

Unit 5 English for All: A Truly Global Language

The Tower of Babel

Jason's only goal in life was to be famous. He aimed to be the most popular kid in school. He didn't care what he did to gain popularity. It did not even matter if he told lies or hurt others' feelings. All he desired was fame.

Soon, however, he discovered that to cover up his lies, he needed to tell more. His whole life seemed to be making up stories to impress others. Many of his lies were about other students to make him appear better. Nevertheless, this only led to him being less popular because he was upsetting his peers. In his pursuit of fame, he had ignored others' feelings and destroyed his relationships. He had made a name for himself, but it was a bad name. His actions had resulted in his own moral confusion and bad reputation.

Jason's focus on himself recalls a story from the Bible. In the beginning, there were just a few people in the world. Everyone spoke the same language, living in harmony with each other and God. Over time, the human population grew. Some people sought living space in new lands. One of the groups reached a beautiful land which they named Shinar. They decided to settle there.

After a while, the settlement grew. The people of Shinar became proud and even boasted about their splendid city. They were determined to make Shinar the most magnificent city on earth. To show off their greatness, they began to build a tower which they hoped would reach the sky. This monument would be noticed by all humanity. It would make Shinar the supreme earthly city. Its people would be superior to everyone else and would even have no need for God. Thus, the citizens became only interested in themselves and stopped praising God.

Although they ignored God, he was nevertheless conscious of them. God resolved to end their selfishness. He suddenly made everyone in Shinar speak different languages. They were confused and could not understand each other. Hence, they could no longer live or work together. Leaving the tower unfinished, they abandoned their

city. Shinar was renamed Babel, meaning the “Gate of God.”

Today, the Tower of Babel is a symbol of the confusion arising from selfish human ambition and pride. Jason, like many people who seek fame at all costs, had built his own Tower of Babel and paid the price.

Please choose or write down the best answer to each question.

1. Which of the following about Jason is **NOT** mentioned in the passage?
 - (A) Why he wanted to be famous.
 - (B) How he became famous.
 - (C) Why he made up untrue stories.
 - (D) How his peers felt about him.
2. Which of the following is **NOT** how God knew people of Shinar no longer cared about other people?
 - (A) They were building a tower that could reach the sky.
 - (B) They did not praise God any more.
 - (C) They were proud and began to boast about their city.
 - (D) Their settlement grew and was splendid.
3. What did Jason and people of Shinar have in common?

4. How did God punish people of Shinar for being so arrogant?

5. According to the passage, what happened to people in Shinar when they couldn't speak the same language?
