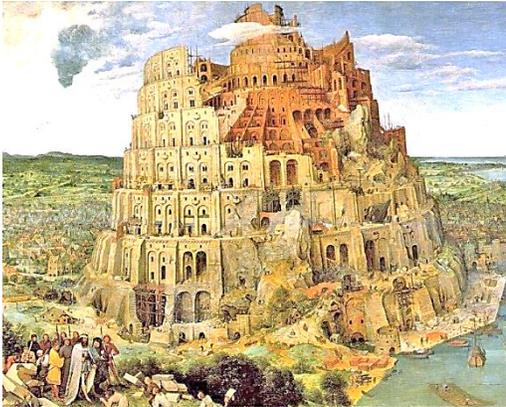


PARABLE OF THE BUILDER

Luke 14:25–33

While journeying to Jerusalem, *“great crowds accompanied him,”* [v25]. At this time Jesus turned to the masses to soberly instruct them. In order to follow him, he said, a man must hate every member of his family. Indeed, he must hate his own life. In fact, *“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.”* [v28] All who heard these remarks knew the cross to be a cruel means of execution reserved for criminals. To follow Christ could mean conflict, persecution and a terrible death.



Pieter Bruegel, *The Tower of Babel*

Earlier Jesus taught a similar lesson to the disciples [Mat. 10:34–39]. The Gospel, he said, would be divisive and create quarrels among families. *“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,”* he explained [v37]. In that passage, the word ‘love’ conveys the same meaning as the word ‘hate’ in this account [Luke 14].

Jesus then tells a parable about a man who plans to build a tower. If he’s wise, care and preparation precede a final decision. Otherwise, when others see the builder cannot finish what he started, humiliation will follow.

Every disciple must understand that following the Lord will cause conflict. Friends may become cold, distant or even hostile. A man’s own family members might reject him as a follower of Christ. Kingdom disciples must be prepared to give up any dreams for a quiet, peaceful life of harmony and accept harsh, often painful consequences.

In a second illustration Jesus asks what a wise king would do when confronted by a much stronger opponent. Before being attacked and destroyed, of course the king will send envoys to seek terms of peace. Just as he did in Luke 12:58–59, our Lord warns that we cannot remain neutral before Almighty God. Psalm 95:3 reads, *“For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.”* If not fully reconciled, we stand to be condemned for eternity.



Pieter Bruegel, *The Tower of Babel (Detail)*

The Lord taught this lesson again and again. In Luke 9:57–62, Jesus addressed three would-be followers, each having his own personal reservations. He told one, *“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”* [v62] Jesus does not call followers to an easy life. The Apostle writes, *“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* [II Tim. 3:12] Jesus concludes, *“So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”* [v33]. As Kingdom Disciples, are we fully surrendered and reconciled with God?