BABYLON & THE TOWER OF BABEL
Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D.
Excerpt from Apples of Gold
"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Proverbs 25:11

With only 7,000 cavalry and 40,000 foot soldiers, in 331 BC Alexander the Great defeated Darius III Codomanus' million man army at Gaugamela near Arbela. Next, Alexander followed the Tigris River c.300 miles to the city of Babylon, which immediately surrendered.

Callisthenes (Alexander's aid) had been asked by Aristotle, his uncle, to send back to Greece any astral records he might find in Babylon. Based upon the statement of Porphyrius, in his commentary on Aristotle's *De Caelo* (On the Heavens) Simplicius of Cilicia (c.490–c.560 AD) says that the Chaldeans gave Callisthenes their astral observations which dated back to the founding of Babylon. When the Chaldean figures recorded by Porphyrius were adjusted, the calculations indicated that it had been 1,903 years from Alexander's capture of Babylon to its founding by Nimrod (for whom the entire region was named: "the land of Nimrod" – Micah 5:6).[1] Thus, Babylon was supposedly built in 331 + 1903 = c.2234 BC (1770 AM). This agrees remarkably well with Berosus from whom 2233 BC is derived.

Genesis 10–11:9 unmistakably indicates that it was Nimrod who built Babylon and that he was also the instigator of the Tower of Babel rebellion that took place during Peleg's lifetime (Gen. 10:25, cp. 10:5: also see Isaiah 47:12–13). Josephus concurs (*Antiquities*, I, 4, 2–3). Nimrod's was the 13th generation from Adam.

Manetho wrote (c.250 BC) that the Tower event occurred 5 years after the birth of Peleg (*Book of Sothis*, Loeb, p. 239). However, when population statistics are taken into account for the 106-year span from the Flood unto the fifth year of Peleg, the problem of generating enough people to fit the biblical context of Genesis 10 and 11 (Nimrod's building of Babel, the Tower, Erech, Accad, Calneh as well as Asshur's building of Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah, and Resen) becomes readily apparent.

The Hebrew text of Genesis 11 reveals that the average length of a generation around and including Peleg was only 31 years. The Genesis 10 genealogies of Noah's 3 sons infer 11 to 12 offspring per generation. From the 2348 BC Flood to Manetho's 2242 is 106 years and 106 ÷ 31 is 3.42 generations. Using 12 children per family for 3.42 generations over Manetho's 106-year span would generate only c.1,000 people, and half would have been women. As about 90% would have been born in the last generation, only around 300 of the 500 males would have been old enough to have worked on the building projects.

Many of these would have been engaged in full-time agricultural pursuits in order to feed the populace. Thus, this scenario would only yield about 150 workers, not nearly enough to fit the context of the Babel incident even though this represents a very large annual growth rate (6%, note: neither Noah nor Shem would have participated in this rebellion). This scenario is simply not plausible, and since the Chaldean priesthood's date of 2234 would add only eight more years, it too is not possible.

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[1] James Ussher, *Annals of the World,* revised by Larry & Marion Pierce, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2003), p. 22, §50 & p. 236, §1891 (pp. 4 & 224 in the 1658 ed.).

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According to Ctesias of Cnidus[2] (fl. 401-384 BC), Nimrod's kingdom began in 2182 BC. This date is 166-years after the Flood, and $166 \div 31$ years per generation yields 5.35 generations. If we again use 12 children per family per generation, a total of over 30,000 could be produced from which we could expect a work force of about 5,000. Thus, although Ctesias' year may well not be the actual date, it is reasonable.[3]

All this is most significant, for here we have the ancient secular witnesses of Manetho, Ctesias, Berosus, and the Chaldean priesthood in 331 BC. All four give chronological data relevant to either Nimrod, the founding of the city of Babylon, or the Tower of Babel that completely agrees with the biblical account, for these events and their dates are all found in association with the life-span of Peleg.

This must be seen as devastating to all who would disparage the Holy Writ. Hence, we here affirm that Bible chronology is the most powerful apologetic tool available to the Christian. As these ancient biblical dates are verifiable within narrow limits by these external data, (and vice versa!) should we not now be more given to trust those passages which cannot be so supported.

Finally, such conformity is only to be found when the chronologer uses the Hebrew Text. If instead dates recorded in the Septuagint are used, Peleg's life will be farther back in time and not match the derived dates from the above ancient historical accounts.[4]

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[2] Ctesias is preserved in Diodorus Siculus, II, 21-22. See: H.F. Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici,* vol. I, (Oxford, Eng.: 1834), pp. 261, 263, & 268–269 for a more complete explanation.

[3] The *Seder Olam* (the chronology of the Jews) dates the Tower of Babel dispersion as occurring in Peleg's final year. Dr. Heinrich Guggenheimer, editor, (NY: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., 2005), pp. 3 and 5.

[4] The data and dates were taken from: Floyd Nolen Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament,* 2009 edition, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books Pub.), and Charts 5 or 5c. The Tower of Babel-Peleg material also came from this work: pp. 41-42.