

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Introduction

- 1) **Genesis 11:1-9** – the story of the Tower of Babel. The history of man up to this point:
 - a) Man created by God; man sinned and was cast out of the garden of Eden (Gen. 1-3)
 - b) Cain killed Abel and became a fugitive and a vagabond (Gen. 4)
 - c) Genealogy of Adam to Noah (Gen. 5)
 - d) Man became exceedingly wicked and was destroyed in the Flood except Noah (Gen. 6-8)
 - e) Earth began to be repopulated from Noah's sons (Gen. 9:1, 18-19; 10:1-32)
- 2) Most of us know about the tower of Babel, but do we know why it was built and its lessons?

I) **The Setting** (vv. 1-2)

- A) The whole earth [inhabitants] had one language and one speech
- B) Migrated to a plain in the land of Shinar (Mesopotamia) and dwelt there

II) **The Rebellion** (vv. 3-4)

- A) People gathered building materials in order to build a city and a tower
- B) Why did they do this?
 - 1) Make “a name” for themselves (earthly reputation, fame, recognition)
 - 2) Prevent being “scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth”
- C) Centralized themselves with a city and tower
 - 1) Tower served as focal point (religious significance? *ziggurat* = “temple tower”)
 - 2) Seemed like a great plan to human minds – city to dwell in and tower as focal point
- D) Serious problems with their plan
 - 1) Attitude of self-reliance and desire for personal reputation – pride (“let us” = 3x)
 - 2) Blatant disobedience of God's authoritative command to fill the earth (1:28; 9:1, 7)
 - 3) Trusted in and rallied around human wisdom and schemes – constant problem

III) **Divine Intervention and Judgment** (vv. 5-9)

- A) Lord inspected their works (cf. Rev. 2:2) – found to be works of human wisdom
 - 1) They would only get worse if continue doing what *they* wanted to do (2 Tim. 3:13)
 - 2) Man becomes his own authority instead of obeying divine authority by faith (Heb. 11:6)
- B) Lord confused what bound them together in evil – common language
 - 1) Isolated people into groups and achieved *God's purpose* of scattering them over the earth
- C) The variety of languages today is *not* a tribute to human evolution or human ingenuity, but a consequence of human rebellion against God
 - 1) God can, and will, put an end to all unauthorized schemes of men (Matt. 15:13)
- D) “Babel” = confusion; Babylon = Greek name - often associated with evil (Rev. 17:5; 18:5)

IV) **Lessons for Today**

- A) Unity is good when men are united upon God's will (Psa. 133:1; 1 Cor. 1:10), but bad when men have ignored God's word and have agreed on something God has not revealed/authorized (Ex. 23:2; 2 Jn. 9-11)
- B) We must not go beyond God's will, even if it seems “good-intentioned” (1 Cor. 4:6)
 - 1) Organization and work of the church, worship, fellowship, salvation, etc.
 - 2) There is no confusion if we just believe and obey Jesus (Lk. 6:46; 1 Pet. 2:6)

Conclusion

In Acts 2, God had his message proclaimed in the various tongues of men. The same God who confused the languages of men unites all men with the one message of salvation in Christ. We are now gathered together in Christ in one body/temple (Eph. 1:10; 2:13, 16, 19-22; Rom. 15:5-6). Are you gathered now with the saved in Jesus in His body, the church? Obey Him today!

Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9)	Pentecost (Acts 2)
One language used to promote man's word and work (vv. 3-4)	Many languages used as a sign of God's word and work (vv. 14-21)
Speaking in different languages resulted in confusion (vv. 7-9)	Speaking in different languages resulted in understanding (vv. 38)
Prideful men desired to make a name for themselves (v. 4)	Godly men exalted the name of God and Christ (vv. 22-39)
Punishment brought by God's wrath on sinners (vv. 5-7)	Salvation brought by God's grace on believers (vv. 37-40)
Division resulted from disobeying God's will (v. 4)	Unity resulted from obeying God's will (vv. 41-47)