

Tale of Two Cities

Ok So the Spirit fell on them... Why did they speak in tongues? Obviously it helped those who were visiting Jerusalem at Pentecost By speaking in tongues..they saw that something supernatural was happening It allowed them to hear and respond to the Good News about Jesus... But as usual...God is doing something deeper here.

The Only Reason they Had to Speak in Tongues Is because God had confused their language in the first place.

Immediately after Noah's Flood.... Everyone spoke the same language God had promised with the rainbow to never flood them again. He blessed them and told them to multiply. The Story of God and God's People... Is that He loves and blesses us...and we often reject and sin against him.

Genesis 11:1-4 (ESV) 1 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. 2 And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

Shinar. **MAP** Shinar is one of the biblical designations for the lower region of the Tigris-Euphrates basin. The same region that witnessed the earliest development of civilization. The principal cities of the region in earliest times were Ur, Eridu, Uruk and Nippur.

Throughout the Scriptures and prophetically ahead in the future....this area is always an area associated with man's pride and rebellion against God.

Do you remember Adam and Eve's rebellion in the Garden of Eden? Do you know where the Garden of Eden was?

Genesis 2:8 (ESV) 8 And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

Genesis 2:10-14 (ESV) 10 A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.....4 And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

Man's original rebellion against God....came in the midst of a blessing....and from Babylon.

Remember Cain and Abel? How Cain killed Abel and then set up his cities east of Eden In Nod?

Do You know where Nod is? In Babylon.

Do you remember Noah and the land he lived in? How people had rebelled against God and Noah was the only one left? God rescued Noah and protected him on the ark.

Do you know the land Noah lived in? Babylon..

Babylon is first found in Genesis 10 in the table of nations. Here Moses traces the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. But when Moses traces the descendants of Ham, those responsible for a great deal of trouble for Israel throughout her history, Moses wrote the following:

Genesis 10:8–10 (ESV) 8 Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord." 10 The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Nimrod is recorded as the founder of Babel, later called Babylon. Nimrod's nature and character are seen in both his name and in his actions and in his origin in Babylon. His name means "Let us revolt or rebel."

God's ideal of a king is a shepherd who leads his people under God and in God's plan. Nimrod was against God and His plan and formed his own kingdom by force.

Then the Tower of Babel....In Babylon

Do you remember Abraham? He was called by God to leave his homeland and go to the Promised Land of God.

Do you remember how God told him to leave his homeland but did not tell him where he was going? Do you want to guess where Abraham lived?

Genesis 11:31 (ESV) 31 Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan

Genesis 15:7 (ESV) 7 And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."

One recurrent theme in the Bible is that there is evil in Babylon....God rescues His people from there and brings them to the promised land. He rescued Abraham....brought him to the area of the promised land around the Dead Sea (MAP)

But another theme is that evil chases God's people even in the promised land.

Do you remember how evil Sodom and Gomorrah were? How Jesus used them as an example of evil? Do you wonder how those cities became so evil?

Genesis 13:9–13 (ESV) 9 Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left." 10 And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord...., 12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. 13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.

Lot looked up and saw land that looked like Babylon....so he chose it. And we are told it too is full of wicked people....

Abraham had no sooner arrived in the Promised Land when the evils of Babylon followed him....look at who invades the valley of the Dead Sea

Genesis 14:1–2 (ESV) 1 In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, 2 these kings made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah....

Amraphel King of Sinar....that is Babylon.

Sodom and Gomorra were attacked and defeated by a confederation of kings and taken captive. This included Lot, the nephew of Abraham. But there is a bigger picture here to see.

Sodom and Gomorra were located in the land of Canaan or Palestine probably at a spot that is now under the southern end of the Dead Sea. But where is this? It is a part of the land God had promised to Abraham in the Abrahamic covenant

So God brought Abraham and his family to the Promised Land. The King of Babylon captures Lot and Abraham rescues him. Evil tried to steal Him, God saved him.

What does Abraham do to thank God for victory over Babylon's attack?

He stopped at a place called Salem which later came to be known as Jerusalem. Which would become the city of God. There Abram received a blessing from Melchizedek, King of Salem. Melchizedek means "king of righteousness" and in the Bible, he is a type of Christ. So, beginning in Genesis 14, we begin to see the contrasts between this Jerusalem City of God and Babylon the City of Fallen Man and Satan.

Sodom and Gomorrah would remain evil until God destroys them with fire from above...

Genesis 19:24–28 (ESV) 24 Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ... 27 And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. 28 And he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and he looked and, behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.

Later as we learned in the Jeremiah series, God would actually use these evil people to punish Judah for their rebellion against Him. Babylon and King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah, destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and carried off many Jews to Babylon as exiles. Including Daniel.

Because of the awful destruction caused by the Babylonians, Babylon became a symbol for the stereotypical enemies of God and His people.

Babylon is mentioned 260 times in Scripture, [MAP 1](#) and is second in importance only to Jerusalem. Biblically it is viewed as the Devil's city while Jerusalem is viewed as God's city. They are always seen in opposition to each other. Babylon is the result of apostasy against God's plan of salvation, the first international, political and religious ecumenical movement in the history of man, and one which has never ceased to exist in one form or another. Jerusalem is the result of God's call of a man and a nation to perpetuate His plan of salvation and nationalism for the world.

As you undoubtedly know, the city of ancient Babylon is in Iraq, [MAP 2](#) about 50 miles south of Baghdad on the Euphrates river. What you may not know is that prior to Desert Storm and the conflict in Iraq, Saddam Hussein had for several years been working to uncover the ancient ruins of Babylon with a view to rebuilding the city

and establishing himself as practically the incarnation of Nebuchadnezzar, the great Babylonian king who took Judah captive from 606 to 586 B.C.

Genesis 11:7-9 (ESV) 7 Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." 8 So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. 9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

Have you ever thought about how odd this is? Most teach that God is punishing them. They rejected God. Refused to receive His blessing...they tried to build their own way to Heaven...telling God they did not need Him, want Him or care about Him.

God has everything at His disposal. Every plague, every disease, every form of punishment....and he turns to the other members of the Trinity and says....

Lets go mess up their languages...that will show them! Really? Notice how personal this is....God doesn't send it from Heaven....He came down Himself...

And then He tells us that He isn't trying to punish them....He is trying to protect them.

Genesis 11:6 (ESV) 6 And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.

Fallen Man without the Spirit of God will do horrible things if they can effectively communicate. Remember God was addressing their pride and their rebellion. If He wanted to punish them....He could zap them like He did Sodom and Gomorrah.

God divided their tongues to protect man from Himself. To keep man from the ultimate evil. The World devoid of God, if organized, is Hell. God divided tongues to make it harder for all of mankind to organized around Satan. God wasn't trying to punishment them by dividing tongues, but actually it was God's love. With one tongue and devoid of the Holy Spirit we would have been doomed. We would have destroyed ourselves.

Remember that all of us are born in sin flesh and enemies of God.

Now God is doing a new thing. The Spirit of God has moved from being with the people in the Holy of Holies to being in the people of God.

What better way to demonstrate the new presence of the Holy Spirit on earth than to resolve the issue of multiple tongues.

Now another interesting thing to consider....The Scriptures clearly tell us that there was originally one language for all humans....and every language came from that one. God confused the speech and the words of the people.

Have you ever studied linguistics? It is interesting to watch non-believers try to explain the origin of language. They struggle trying to explain why humans speak and communicate in spoken language and other animal species do not.

Modern linguists know man did not invent language, any more than man invented his own circulatory or nervous system.

Language is so complex because languages exist as whole systems, not as small parts put together. Most modern linguists believe all languages come from one original language.

Most modern linguists believe language is so unique that the only way they can explain it apart from God is to say that it was part of a unique evolutionary process.

Man spoke one language....from that language every other language originated. Languages drove people across the world to settle. Thousands of years of research and they could have just read Genesis.

But God is not finished the story yet.

We will see Babel and Jerusalem again...

Prophecies point to moments in the future... When God will once again raise up His Holy City- Jerusalem And contrast it with the city that represents Man's Pride and Rebellion- Babylon

You can read about it Today You can read speculation about it in the papers..or you can know what happens by Reading God's word

Babylon figures prominently in the book of Revelation as the ultimate enemy of God and persecutor of His people. "Babylon the Great" will be overthrown, but here is how she is described:

Revelation 17:2-6 (ESV) 2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk." 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. 5 And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." 6 And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly.

Revelation 18:1-3 (ESV) 1 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. 2 And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. 3 For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living."

Revelation 18:24-19:2 (ESV) 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth." 1 After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and

glory and power belong to our God, 2 for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

It really is a tale of two cities. What God did at Babel He was now undoing in Jerusalem With the events in Jerusalem at Pentecost. What God accomplished at Babel... He seemed to restore in Jerusalem

People of Babel were driven by their sin God dispersed them and confused their languages But for those in Jerusalem...Jesus took care of their sin And God brought them back to Him And resolved their language differences.

Babel Displayed the Spirit of Pride and Arrogance. What happened at Jerusalem on Pentecost displayed the Spirit of God's love

Babel divided men through language. What happened at Jerusalem on Pentecost united men through tongues

Babel brought confusion. What happened at Jerusalem on Pentecost brought peace

Babel shows us Man full of Himself. What Happened at Jerusalem on Pentecost shows us Man full of God

Babel brought destruction of the tower. What happened at Jerusalem on Pentecost brought the foundation of the Church

Babel scattered men across the earth telling of God's wrath. What happened in Jerusalem on Pentecost sent men across the earth telling of God's love.

But there is a bigger picture to see here too....

God placed man in Babylon...the garden of Eden. He blessed them and gave them everything. Yet Adam and Eve Rebelled against God and the Spirit of God left the Earth.

From Adam and Eve's Sin until the moment at Pentecost....the presence of the Holy Spirit was only briefly and intermittently on earth. Only for very specific purposes.

Man without the Spirit of God leading him chose to worship Himself. To try to become His own God. The entire Old Testament shows us how well that concept worked. It failed miserably.

When Man began rejected God's Word and began trying to build their own way to heaven....God confused their words. God divided their tongues. So man, fallen man, had his own language and his own word, and had rejected God's Word.

There was only one reason the Holy Spirit was no longer present on earth....Sin. Until the Sin problem between us and God was resolved...the Holy Spirit could not be universally present on earth.

So Jesus paid the price and resolved the Sin issue. We discussed last week how the curtain was torn in the Holy Of Holies and God's Spirit was poured out on the people who believed.

Those who believed in Jesus in faith were now reconciled with God because Jesus cleansed them of their sins. They were now vessels who can hold the Holy Spirit.

The more you study God's word... The more you begin to see patterns from Genesis to Revelation You begin to understand that this book... Could only have been written by God.

Parallels are drawn down to the greatest detail. Mt Sinai linked to Pentecost.... Pentecost linked to Babel Hundreds of Prophecies...Pointing to the Savior..the Promised One Prophecies that promised the outpouring of God's Spirit on His people Jesus told them to wait for the Holy Spirit....lets look again at that moment at Pentecost.

Acts 2:1-3 (ESV) 1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

The Holy Spirit fell individually on each person. The Spirit fell and rested...aka....stayed. Without the Spirit the languages the world had been confused by God. It was His punishment for man's rebellion at Babel.

So now the Spirit of God has returned because of the defeat of Satan by Jesus on the Cross. All believers can communicate in the Spirit.

To demonstrate this new relationship, God demonstrated to the people at Pentecost that His Return would solve the language barrier of man that sin had required.

Acts 2:5-6 (ESV) 5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.

Notice they were speaking in known Tongues. Not new tongues. They were not speaking gibberish....they did not need an interpreter....each person...over 3000 of them heard the speak in their own language....Texan.

Acts 2:7-8 (ESV) 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?

The Spirit of God is solving the language barrier. Why?

Acts 2:11 (ESV) 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

The Mighty Works of God.

Why did they speak in tongues that day? So that people could hear and understand the mighty works of God. Why does the Holy Spirit do anything He does? So people can hear and understand the mighty works of God.

God gave man one language....and then when man rebelled...God protected us from ourselves by confusing our speech.

The Spirit returned and foreshadowed a day when everyone would worship Jesus in the tongue of the Spirit with one voice again.

When God created man before the Fall He created Man in His image and made man His representation on earth. At that time Man spoke in one language...if we accept that the multiple languages we experience on earth are all imperfect representations of reality, none of them can be the language we will speak in that perfect place. I believe that in heaven, all of us will speak the perfect language of the Spirit.

We know from Scripture that Jesus will have a new name, each of us will have a new name, and Israel will be called by a new name.

Many believe that the prayer language that some experience is an earthly utterance of that language from the Holy Spirit in prayer. We will get to that later in the series. But for now I think I support the fact that we can all look forward to speaking one heavenly language one day.

1 Corinthians 14:2 (ESV) 2 For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.

We utter mysteries...In the Spirit. We don't understand them. Because they are communications between the Holy Spirit in us and God the Father. The language of the Holy Spirit...is the inner communication of the Trinity. Paul told the Romans to look forward to a day.

Romans 15:4-6 (ESV) 5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, 6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 5:11-14 (ESV) 11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" 13 And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" 14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Revelation 19:1-6 (ESV) 1 After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, 2 for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants." 3 Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" 5 And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great." 6 Then I heard what seemed to be the

voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Babylon destroyed....smoke comes up from her forever. The Voice....Not voices....the single voice of the Multitudes of Believers. The voice of the Holy Spirit. Doing what He does. Worshiping Jesus. All is restored. All is corrected. All are reunited with God....The Spirit reigns and all the Glory Goes to JESUS!