel Purpose of the Book: To show God as Creator, Judge, and Covenant-Keeper, and to explain the beginnings of the world, sin, nations, and God's plan of redemption.

HISTORICAL & CULTURAL CONTEXT

After the Flood, God commanded humanity to spread out and fill the earth (Genesis 9:1). Instead, people chose to remain unified in one location and build a city with a tower. Scripture specifically notes that they used baked bricks and bitumen (tar) for mortar: "They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar" (Genesis 11:3).

This detail is theologically important. In the ancient Near East, bitumen was a man-made binding substance associated with Mesopotamian construction, especially ziggurats. Unlike stone set by God's creation, baked bricks and bitumen represent human technology, self-sufficiency, and permanence achieved apart from God.

Dr. Michael Heiser notes that this construction choice highlights humanity's intentional rebellion. The people were not merely building; they were engineering stability, unity, and security without dependence on God. Bitumen, unlike natural mortar, resists water—an ironic detail after the Flood—symbolizing humanity's desire to prevent divine judgment and secure themselves against God's authority.

The use of bitumen reinforces the spiritual meaning of Babel: humanity trusting human ingenuity and religious systems rather than God's Word. This was a declaration of independence from God's rule, not a neutral building project.

IMMEDIATE BIBLICAL CONTEXT

What happens before this passage: God rescues Noah's family, judges sin through the Flood, and makes a covenant promising never again to destroy the earth with a flood (Genesis 8–9).

What happens after this passage: God calls Abram and begins His covenant plan to bless all nations through one family (Genesis 12:1–3).

Why this moment matters in God's plan: Genesis 11 explains why the world has many languages and nations and shows humanity's need for God's rescue and guidance.

KEY THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS — APPLIED TO THIS WEEK'S LESSON

CORE TRUTH #1: What this lesson teaches about God God alone rules heaven and earth. Heiser emphasizes that God's response at Babel shows His authority over both human nations and the spiritual realm. God is not threatened, but He actively governs human rebellion with wisdom and restraint (Genesis 11:5–8).

CORE TRUTH #2: What this lesson teaches about people Human rebellion often disguises itself as unity and progress. The people of Babel sought control, security, and spiritual independence apart from God. Scripture shows this desire leads to separation rather than blessing (Genesis 11:6–9).

CORE TRUTH #3: What this lesson teaches about salvation

Genesis 11 shows that when humanity persists in rebellion, God may allow separation as an act of judgment—but never as abandonment of His redemptive plan. Dr. Michael Heiser explains that the Tower of Babel is closely connected to Deuteronomy 32:8–9, which teaches that God divided humanity into nations and “gave them over” to other spiritual rulers after Babel. This does not mean God stopped caring for humanity; rather, it means He allowed rebellious humanity to experience the consequences of rejecting His direct rule.

This moment is sometimes described as God “disinheriting” or “divorcing Himself from the nations,” language drawn from covenant imagery used throughout Scripture (see Hosea 1–2). God removed His immediate covenant relationship with the nations—not because He was powerless, but because they persistently rejected Him. Scripture says, “When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of God” (Deuteronomy 32:8).

The “sons of God” refers to members of God's divine council—a biblical term describing created spiritual beings who serve under God's authority (Job 1:6; Psalm 82). God alone is eternal, all-powerful, and worthy of worship. These beings are not equal to God, but part of His created order. Some later rebelled, contributing to corruption among the nations (Psalm 82:1–7).

Immediately after Babel, God begins a rescue plan. In Genesis 12:1–3, He calls Abram and promises that through him “all peoples on earth will be blessed.” This shows that God's response to Babel was not the end of the story, but the beginning of redemption. Through Israel—and ultimately through Jesus—God sets out to reclaim the nations that were divided at Babel.

Jesus fulfills this plan by defeating the powers of sin and spiritual rebellion through His death and resurrection (Colossians 2:15). In Christ, people from every nation are welcomed back into God's family (Ephesians 2:12–19; Galatians 3:26–29). What was divided at Babel begins to be healed through Jesus.

CORE TRUTH #4: Trusting God's Word

Trusting God's Word Genesis 11 is not myth but theology grounded in history. God's Word consistently explains why the world is the way it is and reveals His long-term plan to redeem humanity through Christ.

CORE TRUTH #5: God as Trinity God acts in unity and authority, consistent with His Triune nature. Though Genesis 11 does not fully reveal the Trinity, God's divine counsel and action align with the fuller revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the New Testament (Matthew 28:19).

RELIABILITY OF SCRIPTURE

Genesis is supported by its internal consistency, historical coherence, and unified message. The table of nations in Genesis 10 aligns with known ancient people groups. Linguistic diversity is observable worldwide, consistent with Genesis 11.

APOLOGETICS FOUNDATION

This account explains the origin of languages and nations. It fits the biblical timeline and explains why cultures are distinct. Scripture teaches that God actively governs history, not by myth but by real events (Acts 17:26).

ANTICIPATED CHILD QUESTIONS

Question: Was God being mean by confusing the languages? Answer: No. God was protecting people from greater harm and helping them obey His command to fill the earth (Genesis 9:1; 11:7).

Question: Is it wrong to build tall buildings today? Answer: No. The problem was pride, not building. God cares about our hearts (1 Samuel 16:7).

COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Children may think God dislikes teamwork. Clarify that God loves cooperation when it honors Him, but not when it replaces Him.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Dr. Heiser highlights that Babel represents humanity's alignment against God, which results in dispersion and spiritual separation. The gospel reverses Babel. At Pentecost, God uses many languages to proclaim one Savior (Acts 2). Through Jesus, God begins reclaiming the nations scattered at Babel, fulfilling His promise to bless all nations through Abraham (Genesis 12:3).

TEACHER HEART PREPARATION

Prayer Focus: Ask God for humility and clarity as you teach. Encouragement: God is still building His kingdom, and He invites children to trust Him instead of themselves.