



The Tower of Babel, Peter Brueghel the Elder, c. 1563

The Destruction of the Tower of Babel

A Failed Ascension

In another story of man's attempt to climb up to the Heavens, the Lord destroys the tower built at Babel and scatters its inhabitants. Genesis 11 falls at the end of parsha Noah, which tells us of the Flood and Noah's Ark, and closes with our introduction to Abram and his barren wife, Sarai.

בראשית פרק יא'

^א וַיְהִי כָל-הָאָרֶץ, שְׂפָה אֶחָת, וּדְבָרִים, אֶחָדִים. ^ב וַיְהִי, בְּנִסְעָם מִקֶּדֶם; וַיִּמְצְאוּ בְקָעָה בְּאֶרֶץ שִׁנְעָר, וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם. ^ג וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-רֵעֵהוּ, הִבֵּה נִלְבְּנָה לִבְנִים, וְנִשְׂרָפָה, לְשִׂרְפָּה; וְתָהִי לָהֶם הַלְּבָנָה, לְאַבֵּן, וְהַחֲמֹר, הִזֵּה לָהֶם לַחֲמֹר. ^ד וַיֹּאמְרוּ הִבֵּה נִבְנֶה-לָּנוּ עִיר, וּמִגְדָּל וְרֹאשׁוֹ בַשָּׁמַיִם, וְנַעֲשֶׂה-לָּנוּ, שֵׁם: פֶּן-נִפּוּץ, עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ. ^ה וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה, לִרְאֹת אֶת-הָעִיר וְאֶת-הַמִּגְדָּל, אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ, בְּנֵי הָאָדָם. ^ו וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה, הֵן עַם אֶחָד וּשְׂפָה אֶחָת לְכָלָם, וְזֶה, הַחֲלֹם לַעֲשׂוֹת; וְעַתָּה לֹא-יִבָּצֵר מֵהֶם, כָּל אֲשֶׁר יִזְמוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת. ^ז הִבֵּה, נִרְדָּה, וְנִבְלָה שָׁם, שְׂפָתָם--אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ, אִישׁ שִׁפְתֵי רֵעֵהוּ. ^ח וַיִּפֹּץ יְהוָה אֹתָם מִשָּׁם, עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ; וַיִּחְדְּלוּ, לִבְנֹת הָעִיר. ^ט עַל-כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ, בָּבֶל, כִּי-שָׁם בָּלַל יְהוָה, שְׂפַת כָּל-הָאָרֶץ; וּמִשָּׁם הִפִּיצָם יְהוָה, עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ

Genesis 11

¹ And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. ² And it came to pass, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. ³ And they said one to another: "Come, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. ⁴ And they said: "Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, with its top in heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." ⁵ And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built. ⁶ And the Lord said: "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is what they begin to do; and now nothing will be withheld from them, which they purpose to do. ⁷ Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city. ⁹ Therefore was the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Source: http://www.sefarim.fr/Pentateuque_Gen%E8se_11_7.aspx