

ONLY ONE LANGUAGE BEFORE BABEL?

Eric Lyons, adapted

According to some skeptics, Genesis 10:5, 20, 31 contradict what is stated in Genesis 11:1. Supposedly, since it is recorded that the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth spoke different languages in Genesis 10, and yet he indicated that *“the whole earth had one language and one speech”* in Genesis 11:1, then a discrepancy exists. Obviously, before the dispersion of man at Babel, the whole Earth could not have both many languages and only one language at the same time.

The explanation to this “problem” is that the events recorded in Genesis 10-11 were not written chronologically. Genesis 10 is more of an overview, while Genesis 11 speaks of one event within Genesis 10. Some of the things recorded in chapter 10 occurred before the tower of Babel, while others occurred sometime later. The simple fact is, Bible writers did not always record information in a strictly chronological sequence (and they never claimed to do such). Genesis 2:5-25 does not pick up where chapter 1 left off; rather it provides more detailed information about some of the events mentioned in chapter one. Several of the events in Genesis 38 involving Judah and Tamar occurred while the things recorded in chapter 39 and following took place. Similar to a teacher who is telling her class a story and inserts information into it about something the main character did in the past or will do in the future, the narrator jumps ahead at times by inserting parenthetical material like that found in Genesis 10.

Aside from the languages mentioned in Genesis 10, there is another clue in the text that reveals the events recorded in chapter 11 occurred before the descendants of Noah began speaking different languages and spreading throughout the Earth. In 10:25, it mentions a man named Peleg (meaning “division”) who received such a name because *“in his days the earth was divided.”* This is a clear reference to the confusion of languages at the tower of Babel described in chapter 11. The *“earth”* (i.e., people; cf. 11:1) divided when God confused the languages (11:7-8). Thus, the division in Peleg’s day is linked contextually to the linguistic segregation at Babel (Genesis 11:1-9).

When Genesis 10 and 11 are read with the understanding that not all events are recorded chronologically, one clearly sees how the events revealed in these chapters are entwined tightly with one another—so

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A DECISION YOU CAN’T MAKE STANDING UP

Jacob Hudgins, adapted

As great crowds attend Jesus (Luke 14:25), He gives sharp words. To follow Him, a disciple must *“hate his own father and mother and wife and children...and even his own life”* (26). He must also *“renounce all that he has”* (33). Jesus is setting discipleship requirements to the crowd. You think you like Me, but are you ready to give up everything—to surrender all? Especially, He urges them not to speak too quickly in response, but to count the cost.

“For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?” (28). When we build something, we sit down and count the cost. We don’t rush it. *“Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?”* (Luke 14:31). Before we go to war, we sit down and strategize.

Jesus’ repeated use of *“sit down”* in these verses illustrates the seriousness of this decision. It is the difference between considering buying a snack and buying a car. For the latter, I need to sit down, get my calculator out, and make sure I’m really ready. It’s a big decision and I don’t want to regret it later.

I love Jesus for not pulling the wool over my eyes. He doesn’t use sales pitches or fine print. If I follow Him, I do it with eyes wide open. In fact, He assures me that it will cost me.

Sometimes, we get the wrong idea from the book of Acts—that people always made life-changing decisions immediately. Jesus here encourages thought and consideration. **Sit down.** As teachers, we must give people space to count the cost and make the wise choice, even if it takes a while. It’s that important.

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tightly in fact that those who seek contradictions are doomed to fail. Linguistically speaking, there was no pre-Babel confusion; only one language was in existence (Genesis 11:1).

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Men's/Women's Studies
@ 6:30 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belen, New Mexico

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"The command is, *'Ask and ye shall receive,'* but oh, how many things we are constantly receiving without any asking of our own, and out of the spontaneous prompting of the Lord's compassion!"

– William Taylor

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 16

APRIL 23RD, 2023

POSITIVE PREACHING

Robert Welch

I like positive preaching. I like to hear it. I like to do it. It is like watching the sunshine glisten on the dewy leaves of the apple tree by my window, fresh from a springtime shower. I appreciate the knowledge that the sunshine and the rain will make the tree grow, bloom and bring the delicious ripened fruit. I know that it takes positive preaching to make the Christian grow in grace and knowledge, blossom in faith and fervor, and bear the delightful fruit of a mature working Christian.

Only, one year, however, made me see that it takes more than sunshine and rain to produce a bountiful harvest of golden apples from the tree. I saw that the tree needed annual pruning. It needed spraying or some other natural preventive of disease and contamination of the fruit. Otherwise, a pretty little moth would find a lodging place for its egg in the bloom and every apple would be wormy and ruined.

It took no longer for me to learn that positive preaching is not enough to produce the good fruits of Christians. It takes pruning, cutting away the superfluous growth, the weak limbs, the diseased branches, cross branches which would abrade other good ones. This is after the order of the Lord's parable of the vine and the branches (John 15:1-8). Some negative preaching and work has to be done to clear the church of such branches; including *"strife, jealousy, wrath, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults"* (2nd Corinthians 12:20).

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