

WORLD LANGUAGES (TOWER OF BABEL)

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.** But do this with gentleness and respect, 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

Topic: World Languages (Tower of Babel)

Discuss and Summarize the Secular Worldview:

Sample Summary: The Tower of Babel story is just another primitive myth of many trying to explain why there are different languages used around the world. Just as humans evolved slowly, languages developed slowly over time.

Discuss and Summarize the Christian Worldview:

Sample Summary: Words are important to God. God spoke and He created everything. Jesus is known as “the Word.” After the Flood, God instructed Noah and his sons to fill the earth. Instead, they rebelled by staying together to build a city with a tower toward the heavens. As a consequence, God confused their languages so they could no longer understand one another. Those who shared the same language migrated away together. They became the people groups around the world that share similar physical characteristics today. At Babel, language separated people. At Pentecost, people understood one another even though they spoke many different languages.

Why This is Important:

Many people wonder why there are so many languages and dialects around the world, yet it is rarely discussed.

Scripture Says:

Genesis 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,22,24,26,29, Genesis 11:1-9, Genesis 9:1, John 1:1-5, Genesis 10:6-9, Hebrews 4:12, Psalm 119:9, Psalm 119:114, Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 24:35, Isaiah 55:11, Genesis 10:25, Genesis 10:32, 1 Chronicles 1:19, Luke 3:35, Proverbs 30:5, Acts 2

Worth Considering:

- The “Tower of Babel Stele” stone depicts Nebuchadnezzar II, rebuilding the Tower of Babel, dated to about 600 BC.
- Josephus (94 AD, secular Jewish historian) wrote that Nimrod, grandson of Ham, was a mighty man, rebelled against God, and was the instigator for building the Tower of Babel.
- Wikipedia describes the Tower of Babel as a myth, yet then proceeds with a lengthy list of similar Babel-like stories from

- cultures around the world, often combined with a creation and/or flood story. (eg: Sumerian, Assyrian, Greco-Roman, Mexican, Arizona, Nepal, Botswana, Myanmar, and Quran (set in Egypt).
- The number of family groups leaving Babel matches well to the number of language families today. These cannot be reduced to one original language as would be expected by evolution.
- It's believed that the Biblical account of the Tower of Babel occurs about 100 years after the flood. Genesis 10 describes the lineage of each of Noah's three sons and Genesis 11 describes why the people were divided. The birth of Peleg (named in Jesus' genealogy) seems to be a key historical date for the events of Babel to map into the larger timeline of the Bible.
- It's estimated there are over 7,000 spoken languages today and those originated from about 95 proto language families. English is in the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. Languages change significantly over time, even within our own generation, often by physical separation. Scriptures lists about 70 families that left from Babel.
- Cultures from around the world often have a creation, a flood, and a change of languages story in their folk lore as an echo of the past. The shared cultural stories stop after Genesis 11 events.
- Languages require unique characters or symbols that are put together into words. Those words are then arranged using grammar, context, and syntax to communicate expression, meaning, purpose, and a potential call to action.
- Fully developed languages suddenly appear in cultures all around the world, not displaying a slow evolution of new words, structure.
- At Babel, language separated people, at Pentecost, diverse languages were brought together by supernatural understanding.

Questions to Consider:

- What significance do you think that the city, the tower, and making a the name for themselves each have in rebellion against God?
- If Christian missionaries spread ideas of creation and a flood to isolated people groups, why is Jesus not part of the message?
- When controversies between the Bible and secular thought occur, why does it seem the first step is to treat the Bible as myth?
- Has today's discussion made you reconsider any of your views?

For Further Investigation on This Topic:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tower_of_Babel
Tower of Babel Stele