

Reversing Babel

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-7+8 Variety Show. REAL. Camps (HS, Mid, Youth). Donuts. Men's Vid. Jonah.
- B. Calvary Magazine's in info booth.
- C. Slide9 DC4K: is looking for **3 assistants: men, women, grandparents**. Requirements: *a heart to help children whose parents are experiencing divorced or separation*. It's 13 week program, starting Feb.24th. It's a structured program with lesson plans.
 1. Each session has *games, music, videos, activities, crafts and stories* centered around a weekly theme. *You'll be helping the children process the many changes they're facing, identify and sort through their emotions, and learn to communicate their feelings with their parents*. email Lorrain
- D. Slide10 Prayer Night: next Sun.
- E. JM9 - TY from Kel & Myself. You were highly complimented from our speakers & exhibitors & worship presenters. *Even our food vendors*.
- F. Slide11a-c Hey, Happy Groundhog Day/aka Woodchuck [2 things to remember about Groundhog Day]

II. Slide12 Intro: Reversing Babel

- A. The coming of the Holy Spirit at **Pentecost** marks *the official inauguration of the new covenant*.
- B. The **Church's** reception of the Holy Spirit, *preaching*, and *sudden growth* testify to the reality of *Christ's resurrection* and *His ongoing reign*.
- C. There will be some strange language and strange happenings here, *but* don't miss *the main thing*, the Holy Spirit filled them with *power* for *witnessing*.

III. Slide13 WHAT HAPPENED IN THE APOSTLES? (1-4)

- A. **Read Text*
- B. Slide14 SIGNS OF PENTECOST (1,2) [Pesach/Passover. Shavuot/Weeks. Sukkot/Tabernacles]
- C. *The timing is at:* the right **Feast**. the right **Time**. with the right **people**. in the right **place**.
- D. **The Feast of Pentecost** was 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits. (Lev. 23:15-21)

1. Just as **Passover** is a picture of *the death of Christ* (1Cor.5:7), and **Firstfruits** a picture of *the resurrection of Christ* (1Cor.15:20-23), so **Pentecost** pictures *the coming of the Holy Spirit* (1Cor.12:13).
 2. During **Firstfruits** (harvest), they'd wave a bundle of grain/sheaves.
 - a) **Waving this sacrifice** (holding it out to the altar & bringing it back again)
 - b) It was dedicated to Him/God (motion forward), then it was received back (motion back). Representing it came from God to the worshipper. It was an expression of gratitude, of God supplying their daily bread.
 3. During **Feast of Weeks** (7 weeks after 1stfruits)/**Pentecost** they'd wave 2 Loaves of bread with leaven. Israelite farmers would start their journeys toward Jerusalem to present their firstfruit offerings.
 - a) Now at **Pentecost** (NT) it's a picture of **the church** composed of Jews & Gentiles. (In 1Cor.10:17 the church is pictured as *a loaf of bread, For we, though many, are one bread and one body*). The leaven in the bread speaks of sin yet in the church.
 - b) There are 2 occurrences of the Spirit's baptism in Acts: upon the **Jews** in Acts 2, and upon the **Gentiles** in Acts 10. The 2 loaves presented at Pentecost foreshadow these events.
- E. A coincidence then...that the HS brings the Power the disciples need to be witnesses of Jesus in *Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, & to the uttermost parts of earth* precisely on the day designated for **Jews** to **lift their thanks** to Yahweh for the Harvest?
1. The disciples were about to begin reaping **a harvest of souls** that has continued now for almost 2,000 years.
- F. All together in 1 place - Spirit comes, not to divide, but to unite.
- G. Slide15 A wind came from heaven - This was from God.
1. To transform earth w/the power of heaven
- H. The intensity of the sound (mighty = violent) and its origin from heaven, announce its divine origin. It was a sudden noisy release of energy.
1. This sound was so loud the people in the Temple area of Jerusalem were drawn toward it to see what strange thing might be happening. (6)

2. **But** let's be *crystal clear*, there are also many times where we'll watch the Spirit work **softly and secretly, quietly** transforming peoples lives and situations **without** any big noise or fuss.
3. Here Luke is describing something **new**, something that will **launch a great movement**.

a) *Just like a fleet of ships* is launched by the **strong wind** that drives them out to sea.
Or like, **a forest fire** started by *a few small flames*.

- I. **Wind** - this untamable force, **both terrifying & exhilarating**. It reminds us of...
 1. John 3:8 **The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit.**

J. Slide16a SIGHTS OF PENTECOST (3)

- K. **Fire** - in the OT was often used by God to give **tangible evidence** of **His Power**.
 1. **Elijah** experienced **God's Power** w/the Baal prophets. [Fire from Heaven]
 2. **Moses** experienced **God Presence** in the burning bush. [Fire in Bush]
 3. **Isaiah** experienced **God Holiness** when lips were touched w/burning coal. [Fire on Lips]
 - a) Slide16b Christians if we want to be used by God in world evangelism, we need to **experience His Power, live in His Presence & be characterized by His Holiness.**¹

L. Slide17a SPEECH OF PENTECOST (4)

M. They spoke in at least **15 different languages**, they had never learned.

- N. In Acts, **tongues** are an outward manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit. **Speaking in tongues occurs 3 major times in the book** (4; 10:46; 19:6). **Each instance pertains to the acceptance of a new people group into the body of Christ.**
 1. **First**, the apostles speak in tongues **to the Jews**, demonstrating that the promise of the Holy Spirit has come **and** that the covenant promises to them will be fulfilled (4).

¹ Acts of the Holy Spirit, Peter Wagner.

2. **Next**, Cornelius and his family speak in tongues **to show that Gentiles** have been accepted into God's people (10:46).
 3. **Finally, Jews in Ephesus**, a city in Asia Minor (modern Turkey), speak in tongues **to demonstrate that the Church extends beyond local believers or national borders**.
- O. Slide17b [Note: difference between the tongues used here & that of 1 Cor.12&14. You could call this *the miracle of language* & the other *a gift of tongues*]
- P. **Lastly in vs.4 they began to speak** - As one noticed the Holy Spirit didn't distribute **pens but tongues** at Pentecost; **for** the gospel was to be proclaimed *preferably by human lips*.
1. Slide17c If we are filled with the HS, He will be... **In us as the presence of God in our life. On us as the power of God in our work. And through us as the manifestation of God in our testimony.**

IV. Slide18 **WHAT HAPPENED THROUGH THE APOSTLES? (5-13)**

- A. (5) There was a never a more **cosmopolitan gathering** in Jerusalem than this. **It was the perfect time** for the dissent of *the Holy Spirit of God*.
- B. **From every nation** – i.e. the nations of *the 1st century Jewish dispersion*.
1. These were **Jews** who lived w/their families in Jewish communities **outside of** the Holy Land. (known as Hellenistic Jews) Distinguished from Jews living in The Land
- C. (6) Apparently they started **in the Upper Room** when the Spirit descended (2), **but** must have **moved out to the temple courts** where a great crowd gathered.
- D. **Bewildered** - The wording used here, *together with* the reference to **tongues or languages and** to the **many nations** (5), indicates that this is **a reversal** of the Tower of Babel, where God confused the languages of those who rebelled against Him.
1. Slide19 In Gen.11:4 they said, **Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.**
 - a) We make the story about *a structure trying to reach heaven*. **No**, it was about them *making a name for themselves* (instead of God). It was about **staying** instead of **going** (*fill up the earth*). It was about **staying put** in their safe city, w/no risk. Their safety was in *the buildings*, **not God**. Their **glory** was in *themselves*, **not God**.

2. **Back then**, Yahweh came down to thwart ill-founded human ambition **and** pride **by confusing their languages**. **Here** in **Acts**, the Spirit of the Lord comes down to proclaim salvation in Christ **by** making **the gospel intelligible in all languages**
 3. **Back then**, it was a **confusion** of tongues. **Here**, it was an **understanding** of tongues.
 4. **Back then**, it was a **division** of purpose. **Here**, it was a **unity** of purpose.
 5. **Back then**, it was a **scattered people**. **Here**, it was a **scattered gospel**.
 - a) **Babel** became **a Major Turning Point** in the bible [take Andrew's *Unfolding Gospel*]
 - b) **Slide20** See slide.
- E. (7) **Galileans** - this small group of frightened, puzzled and largely uneducated men and women will quickly become, a force to be reckoned with right across the known world.²
1. Some commentators refer to them as the **Hillbillies** of the day, **culturally backward**. **But** the Galileans were **the aggressive evangelists**, the instruments **chosen by God** to take **the good news**...to Hellenist, from all over the world.
- F. (8) **This verse is an important verse in evangelism as it is the 1st time the disciples took the gospel across a discernible cultural barrier**. [cross-cultural, **or** E-2 evangelism]
1. The gap between the Hebrews **&** the Hellenists was more formidable than some might think. [**Example**: the **Elamites** never had returned to the Holy Land, **but** settled down in the area *North of the Persian Gulf*. **They had very little in common with each other**]
 2. Not only were virtually all believers up to this point **Hebrew Jews**, they were also **Galilean Hebrews** as opposed to **Judean Hebrews**. [**eg.** Union/Confederates]
- G. **We hear, each of us in his own native language** – God shows respect for the culture & language of each of the groups mentioned here.
1. Why is this important because, **it isn't only for Israel**. **And** it's **not** a Western Religion. **Or** the white man's religion (Haiti Airport). **No**, **it transcends race, creed, color, or culture**.
 2. To evangelize effectively, **the gospel** must be preached **in their heart language**, **and the Bible** must be translated into **their vernacular**.

² N.T.Wright, Acts for Everyone. Pg.23 Kindle.

- H. Slide21 (9,10) These regions (15 mentioned) go East to West, North to South. i.e. *the kingdom of God is destined to reach the entire world.*
1. Parthians (Iran). Mesopotamia (Iraq). List of 15, probably not a complete list.
Proselytes (Gentiles by birth, who decided to convert to Judaism).
Arabs (Jews from Arabia *not* Arabs as we think of today).
- I. (11) we hear them telling in our own tongue *the mighty works of God* - They did not *preach* in tongues, *but rather praised God* in languages they did not naturally know.
- J. (12,13) All were amazed & perplexed...but others mocking –
1. Some **accept** it, some **reject** it. Some **receptive**, some **resistant**.
 2. **But remember**, not all crops ripen at the same time. Even the same crop does not all ripen at once. [*Example*: In the US **wheat** in the southern states ripens *before* the **wheat** in the northern states]
- K. (13) They are full of new wine – Well, in a sense...*yes they were.*
1. Lk.5:37,38 *no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.*
- L. Slide22 What does this mean? *It means that the Holy Spirit brings new life to those who believe in Jesus Christ, and with that life comes a continuing power to those are continually filled. It means fire in our lives, individually burning away the chaff and flaming out to those around us. It means the truth of God going forth from us in a way we would never have dreamed of - the divine utterance of God through us. It means communication, joy, thankfulness, submission. R.Kent Hughes*
- M. We're told *Nature abhors a vacuum* (ex: If you pumped out all the air out of a bottle & sealed it, it would create a vacuum inside. If you put a hole in the bottle, *air rushes in to fill it*, because of the air pressure around the bottle).
1. Thus the state of being full, or fullness, is 1 of the necessities of life.
 2. Also our **Spiritual Nature** *abhors a vacuum*.
- N. We are all *full of something*...the question is...of **what?**
1. Full of yourself? Full of this world? Or, Full of the Holy Spirit?

- O. Maybe this filling comes each time we *acknowledge our inadequacy, our emptiness*.
1. He will not fill our sails with the wind of the Holy Spirit **unless** we admit that our sails are empty. **This requires humility and confession**. This requires *empty dependency* on the Holy Spirit's **fillings**.
 2. The key to a spirit-filled Christian life is found in Paradox: Cultivating an *attitude of perpetual emptiness* brings with it a **perpetual fullness**.
 - a) Jesus said it this way, *blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be **filled***.