



# Tower of Babel

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- Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1563)
- Based on the Colosseum



# Tower of Babel

- Lucas van Valckenborch, 1594



# Confusion of Languages

- Paul Gustave Louis  
Christophe Doré







# Genesis 11

## The Text

# Thoughts on the Primeval History, von Rad

- Tower Babel is keystone to the Primeval history
- Story God & man is an increase in sin to “avalanche proportions.”
- Despite this, “God’s activity of succor and preservation was revealed.”
- Story of God and man ... continuously new punishment and at the same time, gracious preservation
- Tower of Babel story concludes with God’s judgement on humankind; is God’s gracious forbearance now broken?
- Answer given in Abraham story

# P, J, and E (and R) – A review before Westermann

- Priestly source
- Narrative sources J and E
- Some say there is an R (for redactor)
- Fourth source in the Pentateuch, D, for the author of Deuteronomy

# Thoughts on Primeval History, Westermann

- *Creation as comprehensive talk about reality*: In the creation declaration, people for the first time conceptualized the origin of humankind and the world as a whole.
  - R - “redactor” has integrated two perspectives, J, which speaks of humanity, and P, which speaks of the world.
  - This combination has made the biblical primeval story effective through the millennia.
  - This parallels division of the sciences into the natural and the human



# Thoughts on Primeval History, Westermann

- *Created in the image of God*: God created humanity to be His counterpoint so that something can happen between God and the individual.
  - Human dignity cannot be abrogated by distinctions between groups or sorts of people.
  - The image and likeness of God includes what we would call responsibility.

# Thoughts on Primeval History, Westermann

- *Punishment of the 'Evil One' and tolerance of evil: God punishes people.*
  - God preserves one's humanity in His restrictive punishment
  - The image and likeness of God includes what we would call responsibility.
  - Punishment in the primeval story is not based on a fixed set of principles. Punishment is not in the service of justice (fixed principles), but in the service of life.