

IDOLATRY

RE-CENTRING ON GOD IN EVERYWAY

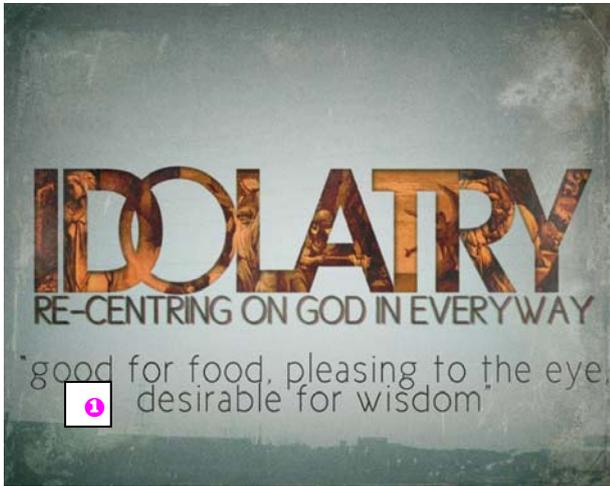
“Knowledge puffs up,
but Love builds up.”

“And the LORD came down”

IDOLATRY
RE-CENTRING ON GOD IN EVERYWAY

The Idol of Knowledge, "Good for Wisdom" (Genesis 11, Acts 2)

An Accidental Fall or a Rebellious Uprising?



Welcome to Kenmore Baptist Church. Today we're into the last part of the series, "Idolatry: Re-Centring on God in Every Way".

So, what is idolatry? Idolatry is when you take something good, and you make it god. You build your life around it. You make sacrifices to it. And over time, what's good perverts into what's bad. Money becomes greed; love becomes lust; and as we'll see today, knowledge

becomes pride. We're all tempted to make this switch, because the fruit of the world looks "good for food, it's pleasing to the eye, and it's desirable for gaining wisdom" (Genesis 3:6).

Now, the point of this series is not to tell you what naughty people you've been—look at all those rules you've broken. Instead, it's more like a trip to the doctor. All the prodding and poking helps assess the cause of the problem. If you take time to diagnose the disease, it's quick to prescribe the cure. So today I'll assess the idolatry of knowledge from three angles, how we've become de-centred in our search for control. Once that's clear, we'll see the cure in re-centring our lives around God.

There's no finger pointing in this. I'm the only pastor to give footnotes in the message outline. I've got a really bad case of knowledge-sickness. This message is therapy for me, so any benefit to you is an added bonus!



Okay, back to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Genesis 3. God planted them there to multiply and cultivate the world. All was a gift. Nothing good was out of bounds. Our world's best gardens today limit your freedom. But in God's garden, there was one rule: don't eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

As Ryan explored, God's not against knowledge. This rule was for *our* benefit. All through the Bible God is presented as

the source of knowledge, and he commends the wise for seeking it out (Psalm 94:10; Proverbs 18:15). Christians have no reason to be anti-intellectual.

God put us in the garden to cultivate it, which takes technique: it takes science. And the end of the Biblical story is a garden city, celebrating the cultural glories of the nations. So God's not against urban dwellings.

But taking from this tree represented autonomy—going it alone.



Language was a gift to have dominion over the world. But instead, that old Serpent twists words to dominate and confuse this couple. He offers control—to be like God; to know the way the world is, objectively, impersonally, with fixed certainty apart from trust. Satan promised independence—no need to walk slowly with God in the Garden.

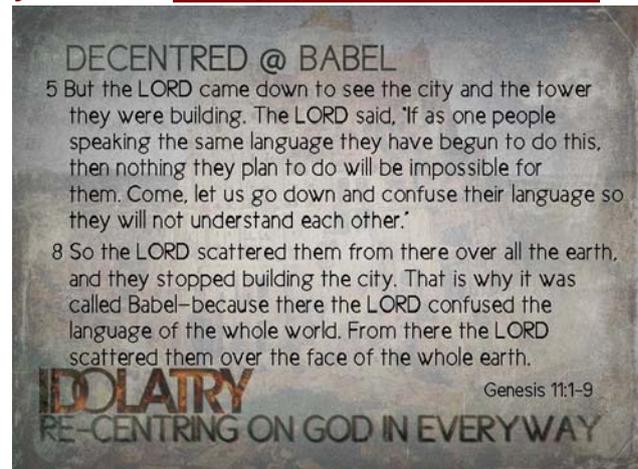
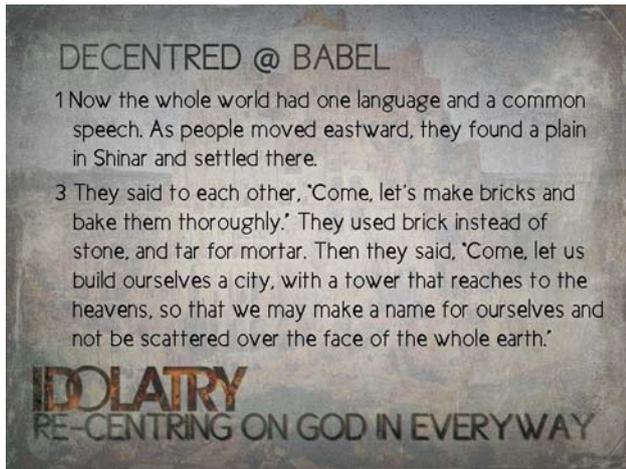
As the story goes, Eve listened, and Adam ate. They wanted wisdom and power. But instead, they found themselves defenceless and dumb, stripped of protective clothing. And we've all been sewing fig leaves together ever since to cover our ignorance.

Theologians call this "the fall". But this is only half the story. It sounds like we accidentally tripped and bit the dust. In context, it's more of a rebellious uprising: "I will be God." And the story of our rebellion reaches a high point in Genesis 11, with the Tower of Babel.

Grab your note outline from the KBC News, and open your Bibles to Genesis 11, and let's see what God has to say through His Word to us today. First, let's pray.

Lord God, thank you for your Word. Would you open our eyes to see? Would you lay bare our own rebellion and idolatry of knowledge? Once again, may we trust you, the source of Life? Amen.

DECENTRED @ BABEL: the confused city of man (reading by female on microphone)



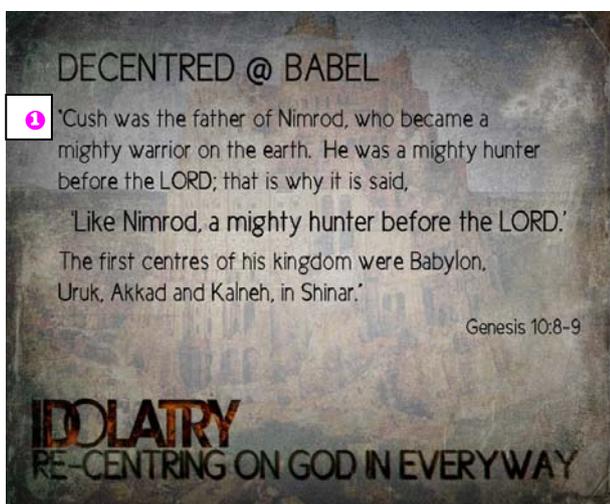
Reading from Genesis 11:1-9:

¹ Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. ² As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

³ They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.'

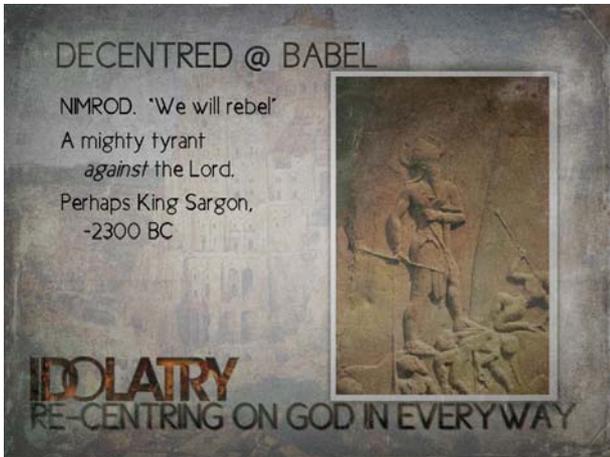
⁵ But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower they were building. ⁶ The LORD said, 'If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.'

⁸ So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹ That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.



First, some background. In Genesis 6 through 9 we read of God's judgment on a world gone wrong. He saves Noah and his family from the flood and reminds them of their mandate to scatter and fill the earth—stop dominating each other, and have dominion over the world. Instead, by Genesis 11, we find this rebellious people settling in another city. It reads like yesterday's news: "*Water destroys our River City, but we'll rebuild bigger and better, with or without God.*"

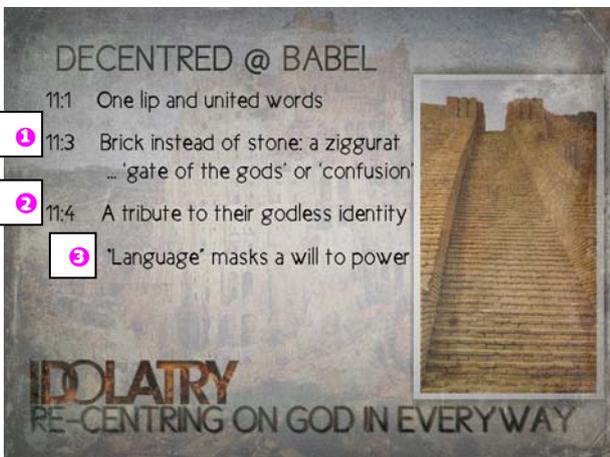
❶ In Genesis 10 we read the table of nations out of Noah's family, but the genealogy pauses to highlight this guy named *Nimrod*. Reading from verses 8-9, "Cush was the father of Nimrod, who became a mighty warrior on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, 'Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD.' The first centres of his kingdom were Babylon, Uruk, Akkad and Kalneh, in Shinar."



We've moved from city to Kingdom. Nimrod is often identified with King Sargon, around 2300 BC. He established the world's first Empire across Mesopotamia, with the city of Babylon at the centre, around modern day Iraq. So, this guy's a "mighty hunter." But in Hebrew, the phrase literally means a *tyrant*. His name means "we shall rebel." His Kingdom spreads by control, built on the knowledge and techniques of this

ancient people. Nimrod ruled nature and hunted people. Nimrod is the epitome of naked pride before, or *against*, the Lord.

So we come to Genesis 11, the Tower of Babel. The people won't scatter; they want security.



Verse 1, "the whole world had one language and a common speech." Literally, they had "one lip and united words"—a bit like today with the advance of the internet and English as a common language. They were unified by vocabulary. For the history buffs, Babylon was the heart of the Sumerian Empire, where "Sumer" means "land of the civilized lords." They weren't savages. They had knowledge of mathematics and

astronomy, aligning their temples with great precision to constellations invisible to the naked eye. And archaeology has unearthed a Sumerian story which recalls when "the whole universe in unison spoke to God in one tongue," before contention came, and the deity confused their languages.

So this people with one language settled outside God's blessing in the East, rather than scattering as they were commanded. This was wilful rebellion.

❶ Down to Verse 3, "they used brick instead of stone" in building "a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens." The tower of Babel was most likely a ziggurat, a multi-tiered shrine to the gods at the centre of a temple complex with rooms for the powerful priests. Think of the pyramids, or something out of *Apocalypso*,

composed of sun-baked bricks. These structures cropped up all over the ancient world around the third millennium before Christ. Like the Marduk Ziggurat in ancient Babylon. It had seven levels, topped with an exquisite temple, all painted sky blue. The name of this structure literally meant “The Foundation of Heaven and Earth”; stairs ascended to the gods who were invited to come down and bless their building. Babylon actually means “gate of the gods”, but with a small twist of language, it means “confusion”. This project of breaking the bounds between Heaven and Earth was confused and foolish.

But they were technologically savvy. They’d moved beyond sun-dried bricks and were baking them thoroughly. Stone was the best building material—graciously provided by God—but there wasn’t much grace where they’d settled, so they had to provide for themselves (Exodus 20:25). They’d built the foundation out of what should only be the superstructure. One earthquake and the whole building would come tumbling down.

2 But in Babel they’d stopped pretending this altar was for the gods. The priests lived in the building and found safety on high when the flood waters rose—it was all self-serving. Position a few guards at the base of the stairs and the tower was a stronghold for the politicians. As we read in verse 4, this tower was to “**make a name for ourselves.**” Like Totem poles for the American Indians, the symbols and regalia were less about worship, and more a celebration of their cultural identity. They’d built their worth around displacing God and ascending to the heavens. They wanted God’s infallible angle on the world—a high tower from which the politicians and priests could control the people.

3 Throughout the Bible, God promises to make a name for those who trust Him. He will make them great. God wasn’t threatened by their rebellion. But He could see that this confused city of man would only end in violence—when we play God, oppression is sure to follow. The story of Babel highlights “language” five times in nine verses. As postmoderns point out, our language and truth claims often mask a will to power. We twist and confuse words to control others. So God got in first and confused their grand plans; His intervention freed those with the least power, on whose back this tower was built.



Most Biblical scholars see Genesis 11 as a *chiasm*—the story has two halves like a mirror image.

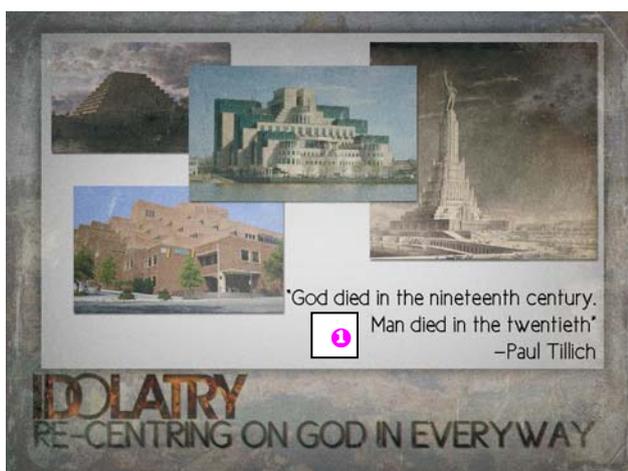
- A All the *earth* one language (v1)
 B People *settle* together there (v2)
 C *Said* to each other (v3a)
 D *Come make bricks*
 (*hā·bāh nil·bē·nāh lə·bê·nīm*) (v3b)
 E A City and a *tower* (v4)
 X And the Lord came down (v5a)
 E' The City and the *tower* (v5b-6)
 D' Come now ... let us *confuse*
 (*hā·bāh nê·rə·dāh, wə·nā·bē·lāh*) (v7a)
 C' ~~{Not understand}~~ each other (v7b)
 B' People *disperse* from there (v8)
 A' Language of the whole *earth* (v9)

God responded to Babel. Every rebellious action was countered. One language and a settled people became multiple languages and a scattered people. "Let us make bricks" (*nilb^enā*) is reversed by "let us confuse" (*nāb^enā*). The gate of the gods, Babylon (*bāb-ilu*), becomes Babel (*bābel*), meaning confusion.

But the whole story hinges on a huge irony in verse 5. This mighty tower from man's perspective, ascending to God in the Heavens; this overcompensation by little people asserting their independence—"The Lord came down to see." You can't see the Great Wall of China, or even the pyramids from the moon. So the Creator of the universe strains His eyes to see their puny efforts. Their endeavour for fame, for significance, for unity through a technology driven tower—it all falls short. Nimrod's anti-god project comes crumbling down.

Idolatry of knowledge leads to pride, and pride comes before a fall. ...

Well, what are we to make of all this? Have we learned our lesson? *I suspect not.*



For the ziggurat style of architecture is today seen in the University of Tennessee, the United States Bullion Depository in Kentucky, the National Geographic Society headquarters, the Guggenheim Museum, the MI6 building housing British Secret Intelligence, and even the unfinished Palace of the Soviets in Moscow. Babylon is alive and well in the centres of higher learning, finance, science, intelligence and political power.

If anything, we are closer today than any time since Babel to building a shrine to our knowledge and turning into Gods.

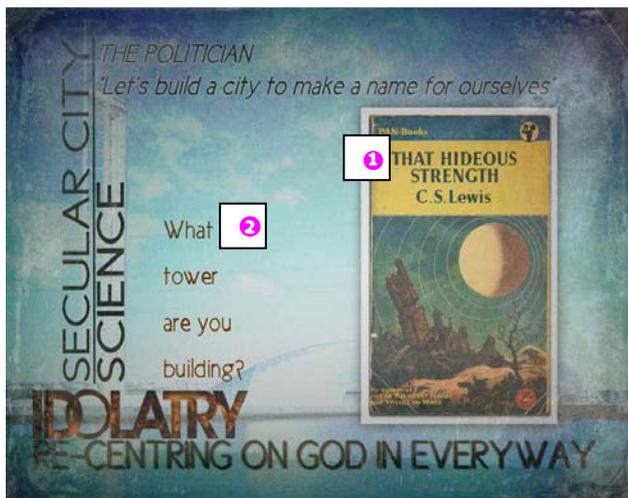
- But be warned. As philosopher Paul Tillich observed, "If God died in the nineteenth century, man died in the twentieth." Our efforts to play God never end well.

I could quote statistics to measure our modern towers. But stories get under our skin. So I want to tell of three towers we're building right now. Each building project seeks control through secure knowledge. But like the Tower of Babel, the foundations are flawed and the superstructure is weak. The people are confused, but it takes a story to show how.

Let's start with a preview for a 2010 documentary.

VIDEO CLIP ON SYSTEM: 'TURNING INTO GODS' {4.02 minutes}

The First Tower: Building a Secular City on the Foundation of Science
"... let's build ourselves a city to make a name for ourselves" (v4)



What does idolatry of knowledge look like in the 21st century? How about, "turning into gods"? I have no idea what that guy at the end was saying, but all this talk of humanity conquering death if we just give science free enough reign—this is pure hubris. It's pride. This is Babel.

The first tower is building a secular city on the foundation of science. As it says in Genesis 11:4, "let's build a city to make

a name for ourselves." The politicians craft a vision of progress to a brighter future courtesy of experimentation ... onward and upward, to greater efficiency, greater productivity, greater power, all without reference to God. We can be confident in our knowledge, and upon this infallible foundation we'll build utopia.

Well, how's this working out? Perhaps a subversive story will help.

□ The last book in C. S. Lewis's space trilogy is called *That Hideous Strength*. It's set in the future, but "*that hideous strength*" is a line from a sixteenth century poem describing the Tower of Babel: "*The Shadow of that hideous strength, six mile and more it is of length.*" Nimrod's strong tower promised safety, but instead it cast a six mile shadow over the whole land. Everything lay in the grip of its terror.

Lewis's story tells of a government sponsored project called "NICE" ... the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments. It was the "first-fruits of a constructive fusion between the State and the laboratory on which so many thoughtful people based their hopes of a better world." Free from all the tiresome 'red tape' that hampered research, science could now "take over the human race and recondition it: make man a really efficient animal. If this fails, we're all done." People had to choose which side they were on: *Obscurantism* (opposing the spread of knowledge), or *Order*. Humanity was at the cross-roads, and it was time to take control of our own destiny.

With their million dollar devices like the Pragmatometer, they were going to put science itself on a scientific basis. Imagine applying science to social problems, backed by the State, just as war was backed by government in ages past. The perfect society is just around the corner.

But things weren't as they seemed.

As the lead character is drawn deeper into NICE, seeking to preserve the human race, he discovers that the talk of "humanity controlling nature" is misleading. Rather, it means that "some men have got to take charge of the rest—which is another reason for cashing in on it as soon as one can." What does this mean? Simple:

"Sterilisation of the unfit, liquidation of backward races (we don't want any dead weights), selective breeding. Then real education, including pre-natal training ... mainly psychological at first, but we'll go onto biochemical conditioning in the end and direct manipulation of the brain. ... The word 'experiment' is unpopular ... so we mustn't experiment on children; but offer the dear little kiddies free education in an experimental school attached to the NICE and it's all correct! ... We'll have a new type of man; and it's people like you who've got to begin to make him."

As the story progresses, we see Nimrod emerge. Do you think Nimrod built his own tower? "Man's power over Nature means the power of some men over other men with Nature as the instrument." And the power will reduce to a select few, and eventually down to one: Nimrod. When God is dead, Nimrod plays God. And all the people suffer.

Let's step back for a moment. Science is a good gift. It's a great servant, but a terrible saviour. And when scientific knowledge becomes ultimate, it perverts into pride and leads to destruction. How many nuclear weapons have been developed by science? How many genomes must be re-engineered until we clone people for spare body parts? Eugenics and euthanasia, psychological reconditioning ... this only sounds alarmist because we have short memories. Over 100 million people were killed by their own governments in the twentieth century to realise the utopia of scientific communism. The West has exported our brand of progress, without ever agreeing on what we are progressing toward. Science merely describes the way the world is, not what ought to be. *What is moral, what is just, what is love?* If we can't agree on our direction, then how can we progress? In trying to build a godless city that celebrates humanity, the powerless person loses their name and is eradicated.

o *What tower are you building?* Is your sense of security tied to the size of our military, or the state of scientific and medical breakthroughs? Are you optimistic that one more operation, one more experiment, and life will be great? Are you building a name for yourself at the bleeding edge of progress? Watch out, you may have a severe case of knowledge-sickness.

The Second Tower: Building God's Kingdom on the Foundation of Theology *"... with a tower that reaches to the heavens" (v3)*



Okay, most of us Christian-types despise the first tower. We're about reclaiming our godless culture. So onto the second tower: Building God's Kingdom on the Foundation of Theology. As it says in verse 3, the tower "reached to the heavens." Theology is a strange bedfellow with science. But science comes from the Latin *scientia*, which simply means knowledge. And if you ever get to the

rotunda in Oxford University, you'll see a series of doors representing the best of humanity's knowledge we've acquired from below. But the biggest door is reserved for what God has spoken from above, tying all these other types of knowledge together. Theology was called the Queen of the Sciences.

Theology is the art of making sense of what God has said. And like science, it's a good thing. It takes the Bible as raw data, and works it into a logical, systematic whole. It tells of the Creator's design, and the enemy's plans. And just like politicians promising a secure city, many priests have promised the theological blueprint for building God's Kingdom. We offer a tower that reaches to the heavens, commanding the blessing of God and the advance of His church.

Well, how has this worked out? Does revelation give us infallible knowledge to build a Kingdom?

Time for another story.

1 Who's read or seen *Lord of the Rings*? J. R. Tolkien, the author, resisted this epic being read as an allegory. Even so, there's so much we can learn.

The whole fantasy centres on the Ring, which represents power. And in this world, power was distributed among many forces—elves, dwarves, men. This kept any one group from dominating the rest. But there was a Dark Lord named Sauron—the Satan figure—who forged a new ring to rule them all.

Enter Saruman the White, the head of the Istari. The Istari were a group of powerful wizards sent as messengers to challenge the power of Sauron. Their mission was to fight against Sauron and stop him from enslaving the whole world. Wisdom was their weapon. *They were given no rings to rule.* They were only to guide, never to give orders, coerce, or fight.

Gandalf the Grey, a gentle wizard, was one of the Istari. But Saruman was elected as their leader, the greatest of their order. He had long studied the powers of the Enemy. He was the oldest and wisest, with a powerful and enchanting voice that could bring people under his spell.

So we read of *The Two Towers*. Sauron had set up a dark tower from which he ruled. But there was a second tower from which Saruman operated. It was called "Orthanc". Like Babel, it had two meanings: it meant Mount Fang—or power—but it also meant "Cunning Mind." It used to be beautiful. But over time Saruman the White fell in love with his wisdom. He used the tools of the Enemy, all for good of course. He was blind to his pride and thirst for power. Looking down from his cathedral-like tower, he determined to possess the one ring all for himself. Pride was his downfall.

Saruman *was* white, at least to start with. But white light splintered into a many-coloured cloak as he left the path of wisdom. He tried to convince Gandalf to join him: *"We must rule. But we must have power, power to order all things as we will, for that good which only the Wise can see."*

Gandalf has heard this voice before: "Get behind me Sauron." By the story's end, Saruman's tower has crumbled and Gandalf is revealed as the true white wizard. He rules from below by serving the weak.

Can you see the connections? The wizards are like the church—sent to guide, to warn, to lead ... but never to control. We may well possess God's infallible Word, but when we stop humbly dwelling with the God who speaks, all we are left with is dry theology and delusions of grandeur. We try to play God and become like the hypocritical religious leaders Jesus condemned: **"You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you possess eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life"** (John 5:39).

God's Word may be infallible, but we are limited and biased, finite and fallen, quick to theologize but slow to listen. How many crusades have been fought with crosses painted on our shields? How many peasants have sold their land to pay the priests? The Kingdom of God is a gift He is pleased to give to His little children; it's not built by human hands (Luke 12:32; Hebrews 11:10). In claiming to construct God's Kingdom by our own knowledge and effort, have we in fact bought into the lie of Satan?

o ***What tower are you building?*** In studying the Scriptures, are you more concerned with being right than listening to the God who speaks? Do you regularly make claims on God, demanding He act according to your particular theology? Are you fighting hard to reclaim culture, forcefully building the kingdom of God? Watch out, idolatry of knowledge is never far away.

The Third Tower: Building My Empire on the Foundation of Technique
** ... let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly* (v3)*



Perhaps, so far, we're showing no signs of knowledge-sickness. We're postmodern, right? We've given up those arrogant dreams of remaking the world through building culture and church. We're sceptical of both politician and priest, science and theology. But are we free of the publicist?

There is a third variety of tower, and these are cropping up all over the

contemporary skyline. Individuals everywhere are building the Empire of Me, founded on technique. As we read in verse 3, "let's make bricks instead of stone, and bake them thoroughly." Of course we don't swallow the egocentric ads on t.v. But we're self-consumed none-the-less. We play the role of our own publicist, believing the hype. Our tower is the Trump Tower: a vision of the good-life, where we have the money and smarts to reach for the skies and control our destiny, all courtesy of the latest technology. We worship the god of Google. Google is all knowing, all powerful, and everywhere. We have bought into a culture of technique to have knowledge at our fingertips, anytime, anywhere. We turn a blind eye to the political and military moves necessary to guarantee the best prices and limitless supply—we ignore mounting third world debt and environmental destruction caused by our insatiable appetite for more.

How do we pay for all this? Well, we sacrifice years to study and stress, all to get the grades which build our financial future. At the Academic Ceremony, we admire the authority of those robed demi-gods walking down the aisle. It's often emptied of any reference to God, despite copying the garments of the monastic communities which birthed our modern universities.

Our contemporary story is the movie *Limitless*. Have you seen it? Eddie Morra is a struggling author lacking the smarts. But when he starts taking the drug NZT, the neurons fire like never before—he finishes his manuscript in a day, learns new languages, and corners the Stock market to become a millionaire. The newspapers report, "Is he Houdini, a Prophet, *God?*" He has the recipe for grandeur and secures all the best toys with a limitless line of credit.

Now, I thought from the movie's start that this story would expose the Empire of Me. The lead character is on the edge of suicide, hunted by hit-men, and his first four words are "Obviously I miscalculated something." No-one but God can know the end from the beginning. Sadly—*spoiler alert*—this is just a speed bump en route to Eddie becoming the next President of the United States. His brain adapts, and Mr. Morra is the first lucky man on planet earth to evolve to a new level of thinking.

But we know this is a farce, right? No matter how good your technology, you can't cheat death forever. Playing God is short lived. No one can know it all. This is a modern myth.

- 1 We need to dust off the classics like *Jekyll and Hyde*, or Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to read how it really ends. The ancient Greeks knew that if Prometheus ever reached up to steal the secret of life from the gods, it would end in tragedy. As Victor Frankenstein searched the freezing wastelands for the monster he created, the captain of the ship tried to gain the technique for immortality. We need to receive Frankenstein's rebuke:

"Are you mad, my friend? Where does your senseless curiosity lead you? Would you also create for yourself and the world a demonic enemy? Peace, peace! Learn my miseries, and do not seek to increase your own. ... I am like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, /but now/ I am chained in an eternal hell. ... A high destiny seemed to bear me on until I fell, never again to rise."

- 2 **What tower are we building?** Do we consult Wiki before the Bible? Study is a good thing, but are we a slave to making the grade? Do we display withdrawal symptoms when our iPhone is out of reach? How much are we sacrificing to earn that degree, secure that career, and set ourselves up? Does God get the same attention? Watch out, for the tower built on technique will one day fall.

RECENTRED @ PENTECOST: the united city of God

"... but the LORD came down" (v5)



We have exalted three towers: to culture, to church, and to self-centred consumerism. We've laid three foundations of fallible brick, building on science, theology, and technique. We have believed the confused words of the politician, the priest, and the publicist.

We're surrounded, and infected, by the idolatry of knowledge. We've taken a good gift, and made it ultimate. And in

the process, all we know has perverted into pride.

Pride led to our fall.

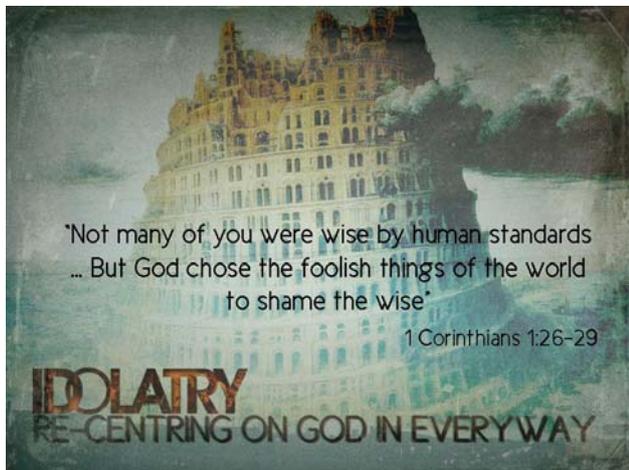
We're decentred. But is this the only way to live in a world like ours?

- 1 In short, no. As we read in 1 Corinthians, "knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (8:1). I may unlock all mysteries, but unless I know the love of God, I am nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2). Love never fails.

- 2 The hinge of the Babel story was verse 5: **But the Lord came down.**

And this is our hinge if we are to be re-centred.

Our only Saviour, the Lord, came down to show us a better way. The logic of the world stepped into His creation and gave us light to truly see, shining in our hearts. We found the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (John 1:1-14; 2 Corinthians 4:6). Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the wisdom in whom the whole universe hangs together (Colossians 1:15-17).

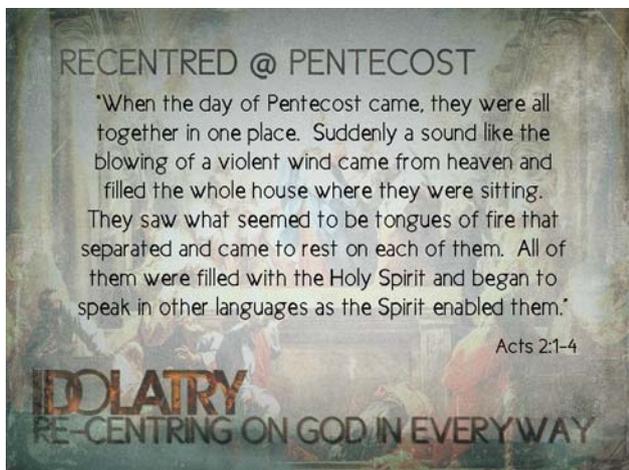


But in the flickering of our own knowledge, we're blind to God's grace. So Jesus chose the simpletons to expose our foolish towers—our attempts to play God. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1,

"Think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish

things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong" (vv 26-29).

He's talking about us—weak and foolish. Can we identify with this, or are we offended?



If we were de-centred at Babel, then we are re-centred at Pentecost.

As we draw to a close, would you turn to Acts 2. Notice the parallels.

Jesus has been raised from the dead, and He commissions His disciples to scatter and cultivate the whole world by making disciples. But first, they need to *wait* in the humble upper room of a house in Jerusalem:

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them" (vv 1-4).

So there the disciples are, *worshipping* in *one lip* and *united words*.

And the Lord came down.

They make a name for themselves out of languages they never studied. They speak from the Heavens without ever needing to climb a tower. And individual tongues develop technique to craft foreign words, but they work as one for God's glory. As the languages multiply, the many nations are confused—not by the babble, but by simple people clearly presenting the Word of God in their native tongue: *“Turn from your towers, and align with the Kingdom of God.”*

God builds His city that day, and three thousand new citizens walk right on in. The Kingdoms of man look on—the pagan Parthians, Medes, and Egyptians, alongside the religious Jews and self-centred Cretans—all amazed at what unfolded. And over time this trusting people were scattered, walking with this good news to the throne of the Roman Empire.



Let's follow their example, to *wait, worship, and walk.*

This is the path to being re-centred:

To Wait ... each day to dwell with the Lord. Not just to read His word and theologize abstract wisdom. Instead, to leave space for God's Spirit to come down and speak—a fresh encounter with the resurrected Christ as He brings the letter to life.

To Worship ... each day to begin on our knees in humility, to intimately encounter God and dedicate all we do for His glory. Let's not strive to build a name for ourselves. We're living for His call, His glory, His Kingdom, not our own. Let's not neglect meeting together—let's join like we are today, to praise God who gives knowledge and wisdom to those who delight in Him.

And To Walk ... each day to heed God's Word and live out our calling in the world. Let's cultivate the whole world, in our work, our play, our travel, our studying, and our socialising. Let's not stay together permanently in that upper room, lest it become another Tower. Let's break out of our religious cliques and truly love those outside the church. Like Abraham, the father of faith, we're to travel light, and walk wherever God leads, blessed to be a blessing.

Wait, worship, and walk. Simple changes each day. After spending so long diagnosing the idolatry of knowledge, it's quick to prescribe the cure.

But this is not another type of impersonal, infallible knowledge. Hearing this message changes nothing. There never has been a purely objective type of knowing. We are subjects. We are always invested in what we know. And we only truly know what we truly love.

Jesus said *“if you love me, you'll obey my commands”*. So will we re-centre our lives on Him? I hope so, because Jesus is the wisdom of God, and the Tree of Life.

What Towers Are We Building?



Right at the start of this series Ryan asked you to answer three questions about the central reference point in your life:

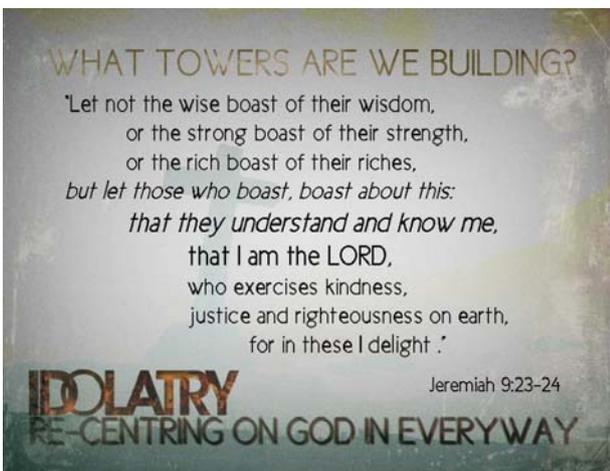
1. *How do you spend your money?*
2. *What is it that you love the most?*
3. *What do you wish you had control over?*

Remember that? We'll bring these answers to mind. The central question is this:

 Who do *you* worship? ... In what do you place your trust?

As we close with a song, you may want to come forward for prayer, perhaps to follow Christ for the first time, or to rededicate your life to Him. But as the band comes up, I want us to identify what tower we are building. Who will we worship?

If you want to acknowledge your allegiance to God, to be centred on Him, would you stand with me, right now?



In Jeremiah 9:23-24, the Lord says,

“Let not the wise boast of their wisdom, or the strong boast of their strength, or the rich boast of their riches, but let those who boast, boast about this: that they understand and know me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight.”

Lord, we acknowledge that You alone are God. You alone are the centre of the Universe. Our lives orbit around You. We ask Your forgiveness for making Your good gifts ultimate; for playing God and building towers in our own name. Thank you Jesus for humbly paying for our pride at the cross, drawing us into Your family. We renounce all our idols, of money, of love, and of knowledge. In You we possess the greatest wealth of knowing Your love. What more could we desire than to be with You. So lead us Lord, and scatter us for the glory of Your Name. In Jesus, Amen.