

Genesis 11

Read Genesis 11:1-4:

The First Language

Genesis 1-10 took 1,656 years (creation to the flood). Genesis 11 covers approximately 2,000 years of time. This may be the biggest *leapfrog* chapter, covering the most years of any chapter in the bible. What was the world's first language, that everyone spoke before the Tower of Babel? Scientists are aware of more than 7,100 languages in use today. Nearly 40 percent of them are considered endangered, meaning they have a declining number of speakers and are at risk of dying out. Some languages are spoken by fewer than 1,000 people, while more than half of the world's population uses one of just 23 tongues.

We are told that Moses composed and re-wrote the first five books of the Bible. Genesis had to be a copy or a re-write, because it pre-dates Moses. Genesis was originally drafted and handed down in sections of scrolls (called generations), long before Moses complied these generational scrolls all together into the book that we call Genesis. Some of these scrolls would have to go all the way back to Adam. They had to be originally written in that first language. Did the Genesis-source scrolls merely get re-drafted into Hebrew, or just copied from Hebrew because Moses could understand it? Below are the lists of these handed down Genesis-source recordings:

The Generations of Genesis

Primeval History (1:1-11:26)			
Introduction	General heading	Specific heading	Section introduced
2:4	These are the generations of	the heavens and the earth	2:4-4:26
5:1	These are the generations of	Adam	5:1-6:8
6:9	These are the generations of	Noah	6:9-9:29
10:1	These are the generations of	the sons of Noah	10:1-11:9
11:10	These are the generations of	Shem	11:10-26
Patriarchal History (11:27-50:26)			
11:27	These are the generations of	Terah	11:27-25:11
25:12	These are the generations of	Ishmael	25:12-18
25:19	These are the generations of	Isaac	25:19-35:29
36:1, 9	These are the generations of	Esau	36:1-37:1

37:2	These are the generations of	Jacob	37:2-50:26
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Hebrew is a logical choice for the original language (before the Tower of Babel). Genesis chapter 2 gives possible evidence of that. The Hebrew word for “man” is *ish* and the Hebrew word for “woman” is *ishah*. But, before concluding that Adam and Eve spoke Hebrew because of this word play, we should also note that there is similar word play in English: *man* and *woman* are similar words. Another clue is found in [Genesis 3:20](#): “The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living.” In Hebrew, the word for “Eve” and the word for “living” have a similar sound. If so, Adam and Eve spoke Hebrew, as did their descendants until the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. We also believe this to be true because of the etymology of the names of people recorded in chapters 1-10. In these chapters prior to the Tower of Babel, all names have meaning only in Hebrew. For example, the name Adam is the Hebrew word for “earth”, while the name Eve in Hebrew means “life”. These names have meaning in no other language besides Hebrew, which would indicate the original language was Hebrew.

Genesis begins by saying in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. There is no Hebrew word for universe; so original Hebrew would have to be recorded this way. If a word for universe in some other language was originally used, the Hebrews would have surely created an equivalent to honor the sacred text.

Eastbound to Babylon or Westbound?

This chapter states that the people came from the ark from the east; not to the east. The people would have migrated from the ark landing to the Plains of Shinar. This tosses out Mt Ararrat in Armenia or Turkey as the place where Noah's ark landed. That location would have been coming from the west. Besides, Mt Ararrat was not even named so until the 1800's.

Names and etymology



View from the Araratian plain near the city of [Artashat, Ar](#)

Ararat

The mountain was not called by the name Ararat until the [Middle Ages](#); early Armenian historians considered the biblical Ararat to be in [Corduene](#). It is known as Ararat in European languages, however, none of the native peoples have traditionally referred to it by that name.

Beyond all of this, the ark landing took place in [the Mountains of Ararat \(plural\)](#). Mt Ararrat is not in a mountain range

For Noah and his descendants coming from the east; this could put them closer to the mountains of Tehran, Iran. Mt. Daviland is a prominent mountain in a range of peaks. Noah saw other peaks; as the water subsided. That would not be the case at Mt. Ararrat.



Brick and Bitumen

We know that petroleum pitch was plentiful near Babylon. It was also the source of the sludge pits near Sodom. The Mesopotamia region has no rocks. Symbolically, God makes rocks, and man makes bricks. It has silt and clay topsoil from the alluvial flood plains. The choice of **bitumen** as mortar further reflects the environmental and technological context of Mesopotamia. Bitumen, a natural tar-like substance derived from petroleum deposits, was abundant in the region. It naturally seeped from the ground, particularly in areas near the Euphrates River and the Dead Sea, and was widely used in ancient construction.

Bitumen served as an adhesive and waterproofing agent. In [Genesis 11:3](#), it is described as the material that “served as mortar,” binding the bricks together in the construction of the tower. Its sticky and durable properties made it ideal for stabilizing structures, especially in a region prone to seasonal flooding. Bitumen’s waterproofing capabilities also helped protect the mud-based bricks from erosion caused by water, ensuring the longevity of buildings. This usage is corroborated by archaeological evidence from Mesopotamian sites, where bitumen was found in the construction of ziggurats, walls, and even canals. J P Getty used the Biblical accounts of bitumen and pitch to successfully drill for and discover oil in the middle east.

Building a Ziggurat

Why did the people build a tower and a city? For starters, Cain's family was all about accomplishments and city building. They were movers and shakers. It seemed to be connected to creating worldly significance and striving to accomplish something noteworthy.

¹⁶ Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. ¹⁷ And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son—Enoch. (Genesis 4)

After the flood, Ham (the cursed son of Noah) had a family who were devoted to building cities.

Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. ⁹ He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.” ¹⁰ And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. ¹¹ From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, ¹² and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city). (Genesis 10)

The tower was more important than the city by their standards. The ziggurats were tied to early idolatry. They were supposed to be earthly homes to their deities, and it was believed to symbolize a mountain with the top room being the actual abode of the god or goddess. The physical focal point of their religion was the monumental, triangular structures known as ziggurats. Modern archaeological excavations in Mesopotamia have determined that ziggurats were often the first buildings constructed in a settlement. They, in fact, provided much of the impetus for early urban development in Mesopotamia. As Mesopotamian cities grew in size, ziggurats were also at the center of the growth. Besides functioning as the earthly home of a particular deity, ziggurats were part of larger temple complexes where young men would study in scribal schools. Some of the world's first astronomers observed the celestial bodies.



Today, many people like to compare ziggurats derived from the ancient Akkadian word for the structures, *ziggurratu* – with their counterparts, the pyramids in Egypt. Although both pyramids and ziggurats were constructed during the same time period, they served different functions and were built using different methods and from different materials. Ziggurats were also built over a much longer period than Egyptian pyramids, and most importantly, ziggurats were built by a plethora of different people who inhabited ancient Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia, unlike Egypt, was full of disparate and, at times, warring ethnic groups. Still, they all followed a similar religion and built ziggurats to appease their gods and assign temporal power.

The first of these ziggurats comprised a simple tower built on top of a platform. One of the first proto-ziggurats was known as the “White Temple,” which towered forty feet above Uruk the city.

God is pretty uniform with textual constancy. Babylon went on to symbolize idolatry and demonic power centers. This should provide some clues on what was happening there. The future Babylon is yet to come; but it carries the same theme.

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. ² And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! ³ For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the

merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.⁵ For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.⁶ Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.⁷ In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’⁸ Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. (Revelation 18)

Read Genesis 11:5-9:

This was similar to the account where God comes down to look at what was going on in Sodom and Gomorrah; just before judging it. It's not because he did not already know what was going on there. God wants unity in the church; but unity based in the exclusion of God is very dangerous. Communism is an example of how anything innocuous that man imagines (apart from God) cannot end well.

Communism, for example, appealed to men because it promised a utopian society that was classless, while offering an economic system in which control of a nation's means of production — the farms, factories and industries — would be transferred from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. Communism also promised to create an international community that would supersede national identity. Countries would cease to exist so there would be no nationalism. No nationalism meant no imperialism, so war also would cease. But what looked good to these men "on paper" looked anything but in practice. Traveling to the Soviet Union, they saw firsthand the brutal repression, the poverty, the inequality and the drab despair that was Soviet life. The gulags, the show trials, the forced starvation of the Ukraine, all left indelible marks on these men. They came to realize that utopia was unattainable and that communism had "failed" it's one true test, providing its citizens a better life. The broken promises involve the caretakers who are given control over the state. We should trust no man with that kind of power over our lives.

Read Genesis 11:10-32:

This genealogy goes from Shem to Abram. Men are no longer living to be 900 years old after the flood. It is assumed that the pre-flood world had a lot of fog and atmospheric moisture and barometric pressure. Things grew to be gigantic, and they flourished.

That lifespan was been cut in half (to 450) during the one hundred years immediately after the flood. Interestingly, Shem lived 500 more years after the flood, so he was more vigorous than those born later (somehow). Two hundred years after the flood men's lifespans are cut in half again. And then it cuts in half yet again. We can conclude that the decrease did not only come from the post-flood climate changes and added radiation exposure. It was a progressive thing that continued to change lifespans:

Abram 130 yrs

Isaac 180 yrs

Jacob 120 yrs

Jospeh 110 yrs

Moses 120 yrs

Joshua 110 yrs

Samuel 80-100 yrs.

Present Age Man 76 years

Mankind is clearly on the decline. He is not living as long.

Why does God scroll through the calendar so fast, until he hits Abram? Apparently, nothing noteworthy was missing. Left to our own freewill, man does not turn the corner for good. This is the biggest timeline bypass in the Bible. Once he hits Abram, he starts going person to person again. God started all over again with Abram.

What was life like at the time of Abram? Idolatry.

And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. ³ Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. (Joshua 24)