

## Lessons for Today from the Tower of Babel

I'll admit it: I've never preached a lesson on Gen.11:1-9. I didn't know quite what to do with it. Here's an historical event which is surely significant to the course of human development, but other than explaining the *source* of divergent languages of men, and his subsequent *scattering*, what's the application value? That when united, "*nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible*" for mankind from v.6? Surely that is not meant in the absolute sense (*batsar* {*baw-tsar*}) here means *to cut off, fortify, and thus to make inaccessible or withhold, to restrain*. But then I began to ponder this passage a little more objectively and realized that **it contains some universal truths about man that are relative to every generation...**

1. **That there is tremendous power imbedded in using the same language and the same words, vv.1,6.** Here in this case, such was not a good thing, since it helped to prevent God's purposes for man to "*fill the earth,*" cp. Gen.1:28; 9:7 and 11:4. But what if man, even now- thousands of years later, would *use the same language and words of God-* both in *local congregations*, and *universally*, cf. 1Cor.1:10; 1Pet.4:11; 1Thess.2:3-4,13; Titus 2:1,15? Religious *divisions* and *denominationalism* would disappear as we unite on a "*Thus says the Lord,*" and would, then, *nothing would be impossible for us*, cf. Gen.11:6,7? What if we *all* (*mankind* and *religious folk*) *spoke the same language* regarding:
  - a. *God of the Bible as Creator, Sustainer, Law-Giver, and eternal Judge* rather than the "*so-called gods*" of man, 1Cor.8:5-6? Then everyone would *understand our origin, provision* (from God rather than *nature* or *ourselves*), and *purpose* in life! Which leads us to...
  - b. *Believing God* and being a *believer*? As I've said many times, "There is a tremendous difference in *believing in God* (His existence) and *believing God* (His truthfulness enough to *obey* Him), cf. John 3:16,36; 8:31-31."
  - c. *Repentance*? Rather than just being *sorry* for getting caught or *feeling bad* about the (personal) consequences of our actions, truly *changing our hearts, minds, and actions*, cf. 2Cor.7:9-11?
  - d. *Baptism*? Methodists and Catholics *sprinkle-* even those too young to *believe* and *confess*, Baptists say it isn't necessary but will do it if you insist, and a few others *immerse* "*for the remission of sins*" as Acts 2:38; 22:16 and 1Pet.3:21 say. What if we all simply read, believed, practiced, and taught what Jesus said in Mark 16:16?
2. **Man's pride invariably winds up seeking to pervert God's word/plan, v.4.** From the beginning, God wanted and commanded man to "*be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth,*" cf. 1:28. Even after the destruction of the Great Flood, this same command was repeated, 9:7. But here in 11:4 we see how man's pride and *self-promotion* perverted that plan. His intention was to, instead, "*build for ourselves a city, and a tower... and a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth*" was in direct opposition to God's intention for him. Is not the principle cause of the perversion of God's plan still man's pride? *Proud* man still wants to "*make a name*" for himself- individually or collectively, rather than being content with

wearing *God's name, Christian*, 1Pet.4:16. Because of such *pride*, some would even prefer to have *their names* become infamous than remain obscure. Our pride also pushes us to **"build for ourselves"** rather than *for the Lord*. Thus, we build "churches" *for ourselves* that cater to our own *felt needs and desires*, cf. Phil.3:19; or *lives for ourselves* that please us rather than God. Through pride, what *we want* supplants what *God wants* both in "our" *lives and religion*, cf. Hag.1:4-5. Man's *accomplishments*- whatever they may be or how far they reach, do not accomplish God's *purposes*, cp. Luke 7:30 and John 11:47-48.

3. **God's will ALWAYS prevails, v.9.** Think about this: God, *before the foundation of the world* (Eph.1:5), had a *plan to save man*, whom He had not yet created on the earth which He had not yet formed, by a Savior who would be *born in the fullness/at the proper time* thousands of years later (Gal.4:4). Throughout time, He *shaped and molded* human history- *individual and collective* (kingdoms and nations), until, "*at the consummation of the ages Jesus was manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*," Heb.9:26. Such was not a "Plan B, C, D, E, or F," but "*predetermined plan*" based on omniscient *foreknowledge of God*," Acts 2:23. No *flesh and blood, ruler(s), power(s), world forces of darkness, or spiritual force of wickedness* (cf. Eph.6:12) could *alter* let alone *prevent* His plan's maturation and fruition. God's will ALWAYS prevails, Rom.9:19-21; Acts 5:38-39; 11:17. **The wise man**, understanding this, ***bends (and brakes if necessary) his will to God's*** rather than ***expecting and exerting himself to bend God's will to his***. These *Babylonians* could have saved themselves a lot of "bother" by understanding this, cf. Dan.4:2,17,25,37. How much *planning and building* are you "working on" that contradicts God's will and way, Jas.4:13-17? God's will/way always prevails, Rom.14:11-12.

### Conclusions:

- "*For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scripture we might have hope*," Rom.15:4. These Bible "stories" are there for a reason, and we had better *learn and heed* their message.
- There is **tremendous power for good in unity**- congregationally, nationally, and worldwide; but there is also **opposing power for evil in division**- from God, yes, but also from one-another, congregationally, nationally, and worldwide.
- Man's pride always leads him to go against God's will, but such will never prevail- not for the individual, the congregation, the nation, or the world, not ever.