



*“At the first pinnacle of humanity’s rebellion, humans were proud of their new invention, the brick. With it they conspired to build a tower, to reach the heights of heaven on their own, without the God who created them. In His mercy, the Lord confused the languages of man, and scattered him across the globe. In Acts 2, the empowering Holy Spirit undoes Babel, and reunites humanity under the Kingdom of Heaven. Join us this week as we look at these two, seemingly disconnected stories and how chaos came into unity through Christ.”*

## Does the Gift of Tongues Still Operate Today?

<https://www.premierchristianity.com/home/does-the-gift-of-tongues-still-operate-today-nt-wright-gives-his-answer/2194.article>



## Division and the Church

**By Pastor CJ**

Over the past several months, I’ve been noticing a trend in how the enemy seeks to destroy relationships between people. Satan has this tendency to do whatever he can to create division between God and humanity and between humans themselves. Over the past two years, it’s felt like the temperature has been turned up on everything and a light shown on how divided we are as a world, a nation, a religion, a church, and, for some of us, as biblical communities or even families. It has felt like with every issue; things quickly sift into two camps where there are the “good guys” on one side (that’s our side) and the “bad guys” on the other. It’s been pretty heartbreaking to see civility and dialogue, respect and love, wonder and curiosity go by the wayside. Everything becomes binary in nature, right and wrong, left and right, intelligent and foolish, truth and fake news.

A couple of weeks ago, I was listening to a book, and NT Wright said that it is easy for a church to be either holy or unified, but it is not easy to live in the tension of being both. He’s right. Many churches divide and are sifted along these two lines- holy or unified. This might seem like a modern problem, but this has been a problem since the first century. Look through the writings of Paul. You’ll see that he is constantly going back and forth in his letters reminding churches to hold fast to the teachings that lead to holiness as well as encouraging them to continually remember that they are unified in Christ. The church in Corinth was leaning too much on grace. The church at Ephesus was too focused on holiness.

Paul’s answer to how to embrace both unity and holiness is radical humility. When we are humble, we can recognize that we are in desperate need of grace ourselves, and we can recognize that others are in desperate need of it as well. This means that we can hold a high standard of holiness (as the Scriptures teach) but not be proud because we recognize that we are still pilgrims in the process of being made holy. However, it also means that we can find unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ who are on their own path toward holiness. It is no longer that we avoid conversations about sin or holiness, but that we lovingly and humbly have these conversations with one another, recognizing that we are all being purified and sanctified for the work Christ has for us in the Kingdom.

On the other hand, in our binary world where everything seems separated, we can begin to think that the division of humanity is the biggest enemy, it isn’t. Back in Genesis 11, with the story of the Tower of Babel, humanity was united together, sinfully united in trying to glorify themselves without submitting to the Creator. This sinful unity necessitated God’s intervention, the separation of humanity by language and tongue so sinful humanity wouldn’t work together to dig to new depths of depravity, all the while thinking they are achieving great heights by the power of their own strength. The Lord separated humanity, by culture and by language.

*This was one of the lowest points in human history. The Lord then anointed His people to act as a Kingdom of priests to the nations, eventually leading to the Great High Priest, King Jesus, who came and died for all people, making space for His Spirit within them. In Acts 2, we see the Spirit descend on the disciples and they are able, all of a sudden to speak the languages of all the different people gathered in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit comes and undoes Babel, reuniting humanity, under one King.*

*Our unity isn't based on our understanding of passages in the Scriptures, but on the unchanging God of the universe, on our unchanging adoption as beloved children of God, created in His image and likeness. In Christ, we are unified. In Christ, we are all pilgrims being made holy. In Christ, we are focused on One Father, centered on One Son, and filled with One Spirit.*

## Babel Reversed

[ligonier.org](http://ligonier.org)

***“Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language” (Acts 2:5–6).***

*With the division of human languages into different tongues and dialects at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–9), the opportunities for disagreement and strife among the peoples of the world were greatly exacerbated. However, the Lord's judgment of the human race so long ago was not His last word for man. Today, we will look at a New Testament passage that has much to say about Babel before we return to the Genesis narrative tomorrow.*

*From the beginning, God has intended to unite men from all places into a people to proclaim His glory. In Adam and in Noah, all men are ordered to exercise wise dominion for His glory (1:28; 9:7). However, we united against our Creator at Babel, and so He confused our languages, making us fill the earth as commanded but hindering our ability to coalesce into one rebellious body (11:1–9).*

*Initially, the Lord worked mostly within the limitations He imposed, calling one tribe and tongue — the people of Israel — as His witness to the nations (Ex. 34:10; Deut. 4:1–8; 26:18–19; Josh 4:19–24). Under the old covenant, the praise of God was limited mainly to one people, but our Father still desired to make Himself known to all men. Yet with few exceptions, Israel failed her duty, and so the prophets looked to the day when the Lord would unite persons from all nations to praise Him (see Isa. 60; Zech. 14:16). The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost began this anticipated day.*

*At Pentecost, the festival of the firstfruits of the harvest, the church received the firstfruits of cosmic redemption when the Holy Spirit was poured out equally upon all flesh (Acts 2:1–4). The miracle of tongues, where everyone heard the Gospel in his own language (vv. 5–11), provided evidence God was breaking down the cultural and ethnic division imposed at Babel, revealing that the true Israel is defined not by tongue or culture but by common faith in the Messiah.*

*Linguistic and cultural differences remain, but the power of the Spirit enables us to break through them for the sake of the Gospel. The reversal of Babel has begun, as the elect from every nation gather before the Lord's throne to worship Him (Rev. 7:9–12).*

*Coram Deo*

*The diversity of language and culture, coupled with our stubbornness, often hinders the call to be united in Christ. However, it will one day give way to one body that will praise God in multifaceted glory. What are you doing to make this a reality now? Befriend one from a different ethnic background so that you may understand their culture better. If they are not a believer, seek to share the Gospel with them, for they may be one of those who will gather before the Lord.*

