

“QUIT YOUR ‘BABELING’!”

Genesis 11:1-9 / Acts 2:1-6, 11b

May God’s Spirit inwardly strengthen you with power in order that Christ lives in your hearts by faith... {Eph 3:16-17}

Dear Spirit-filled People of God,

Many of you know this already, but one of the joys I’ve had in being a Grampa is to hold my grandchildren on my lap and just talk to them. Those conversations start totally one-sided with a newborn so when I hold our 2 wk old grandson, (*Jaxon*) – I’m doing the baby talking and he just lays there either staring or sleeping.

But then they get older and begin to make sounds, “baby-babbling” I call it. That’s what our second youngest grandson (*Aaron*) is doing now – discovering he has a voice and learning to use it whenever/wherever he wants. Then our two oldest grandchildren (*Aubrey & Jalen*) who will be 4 yrs old later this year are learning to communicate with words and phrases. And while there’s still playful babbling from them, they can at least express some of their thoughts clearly. So whether a 2 wk old or 4 yrs olds, their babbling sounds are still music to our ears!

Now that we’re headed into the General Election phase of the political campaigns, one doesn’t have to be a baby to babble. Without taking sides here, isn’t it true that for a whole year already, we’ve heard **attacks and criticisms, programs and promises** from a dozen and ½ candidates? Sometimes it sounded like a lot babbling for this and against this – denouncing this stand and promising that policy – all to get your vote in November. I know – that’s the way it is, but don’t you just want stand up and say: **“QUIT YOUR BABBLING!** Tell us what you’re going to do for America and be able to back it up!”

Today is **Pentecost**, the day the Holy Spirit came as promised by Jesus before He ascended into heaven. That wasn’t babbling – that was truth. Let us take an overview of both the O.T. reading and the Acts reading to draw a striking comparison of two building projects, one a tower & one the Church where the Lord in essence says:

“QUIT YOUR ‘BABELING’!”

1. The message of defiance and spread
2. The message of grace and share

1

Most scholars agree that our O.T. story takes place about a century after the flood. God had wiped out a wicked humanity that defied him by their sinful rebellion. After the flood, there was a muddy earth and 8 people. Noah and his family were all that were left of God’s people. God’s mission now was to **be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth**. God never intended the world to stay at a population of 8 because then the promise of the Messiah would eventually die out.

So from Noah’s 3 sons and daughters-in-law, the building of people began. The entire population at this time spoke one language: the same dialect, same sounds, same vocabulary – **ONE LANGUAGE & ONE SPEECH**. But their unity in language didn’t translate into spiritual unity. It didn’t take long for people to not only ignore God, but to go directly against what he wanted them to do. **The flood waters drowned sinners, but they did not drown the Old Adam.**

Look what happens – **Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly. They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens...** Let’s build a tower so tall and so durable with the best building materials **so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth**. At 1st glance you might say, “**what a great idea...a tall tower to honor God!**” But upon further review, we ask “Where’s God” in this idea? What’s wrong this picture?” The answer is a **MESSAGE OF DEFIANCE**: *“forget what God said about filling the earth and spreading out – He’s just babbling. We can do anything we set our minds to. We’ll fill the earth alright, but we’re gonna stay right here doing it.* Instead of “Glory to God in the highest”...the plaque at the bottom of this tower says: **Glory To Us In The Highest!** So where’s God? He’s completely missing from the **blueprints!**

In **Isaiah 42:8**, The Lord says: **I am the Lord. That is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.”** We don’t know how long this tower construction project went on, but it doesn’t surprise us that the LORD eventually drew himself into their blueprints. Moses writes: **THE LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building**. He didn’t put on a hard hat to literally visit the site from a golf cart. He didn’t have to. He is **GOD**, (elohim), a term emphasizing his power. He is **THE LORD** (adoniah), the God of free and faithful grace.

It was **THE LORD** who sees the defiance of his people to spread out as he wanted them to. He sees pride, arrogance, and selfishness running through their spiritual veins. So **THE LORD** comes down not to destroy them a 2nd time, but to save them before it’s too late. His warning says: **QUIT YOUR BABELING** this message of defiance and spread out like I told you to before your godless pride destroys your souls forever.

The LORD throws a monkey-wrench into their plans: **If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for the. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.** His judgment isn't even noticed until He quietly makes changes in language of words, numbers, codes, and building details so they can't understand what the other guy is saying. **"If your communication isn't on the same page, then you can't read out of the same book."**

So the God of free & faithful grace showed it here in bringing their tower project to a screeching halt by confusing their languages so they could no longer communicate or cooperate. Moses calls the city **BABEL**, which means confusion. And the result? **FROM THERE THE LORD SCATTERED THEM OVER THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH.** Now they quit their **babeling of defiance** and finally **spread over the whole earth**, just the way God wanted them to in the 1st place so those who still believed in the Lord could **spread the message** of the Messiah!

2

Now we turn the Bible history clock ahead several thousands years to 50 days after Jesus' resurrection. In Jewish times, **Pentecost was 7 weeks** after the Passover, **a festival to give thanks** for the early harvest. Like the first story, God sends his Spirit on this day **to quit babeling and clearly share the message of grace.**

On this day, the Lord's Spirit came down to take away the babeling of language and enable his servant to speak the good news of Jesus Christ in many different languages. He broke down any barriers to start a different construction: the construction of His church. One by one, word by word, truth by truth, the Holy Spirit worked through the means of the Gospel of Christ crucified to bring sinners into His kingdom, forgiven and free.

How? First the disciples are in one place waiting for Jesus' promise to come true. Then they heard **the sound** of a violent wind from heaven, but nothing blew. Then what looked like fire flames rested on their heads and they were **filled with the Holy Spirit.** Then they clearly communicated Christ in words and phrases they could never use before: **GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME DOWN TO ENABLE THEM TO declaring the wonders of God in their own languages** the people could understand, **not babbling.** And the people were shocked!

Pentecost is God's way of saying to the church of today: **QUIT YOUR BABELING and clearly share the message of grace.** That same Spirit works through the same Gospel. God's Word is translated into well over 2,000 languages scattered all over the world. The wind, fire, languages, and preaching at Pentecost was God's own statement: **it doesn't matter what country you live, what language you speak** – this same Jesus paid for your sins with his death on the cross. The same Jesus died in your place to rescue you from certain death in hell. This same Jesus suffered your punishment and penalty so you can live with him in heaven. This same Jesus rose from the grave and ascended into heaven to rule & reign over the church and His people for their good while preparing their places to live forever with him.

The Spirit has given you that faith and Jesus says: **EVERYONE WHO CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.** (Act 2:21) That's the construction project going on right now – living stones being gathered into place as building blocks of the Church. **You are those stones, those blocks, those bricks,** joined and fitted together to serve the Lord with your life, your love, and your gifts. The Spirit will keep building so the message of Christ can be shared clearly by Gospel truths, not babeling errors found in many false Christian churches today.

And one day, there'll be no more **babeling** and the project will be done. In heaven we will see the results of the Spirit's work. We will see God's church in all its glorious unity as John writes in Revelation 7:9-10: **9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." AMEN**