

THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGES (glossogeny)

This is our 59th and final lesson of the study of the first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis.

Etiological myths have existed throughout history regarding the Origin of Languages. It is an attempt by the world to explain the diversity of languages in the world without reference to the Bible.

Most historians have discovered references to a great deluge and some punishment by God or gods associated with the diversity of languages in world. Many conclude that the reason for this type of etiological myth is Christian missionary teachings.

Most agree that the diversity of languages arose suddenly. But disagree on how they occurred. Because of the rejection of the Bible as a reliable source, they have proposed some interesting ideas.

- Some think that speech evolved to replace the territorial spray of mammals.
- Some think that speech mimed sounds of the world around them like the boom of thunder.
- Some think that speech imitated sound of animals like bow-wow or oink.
- Some think speech developed from sights of pleasure and experiences of pain.
- Some think that speech developed from oral sounds and body gestures to arbitrary symbols.

In 1866, the Linguistic Society of Paris banned discussion of the origin of languages, deeming it to be an unanswerable problem.

Scientists have discovered a gene, FOXP2, believed to be involved with the development of languages.

We will begin by examining our lesson text by the following five homiletical points.

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| • Speech | (Gen.11:1) | One language |
| • Settlers at Shinar | (Gen.11:2) | One world |
| • Structural wonder | (Gen.11:3-4) | One city-tower |
| • Schemers against God | (Gen.11:5-6; Prov.24:8) | One mind |
| • Segregation by languages | (Gen.11:7-9) | One Lord |

This lesson will study FIVE aspects of the Origin of Languages of the Postdiluvian world.

1. The Antediluvian world had one language and speech used in the Garden of Eden (Gen.2:19-20). It was the biblical language (God said).

This was the language of the custodians of the messianic lineage carried from the Antediluvian world by the Sethites to the Postdiluvian world by the Shemites (Luke 3:34-38).

It is the language of the word of God: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." (Matt.4:4)

2. Believers of all biblical dispensations have embraced the language of the word of God.

In the OT Bible, it is the language of Hebrew. In the NT Bible, it is the language of Greek. A modern wonder is that Christianity has translated the Bible into all the primary languages of the world.

It is the eternal word or language of God – “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.” (Matt.24:35)

“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.” (Matt.5:18)

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim.3:16-17)

3. The divine purpose of the confusion of languages was so that people could not understand one another speech.

“Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” (Gen.11:7)

The people had become universally united in their rebellion against God and His plan of nationalism – “one nation under God.” (Gen.10:5, 20, 32)

“And the Lord said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.’” (Gen.11:6)

4. The diversity of languages was the result of divine judgment upon the generation of the tower of Babel.

“So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.” (Gen.11:8)

It occurred in the days of Peleg – “And two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided.” (Gen.10:25) **Peleg** was the fifth generation from the flood (Gen.11:10-26).

5. Dispersion of the people over the entire earth was also the result of divine judgment on the Tower of Babel.

“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.” (Gen.11:9)

Therefore the Postdiluvian civilization consists of a diversity of languages in the world except for Christians.

Christians still embrace the original biblical eternal language of the word of God – “So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” (Rom.10:17; 1:16)

“For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.” (1 Pet.1:23; 2:2)

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Heb.4:12)