

## [Genesis 10:8-12](#)

(8) And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. (9) He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. (10) And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. (11) Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, (12) And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.

*King James Version*

The name *Nimrod* means "rebellion" or "let us revolt." At the heart of a rebel or revolutionary—one who seeks to change the present order through his own means—is the desire to rule. [Satan](#), the original rebel, was not merely *displeased* with God—he wanted to *replace* Him. A rebel is known for asserting his position, his displeasure, his ideas, and ultimately his own authority. He seeks preeminence. His trail is littered with division and destruction rather than [peace](#) and stability. Rather than allowing [God](#) to govern in His own creation—physical or spiritual—and direct events according to what He knows will be best, the rebel takes matters into his own hands with an unshakable [faith](#) in his own efforts and abilities.

Rebellion and revolution are not just about change, but change with an eye toward establishing a replacement leadership. Indeed, Nimrod was the leader of a revolt against God, not militarily, but culturally and spiritually through the Babylonian system that has its roots in him. The Bible says that rebellion, and all it implies, "is as the [sin](#) of [witchcraft](#)" ([I Samuel 15:23](#)). It also warns "not [to] associate with those given to change" ([Proverbs 24:21](#)), implying a

change in leadership, and especially in circumstances that God has ordained, for "an evil man seeks only rebellion; therefore a cruel messenger will be sent against him" ([Proverbs 17:11](#)).

The fact that Nimrod was a "mighty hunter" against God ([Genesis 10:9](#)) could have two different meanings. On the one hand, some scholars postulate that Nimrod's skill in dealing with wild animals led to various peoples flocking to his banner. His promise of protection and security from harm persuaded the residents of the land to submit to him:

Nimrod, like other great kings of Mesopotamian lands, was a mighty hunter, possibly the mightiest and the prototype of them all, since to his name had attached itself the proverb: "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Yahweh" ([Genesis 10:9](#)). In the primitive days of Mesopotamia, as also in Palestine, wild animals were so numerous that they became a menace to life and property ([Exodus 23:29](#); [Leviticus 26:22](#)); therefore the king as benefactor and protector of his people hunted these wild beasts. (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*)

A second possibility is that Nimrod did not hunt animals at all, but that his prey was *other human beings*. [Genesis 10:9](#) makes no mention of animals, but instead deals with Nimrod's character and moral base—something about his character was very contrary to God! He may have been one of the *nephilim*, one of the cultural giants who were "men of renown" or "men of name," signifying reputation ([Genesis 6:4](#)). Unwilling to brook any opposition, the "mighty hunter" would have hunted the other leaders of his time who were influential or mighty.

A common element connects these two possibilities: Nimrod's narcissism. Whether he gained a following through promising protection and security or he aggressively hunted the competition, what is revealed is his striving to be on top. Sadly, most people went along with it. People like to be associated with success, with popular movements, with momentum. Nothing attracts people like the appearance of greatness and accomplishment.

Nimrod certainly accomplished a great deal, as he has the founding of at least eight cities to his credit ([Genesis 10:10-12](#)). Indeed, one of them, Babel,

was the site of the infamous tower of the same name. The project began as a means to protect against calamity—specifically an act of God. [Genesis 11:4](#) records that the people of Shinar built a tower to "make a name" for themselves. Their solution to the threat of being scattered was to band together in a grand project that would ensure their viability. This, too, was likely done under the premise of providing protection—from another flood, if nothing else. The construction was not done to honor or glorify God, but for their own indulgence.

*Name* here means "an appellation, as a mark or memorial of individuality; by implication honor, authority, character." It contains the idea of a "definite and conspicuous position." They were not concerned about their standing with God, but only about their legacy! God's response to those who sought a name for themselves was the very thing they were trying to protect against: scattering ([Genesis 11:8-9](#)). God's scattering at Babel was so thorough that it exists to this day! "For who can make straight what He has made crooked?" ([Ecclesiastes 7:13](#)).

Nimrod's tale is one of arrogance and blindness. He did not use his leadership abilities and aptitudes constructively but for self-exaltation and the pursuit of preeminence. His competitiveness may have gained him subjects but always at the expense of someone else. He was not afraid to step on others as he fought his way to the top. His central thought was not what *God* was doing but what *he* was doing. He foolishly promised protection to those who would throw their lot in with him—something only God can guarantee! His "salvation through association," though it sounded nice, was deceptive and could only disappoint.

— David C. Grabbe

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