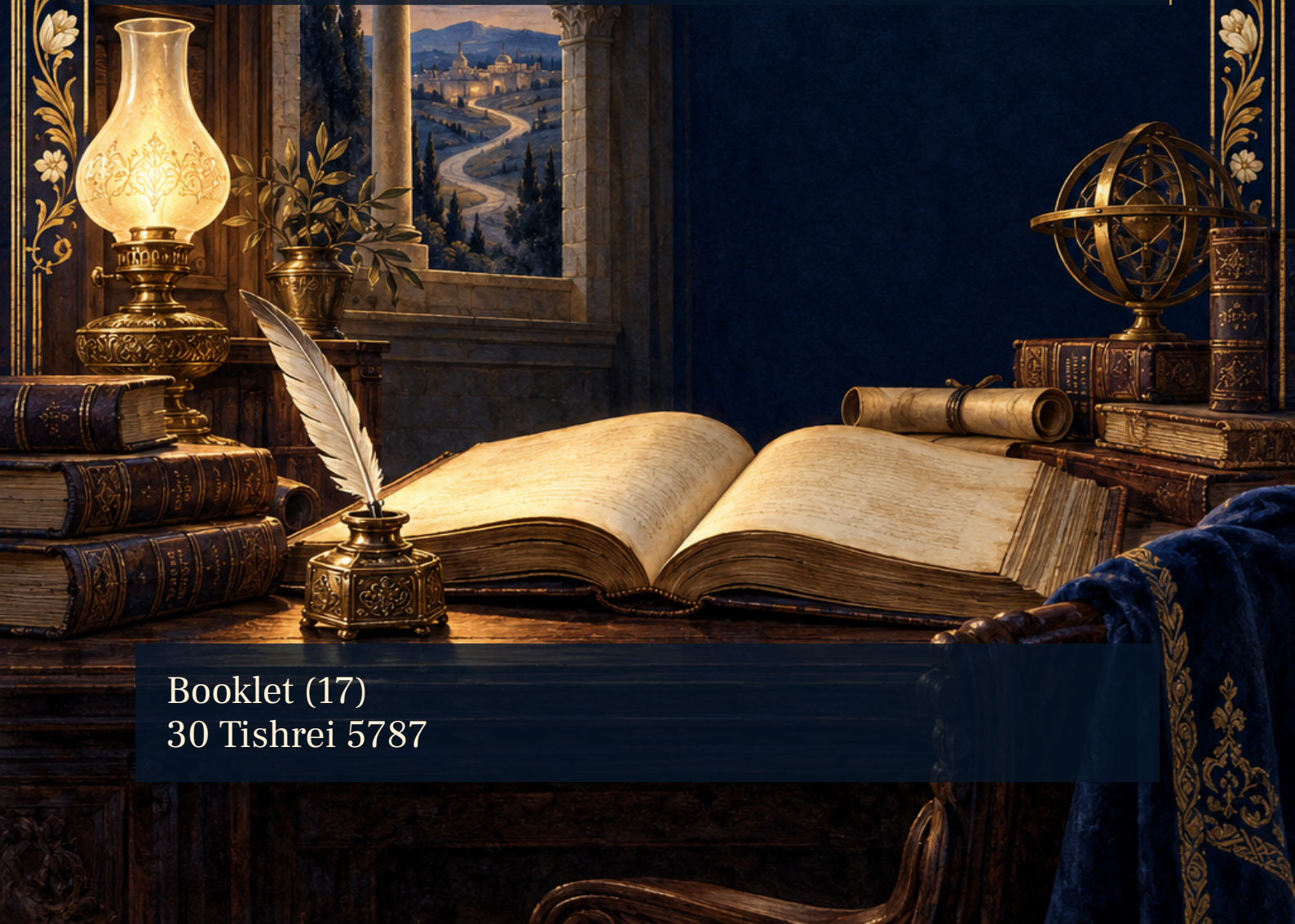


Beit Midrash YeshivahAI

Daily Rashi Study Series

Why Build a Tower in a Valley?

Babel, the valley of Shinar,
and the victims of the Flood



Booklet (17)
30 Tishrei 5787

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1 · A tower to heaven, beginning in a valley?

To reach higher, start higher. That is the natural thought when reading about the Tower of Babel. Yet the Torah says that the people found a valley in the land of Shinar, settled there, and proposed a city and a tower with its top in heaven. Rashi adds, in his commentary on the Flood, that Babylonia is low and that the Flood's dead were swept there. If they wanted to approach the firmament or rise above floodwater, a mountain offered an immediate advantage; in a valley, they would have to build even the height that a mountain already provides. Why did the low place become the starting point for their ascent?^[1]

The difficulty becomes sharper within Rashi's own commentary. In the tower narrative, he reports their fear that the firmament would collapse as it had during the Flood, and their plan to give it supports. In the Flood narrative, he describes low Babylonia, where the Flood's dead were gathered.

1 · Rashi, Genesis 6:17; 11:1-3

Supporting something against collapse is different from taking refuge above water: each objective raises its own question about the site. If they sought refuge from another flood, the difficulty is especially strong: why choose the place to which the previous Flood's victims were swept?

The Talmud already asks why they did not build on a mountain. The difficulty becomes a way of examining the tower's purpose. Some commentators conclude that the builders did not seek a physical ascent to the firmament; others explain a practical constraint; still others find the meaning of their sin in the valley itself.

This booklet presents the question and all the approaches raised around it: explicit interpretations, later proposals, and suggestions for which an identified source is still lacking. For each approach, we ask what it explains, what remains open, and how it relates to the Rashi passage from which we began. The study was prepared with the assistance of AI tools and human editing.

2 • Three questions to distinguish

First: why a valley rather than a mountain? Second: why Shinar rather than another plain? Third: what does “its top in heaven” mean? An answer to one question need not answer the other two. Space for a city explains choosing a valley; it does not establish why Shinar was chosen from among the plains. A spiritual account of the site may explain Shinar without making a claim about the strength of foundations.

Rashi describes Babylonia as low; he does not give a measurement of the lowest point on earth. His wording should not be turned into a modern geographical statistic. Passages about the height of the Land of Israel and the Temple also require attention to their interpretive and spiritual context. The question holds without a record measurement: a mountain offers an advantage in elevation over a valley.

Three ideas about the Flood must be distinguished. In the Talmud, the school of Rabbi Sheila describes striking the firmament so that its water would flow out. Rashi describes constructing supports to prevent its collapse, like beams beneath a ceiling. Maharsha interprets the group wishing to live above as seeking refuge at a height floodwater could not reach. The firmament is the one described in Scripture above the earth; here we are discussing how the builders imagined acting upon it. These three ideas should not be combined into one plan.^{[2][3]}

We begin with the city and its needs, then turn to Abarbanel's argument against a flood refuge. We next examine the structure's function and the needs of the three groups. Interpretations drawing on Kabbalah and Chassidus explain how the lower place itself became part of the objective; the Ishbitz works also make an explicit connection with the Flood's dead. Finally, we consider practical suggestions and proposals that remain open.

“Mabbul: it wore everything away, confused everything, and carried everything from high to low. This is the meaning of Onkelos's rendering, tufana: it flooded everything and brought them to Babylonia, which is low. It is therefore called Shinar, for all the Flood's dead were shaken out there.”

Rashi, Genesis 6:17. This is the passage from which the question arose. The Wikisource transcription also records “the Flood's waters” in place of “the Flood's dead.” Both readings concern the Flood's movement toward the low place; here we follow “the dead,” as in the question.^[4]

2 • Rashi, Genesis 11:1, “shared words” (supports for the firmament).

3 • Maharsha, Chiddushei Aggadot, Sanhedrin 109a

4 • Rashi, Genesis 6:17. The Wikisource transcription records the variant “the Flood's waters” and attributes an emendation to Maharshal. An image of that printed emendation was not checked here.

3 • The Talmud already asks

Sanhedrin 109a reports the view of the school of Rabbi Sheila: the builders sought to ascend to the firmament and strike it with axes so that its water would flow out. “They laughed at this in the West”: the sages in Eretz Yisrael challenged the explanation, asking why they would not build on a mountain. Rashi explains that this would be the obvious advantage if the objective were to reach the firmament.^[5]

This does not mean that the Sages merely called the builders foolish. The ridicule is directed at the proposed explanation of their conduct. The chosen site tests the account of their objective. The passage then presents three groups: one seeking residence above, another idolatry, and another war. Rabbi Natan’s view follows: all intended idolatry.

The division into three groups does not by itself answer the question. The group seeking war might still prefer a mountain. Ben Yehoyada asks precisely this. For the division to provide an answer, we need to understand how each group conceived of the tower, or what outweighed the advantage of a mountain.

4 • The city determines the tower’s location

Rashi on Genesis 11:2 says that they searched for a place large enough to hold everyone and found Shinar. Bereishit Rabbah describes the search for a valley that could contain all the nations. Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer describes an extensive country consisting entirely of a plain. These are actual sources for the need for space, rather than a conjecture invented to answer the question.^{[6][7]}

Ibn Ezra explains that they sought a suitable site for a city. On verse 3, he rejects both a literal ascent to heaven and fear of another Flood: Noah and his sons knew the covenant. The

5 • Sanhedrin 109a, with Rashi

6 • Bereishit Rabbah 38:7

7 • Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer, chapter 24

tower was a landmark for those leaving the city, a means of fame, and a memorial to their name. Radak adds a lookout over livestock and a landmark for returning shepherds. Rashbam emphasizes that “in heaven” can describe exceptional height, as with fortified cities.^{[8][9][10]}

A tall structure at the center of the settlement can thus serve the city and its surroundings. Height relative to where people live differs from elevation above sea level. A landmark for shepherds and a lookout over livestock need to relate to the inhabited area; their construction need not begin at the point nearest the firmament. Still, the need for space does not prove that a nearby mountain or higher plain was unsuitable. Nor does it by itself explain why Shinar was preferable to every other valley.

The commentators on the city also differ. Rabbeinu Bachya emphasizes a tower serving as a landmark and directing people to settle in the city. Chizkuni stresses fortification, rule, and fear of war. Sforno describes a center of government and worship; Malbim describes a kingdom and imposed belief. A landmark draws people to one place; a fortress protects them; a center of government and worship unites them under a common authority. These are different functions, not one interpretation accepted by all.^[11]

5 • Abarbanel: the valley undermines the refuge theory

The city interpretations see the valley as suitable for gathering people; Abarbanel uses its low elevation as evidence against another explanation. He explicitly challenges the claim that the tower was intended to save them from a flood. If so, they would not build in a low place exposed to inundation. He connects

8 • Ibn Ezra, Genesis 11:2–4

9 • Radak, Genesis 11:4

10 • Rashbam and Chizkuni, Genesis 11:4

11 • Rabbeinu Bachya, Chizkuni, and Sforno, Genesis 11:4; Malbim, 11:2–4.

this with the Shinar tradition and points to the mountains of Ararat, with their advantages of height and building stone. This is one of the most direct sources linking low Babylonia, floodwater, and the question about the tower's site.^[12]

The passage's function matters: Abarbanel does not reconcile a valley with a refuge. He uses it to reject the refuge interpretation. His own explanation concerns a departure from meeting natural needs toward luxuries, crafts, honor, and power. The plain suits a great city and its needs, but he regards the objective they set for themselves as wrong.

Ramban likewise cannot simply be grouped with all interpreters of the gathering. He questions whether one city could accommodate everyone and explains a sin of “cutting the plantings,” an injury to divine unity. In simple terms, this is an improper separation within divine unity, like severing branches from the tree to which they belong. Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Radak, and Ramban should therefore not be said to offer the same explanation. Their account of the journey must be distinguished from their interpretation of the sin.^[13]

6 • Yad Ramah and Netziv: height relative to the surroundings

Yad Ramah concludes from the difficulty that they did not intend to reach the firmament at all. He interprets the three groups through the uses of a high place: a residence difficult to conquer, warfare from an elevated position, and idolatry. The warfare is against people. The tower creates an advantage in height within the settlement, rather than serving as a ladder to the firmament.^[14]

Netziv, in Haamek Davar, describes a lookout over the settlements to prevent departure and separation. In his

12 • Abarbanel, Genesis 11, opening discussion

13 • Ramban, Genesis 11:2

14 • Yad Ramah, Sanhedrin 109a

account, their “shared words” became enforced conformity: surveillance, officials, and punishment for anyone departing from the public’s view. This differs from Radak’s lookout: there, shepherds and livestock; here, oversight of people and their opinions.^[15]

In both interpretations, the tower’s function is tied to the settlement. Relative height means an advantage over the immediate surroundings, enabling defense, observation, or supervision. This weakens the premise that the builders had to reach heaven physically. Nevertheless, neither explicitly explains Shinar’s superiority over every other plain or proves that a nearby mountain could not have served the same purpose.

7 · Gur Aryeh: a mountain cannot replace the structure

Yad Ramah transfers the warfare to human opponents; Maharal explains Rashi’s language about warfare directed above. In Gur Aryeh, Maharal asks the Talmud’s question about Rashi himself: if they intended to “ascend to the firmament and wage war against Him,” why not on a mountain? He explains that the tower was part of illicit practices and an attempt to connect with higher orders through which they sought to cancel decrees. Its form, set apart from the earth, represented heaven. A natural mountain remains part of the earth and does not fulfill the same function.^[16]

The “higher orders” here are the arrangements of divine governance that the builders sought to reach through their practices. Maharal describes their attempt to intervene in them and oppose God’s decree. The building was part of that act: its height and form signified separation from the earth. Thus a

15 · Haamek Davar, Genesis 11:1, “shared words”; 11:4, “its top in heaven,” “make ourselves a name,” and “lest we be dispersed.”

16 · Gur Aryeh, Genesis 11:1, paragraphs 2–3

natural mountain, however high, could not fulfill the function of the structure they made.

This does not mean that the valley was nearer heaven or that God is situated at some physical altitude. Maharal shifts the discussion from geographical distance to the structure's role in a wrongful spiritual act. He likewise interprets the supports for the firmament as an action intended to prevent the Flood, rather than as straightforward engineering supports.

A mountain has a real advantage if we assume a physical ladder. In Maharal's explanation, that assumption does not exhaust the builders' intention. This is an explicit resolution within Rashi's commentary, giving it greater weight than a general suggestion about pride or ease of construction.

8 • Ben Yehoyada and Maharsha: different aims for different groups

Ben Yehoyada accepts the full difficulty concerning the group seeking war. He says that they did want a mountain, but the other two groups preferred the valley. The tower was built near the population so that the others could see the fighters and help them if they were being defeated. Proximity and assistance outweighed elevation.^[17] In this account, the fighters did not regard the valley as higher; they needed the other groups' help and therefore gave up the mountain's advantage. This is a compromise among the groups' needs, rather than a reason why every group independently preferred a valley.

Maharsha explains fear of a flood. In the school of Rabbi Sheila's account, they sought to drain the firmament's water so it could not be used for punishment. The group wishing to live above sought a high place floodwater would not reach; among the idolaters, unity was intended to protect against calamity. The group seeking war adds defiance.^[18]

17 • Ben Yehoyada, Sanhedrin 109a, on the three groups

18 • Maharsha, Chiddushei Aggadot, Sanhedrin 109a

Maharsha does give a place to fear of a flood. This passage, however, does not explicitly explain why they chose the valley. His account should not be joined to Rashi's supports as though they were a single answer. Ben Yehoyada, by contrast, directly addresses the choice of site.

9 · Zohar and Alshich: a place suited to the objective

So far, we have examined the needs of a city, fortification, and assistance, as well as the structure's special function. We now turn to interpretations in which the place's suitability for a spiritual action forms part of the answer. This is not an engineering explanation; it concerns how the builders sought to receive power and influence.

The Zohar describes the valley as an alien domain suited to the builders' action. They seek to draw from the higher domain into another domain. The question "Why should we ascend above?" clarifies that the intention is to receive influence in the lower place where they stand, rather than necessarily to take up residence at a physical height.^[19]

"Domain" here means a spiritual side to which they seek to belong, rather than merely geographical territory. "Shefa," or divine influence, means the goodness and vitality received from above, spiritually and materially. The question is how they seek to receive it: through submission to God, or by attempting to use the power without accepting His authority.

Alshich develops this as an attempt to draw influence through forces of impurity, creating a city and tower in opposition to Jerusalem and Zion. In this interpretation, Shinar's suitability is spiritual. Height and valley express a relationship of giver and receiver, not merely coordinates.^[20]

19 · Zohar I, 75a

20 · Alshich, Torat Moshe, Genesis 11

This does not imply that every low place is impure or every tall building holy. The discussion concerns the particular objective and the site's meaning within the interpretation of the passage. Nor should this approach replace Ibn Ezra's plain reading; these are different ways of studying the text.

10 • Torat Chaim: from the highest depth to the lowest

The Mittlerer Rebbe, in *Torat Chaim*, explains that the builders sought to draw the light of unity into the world of separation: the reality in which things appear separate and conceal divine unity. They wished to remain in their own selfhood rather than submit to holiness. "Selfhood" here means the sense of an independent self; "bittul," or self-nullification, means subordinating one's will to God's. They used social unity as a means of receiving divine influence without accepting the inner requirement of divine service.^[21]

Section 62 presents two possibilities: building on a mountain for visibility from afar, followed by "or possibly," building in a valley to reach from above to below through the tower. The Hebrew abbreviations *omek rom* and *omek tachat* mean the highest depth and the lowest depth. The words "or possibly" must remain: the passage does not decide exclusively for one possibility.

The first possibility must also be retained, even though it does not describe construction in a valley. Its relationship to the Torah's description of a valley still requires explanation. We should not supply our own assumption that they built on a mountain within the valley. The second possibility is the one that gives the low elevation an explicit function: bringing divine influence down to the lower place.

In the second possibility, the low setting is not an oversight. It suits the purpose of drawing influence into the domain of

21 • *Torat Chaim*, "Vayehi kol haaretz safah achat," §§62-64

separation. Sections 63–64 also discuss preventing judgments and obtaining uninterrupted material benefit. The explanation does not require the tower to have been capable of physically reaching the firmament.

11 • Mei HaShiloach and Beit Yaakov: keeping fear under control

Here we find the explicit connection with the Flood's dead. In Mei HaShiloach, volume II, the choice of Shinar is expressly linked to them. The builders sought unity and protection, thinking that the place marked by destruction would imprint lasting reverence upon them. In their conception, they would no longer need to work on their reverence repeatedly. The Temple, by contrast, unites Israel through acceptance of God's kingship.^[22]

Remembering the Flood and learning from it is not itself the difficulty. In this account, they thought that the place of destruction would instill permanent reverence, a protection supplied automatically. The problem is the wish for the place to do the work for them, without renewed acceptance of responsibility and the divine yoke. This is not a true promise that any place exempts a person from spiritual work; it is the builders' idea that the interpretation criticizes.

Beit Yaakov, Noach 53, directly asks why they did not build on a mountain. He explains that they wanted to correct the harm to others and the separation that had led to violence in the Flood generation, but wanted the place to provide restraint automatically. Within the bounds of their own will, they could then indulge their desires without constant examination. Building below alludes to the attempt to keep a holy power captive under their control.^[23]

22 • Mei HaShiloach II, Noach, "Vayomer Hashem el libo"

23 • Beit Yaakov, Noach 53, especially paragraph 3

This explicitly connects the question with Rashi's account of Shinar. It is more than "choosing a frightening place as a reminder." The main criticism is of replacing acceptance of the divine yoke and personal service with a mechanism that guarantees protection.

Torat Chaim and Beit Yaakov share a pattern: seeking higher benefit while retaining selfhood. They should nevertheless not be merged into one interpretation. Torat Chaim emphasizes drawing influence into the world of separation; the Ishbitz works emphasize permanent reverence and avoidance of ongoing examination and submission.

12 · Bricks, a broad base, and displays of power

Or LaYesharim quotes a practical proposal in the name of Imrei Shammai: the valley provides material for bricks, and an immense tower needs a broad base. The newsletter connects the second consideration with Tiferet Yehonatan's explanation of ascent beyond the earth. The quotation in the newsletter was read, not the original book. The chain of attribution must be preserved; the entire broad-base explanation should not be assigned to Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschütz.^[24]

These suggestions explain possible needs for space and materials. They do not prove that every mountain lacks stone or room for a base; indeed, Abarbanel emphasizes mountain stone. Nor does "starting deep, like a foundation" prove the point: the depth of a foundation and the elevation of the ground are different measurements.

An article at Yeshivat Har Etzion proposes the tower as a lasting monument after the Flood, making a special impression precisely in a low place. Rabbi Oury Cherki describes building an artificial mountain in place of the mountain provided by the Creator. These are identified later interpretations. A similar

24 · Or LaYesharim, Noach 5785, p. 2, citing Imrei Shammai

idea appears in a forum as an application of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's account of artificial building materials. Applying it to the choice of a valley is the contributor's addition, not a verified quotation from Hirsch.^{[25][26][27]}

13 • Open references and proposals requiring qualification

Proposals remain open for different reasons. Sometimes the idea is interesting but its attribution has not been checked; sometimes a link in the argument is missing. An unverified source does not prove that the idea is wrong, but it does not permit its presentation as an authoritative interpretation either. References to books not yet read. One suggestion is attributed to a manuscript addition in Tur HaArokh: God diverted the builders from a high place so they would not choose the Temple site. The reference appears in an online discussion, but the image of the source was not opened in the examination. It can be mentioned as an interesting lead, not as a passage in Tur that has already been read. A Hebrew discussion attributes to Iyun Yaakov an explanation about the space needed by the three groups; that attribution also requires examination in the book itself.^{[28][29]} The Tur proposal is attractive because it attributes the choice to divine providence. Its source and the question of why they also avoided other high places still need clarification. The proposal attributed to Iyun Yaakov considers all three groups' needs, rather than only the group wishing to ascend.

Arguments lacking evidence. It has been suggested that the firmament collapsed specifically at Shinar, so that they wanted

25 • "Tower of Babel: Rebellion or Monument," Yeshivat Har Etzion

26 • Rabbi Oury Cherki, LeOro 49 (2018), pp. 8–9

27 • Mi Yodeya: user6591, 7 March 2019, on artificial materials. The valley explanation is the contributor's application, not a direct quotation from Hirsch.

28 • Mi Yodeya: Michoel, 18 October 2012, referring to a manuscript addition in Tur HaArokh, Feldheim edition, p. 59. The book image was not checked here.

29 • Comments on "A small passage explaining everything," 1vsdat, attributing an explanation to Iyun Yaakov. The commenter and passage in the book remain unidentified; the attribution is open.

to erect supports there. No identified source for this explanation was found. The fact that the dead were swept to Shinar does not show that the firmament collapsed only there. It may indicate a low place to which water and bodies were carried. The answer is attractive because it connects two Rashi passages, but that connection needs evidence.

Another possibility is that they sought to demonstrate the superiority of human protection precisely where the Flood had displayed its power. This is a possible interpretive proposal, related to the explanation of the tower as a memorial. It is not an explicit answer in Rashi. Nor does it prove a practical advantage to low ground; it is a symbolic meaning assigned to the choice by the proposer.

Bereishit Rabbah interprets “they found” through the verse “If it concerns scorners, He scorns.” The discovery can be understood as fitting the path they chose. This is attractive because it links the discovery to their chosen conduct. The exposition, however, does not expressly say why they did not build on a mountain; applying it to elevation requires a further interpretive step.^[30]

The artificial-mountain idea was also cited in the name of Binaot Deshe by Rabbi David Shaul Greenfeld. That reference was not read in the original during this examination, so a definite attribution should not rest on it. The idea itself can be studied in the identified article mentioned above, while distinguishing its sources.

The distinction between natural stones and human-made bricks was also linked to Torah Or and the Rebbe’s talks through a study booklet for shluchim. References were given to Likkutei Sichot, volume VI, p. 13 onward, and Torat Menachem, volume XL, p. 326, as well as the 1931 discourse “Vehayah HaNishar BeTzion” about a city and tower opposed to holiness. These underlying sources were not read directly here. The

distinction between stone and brick does not itself establish that the Rebbe explained the choice of the valley in this way. A literary formulation was also cited in the name of Sefer HaParshiyot by Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov, describing an attempt to ascend to heaven specifically from the valley. It should not be presented as a Midrash of the Sages without a source. A fine story can illustrate an idea; it does not by itself resolve the Talmud's question. The booklet already contains sufficient explicit interpretations, so these references can remain open without inventing a conclusion for them.

14 • What does the choice of place teach us?

No single explanation has been established as the intention of all the builders; there are several ways to read the passage. Some interpretations make the site serve a city or allow assistance. Abarbanel uses its low elevation as evidence against the refuge interpretation. For Maharal, the structure itself was needed for the action they sought to perform; in Kabbalistic and Chassidic interpretations, the lower place itself acquires meaning. Each answer must be considered in light of the purpose it assigns to the tower.

For the question specifically connected to Rashi's Flood victims, the Ishbitz works add a direct explanation: the valley was where they sought to secure lasting reverence and protection without constant effort. Torat Chaim adds, as a possibility, influence drawn from above to below while the builders remain in separation. These explanations can be accepted without weakening the question.

The question teaches that knowing how high they wanted to build is not enough. We must know why. Someone building a ladder needs a high starting point; someone building a city, fortress, landmark, or instrument with spiritual significance also chooses the site according to its purpose. In some interpretations the valley is a constraint; in others, evidence

against an explanation; in still others, the key to the builders' intention. All the views need not be forced into one answer.

15 • A map of the views and their limits

City and landmark: Rashi on a place that could hold everyone; Ibn Ezra and Radak on the city and tower; Rashbam on the language of height. They explain the needs for space and a prominent structure within the settlement, and why a physical ascent to the firmament was not necessarily intended. They do not prove every mountain unsuitable or Shinar the only option.

Power and rule: Yad Ramah and Chizkuni emphasize fortification and a position for warfare; Netziv emphasizes control over people and opinions; Sforno and Malbim describe a center of government and worship. These are different understandings of the tower within human society.

Fear of the Flood: the school of Rabbi Sheila describes striking the firmament; Rashi gives supports; Maharsha explains what the groups feared and sought. Abarbanel rejects the refuge interpretation because they chose low ground. These accounts should not be assigned one plan or one conclusion.

Proximity and assistance: Ben Yehoyada gives a separate answer for the fighters. They wanted a mountain but needed the nearby majority in the valley to help them. Assistance explains giving up height. This account does not say that the other two groups needed the same advantage.

A sin in belief: Ramban explains “cutting the plantings.” He should not automatically be joined to the plain interpretations of a central city. The site of settlement and the explanation of the sin are distinct matters.

Spiritual action: Maharal explains why a mountain does not fulfill the tower's function; Zohar and Alshich explain a place suited to the act; Torat Chaim proposes drawing influence down to the lowest domain; Mei HaShiloach and Beit Yaakov connect the place with reverence they sought to make

permanent. Their shared spiritual dimension does not erase their differences.

Practical and symbolic suggestions: brick materials, a broad base, displays of power, making a mountain by human effort, and commemorating the Flood. Some appear in identified later sources, while others remain proposals. Foundation depth is not site elevation; a tower's visibility does not prove an advantage in every plain; and the place where the dead gathered does not establish where the firmament collapsed.

Open references: Tur, Iyun Yaakov, the original Imrei Shammai and Tiferet Yehonatan, Binaot Deshe, the Chassidic sources cited secondhand, and the literary formulation in Sefer HaParshiyot. These require focused follow-up. Until then, they should neither disappear nor be printed as verified interpretations.

Sources for further study

Rashi, Genesis 6:17; 11:1–3 · The question's basis and the search for a place that could hold everyone.

Sanhedrin 109a, with Rashi · The Talmud itself asks why they built in a valley.

Ibn Ezra, Genesis 11:2–4 · A landmark, fame, and remembrance, without a physical ascent to the firmament.

Abarbanel, Genesis 11, opening discussion · Low elevation is evidence against interpreting the tower as a flood refuge.

Gur Aryeh, Genesis 11:1, paragraphs 2–3 · A natural mountain cannot replace the tower's function.

Ben Yehoyada, Sanhedrin 109a, on the three groups · Proximity and assistance explain the compromise over location.

Torat Chaim, “Vayehi kol haaretz safah achat,” §§62–64 · Two possibilities: a mountain for visibility, or a valley for drawing influence down.

Beit Yaakov, Noach 53, especially paragraph 3 · The Flood's dead, permanent reverence, and an attempt to control holy power.

Further sources are given in the notes at the relevant discussion. Most checking used digital transcriptions rather than comparisons with every printed edition and manuscript. An unchecked reference remains qualified even when it is interesting. This English text, including source quotations, is our translation of the Hebrew booklet.