

Monuments or Monumental Worship

We know the story of the Tower of Babel in **Genesis chapter 11**. It is the story of human beings attempting to "make a name for themselves" to supposedly serve the common good. Humanity likes to build monuments. It is an interesting human behavior that in our history the powerful get to name entire buildings and even the less powerful can still get their name on some stone or a piece of brass for the right price. Some of our young people "tag" their signature as graffiti all over the city in an attempt to say that "I was here" or "that I mattered". We have always loved erecting monuments to our achievements from the pyramids to statues of fallen heroes in our squares. We build, like the people of Babylon, to honor what we think is important. Just look at most any city, and the largest buildings will tell you what the culture ultimately values like our sports stadiums, malls, and commerce centers. These are the monuments to the gods of our culture where a citizen can worship for only \$55 a seat, only \$100 per item, or for a 50% discount.

Even our churches have become colossal temples of greed and expressions of wealth that are cold and unwelcoming to the poor and needy where those who do not have a Mercedes to valet park or who can not tithe at the \$1000.00 a month partnership level feel like they need people to surround them for prayer because they obviously have a faith issue. God is not impressed with our wonderful buildings, even if they were built to glorify Him. God is not impressed with buildings made out of mud, stone, steel, or wood. **Genesis 11:7** states that God confused our language in order to limit our power, since united, "nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them". The text sounds like a myth trying to explain the reason why there are so many languages in the world doesn't it. Why do we have different languages? Because we built a tower which disturbed God and therefore God came down and frustrated humanity right? We know that God is not so petty. God looked upon this impressive towering example of human achievement and did not see unity but rather confusion, division, and the eventual scattering of humanity. In great human power He saw a people moving away from the living God and was painfully aware that the Babylonian empire in all its glory and pride would not last. ***That which God does not build can not last.*** We have seen this with all the other empires throughout history.

We are witnesses to the truth that God came in Jesus to make humanity united and whole again. And let us not forget how the Kingdom comes. It comes down not in what humanity considers grand or glorious. Christ is born in a manger and He lived amongst the poor in the least of places. He eats with the poor, welcomes the outcast, and communes with sinners. He creates no monuments of stone or wood or steel. What He does create is community and grace. The empire He leads is not of this world, for when he enters Jerusalem, it is on a young donkey not a war horse. He has no army, writes no books and He comes and gives of Himself, even to the point of death on a cross shaped tower. At His rising on the third day we discovered that His empire is without end. We follow one whose power is expressed in giving His life away. God builds true humanity, not in achievements of bricks and mortar, but with living stones into a spiritual house not made with human hands. He erects people like you and me. This is why I know that if you persevere in allowing God to build you and your church up into a spiritual community, you will be a tower that can not be shaken. Let us be careful not to place our trust in buildings such as Babel. They are a tool to assist in the building of grace filled communities but they are not our main focus! ***Souls are the main thing.***