

(Genesis) 21 - the Spirit of Man and the Sovereignty of God

by S. Lewis Johnson

The sermon examines the Tower of Babel as a reflection of human ambition and rebellion against God's sovereignty, highlighting the need for divine-centered unity and purpose.

Duration: 45:53

Scripture: Genesis 11:1-10, Acts 2:1-11, Acts 2:41, Ephesians 4:4-6, Revelation 17:5

Topics: "Sovereignty Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of the Tower of Babel from Genesis chapter 11. He explains that the incident marks the end of the general history of mankind and the beginning of the focus on one of Noah's sons, Shem. The people of Babylon, who all spoke the same language, decided to build a city and a tower that would reach into heaven. However, their intentions were seen as a defiance of God's will, and as a result, God confused their languages and scattered them across the earth. The preacher emphasizes that this story serves as a reminder of the innate sinfulness of humanity and the need for God's intervention in our lives.

Transcript

Will you open your Bibles with me to Genesis chapter 11, and will you listen, verses one through nine, as I read our passage for this morning. This incidentally, as I may say later on if I forget, but this is the end of the general history of mankind, and we will see that in the book of Genesis, from now on, the attention is concentrated upon one of the sons of Noah and his descendants, that of course being Shem. Let's begin reading now at verse one of chapter 11.

Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words, and it came about as they journeyed east that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly. And they used brick for stone and they used tar for mortar.

And they said, come, let us build for ourselves a city and a tower whose top will reach into heaven. That's an interesting expression. It may mean whose top is in the heavens, literally is, and its top is in the heavens.

Or the idea may be that of dedication, but probably the former is truer to the Hebrew text. And let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.

And the Lord said, behold they are one people and they have all the this is what they began to do. And now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down.

And there confused their language that they may not understand one another's speech. Will you notice the plural, let us go down. This again is consonant with what we've been saying as we've gone along in chapter 1 and again in chapter 3. Plurality in the Godhead is the implication of these terms.

Now we of course cannot prove the doctrine of the Trinity from this, but it is in harmony with the doctrine of the Trinity. Come, let us go down. And there confused their language that they may not understand one another's speech.

So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel. Because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

The term Babel, incidentally, is a term that possibly comes from the word balal in Hebrew, which means to confuse. Or many modern scholars feel that it comes or is related to a word babili, which means the gate of God. We are, it's impossible to be absolutely certain about this.

And so we, if it comes from the term that means the gate of God, then it's a word play. That is, Babel sounds like confusion, but the derivation is not strictly from the word balal, which means to confuse. On the other hand, if it is from the term confused, then the relationship is that much closer.

Perhaps the latter is right. It's called Babel because there the Lord confused balal, the language of the whole earth. May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

The subject for today in our continued study of the book of Genesis is the spirit of man and the sovereignty of God. It is the Apostle John who wrote, we know we are of God and the whole world lieth in the wicked one. Nowhere do we see the spirit of the world more clearly than in the account of the tower of Babylon.

There we see the spirit of man, grandiose in its imagination, rebellious in its pretensions, and yet reflective underneath of a basic insecurity. God had said, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth. He had added, subdue the earth.

And it almost as if man had said, God said subdue the earth, so why not master it for ourselves and not for him. Like Lucifer, man would be God himself. We are reminded of this spirit often when we read the things that modern man says.

Often in his glorying in his scientific achievements, one senses the spirit of Lucifer, the spirit of Nimrod, and the spirit of the people of Babylon. And unfortunately the church of Jesus Christ does not escape this spirit either. We find often in our own statements, some very unconscious, that we follow right in the line of the Babylonian thinking of Nimrod and his followers.

The framework of thought manifested in the temptation and the fall was individual, of course, but it was very early institutionalized in this incident of the tower of Babel. After the flood, the great institutional

embodiment of the society of Satan was the tower of Babylon. And I think this is the important thing for us to remember.

We have seen individual rebellion in the case of the fall of Adam and in the other evidences of the sinfulness of man in the earlier chapters of Genesis. But here we see organized rebellion against God for the first time. And that is why in the book of Revelation, in the climax of God's program, Babylon reappears.

And it reappears as the opposite of the city of God, the new Jerusalem. So we have institutional rebellion against God. That's why in Revelation chapter 17, when we read of the vision of the beast and the woman riding upon the beast, who is called Babylon, we read that she, the woman, is the mother of all the abominations upon the earth.

For it all proceeds out of the spirit of Babylonianism manifested here in Genesis chapter 11, the institutional rebellion against God. Now that is important and it's important for us to remember. There is something else, however, that we see here just as clearly as we see the spirit of man.

We see the sovereignty of God. When man demands God's sword in a claim for the surrender of God, he receives the sword of God, but he receives it through his own heart. And we learn, number one, that unity and peace on man's terms are not ultimate goods.

That's something to remember too. When the world cries for unity and cries for peace, God asks for something else. He asks for unity and he asks for peace, but not in mankind, in Christ.

And so unity and peace is not an ultimate good. In fact, it's better to have division than collective apostasy. And the authority for that is our Lord Jesus himself, who said, do you suppose that I came to grant peace on the earth? I tell you no, but rather division.

So the Lord Jesus came with the full intention of creating division upon the earth, so that men would see what is right and what is wrong, or what is truth and what is error. Now it's important that we keep this in mind collectively too, for when we look out and see man seeking to accomplish his human goals by means of systems of confederation, disarmament treaties, and other means of organizing men, it's well for us to remember that there can never be any true unity and peace in mankind. God demands more.

There's another thing that we see here, and that is that nationalism, of which we have a great deal today, is God's fifth discipline for an evil race. God does not catch man's disease of jehontism, as it has been called. And consequently he scatters the inhabitants of Babylon over the face of the earth, makes it impossible for them to understand one another, because they have refused to carry out the will of God, which was that they separate and spread over the face of the earth, multiplying and filling it.

But God does not subordinate himself to man's goals. This account I mentioned in the scripture reading, belongs to the history of the sons of Noah, and with it the general history of mankind comes to an end. From now on primary attention is directed to the line of Shem.

And we read in the tenth verse then of this chapter, these are the records of the generations of Shem. And then we read of Abraham's ancestry, and the attention will focus upon Abraham and Isaac and Jacob throughout the rest of the book of Genesis. The time of the event that we are going to study was probably about a hundred years after the flood.

The story is a reminder, an ancient reminder of the inclination of the human heart to arrogance. Languages we should not think are testimonials to the ingenuity of man, but they are rather testimonies to the sinfulness of the human heart. The fact that someone speaks German and someone else speaks French and someone else speaks Italian and someone else speaks some Indian language, is a testimony not to the fact that man is able to say things in thousands of different ways, but rather a testimony to the innate sinfulness of the human heart.

It's God's judgment upon us for failing to carry out his will. Now Moses, who put this account together, says in the first through the fourth verses that there was a great resolve on the part of the inhabitants of Babylon to build a tower. One of the commentators has written concerning Genesis chapter 11 in verse 1 through verse 4, the primeval history reaches its fruitless climax as man, conscious of new abilities, prepares to glorify and fortify himself by collective effort.

And so we read in verse 1, now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. What does that mean? Well that means first of all that the whole earth had the same phonology, and it also means that they had the same vocabulary. The faculty of human speech is an interesting faculty of course, and it's one of the amazing attributes that God gave to mankind, the ability to communicate.

The evolutionist cannot account for human speech. He cannot account for the fact that there is an unbridgeable gulf between the chatterings of animals and human language. Now we all have seen this.

Around my house for example, I have a few squirrels, and they and I carry on a little warfare. With my slingshot, they are deathly afraid of me. Whenever I come out, they run.

There is also a cat, and they too are afraid of me, because I use my slingshot on the cats too. I like the birds a little better, not much, but a little better. But I like my few flowers better than either.

I've noticed the squirrel, the squirrel is a very interesting little animal. I didn't really realize what that squirrel could say, but the squirrel, when the squirrel is on the roof and the cat walks by, there is an interesting conversation that takes place. I wish I could give it to you, but the squirrel obviously does not like cats either.

You would think that we would get together, the two of us, but I cannot communicate to him, and he cannot communicate to me. And as a matter of fact, I do not notice that the cat really communicates with the squirrel either. But he can tell from the screeching and squalling and shrill sounds that the squirrel makes when he walks by, that he is not welcome around the place.

But I've never yet heard him turn around like Morris and say, why don't you shut your mouth? You belong to the rodent family. I'm one of the felines. You belong to the rats.

And they're dirty animals. They carry all kinds of disease. That's why I eat them when I find them.

You never find this. They do not really carry on any conversation. There is a definite unbridgeable gulf between the animals and men.

It is men who communicate by speech. I have never, I have never, there may be some very logical explanation, but I have never found a satisfactory explanation of the fact that men speak and animals do not from the mouth of an evolutionist. Maybe he knows the speech by which he may communicate.

We read in the second verse, and it came about as they journeyed east that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. That is a very interesting statement because it indicates that as they left Ararat, they moved eastward, the descendants of Noah and the families and they came to the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates, a very fertile alluvial plain. And evidently they thought that this looked something like the Garden of Eden because there they settled.

It has even been suggested that the names Tigris and Euphrates were given to those large rivers by them in honor of and in memory of the two streams that flowed out of the Garden of Eden which were named the Tigris and the Euphrates. That is an interesting explanation. And of course it might well be true because our rivers are frequently named after other rivers known by those who have discovered them.

At any rate they settled there because they saw possibilities. And then it seems a tremendous civilization originated around that particular part of the world. But there was a man by the name of Nimrod who was the founder of Babylon and one who was especially active in the building up of that part of the world.

So evidently as the society grew and as Nimrod's authority grew they were faced with a problem. And the problem was this. Shall we systematically colonize the world as God had originally said.

We read in chapter 9 verse 1 as they came out of the ark that God blessed Noah and his sons and said to him be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And he repeated it in the seventh verse and as for you be fruitful and multiply, populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it. They may have discussed this.

Shall we systematically colonize the earth or shall we build a strong central society right here. And they obviously opt for the latter. They decide to build a strong centralized society right there in Babylon.

The absurdity and the gravity of this scene appear immediately when we read that they said come let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly and they used brick for stone and they used tar for mortar. Now they were very inventive these Hamitic peoples and we have seen from archaeological discoveries that some of the things that they built were long lasting. But it was a makeshift situation, makeshift materials and mortal men were involved in it.

And so it leaves its impress upon the things that they were doing. Notice the purposes that they have. There are three of them.

In the fourth verse they say come let us build for ourselves a city. They want a planned urban center for societal fellowship. What one of the commentators has called as characteristic of humanity a hunger to huddle together for fellowship.

Now there is nothing wrong with building a city although Cain built the first one according to chapter 4 and verse 17. After all there is to be a city in the future, the city of God, the New Jerusalem. So there is nothing wrong with a city per se.

What is wrong is that this city does not have as its center the Lord God. This city has as its center the Lord man. And so in the construction of the city it is a city constructed with its center in man and not its center in God.

That's the first thing. Now a city is a place for pleasure and a place for culture. So those who live in the city think.

Some say the city is a place to make money. I call that pleasure. So pleasure and culture they are the things that bring us to the city.

But the tower, let us make a tower whose top will reach into heaven. That is obviously for divine recognition or recognition of the divine and divine companionship. Evidently what is referred to is a ziggurat which was a stepped pyramid.

You've seen pictures of them in books on the ancient east. It's a kind of ladder that reaches high into the sky, each floor being a little smaller than the next. So it looks like a pyramid and then on top there would be a shrine that would be dedicated to the deity.

So it was a tower that had religious or spiritual connotations. They said its top is in the heavens and so they conceived of this as somehow linking earth with heaven. But on man's terms not upon God's terms.

Dedicated to heaven some have suggested. On the other hand it would seem that the language as it appears here really means whose top is in the heavens. They really had the idea of man as an autonomous being who was able of himself to make contact with heaven.

After all am I not the ruler of this creation? Am I not the master of it? Am I not autonomous? Am I not homo sapiens? Wise man. I can do anything. How often have you heard people say that? I believe that we can do anything that we really put our mind to.

That's very common. On the other hand the biblical idea is the name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and is safe.

The only place of safety is in the Lord but they have not recognized that. Human engineering. What do we have today? We have men claiming to create life.

We have all types of scientific endeavor in which attempts are made to suggest that it is really a divine activity that man is performing. And the things that we build in honor of spiritual things are things often that ultimately bring glory only to man. We have all seen churches constructed that bring more glory to man than they do to God.

I have before me an article in one of the newspapers of this country in which a description is given of a new sanctuary that a liberal church was building. There is a great deal of detail in it. I won't waste time to talk about the fact that the columns and appointments of marble came from Italy.

Specially cut stones from Israel. A chance organ with seventy-one ranks and more than six thousand pipes and various other types of things. Hand blown walls by mingling domestic cathedral glass from Indiana with antique hand blown glass from Germany and France.

And then at the end of the description it is said the completion of the sanctuary is not the end of our work but the beginning. We must give a little glory to God here. There's not anything else in this article that I could find that would bring glory to him.

This is not our promised land but it's a land with a promise for the future which God still has for the Christian congregation. We must assume our responsibilities that we may deserve to be in this land. And the things that we do in the name of the Lord God are really things that bring honor to the Lord man.

So let us build a tower. Let us recognize God. Let's not give him too much recognition but let's recognize him.

Let's don't think of him as sovereign but let's think of him as being used by us. We also read here let us make a name for ourselves. I dare say that is not understood too well because we use that expression in a little different way today.

We say he made a name for himself. That is he excelled in his profession or his work so that men knew of him as outstanding. We would say Tom Watson has made a name for himself in the golfing world by being the heir apparent to Jack Nicklaus' throne.

Jack Nicklaus has made a name for himself. Roger Stoback has made a name for himself as a football player. But there is more to this statement let us make a name for ourselves.

This really could be a kind of motto of humanity. Let us make a name for ourselves. In the earlier part of the book it says in Genesis chapter four and verse twenty-six.

Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord. Now the name of the Lord represents all that the Lord is. So when they say let us make a name for ourselves they mean let us have a name like God.

Let us be the center. Let us be the means of definition. Let us be the standard by which everything is judged.

Let us make for ourselves a name. It reminds me of the incident in Exodus when Moses asks God for his name. And the Lord says I am who I am.

It is impossible for me to give you a definition of God. And so he says I just am who I am. If we define God we limit God.

And he is an infinite being and cannot be limited. He gives definition to everything else. Now he gives a relational name.

In a few moments he will say I'm the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And that will let Moses know that he is the covenant keeping God who exercises mercy. But so far as an absolute definition of God such is impossible for man.

But here is man wanting to make a name for himself. This is in a sense the master motive behind all religion. It's the idea that we are our own Messiah.

We are our own God. We do not need God. One of the commentators has written something very significant I think.

He says the fact that this was a religious tower and yet built to make a name for man reveals the master motive behind religion. It is a means by which man attempts to share the glory of God. We must understand this otherwise we will never understand the power of religion as it has pervaded the earth and permeated our culture ever since.

It is a way by which man seeks to share what is rightfully God's alone. This tower was a grandiose structure and undoubtedly it was intended to be a means by which man would glorify God. Unquestionably there was a plaque somewhere attached to it that carried the past words.

Erected in the year so-and-so to the greater glory of God. But it was not really for the glory of God. It was a way of controlling God.

A way of channeling God by using him for man's glory. Man does not really, really want to eliminate God he pointed out. It's only sporadically and not only for a relatively brief time that men crowd for the elimination of God.

Madeleine Murray O'Hare's only appear on the scene for a time and then they pass off the scene. Atheism is too barren, too pessimistic, too morally bankrupt to live with very long. The Communists he goes on to say are finding this out.

No we need dear old God but let's keep him under control. Do not let him get out of his place. Don't call us God we'll call you.

There is a lot of that spirit manifest here and let us make a name for ourselves. Now they were smart. They had a program.

Their purpose was unity. Their program was united effort. Their principles were human glory.

What is that? Well that's the counterfeit of the kingdom of God. But it's twisted so that it's the kingdom of man instead of the kingdom of God. Deep down however there's a lack of trust in their own abilities.

For we read, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. Deep down in the human heart in the midst of all of his braggadocio and his arrogant boastfulness man knows that he cannot play the role of Superman very long. Lest we be scattered over the face of the whole earth.

But this idea of building a tower and a city and making a name for ourselves is the shriek of politicians and the shriek of ecclesiastics today. The supreme evil is not apostasy. The supreme evil is disunity.

Unity and peace at any cost. But God will not have unity and peace at any cost. Now God reacts.

There are people who say the Bible is humorless. There's not a whole lot of humor in the Bible. There are very few jokes in the Bible.

They're supplied by preachers. But the Bible has very few of the jokes. But there is a lot of unity and there is a lot of irony in the Bible.

And here we have some of the greatest. Because you see here is an omniscient God. An infinite being.

Omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent. He knows exactly what's going on down on the earth. He knows every thought of Nimrod and all of his followers.

But we read in the fifth verse, and the Lord came down to see the city and the town which the sons of men had built. He did catch on to what was going down on the earth. But when he looked down from heaven at what was going down on the earth.

What he, well what man was doing was so pignish, so puny, so dinky, that God, the omniscient God, couldn't even see it. What irony. It's so small that even a great God cannot see it.

That dinky little structure that they think is so great, whose top shall reach the heavens. Runty, dwarfish, elephant, think of all the adjectives you want to. It applied to the Tower of Babel.

So this great God must make a local inspection. And so he came down and he took a look at what he saw. And he made an observation.

He said why there are one people and they have, they've all got the same language. So there is unity there all right. And this is what they begin to do.

That's the second thing. He noticed they're in, they're in process of building this structure. And then he had something that's rather interesting to me.

And now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. That seems a denial of the sovereignty of God does it not. Nothing that they purpose to do will be impossible for them.

You see God takes very seriously the things that man does. And he knows the great powers that lie within human nature because he has implanted them there. They were created in the image of God.

But it is an image now that has been marred by sin. But there are vast powers that are within the human body, within the human being. And those powers will be brought to their perfection by the redeeming power of our God.

But he says nothing that they purpose to do will be impossible for them. But if they do it they will destroy themselves. That same commentator to whom I referred tells the story of the sorcerer's apprentice.

The boy who hired him, hired himself out to the sorcerer to carry his water in from the well into the house. Like all boys he got a little tired of doing that work. And so when the sorcerer was gone he thought that perhaps if he prowled around among the sorcerer's paraphernalia he might find a little magic incantation that he could say that would get the work done and enable him to read the newspaper while all of the work was being done.

So he fooled around among the books that the magician had and he learned a few of the incantations that he saw there. And he tried them out on the broom in the room. And sure enough the broom began to walk out to the well and bring in water, buckets of it.

And thinking that he had solved the problem he sat down over in the corner and began to read. Until he noticed that he was sitting in something that was a little damp. And he looked up and all of the buckets were overflowing with water and the broom was still bringing in the water.

He was a little disturbed he jumped up he shouted a few incantations at the broom but they didn't work. The broom kept on. The broom brought in more and more water.

Everything that he did only made it more difficult for him until finally when he was about to drown with the water up around his neck it just happened that the sorcerer came home said a few proper words and he was saved. That's a parable of the power of Babel. Because man in his inventiveness thinks that he can master the earth but the very solutions that he works out are the solutions that will ultimately be his downfall if God does not intervene.

And the power of Babel would have been his downfall had not God confused and confounded the languages and scattered those people over the face of the earth. Now I think that God thought that this was irony too because you'll notice in verse 3 they say come on let's make bricks and burn them. And verse 4 come on let's build for ourselves a city.

And so in verse 7 God says come on let's go down and confuse their language. He knows what they're saying he even accommodates his language to them. He's not threatened he's not jealous.

You think God is a threatened God in heaven? Is he jealous of man? No he's not jealous of man. He's not threatened by man. He's jealous of only one thing and that is his deity.

He will not let man assume his attributes. And he is jealous of his position in this universe and he will not relinquish it to puny, dwarfish, pygmy-ish man. You can be sure of that.

And so he comes down as the sovereign God. And he does only one thing. He confuses their language and they are forced to do what he had told them to do from the beginning.

So the next morning can you not imagine what happened. One worker is going to work on the tower it's half constructed. When he meets his friend coming down the street he says Guten Morgen.

He's surprised his language is not the language that he had been speaking. The other person replies Bonjour. Until he realizes what he has said.

And then the first one says Ich verstehe nicht. And the other one's even more puzzled he says Je ne comprends pas. And ah, Wie bitte? Pardon? And they realize they cannot communicate one with another.

Kunten sie bitte langsamer sprechen one says. Can't you speak a little more slowly. And they discover and they are not only humiliated but they get mad at each other because perhaps they think they're trying to fool each other.

Well when they arrive at the job and the foreman tells them to do something. Again he cannot communicate with them. He speaks some other language.

And speaking in that language they cannot understand. And they don't do the work and he gets mad and word goes to Nimrod. And Nimrod is furious.

He cuts out a few tones. And they can't speak any language after that. But he is very disturbed and the whole place becomes total confusion.

They are loud incoherent arguments and fights and struggles all over the city. We assume of course that in the families that there was the same speech. So that within the family a person may get up and say Guten Morgen.

And another one would reply Guten Morgen Herr. And they would communicate but outside they could not. And so they were forced by God finally someone said I'm getting away from this place.

Let's go away from here where we can understand one another. And so they begin to spread out over the earth. And it is God who fulfills, be fruitful, multiply, populate the earth.

If man will not do it he will do it. He is the sovereign God. That's why we proclaim a God who is not confused.

The members of the Godhead do not work at cross purposes. It is not the Father who elects a certain number of people and the Son who does for all people. And the Holy Spirit who applies the salvation to the elect of the Father.

So that the Son is outvoted two to one. We don't have a confused deity. We do not have a frustrated deity who seeks to save everybody but only certain are saved.

We don't worship that kind of God. We worship a God who is sovereign. He is not confused.

He is not frustrated. And when man refuses to respond to him he will fulfill his will. And so men are scattered over the face of the earth and they are forced to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth against their will.

They stop building, the text says, the city. So the tower remained in Scotland near Oban on the west coast. Oban is a little town on the water.

And if you get out in the harbor and you look back there is a large hill, not a mountain, but it's a hill above the city. And there is a giant Coliseum like structure in this little city of Oban. Column after column in a circular form you see it from the water.

And it's called McCaig's Folly. A man by the name of McCaig attempted to build a giant structure but when he got halfway through he didn't have the resources to finish it. We all know stories of this.

When I was growing up in North Carolina in the summer when we went to the mountains. In Hendersonville there was a large hotel on the top of the mountain that overlooked the city which was half built. One of the places, one of the means by which we entertained one another was to go up on top of the mountain and see that structure which was half constructed.

And it too was called somebody's Folly. For years in downtown Dallas one of our best-known hotels now was half constructed. The construction stopped because the funds of a very wealthy man in the city ran out.

And it was called so-and-so's Folly. Well this was Nimrod's Folly. And for generations afterward they looked at the power of Babel and said look at Nimrod's Folly.

And then the author of Scripture explains, therefore its name was called Babel. Because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth and from there the Lord scattered it abroad over the face of the whole earth. So what they feared being scattered did take place.

But God did it. Well Babylon's importance I think we see. Babylon is the symbol of collective defiance of God.

It's the symbol of human autonomy. And in fact one of the last of the things that we read in the New Testament is Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen. It's the symbol of organized rebellion against God.

You see God's program is unity in Christ. And he will have unity but only in Christ. Now I must close.

I don't want to be too long-winded like the preacher who had been delivering a dry long-winded discourse completely oblivious to the restlessness of the congregation. He was brought rather quickly back to earth when a little boy sitting over in the front row just like Bo is here. And with a shrill voice he said, Mommy are you sure this is the only way we can get to heaven? So let me, let me just say one word by way of conclusion.

What you see in Babylonianism and you will see it all through the Bible. Babylon opposed to Jerusalem and finally Babylon opposed to the New Jerusalem, God's great city of the future. You will see the mystery of iniquity at work.

But you will also see the mystery of godliness progressing. Founded in the blood of Calvary, shed by our Lord Jesus Christ for the redemption of sins. Extended by the rushing mighty wind of the Holy Spirit who united these people from different languages in one language they understood on the day of Pentecost.

See that's an earnest of the turning around of that which God did at Babylon. And their people who spoke different languages suddenly were able to understand one another by virtue of the coming of the Holy Spirit. And a man stood on his feet in Parthian and gave praise for the wonderful works of God.

And another man who was a Greek standing there heard him speak and understood what he was talking about. Or a man from Parthia understood a man who was a Greek speaking in his language. And so by virtue of the gift of tongue speaking in known language an earnest of what God would ultimately do was given on the day of Pentecost.

And as a result there is being constructed the body of Christ composed of all who have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. And this great body of Christ all one body we is by the Holy Spirit marching on to the city of God where the Lord Jesus Christ and the truth of God shall be supreme and honored. Merrill Tenney was for many years a professor at Wheaton College and Wheaton Graduate School and he was preaching once in Hong Kong to a congregation that were largely Chinese.

He didn't know their language and they didn't know his. It was a large audience and he had a someone who was interpreting for him. Afterwards when he had pronounced the benediction he stood at the door outside and the congregation filed out and those that spoke English could say a word to him.

But he said there was one man who came up who obviously could not say anything. You could tell he wanted to say something but he really couldn't say anything. And finally when he reached Dr. Tenney all he could blurt out was Hallelujah.

And then Dr. Tenney said I didn't know what to say to him. I couldn't say one word in his language. But I finally broke out with Amen.

And he smiled and I smiled. We were able to communicate by virtue of our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what's going to happen in the future.

And finally those who have bowed to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be one in Christ. And God's program for unity to the glory of God will be accomplished. You're here this morning and you've never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We invite you to come receive the blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Receive the benefits of the work of Christ through faith. Not by coming down front.

Not by signing a paper. Not by raising your hand. But by in your heart turning to the Lord Jesus and receiving as a free gift the salvation of God.

Come to him. Join the company of the saints who shall ultimately be one in Christ. And enjoy the fellowship of God forever.

Why don't you come? Acknowledge your own lost condition. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. What a wonderful promise.

May God help you to respond. Let's stand for the benediction. Father we are so grateful to thee for the ancient accounts of the word of God which already in those earliest days hundreds and thousands of years ago revealed the eternal principles of our great triune God.

Oh Father we pray especially for any in this audience who may not know our Lord Jesus Christ. May through the Holy Spirit there be a working of the power of God, an acknowledgement of our lost condition, a fleeing to the cross of Christ for the forgiveness of sins through the blood that was shed. May grace, mercy, and peace go with us for Jesus' sake.

Amen. you

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