

"Character is power."
—Booker T. Washington

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Coattails

Genesis 10 and 11 contain the brief description of Nimrod, the founder of Babylon and the Babylonian system, which has so greatly influenced the course of [this world](#). While the Bible does not give many details of Nimrod's life or character, those that *are* available provide tremendous food for thought for those of us who are enduring the scattering of the church.

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](#)).

The same can be said of the church's current, splintered condition. Can anyone but God undo the scattering He has caused? We cannot, through our own means, effect a meaningful change in the church's condition—except by changing our *own* spiritual condition. While the greater church still essentially has a unity of the Spirit ([Ephesians 4:3](#)), it does not have uniformity, and it is impossible to say how long it will be until God acts to bring about a change in this condition. In fact, Revelation 1—3 strongly suggests there will be *seven* organizations present during the Day of the Lord, not one!

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.

God's hedge, or lack thereof, is His prerogative, according to what He knows is best for the individual. A man's standing with God—good or bad—simply cannot be passed on to anyone else. We cannot ride anybody else's coattails into the Kingdom.

- David C. Grabbe

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[The Right Use of Power](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Of all creation, man is the only creature made in God's image and given dominion over the rest of creation. When God breathed in the spirit of man (Genesis 2:7) to enable thinking, feeling, and creating, He imbued God-like characteristics, giving mankind the capability of subduing, controlling, and directing the rest of creation—a power not given to animals (Genesis 1:26, 28). With dominion comes responsibility to maintain (Genesis 2:15). The sad history of mankind shows that he has badly mismanaged his power, bringing about disease, war, and famine. Such people will be brought into account (Revelation 11:18). God's Spirit enables us to direct this power in a responsible, godly manner.

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by Staff

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