

TOWER OF BABEL

God instructed the Sons of Noah to fill the earth. (Genesis 9:1) Instead, they chose a common area wherein to dwell together and build a tower. (Ibid., 11:1-6) God then interfered with what they, in defiance to His command, proposed to do and caused them to misunderstand each other by “confusing their tongue.” (vs. 7) The apparent babel in speech sealed the site as the *Tower of Babel*.

Technologically speaking we could say that God removed, uninstalled, took away from each individual the *common-language program* originally existing in the “computer” of their mind, and substituted in its place a *new-language program*, such that a different and unique *new-language* was given to a family or groups of people for them to communicate with each other in their own distinct tongue. The word “tongue” in that passage is a synonym of the word “language,” thus its Biblical definition is the same as the standard definition for that word: the oral structure of sounds by which means groups of people communicate intelligently with one another.

In the action of interrupting their work by creating language barriers between different groups, God forced Noah’s descendants to

separate from each other and, consequently, to migrate to different areas as He had purposed for them to do in the first place. (vs. 11:8-9)

That generation had proposed to do contrary to what God commanded, but it was not so with the children of Israel. When God gave His Law and statutes, the Israelites exclaimed, "What God has commanded we will do." (Exodus 24:7) It was a promise they determined to keep. Yet, though their intentions were well-meaning, man cannot obey God merely by human effort. Thus the Israelites' story is the same as ours, for in the power of the flesh is revealed that we are continually engaged in neverending disobedience. Such was also Paul's spiritual battle. (Romans 7:14-25) Hence the admonition given that we are to pray and not faint, pray always, pray without ceasing, and remain always, continually attached to the True Vine. (Luke 18:1; 21:36; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; John 15:1-8)

But the remnant of Israel did carry on God's work and we have them to thank for the New Testament. Yet they did not assert a promise, but instead prayed for God's promise of His Spirit, and when the Holy Spirit was given to them, they accomplished the vast work of evangelizing such that they turned the world upside down. (Acts 17:6) They preached in other tongues, other languages, because, without removing their *native-language program*, a *second-language program* was "installed" in them; that is, they received the gift of a new tongue for each of them to speak, so that now in addition to their mother tongue, each disciple became a fully bilingual, or perhaps multilingual, individual.¹

Their message was salvation in a resurrected Savior. It revealed the Creator's Son, submissive and docile, surrendering to the will of men to put Him to death, when all He wanted was for them to surrender to His Father's will that He may give them eternal life. Israel's remnant carried out the order entrusted to them to "go into all the world." (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15) The miracle bestower upon them which first appeared on Pentecost, is commonly known as "speaking in tongues," and is recorded in Scripture four times: 1) on the day Pentecost (Acts 2); 2) in the home of Cornelius (Acts 10 and 11); 3) at Ephesus (Acts 19); and 4) at Corinth (1 Corinthians 14). We will proceed to consider each of those passages.

¹ "From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language." (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 40)