

WHY THE SUDDEN CHANGE OF TONGUES?

[Gen.11:9](#) “Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”

[Acts 2:4](#) “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

When we think of what a simple organ the tongue is, we are astounded at the wisdom of God who created it. The number of words that can be made by the tongue seems to be almost infinite, Let us just suppose that every language has about 20,000 words and that there are about 3000 different languages; the total number of words which the tongue can speak would be around 60,000,000. Learning and vocabulary go together. The more civilized and learned man becomes, the more words he needs to express his expanded knowledge.

Learning a foreign language is difficult and it often takes years to master it. But there are two out-standing times in the Bible when man was suddenly given new languages by God. Today we shall learn why this was done.

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1. TO HINDER A WORK AT BABEL

Not too long after the flood the people came to a great plain and decided to remain there. They were all of one language. God had told Noah and his sons to “replenish the earth”, but in direct defiance to this wish of God they did not want to be scattered over the face of the earth. The lesson of the flood was soon forgotten and they were seeking their own glory and not the Lord’s. How awful to defy God and not let His will be done on earth!



There was confusion in their souls and they had confused plans for life. They evolved a grand scheme, and their thoughts ran something like this,

“Let us build on this plain a high tower which can be seen for miles around. This tower will not only make us famous for all time to come, but it will also hold our people together, and they will not wander away to other places.” So they began to build the tower with the thought that this life was the all-important thing, with little or no concern about life after death. They were children of the world and left God out of their confused plans, in fact, they opposed Him.

Since the Lord was displeased with their plans and projects, He, in love, decided to stop the building lest man become completely corrupt in his vain imagination. God changed their language so that they could no longer converse with each other and the construction of the giant tower ground to a halt as they began to scatter over the earth. There stood the unfinished tower, a monument to man’s foolishness and pride and confusion.

Babel is of sin, and every one who is not a child of God in Christ is living in the same confusion and sin as these people. This is what the Psalmist had in mind (Ps. 1) “The ungodly are like the chaff which the wind driveth.”

Would it not be well for each of us to get rid of some of our confusion? Would it not be profitable for us to re-examine our aims and goals in life? Pentecost is just the opposite of Babel.

2. TO AID THE WORK ON PENTECOST

A great change took place in the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Before that day they were confused and unclear as to the Lord’s plans. Even on Ascension Day they asked this peculiar question, “Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” Jesus had promised them that on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon them and also assured them, “He will guide you into all truth.” The Holy Spirit filled their hearts and opened their understanding to perceive the complete truth of the Gospel, and they became the errorless and infallible teachers of the Church until the end of time.



Up until the day of Pentecost the disciples were not fully informed about the person and work of the Lord Jesus. They had vague ideas, yes, but not real clarity. Referring to the coming of the Spirit, Jesus said in [John 14:26](#), “The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things.” Suddenly we see this clarity of the doctrine of salvation when Peter arose on this great day and preached faith in the crucified Savior as the only way to eternal life.

With clarity of doctrine they also became clear concerning their aims and goals as the chosen Apostles of the Lord; they were to spread the Gospel all over the world. The Holy Spirit strengthened them in this conviction by giving them the ability to speak in many of the languages of the then-known world. Although this gift of tongues was, perhaps, continued for a limited time only, yet the Spirit made it quite plain to the Apostles by the special gift of tongues that all people should hear in their own language “the wonderful works of God.” The whole book of the Acts is a history of the missionary zeal of the Apostles which they acquired on Pentecost. The added gift of tongues on Pentecost was given to aid the Apostles in their work of saving souls.

Pentecost is the birthday of the Christian Church and is a towering memorial to the grace of the Holy Spirit. Only those who have been born again of the Holy Spirit have clarity and peace in this life. May the same Spirit open our hearts to believe and, accept Jesus as our only Lord and Savior. He will also aid us in our determination to spread the Gospel throughout the world. The difference between Babel and Pentecost *is* great

indeed. God was pleased with the people of Pentecost, but was displeased with the people of Babel. Babel is entirely of this world with its proud and selfish aims; Pentecost is for the next world by preaching salvation through faith in Jesus. Babel is of sin, but Pentecost is of grace. At Babel God confounded their tongues into many languages to hinder and stop their work; at Pentecost the Spirit gave them many tongues to encourage and expand their work. Babel was an unfinished tower to the glory of man and it crumbled into the dust; Pentecost is a great tower and memorial to the glory of God and will continue until the end.

Babel is the present world-view, which holds that science will do everything, even convert this world into a paradise. Man and science can do anything! Yes, man is still building his little tower of Babel.

Pentecost and the Holy Spirit give us a different viewpoint. Being washed in the blood of the Lamb we show our faith by our works, and one of the best fruits of faith is that of doing mission work. As His disciples, we are always happy to serve the Lord who redeemed us.

What is our choice. Babel or Pentecost, confusion or clarity, living for this world only or for the one to come, defying God and provoking Him to anger or serving Him and being assisted and blessed by Him, eternal death or eternal life? May the Holy Spirit of Pentecost help us to make the right choice and be able to say with Joshua, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

AMEN

PRAYER. O Holy Spirit, shine into our hearts with Thy divine light and let us see our Savior's face. Fill us with Pentecostal zeal to carry out His wishes to preach the Gospel among all nations. Give unto Thy Church on earth a renewed heart and spirit that in these last days we may carry the cross of Christ to the ends of the world. Hear us, O Holy Spirit, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Son, ever one God, world without end. AMEN.