

Genesis 11 begins with a very interesting sentence. “Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.” From the creation account all the way until Genesis 11 God’s original plan for man was that there would be one language. But after the fall, if the sons of men in their fallen state decided to join together in their plans for promoting self and disobeying God, the Bible says that “nothing they propose to do will be withheld from them.” You would have a world under the sway of the wicked one, with all of its inhabitants aligning themselves with him. Now you would have a whole planet that was in total disobedience to its Creator.

Upon first glance it could sound like God was a little worried about these people having the ability to achieve their task, and that He acted out of concern or even fear. But in all reality, God, in His mercy, keeps this from happening so that there will still be a chance for this planet, and the seed of Eve can still bless the world. He intervenes by confounding their language and by scattering them abroad over the face of all the earth.

**The first instance where other languages are brought into existence is for the singular purpose of keeping man from uniting for evil purposes.**

Notice also that the people saw this coming in verse 4, “And they said, ‘Come let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’” They wanted to go as one up to heaven. Sounds a little like Revelation 20 doesn’t it? We’ll discuss that more in-depth at the end of this study. But look how God keeps it from happening, “Come let Us go down and confuse their language”. The plurality of the Godhead comes down and keeps Babel from approaching the heavens. In a moment we will see that each member of the Godhead will then work through Salvation history to reverse this action they have just taken.

In Genesis 11:4 the people wanted to make a name for themselves. God’s answer in Genesis 12:2 is that He will make Abram a great nation, bless him, and make his name great, and he shall be a blessing. This is foreshadowing God’s plan to reach the dispersed world through Abraham’s/Eve’s seed.

Thankfully Jesus the Ultimate Evangelist (the LORD comes down again), after living a perfect life and providing a perfect atonement for all of dispersed humanity gives the great commission in Matthew 28:18-20 “18And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” Jesus also mentioned in Matthew 24:14 that just before His second coming “...this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

This is fantastic news for the dispersed world. But there’s a problem. There are people that the disciples, and those who will fulfill this calling after them would like to reach but cannot because they don’t know the language. But God, who created the language circumstance to keep man from unifying for evil purposes, provides something that will unify man for good purposes. He pours out the Holy Spirit (the LORD comes down yet again) at Pentecost, and provides the gift of tongues. He not only provides the gift of tongues (a functional gift afforded for the purpose of sharing the Gospel to those of other languages), but He does it at a time where natives from “every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5) are present so that they too will share with those back home.

We see a similar allusion to this strategy in Acts 19:9,10 where Paul preaches in Ephesus, and in two years all of Asia (Roman province of Asia) both Jews and Greeks heard the Gospel. How did that happen? Those who came to Ephesus heard the Gospel from Paul, and then went home and shared. Those people they shared with went and shared with others, etc. Then more came from Asia and heard the Gospel and went back home and shared. This cycle continued, and this whole province heard the Gospel in 2 short years. Paul didn’t leave Ephesus during that time and yet the Gospel made it’s way though an entire Roman province.

K.P. Yohannan in his book *Revolution in World Missions* points this missions strategy out very candidly, “*Unless we abandon the racism implied in our unwritten definition of a missionary, we never will see the world reached for Christ. While governments may close the borders of their countries to Western missionaries, they cannot close them to their own people. The Lord is raising up such an army of national missionaries right now, but they cannot go unless North Americans will continue to support the work as they did when white Westerners were allowed.*” This can be financially or by training these beautiful people while they’re on our shores, as we have been discussing in our seminars.

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There is now a two-fold campaign to get the Gospel to “all the world.” Missionaries equipped with the gift of tongues (literally, or those with a knowledge of more than one language), and natives that are converted in another land and are going to share in their home country. This is the missions plan that is laid out in scripture.

M. B. Czechowski is a relatively unknown figure in Adventist history. He knew 7 languages. He came to American shores as a Catholic priest, and when he heard the Adventist message he then took it to Europe on Sunday keepers dime when the church wouldn't pay for it because of his obstinate personality and poor business sense. The Adventist message got to Europe by someone hearing here and then taking it back home. J.N. Andrews met up with his churches when he went to Europe. This method actually happened in Adventism.

To close out the timeline in Revelation 20 we have a movement by a city called Babylon that is trying to take heaven (The New Jerusalem) by storm and is stopped by the LORD coming down in Revelation 21. Then the need for other languages stops and God's original plan is restored.

So God comes down four times to address this problem. The first time He came to confuse their language and scatter them over the whole face of the earth. Then each member of the Godhead does their part by coming down. Jesus comes to provide the perfect life and atonement for the sin of the dispersed world; the Holy Spirit comes down to unite believers and provide them the gift of tongues to use language to draw men together for good purposes and spread the Gospel to all the world; and lastly God Himself comes down in Revelation 21 to put an end to Babylon's movement to take heaven by storm and He puts an end to the rebellion for good.

The Biblical purpose for the existence of multiple languages was solely for the preservation and redemption of humanity. That means that if you know more than one language—and the Gospel—you are an incredibly valuable and needed asset in the closing of God's work on earth. You don't know that language because of your culture or family. God in His providence has equipped you to do a work for the kingdom that many others cannot do. Seek out opportunities to use this blessed gift in service for Him. If God has given you a burden to know an additional language, now you know why. Carry that conviction forward into diligent study to advance the kingdom in the hearts of men.

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## SESSION #3 QUESTIONS FOR COMPASSIONATE ACTION

Gather ideas of how to help new arrivals from your own thinking, from the friends in your group, from internationals you have met, and from those who are serving these communities. You can do an Internet search for “refugee resettlement agencies,” and then call or visit them. You could also visit a college or university and ask to speak to whoever is in charge of international students to find out what volunteer possibilities are available. You can also go to the local migrant council that helps migrant workers in your area.

1. If you had just arrived in a new country and a new neighborhood, what would you like people to do that would make you feel warmly welcomed?
2. What do you think can be done to help immigrants or refugees have adequate food, clothing, housing, and employment?
3. What do you think are the needs of international students at colleges and universities and how can you help them?
4. In what ways can you assist them to help themselves and each other so they do not become dependent on you or the government?
5. What advice would you give them to help them save money on food, clothing, electricity bills, and housing, etc.?
6. What creative ways can you think of to help them improve their English skills?
7. What do you think new arrivals find different and difficult about the culture in your country and how might you help them adapt?
8. Pray for the people in your community who are facing these difficult challenges. Decide what specific actions you will take to help them.

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