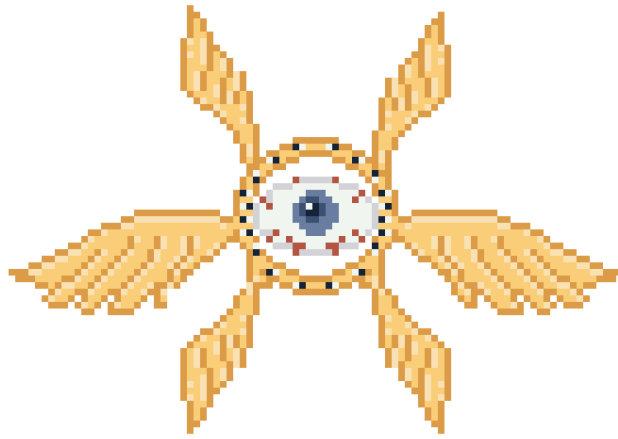


**Babel :**  
**Game Design Document**  
By Owen Beck and Jake Wardell



Reach For The Heavens

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Current Status:

Babel 2.0 has been underway since August 2025. Due to our return to our senior year of college at RIT, progress slowed down. We are nearing its completion now in October of 2025. Babel 2.0 features a robust new UI system which features a scroll in which you can view your tower's census stats and populace stats. These populace stats tie into our new event system, which is also releasing with Babel 2.0.

It is also worth noting that we are working on a side project called Bru Master for a brewing class, so this is eating up our attention currently.

## 1.2 Inspiration:

Babel was inspired by simple clicker games like Tiny Tower, Adventure Capitalist, and Cookie Clicker. We admire the simplicity of clicker games, and our goal was to make our own featuring tower defense elements akin to Bloons: Tower Defense via our upgrade tree and waves of attacking angels. On top of all this, to boost replayability, we set out to add some roguelike elements that ensure each run will differ from the last via our event system and populace stat management mechanics.

## 1.3 Background:

Babel was originally a prototype we built for a week-long game jam. We learned from our negative feedback on our last game, [ATONE](#), which told us it was too difficult for the average player, largely resulting from improper playtesting. Because of this, we wanted to make an incredibly simple core mechanic like a clicker game. The original version of the game was more of a demo, which featured the building mechanics and basic upgrading system. Due to its simplicity, we came in 13th place with most of the feedback consisting of, "Can't wait to see the full version". We were both incredibly passionate about this project and spent the summer of 2025 working hard despite both having full time jobs. By July, we released Babel 1.0, which featured the entire original vision of the game, with archers, temples, and angels that attack your tower.

## 1.4 Roles:

Team Babel is comprised of Owen Beck and Jake Wardell. Owen Beck was responsible for the game design, pixel art, and assisted with scripting. Jake Wardell was in charge of scripting major gameplay systems and assisted with the game's design.

# 2. High-Level Design

## 2.1 Brief Concept:

You are building a tower in defiance of God. This is a single-player clicker-based tycoon in which you must build your tower as high as you can without being brought down by God's angels or God himself. You are in charge of your tower's economy, upgrades, workers, and heresy carefully, balancing growth with survival to see how far your defiance can reach.

## 2.2 Genre:

Babel combines mechanics from multiple genres, including clicker tycoons, tower defense, and roguelikes. At its core, it's a clicker game where building your tower requires relentless clicking, but survival depends on managing resources, defending against angelic assaults, and adapting to ever-changing roguelike events that make each run unique.

## 2.3 Target Audience:

Babel is designed to appeal to both casual and hardcore players. Casual players can enjoy it as a low-commitment game to play alongside other activities, engaging with the core clicker mechanics at a surface level. At the same time, the game offers enough strategic depth and replayability to satisfy hardcore players who want to optimize builds and push their tower as high as possible.

During development, Owen worked as a camp instructor at ID Tech Camps, teaching children ages 10–17. Weekly playtests with this age group provided valuable insight and consistently positive feedback. Players in this demographic gravitated toward Babel’s simplicity and replayability—so much so that some students even set aside their camp projects just to keep playing.

Babel’s maturity level would be rated E for Everyone, as it was intentionally designed to be accessible to children and adolescents. While certain features, such as events and populace stats, require more advanced reading comprehension, younger players can easily bypass them and still enjoy the game.

## 2.4 Story Overview:

You have been appointed overseer of the Babel Project by Lord Bashar and Grand Seer Belior. Lord Bashar has a plot to build to the heavens to dethrone God Himself, to create a new and more just world. As the chief priest of the Church, Grand Seer Belior opposes this goal vehemently. After gazing into the Heavens, Belior caught a glimpse of God, but lost his sight shortly after. His goal is to build this tower to reach the Heavens and embrace God with his bare hands. As these two divas clash ideologically, you are left to oversee the construction and manage the population of the Tower of Babel.



**Good Luck!**

## 2.5 In-Depth Concept:

Babel is a single-player clicker-based tycoon that challenges players to construct a massive tower in open defiance of God. The core loop revolves around clicking to build floors, generating gold, hiring workers, and expanding the tower ever higher while defending it from angelic attacks. Each floor built increases your heresy meter, which pushes you closer towards being attacked by heralds, or even struck down by God himself. Progression is driven by resource management, unlocking specialized floors (such as bazaars, temples, and archer towers), and balancing the ever-present threat of heresy. Due to the perils of inflation, each floor costs more to upgrade than the last and takes more clicks to build. The look and feel draw heavily from pixel-art aesthetics, blending the grandeur of biblical myth with the humor and accessibility of modern clicker games. Runs are structured with roguelike elements—randomized events, populace management, and permanent modifiers—ensuring that no two attempts to reach the heavens ever feel the same. Game Link: <https://jorgedabossman.itch.io/babel>

## 2.6 Unique Selling Points

- **Clicker Meets Strategy:** Unlike traditional clicker tycoon games that are purely about number growth, Babel layers in tower defense and strategic resource management. Players must actively balance economy, defense, heresy, and their populace instead of idly waiting for progress.
- **Populace Management:** Behind the scenes, the tower is alive with a population whose culture, dogma, and political power shift dynamically based on the player's choice, tower growth, and random events. This creates meaningful consequences for how you build and rule.
- **Roguelike Replayability:** Randomized events based on your stats and multiple strategic paths ensure each run and play style feels distinct. This encourages experimentation and mastery across many playthroughs.
- **Thematic Flavor:** This is a satirical yet epic retelling of the myth of the Tower of Babel. Mixing biblical themes with modern humor and game mechanics provides a unique setting rarely explored in games.

- **Accessibility With Depth:** Casual players can engage with simply clicking and upgrading, while hardcore players can dive deeper into optimization, strategic population control, and advanced event outcomes.

## 3. Product Design & UX

### 3.1 Player Experience

In Babel, you play as an unnamed overseer appointed by his majesty Lord Bashar. Working alongside Lord Bashar and Grand Seer Belior, you must manage every facet of the tower's construction. Babel is set in ancient Mesopotamia in a pseudo-biblical world where angels, demons, and God are incredibly real. Your goal as the overseer is to build your tower all the way to the heavens.

An average run of Babel lasts between 5 and 20 minutes, though the game can technically be played forever. This flexibility allows for both quick sections and extended runs for players chasing high scores and advanced strategies.

The player's experience can be understood in 3 broad phases:

- 1. Early Growth:** The player rapidly clicks to lay foundations, hires their first few workers and engineers, and establishes a simple economy. The player can peacefully begin their construction with no threat of angel attack.
- 2. Mid-Game Management:** As your tower has been built up, your heresy has slowly grown over the halfway point, which means angels will begin to attack your tower. The player can now start building archer towers and temples to help quell this threat. This is where strategies start to emerge as players can choose how to solve events and how they will manage their populace.
- 3. Late-Game Chaos:** The tower has now grown massive and complex but fragile due to a tighter economy and more frequent angel attacks. When your heresy is higher, angels attack more

frequently and gain more health. The player faces difficult sacrifices, escalating threats, and high-stakes decisions that will eventually lead them to their downfall.

## 3.2 Key Moments

- **First floor built (First minute):**

On their first click, the player will notice that a progress bar appears alongside a hammer and an anvil. Clicking animates the hammer pounding, and the bar fills up, showing they're making progress. After clicking 5 times, the players will build their very first tower floor. They will see that it generates 20 gold every 5 seconds. They should also notice that the hammer stops after you stop clicking, showing you must click fast to keep making progress. Players will quickly realize that the second floor requires more clicks to build, and should catch on that each floor requires more clicks.
- **First Worker / Engineer Hired (~1-2 minutes):**

After generating enough gold, the player can afford to hire their first worker or engineer. The worker begins passively contributing clicks, showing that the tower is no longer entirely dependent on player input. If they buy an engineer, they will see that suddenly, the power of each click has drastically improved. This will show them that these are the two tools to counteract the game's price scaling to ensure they can get high power and high frequency of clicks by buying more workers and engineers.
- **First Angel Attack (Early-Mid Game, ~4 minutes):**

Once the heresy meter rises above halfway, the player encounters their first angel attack. The screen flashes, a warning appears, and angels attempt to destroy a floor. The player learns the importance of defense (archer floors) and balancing heresy, adding tension and consequence to what initially felt like a simple clicker loop.
- **First Sacrifice (Mid-Game):**

The player builds their first temple and is presented with the option to sacrifice adjacent floors to reduce heresy. This is a turning point that teaches players they can get rid of old floors they aren't using any more in turn for a drop in heresy. Now the

two adjacent floors are temples that can sacrifice again. This should inform the player that the temples eventually could take up the entire tower, leaving you defenseless.

- **First Populace Event (Mid-Game):**

As population stats drift toward extremes, the player triggers their first event. A narrative choice appears (e.g., “The Tower’s Inquisition”), forcing them to decide between two trade-offs. This moment reinforces replayability and introduces a layer of storytelling that makes each run unique. Each choice can have temporary, permanent, or singular effects that will slightly or majorly alter the rest of your run.

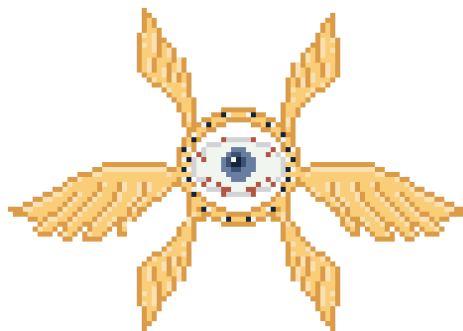
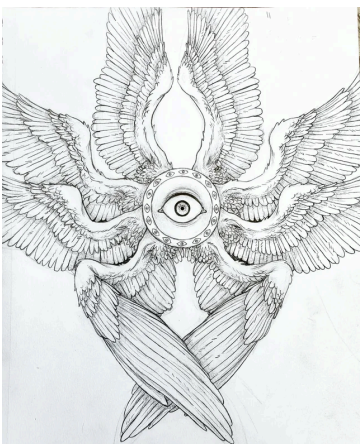
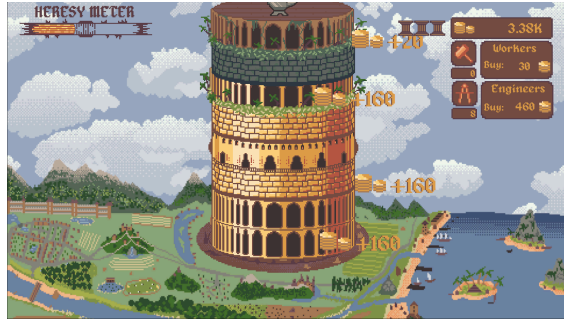
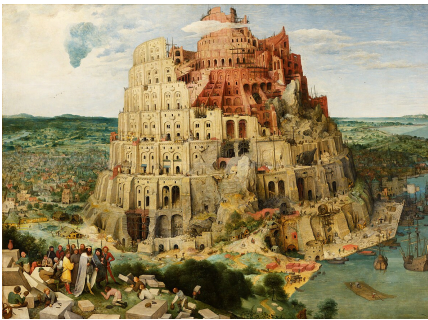
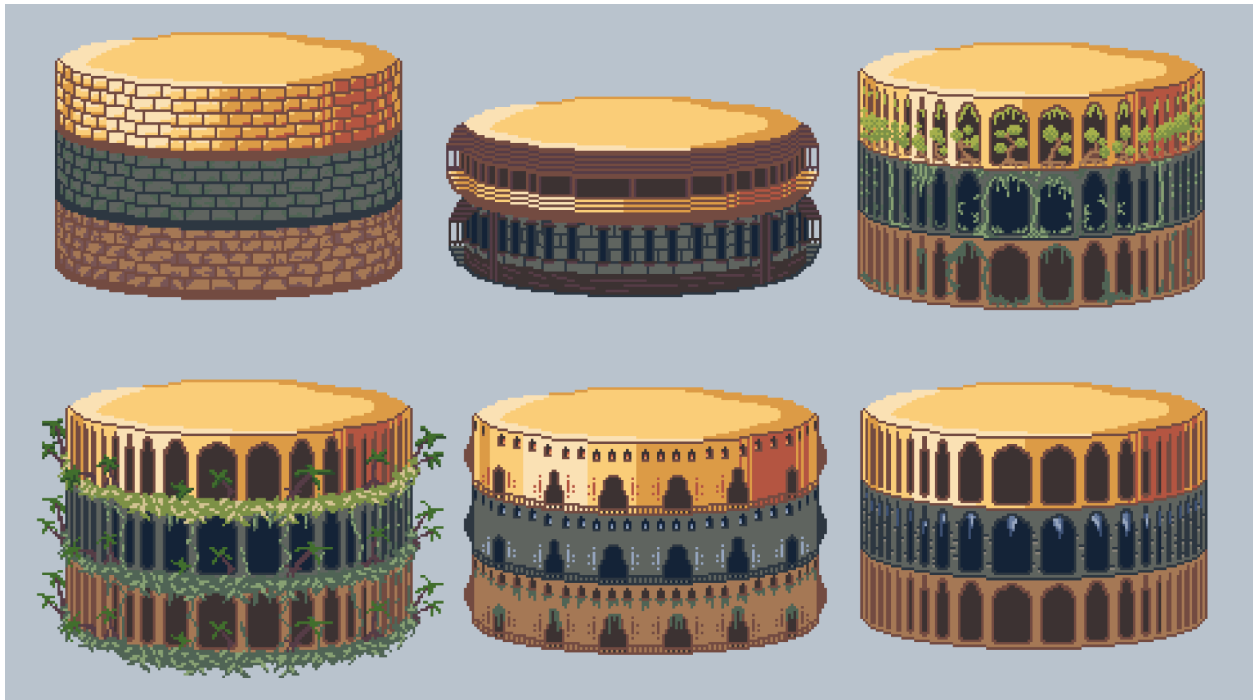
- **Divine Destruction (Inevitable End):**

Whether through maxed heresy or angel attacks, the tower eventually must fall. The destruction of the tower—accompanied by dramatic visuals and sound—serves as the climax of the run. While it is technically a “loss,” it reinforces the roguelike loop and motivates the player to try again with new strategies. The player’s floor count and stats will be displayed, urging them to retry to beat their high score or try a new strategy.

### 3.3 Art, Sound, and Music

The art style of Babel is highly based on classical paintings of the Tower of Babel and biblically accurate descriptions. A key goal was to have many different variations of floor types that spawn randomly, each featuring

multiple layers for their respective upgrade path.



A key goal with the pixel art style is to feel like this game could've been made a long time ago, almost like an old arcade game or pc game. This vibe partially comes from the slightly muted and limited color palette. It can be found on Lospec here by user matt: <https://lospec.com/palette-list/31>

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#b55945	#734c44	#3d3333	#593e47	#7a5859
#a57855	#de9f47	#fdd179	#fee1b8	#d4c692
#a6b04f	#819447	#44702d	#2f4d2f	#546756
#89a477	#a4c5af	#cae6d9	#f1f6f0	#d5d6db
#bbc3d0	#96a9c1	#6c81a1	#405273	#303843
#14233a				

All of the sound effects in Babel were created using the tool ChipTone which is an open source tool located here: <https://sfbgames.itch.io/chiptone>. The goal with the sound effects was to be original, retro, and uniform. In previous games, we have used free sound effects from varying sources, and the fact that they didn't match very well bothered us. The sfx are meant to add to our overall game feel, so that basic actions like building a floor or buying workers give pleasant audio feedback.

Our music was composed by Andersen Beck, who made 3 tracks for us in return for a case of Coors Banquet. They are titled *Bashar's Theme* (tutorial track), *Mesopotamian Lullaby* (main game loop), and *Angelic Assault* (plays when angels spawn). These tracks are great, and fit the vibe of their title and in-game placement very well.

### 3.4 Current Target Platform

[Babel](#) is currently hosted on [itch.io](#) as a web game that plays in the browser. It was designed to run on PC and mobile phones. It runs fine in browsers like Safari and Google on mobile, but our goal is to upload it to the Android and iOS app stores when Babel 2.0 is complete. This also includes uploading it to Steam for PC players.

### 3.5 Competition

Games that are similar to Babel include clickers like Cookie Clicker, Adventure Capitalist, or Tiny Tower. All are incredibly popular mobile games, especially among younger audiences. What these games lack is any form of strategy, and rather focus on endless grinding. Babel is a game made by

people who grew up playing these games and wanted to take it even further. Babel features more in-depth management systems than just hiring different employees to automate clicking and progress, such as the populace stats and events system. These games are meant to be played endlessly, where we took a different and more roguelike approach to boost replayability. Endless mobile games can be fun for a bit, but get stale and boring eventually as progress becomes stagnant and the player eventually stops being a player and more of a spectator. In Babel, we've ensured that even as players gain massive amounts of gold and floors, they will never get bored due to the complex event system, constantly scaling difficulty, and threat of angel attacks.

## 3.6 Monetization

Babel is currently free to play on Itch with the option to donate to the developers. Our goal is to charge a tiny fee like \$1-5 dollars when the game is complete and uploaded to Steam or the App Store.

# 4. Detailed System Design

## 4.1 Core Loops

- **Core Construction Loop (Click → Build → Gold → Hire → Upgrade):**
  - **Player Action:** Click repeatedly to construct tower floors. Clicking is Babel's main mechanic and drives all progression in-game.
    - Players can click upgrade buttons or buttons that hire workers/engineers.
  - **System Response:** Floors are completed after a threshold of clicks and begin generating passive gold income.
    - Upgrading floors changes the floor type to the next type in the tree based on which upgrade was purchased.
    - Hiring workers/engineers increases your worker count and is displayed in the top right corner.
  - **Result:** Gold is spent to hire workers, engineers, and fund tower upgrades, which accelerates construction speed and gold gain.

- Workers give passive clicks per second which allows the player to focus on other tasks and still make building progress.
    - Engineers boost click efficiency by multiplying the click power. Buying more engineers increases the multiplier.
  - **Engagement:** Players feel a sense of progress with each completed floor, while scaling costs push them to optimize. Slowly seeing your brown tower turn a shimmering gold is engaging and feels good as a player. It can also be incredibly satisfying to see your money increase dramatically as you upgrade your floors.
  - **Supports Goals:** Reinforces the central goal of defiance through building your tower as high as possible.
- **Heresy & Defense Loop (Growth → Heresy → Angels → Defense/Sacrifice)**
  - **Player Action:** With each new floor built, heresy rises. Players must either build temples or sacrifice floors to lower it.
    - Sacrifices (2nd upgrade tier for temple) consume all adjacent towers, turning them into temples, and the chosen temple will turn into a cathedral.
    - Cathedrals cannot be interacted with again. Sacrificing an adjacent temple will turn it into a cathedral as well.
    - The player can build archer towers to combat the angels.
  - **System Response:** When your heresy meter is halfway filled, this will trigger angels to be spawned in and attack your tower. The more heresy you build up, the size, speed, and health of the attacking angels.
    - If your meter maxes out entirely, God will strike down your tower with a lightning bolt that instantly ends your game, regardless of remaining lives.
    - Building temples will reduce your heresy, but under the hood adds to your heresy per minute buildup. So the more temples you build, the more you will allow heresy and corruption to slowly creep up in the shadows of the temple walls.

- Sacrifices dramatically decrease heresy at the cost of losing gold production from the consumed towers, as well as killing the population of the 1-2 floors consumed.
    - Sacrifices drain more heresy per floor consumed.
    - Archers have a range in which they fire arrows as the angels fly down the tower. When angels run out of health, they explode, preventing them from damaging your tower.
  - **Result:** A constant push-pull between ambition (growth) and survival (maintaining heresy control). Neither temples nor cathedrals can make money by default, so filling your tower with them will eventually cripple your economy.
  - **Engagement:** Creates tension and stakes — greed makes the game harder, but restraint costs progress.
  - **Supports Goals:** This core loop is what brings about the end condition of Babel. It was infinite before this system was implemented in Babel 1.0. It drives tension and replayability.
- **Populace Stats and Events (Expansion → Stat Drift → Events )**
  - **Player Action:** There are 3 Populace Stats that shift based on player choices and playstyle. As you drift towards certain polar ends of each stat meter, you will trigger events based on your current stats.
    - Dogma Meter: Heretical ↔ Orthodox
    - Culture Meter: Monoculture ↔ Multiculture
    - Power Meter: Authoritarian ↔ Democratic
    - Event System: There are specific events that trigger when you are leaning toward either end of any populace stat.
    - Events pop up on screen and present you with a choice of 2 options that will alter your run either temporarily or permanently.
  - **System Response:** Your choices in every event can minorly or drastically shift your populace stats in either direction, as well as grant game modifiers that will reward or punish the player.

- Stat changes occur under the hood and are not explicitly stated to players. They will notice in their scroll that the stats change based on their choices.
- **Result:** Players make choices in events that permanently alter their tower's ecosystem, affecting gameplay and future strategies.
- **Engagement:** Adds replayability through emergent outcomes and branching paths. This was our implementation of roguelike elements that ensure each run of Babel is unique.
- **Supports Goals:** Highlights the political/social consequences of tower-building beyond raw mechanics. This adds strategic depth and complexity to Babel.

## 4.2 Objectives and Progression

### Player Identity

The player takes the role of the Overseer of Babel, tasked by Lord Bashar to direct construction, management, and governance of the tower. Unlike Bashar, who wages war against the heavens, the Overseer's challenge is logistical, spiritual, and political — ensuring Babel rises skyward despite divine opposition and internal strife.

### Initial Knowledge

At the start, the player is told their objective plainly: *Build Babel all the way to the Heavens*. They are introduced to the basics through the first key moments:

- Clicking to build the first floor.
- Seeing gold generate for the first time.
- Realizing floors require more effort with each new level.  
This initial gameplay immediately teaches that progress is earned

through both action (clicking) and planning (spending gold wisely).

## Primary Goals

- **Immediate Goal:** Build new floors of the tower by clicking.
- **Short-Term Goals:** Accumulate gold by upgrading floors, hiring workers, and engineers to boost progress.
- **Mid-Term Goals:** Manage heresy, population, and populace stats while defending against angels. Make smart choices in populace events that will set you up for a good run.
- **Long-Term Goal:** Push Babel as high as possible before heresy or divine punishment destroys it.

## Progression Systems

Progression is achieved through a mix of **linear scaling** and **player-driven branching**:

- **Linear:** Floors cost increasingly more effort, gold, and risk as the tower grows. Angel attacks escalate with heresy-gain.
- **Branching:** The player influences culture, dogma, and power stats through events and sacrifices, which lead to different modifiers, buffs, and debuffs. These choices can create dramatically different “societies” across multiple playthroughs.

## Moment-to-Moment Gameplay

- **Click to Build:** Players click to contribute progress toward new floors or repairs.
- **Resource Management:** Gold is earned passively and spent actively on upgrades, workers, engineers, and archers.

- **Crisis Management:** Angel attacks or heresy spikes require immediate decisions (temples, sacrifices, defenses).
- **Societal Decisions:** Events linked to populace stats appear periodically, forcing long-term trade-offs.

## Overall Progression Arc

The player begins with simple clicking and gold management, expands into strategic hiring and defense, and eventually grapples with complex societal trade-offs. The ultimate progression is measured not by reaching a narrative ending, but by achieving the highest tower possible before collapse. Babel uses a score-based, replayable arc.

## 4.3 Game Systems

### Tower Construction

Players build the Tower by repeatedly clicking to complete each segment.

- The first floor requires 5 clicks; subsequent floors increase incrementally (e.g., 10, 15, etc.).
- Each completed floor generates gold automatically every 5 seconds.
  - **Level 1:** 20 gold
  - **Level 2:** 60 gold
  - **Level 3:** 160 gold
- Upgrade Branches
  - **Temples** (reduce Heresy upon upgrade, but make no gold)
    - 2 tiers, the second requires a sacrifice to upgrade.
  - **Archers** (Defend the tower from angel attacks by shooting them down)
    - 2 tiers, the second gains more range

### Heresy System

As the Tower ascends closer to the heavens, it accumulates **Heresy**, measured by a Heresy Meter.

- A higher Heresy level increases the chance of **angelic attacks**.
  - When the Heresy Meter reaches its maximum, **God strikes down the Tower**, forcing the player to restart.
  - The Tower begins with **three lives**; each successful angel attack removes one life.
- 

## Hiring and Upgrades

### Workers

- **Workers:** Perform passive clicks to automate tower construction.
- **Engineers:** Increase the player's click power through multipliers.
- **Archers:** Defend the Tower from angelic attacks.
- **Temples:** Reduce Heresy by performing sacrifices.

### Temples and Sacrifices

- Players can interact with Temples to perform **Sacrifices**, consuming multiple floors to lower Heresy.
- Consumed floors are permanently transformed into Temple floors.
- When no free floors remain for Temples, sacrifices can no longer be performed—leaving the player vulnerable to divine punishment.

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## Population System

### Overview

Population mechanics simulate the Tower's society, tying player decisions to internal social dynamics.

- Population size increases through **bazaars, tower expansion,** and **economic prosperity.**
- It decreases due to **angel attacks, disasters,** or **sacrifices.**
- These changes are reflected in real-time via the **Census Scroll** UI panel.

### Populace Stats

The population is defined by three core social stats, each represented by a sliding meter between two extremes:

#### Culture

- **Monocultural ← Neutral → Multicultural**
  - *Monocultural* tendencies rise from orthodoxy, smaller populations, and purges.
  - *Multiculturalism* grows through trade, large populations, and inclusive policies.

#### Dogma

- **Heretical ← Neutral → Orthodox**
  - Orthodoxy increases with sacrifices, low heresy, and temple expansion.
  - Heresy spreads through tolerance, democratic values, and rebellious events.

#### Power

- **Authoritarian ← Neutral → Democratic**

- Authoritarianism strengthens through control, suppression, and scarcity.
- Democracy thrives under prosperity, diversity, and public empowerment.

Each stat is interconnected—for example, **Monocultural societies tend toward Authoritarianism**, while **Multicultural ones favor Democracy**.

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## Populace Event System

Every few minutes, one populace stat is evaluated.

- If a stat reaches an **extreme**, it can **trigger a unique event** related to that societal condition.
- Events present **multiple choices**, each affecting gameplay in distinct ways.
  - Outcomes can be **temporary or permanent**, including buffs, debuffs, or systemic modifiers.

This system ensures that player decisions continuously reshape the Tower's political, cultural, and spiritual identity—making every run dynamically different.