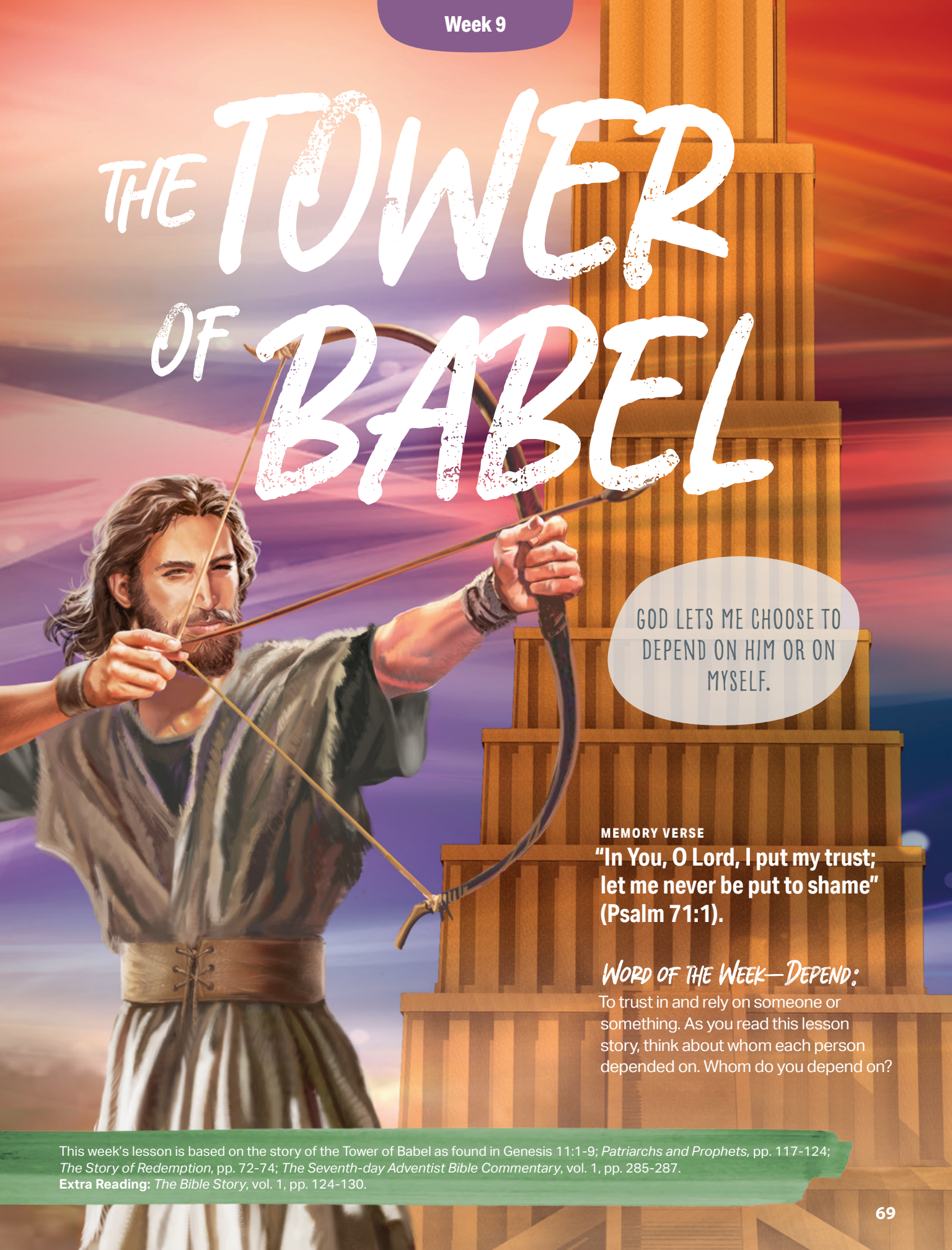
THE TOWER OF BABEL



GOD LETS ME CHOOSE TO DEPEND ON HIM OR ON MYSELF.

MEMORY VERSE

"In You, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be put to shame" (Psalm 71:1).

Word of the Week—Depend:

To trust in and rely on someone or something. As you read this lesson story, think about whom each person depended on. Whom do you depend on?

This week's lesson is based on the story of the Tower of Babel as found in Genesis 11:1-9; *Patriarchs and Prophets,* pp. 117-124; *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 72-74; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 285-287.
Extra Reading: *The Bible Story*, vol. 1, pp. 124-130.



☐ SUNDAY

Depending on God

In the world washed of wickedness Noah and his family set about finding a good place to plant gardens, begin farming, and make a warm home. For a time the family stayed in the mountain area near to where the ark had come to rest. Here Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth built cozy houses from whatever they could find.

With happy hearts they depended totally on God to guide them, for life was not easy in the flood-damaged world. Plants and forests had been ripped out of the ground, buried, or washed away. Rocks and rubble needed to be cleared, forests replanted, and vegetable gardens sown with seeds. It was hard work! Why were they happy? Read Psalm 144:15.

The Bible says it well in Philippians 4:11: "I have learned to be satisfied with the things I have and with everything that happens" (ICB). God was pleased that they were happy and content as they depended on Him for everything.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *Can you think of a time things were hard for you—at home, in school, or with your friends? Did you depend on God to help you?*

Pray: God wants to help you and fill your heart with happiness, no matter what is going on. Thank God for helping you to depend on Him.

Do: Tell a younger child about last week's lesson story. Use last week's Sabbath School craft spinner to tell it.



PRAY: Thank God for loving you and showing you His love. Ask Him to help you to always choose His ways.

☐ **MONDAY**

Faith and Doubt Live Side by Side

With houses built, gardens planted, and animals grazing contentedly across the mountainside, life was good for the four happy couples. Over time beautiful babies were born, and homes became places of laughter, singing, and work. Those babies grew up to be strong and healthy moms and dads too. Time went by quickly, and soon Noah was a granddad, and then a great-granddad to many children!

Granddad Noah loved to gather everyone together to worship God. He told them wonderful stories about the beautiful world before the Flood, life on the ark, and God's rainbow promise. But sadly, some people got tired of listening to his stories. They got angry at those who chose to trust and obey God. They wanted to do things their own way. They depended on themselves and their own opinions, not on God.

Noah shook his head in sadness. He tried to draw them back to their loving Creator. God and Noah both knew that if everyone remembered how much God loved them, they would be happy and love God in return.

What else did God want them to remember? **Read Deuteronomy 7:9.**

God is so loving and faithful that He didn't give up on those who rejected Him, nor did He stop loving them. But in the end many of the people in Noah's family chose to walk away from God and their faithful relatives. They packed up their belongings and left the beautiful mountain region and headed south toward the plains.

God will do all He can to remind us of His love and keep us close to Him. And He will always love us, even if we choose to depend on ourselves and our own opinions instead of on Him.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *Imagine God's people watching their uncles, cousins, and friends walking away. How would they have felt?*
- *What would you have said to try to persuade the relatives not to turn their backs on God?*

MAP FIND: Genesis 8:4 says the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. If your family has a Bible with maps, an atlas, or Google maps online, look up Mount Ararat. Then trace where you think Noah and his family may have gone from there to build homes in the valley. Look at where you think the unbelievers might have gone next.

TUESDAY

Busy Building a City

With God's faithful people far behind them, the bold unbelievers found a new place to live. Where did they move to? **Read Genesis 11:2.**

The soil was great for growing gardens, and plenty of fresh water flowed in a nearby river. Searching around, they found clay to make sunbaked bricks and sticky tar to hold them together. They thought they were very clever to have found the perfect building materials. Pretty soon grand houses, smooth roads, stores, and barns rose up from the ground. Feeling very confident in their unbelief, they soon built a big city.

God had instructed His people to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Genesis 9:1). It was God's plan to spread His love everywhere. But while the people in the city grew in numbers, they did not want to be scattered. They would depend on their own plan, not God's.

The place *they* chose, the city *they* built, was beautiful. The unbelievers gave themselves a pat on the back. Their chests puffed up with pride as their hearts filled up with "we." *We* are clever, *we* are wise, *we* are strong, *we* are mighty builders . . . we, we, we.

If only they had chosen instead to depend on God. If only they had known, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Psalm 127:1). While they were working hard for things that aren't really important, up in the mountain area their relatives were happily depending on God and building good things in their hearts.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *What good things do you think God's faithful people were building in their hearts? What good things would you like God to build in your heart?*

Pray: If you'd like to choose God's love and His plan for you today, tell Him that He's your number one. Ask God to build good things in your heart.

Do: Make salt dough bricks. Mix together 2 cups flour, ½ cup salt, and ¾ cup water. Roll out and cut into rectangular bricks. Bake approximately 1 hour at 250° F (120° C) or until the bricks are hard. Once dry, write a word of your memory verse on each one. Put the bricks in order as a reminder to depend on God.

For You, Parents: In our me-first world we can easily find ourselves chasing things rather than God. Be encouraged that as you spend this time in God's Word with your child, you are laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20).



☐ WEDNESDAY

A Crazy Escape Plan

God had given beautiful promises to Adam and Noah that showed how much He loves sinners and faithful people alike. But a promise is beautiful only if it is believed; and the proud city dwellers didn't believe the promise.

Deep down, the city dwellers were angry with God because they believed He had flooded and wrecked the earth for no good reason. *A God like that could do it again*, they may have thought. They would not trust His love; they would not trust His rainbow promise. They would protect themselves should disaster strike again! They came up with a crazy and dangerous idea, something their faithful relatives would never ever have thought of. What was their idea? **Read Genesis 11:4.**

Their foolish idea caught on, and soon an army of workers were making bricks, collecting tar, and carrying supplies. The longer they worked, the prouder they were of the gigantic tower that was taking shape. They truly believed it would reach so high that it would save them from another flood and make them world-famous for many years to come.

Soaring up into the clouds, the tower could be seen for miles around. Children's eyes sparkled as they squinted up at workers scurrying busily around like tiny ants at the top. They had never seen such an enormous building, and they were in awe.

God had seen it too, and He was not in awe. For "those people who are ruled by their sinful selves cannot please God" (Romans 8:8, ICB). Without a doubt their choices broke His heart. They had depended on themselves and not God's promises. Every promise in God's Word is a true message of love from Him.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *If you had lived in the city, how easy or difficult would it have been for you to depend on God?*
- *What would you have said if someone asked you to help build the tower?*

Pray: Thank God for His promises that we can depend on. Ask Him to help you make sensible choices.

Parent Faith Talk: 1 Thessalonians 5:11 tells us to encourage one another and build each other up. Think of a time you have encouraged someone, or when someone has built you up. Share this experience and how it made you feel with your child.

Do: Think about someone you know who may need building up. Make a card to encourage them. You may like to include a Bible promise.

Fast Fact: According to *Wikipedia*, the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, is 160 stories high.



PRAY: If members of your family speak different languages, you may like to pray in these different languages together to thank God that He is powerful and in control.

SPEAK UP: Have fun saying the words "please" and "thank you" in different languages.

Please: Zulu—*jabilisa*; Russian—*pozhaluysta*; German—*bitte*.

Thank you: Swedish—*tack*; Spanish—*gracias*; Chinese—*doh jeh*. God loves to hear us speak to others politely.

ROLE PLAY: Act out or mime this part of the story with your family. Use made-up words to ask a family member for something. Think about how frustrating this would be if it were real.

☐ **THURSDAY**

God's Clever Plan

God longed for the tower builders to stop building and turn to Him, but some now believed they were more powerful than God. Others believed that He didn't even exist! God knew that these sad lies would spread, and people's hearts would become as hard as stone.

Out of love, God stepped in to stop the building Himself. He chose an interesting way to do it! What did God do? **Read Genesis 11:7.**

God and His team of angels went swiftly about their work to create total confusion. When someone asked for bricks, they may have been handed sticky tar. Another builder asking for a hammer might have been offered a shovel!

Everything was mixed up and messed up! Soon there was confusion and shouting, and angry fights up and down the tower. Some builders clenched their fists and kept on babbling, while others walked off the job. Just like that, work on the tower stopped completely.

Because of what happened, the city was called "Babel" (Genesis 11:9), which sounds like the Hebrew word for "confusion" (*balal*), so they would always remember how God confused the languages there.

The Bible tells us in Proverbs 16:9, "A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." What the proud city dwellers thought was a clever plan was really very foolish. God needed to direct their steps and challenge their dependence on themselves before wickedness grew bigger than their tower.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT

- *Read the memory verse. How were the tower builders "put to shame"?*
- *Have you ever had a friend step in and stop you from doing or saying something foolish? How grateful did you feel?*
- *Do you depend on God to always be that friend to you?*



FRIDAY

Fill the Earth

God's clever plan to stop the tower builders had worked very well. Then to help them understand that they didn't rule the world as they proudly believed, God sent a massive bolt of lightning to smash the top of the tower and send it toppling to the ground. What an impressive way to remind them that He was in charge! Scared and stripped of their boastful words, people scurried to their homes and shut themselves in. Gradually they found others they could understand. But everyone living together in one place was a nightmare of mix-ups and misunderstandings! What happened next? **Read Genesis 11:8.**

God had said to Grandfather Noah and his sons, "Fill the earth" (Genesis 9:1). But the city dwellers had ignored God's wise words, so now His wise plan meant they had to split up and spread out. God was pleased that they would have a fresh chance to learn to depend on Him again as their friend.

God loves for us to depend on Him and follow His instructions. When we depend upon and obey Him, we show God that we choose Him to be the leader of our lives. When we don't, God doesn't give up on us. Instead, He uses different ways to help us.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *How well do you follow instructions? How do you respond when others do something to help you obey?*



Friday Night

Share and Praise

Take your lesson book and your family to a favorite place; consider going outside. Reflect on what you have learned from the story as you look at the pictures and read parts of the lesson. Share your thoughts with your family. Recite your memory verse and sing some praise songs together, including the hymn "Only Trust Him" *(The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal,* no. 279).

Family Journal

- One important thing I learned from this week's story is . . .
- Remembering this story will help me when I . . .

Pray

Thank God for helping you to depend on Him and follow His instructions.

For You, Parents

No matter where you live in the world—city or country—be encouraged that God and His Spirit are with you and your family as you depend on Him. "The sweetest type of heaven is a home where the Spirit of the Lord presides" (Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home,* p. 15). May you and your family be blessed by a home that is the sweetest type of heaven.

SABBATH SPECIAL

Retell the Bible Story

Think about whom you could tell the story to. Think also about who could help you.

Collect props (objects) that could help you tell the story in a creative way. Suggested props for each day's lesson:

- Sunday: seeds, a gardening tool, stuffed farm animals (or pictures), building blocks.
- Monday: a baby doll, a backpack or bag.
- Tuesday: either clay, play-dough, dirt and water, or blocks, a picture of a large city.
- Wednesday: a rainbow you have drawn, lots of blocks, building tools.
- Thursday: a stone, building tool.
- Friday: a piece of cloth or other object to represent lightning, a backpack or bag.

Tell the story to your audience. You may like to practice several times first.



Special Delivery: The Fish God Sent

There was only a little rice left in the house. Mother sighed as she gathered it in her hands, knowing it was enough only to fill her young son's tiny belly. She had no money left and no relatives or friends to help her. Life in Myanmar was full of challenges.

But Mother wouldn't let the tears come. She knew that however bad things got, God loved and cared for her family. She would depend on God to help her yet again. With a smile she gathered her children, and they all knelt down and prayed that God would send them food for Sabbath lunch. Then they set out for church.

Mother was quiet on the way to church; her eldest daughter, Rachana, knew that she was praying. And she knew that God would provide for their needs. She was happy as she skipped into the little church and sang her favorite songs. The family enjoyed Sabbath worship, but when church ended, they were eager to get home and see what God had for them to eat.

About halfway home Mother stopped. "See that plastic bag on the road?" she said. "I think it has something inside it. Sister, please get it."

Sister opened the bag and looked inside. "It's a fish," she said. "Someone must have dropped it."

Mother looked around, but she saw no one looking as if they had lost something. "I think God sent the fish in answer to our prayers," Mother said.

As the family set out for home, Mother chatted happily. "Isn't God good? He sent us a fish, and He even wrapped it so it would stay clean!"

When the family arrived home, Mother prepared a fire to cook the fish and rice while the children gathered some greens that grew around their little home. Then they feasted on fish and rice and vegetables.

When things are hard for Rachana's family, they talk about the times God has given them food. They know they can depend on God for all things. "God wants good things for us," Rachana says. "He loves us and cares for us."

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