

Introduction: The biggest problem people have is that they think too much of themselves, this also includes people who obsess about their shortcoming. When this is taken to the extreme, people think only of themselves. *** I remember an incident sixty years ago on our school playground. Our class had two sets of twins. The more interesting twins were the fraternal Guy and Ned. Everyone liked them. Ned was an inch taller than his brother and had blond hair. He was like Huck Finn. Guy had brown hair and some mild gangster qualities. One cloudy day, at the morning recess, Guy was standing in the middle of a group of boys with a big Hershey bar in his hands: the one with eight squares of chocolate. As he slipped the outside wrapper off, threw it on the ground and started to open the inside wrapper, he said, 'This candy bar is for three people!' I knew I would get nothing because there were more than two guys in our group cooler than me. Then he surprised us all by saying. 'Yes, this candy bar is for: 'Me, Myself and I!' *** Both of our texts this morning show us that people tend to want to elevate themselves, make themselves great; and, also the danger that goes with this attitude, namely trying to bring God down to our level so we might have some control over Him. *** The first story comes from a time before Abraham was born. The second one comes at the end of Joshua's life. *** Let's get into these stories so we may be warned by God and learn from God. Then, when we trust God to be all He is and approach Him in humble dependence, He will show us the power of His Name.

I. People united in language decide to build a tower to heaven for their own name's sake; Yahweh sees this as rebellion against Him, confuses their language and scatters them. (Genesis 11:1-9)

A. When all people lived together with one language they built a tower towards heaven to make a name for themselves. (Verses 1-4)

1. Then all the earth (had) one language and few words. (Verse 1)

One language: In the early days of people multiplying over the earth there was only one language.

Interesting note, the word for 'few' words is literally the plural form of 'one'!

2. Then, as they journeyed from the east, they found a broad valley in the land of Shinar, and then they dwelt there. (Verse 2)

East of Eden: The line of Cain went east of Eden (Genesis 3:16). Now we are told people moved farther east.

Shinar means country of two rivers. The great-grandson of Noah founded the kingdom of Babel in Shinar (Genesis 10:1-12).

3. Then they said, one to his neighbor, 'Come now, we will make bricks and burn them with burning'; then, they had the brick for stone, and pitch was for mortar; then they said, 'Come now, we will build for ourselves a city and a tower, and its top in the heavens; we will work for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered upon the face of all the earth. (Verses 3-4)

One to neighbor: All the people in the region are talking among themselves to focus on one thing: to make strong bricks together.

Build city: They desire to build a city so they may be strong together: it will be for themselves.

Tower toward heaven: They want to build a tower in that city that will reach to heaven.

They want to get to God by their own efforts.

Name for us: They want to make a name for themselves. They are united in self-centeredness. And they are rebelling against God's first word to *adam* to multiply and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28).

They want to earn the respect of God in heaven. They will soon see that their hearts are not right with God.

We must not be concerned with making a name for ourselves

B. When Yahweh sees this work of self-exultation for the rebellion it is against Him, He confused their language and scattered them. (Verses 5-9)

1. Then Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower which they built, the sons of *adam*. (Verse 5)

Yahweh comes down: The Covenant God, Yahweh, comes down to have a close up look at the city these 'sons of *adam*' had built.

2. Then Yahweh said, 'Behold! People (are) one, and one language to all of them; and, this beginning them to do; now they will not be restrained from all which they will imagine to do'. (Verse 6)

Unified: Even when the goal and cause are wrong, for example: abortion and gender confusion.

People have incredible power when they are fully united in accomplishing their desired goal or cause.

3. [Yahweh continued] 'Come now, we will go down, and we will confuse there the language of the people, that they will not understand (one) man language of another; then, Yahweh scattered them from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased to build the city. (Verses 7-8)

Confuse speech: The 'we' who confused the speech of the people could very well be The Covenant God Yahweh and His faithful and strong angelic spirit beings. This is actually an act of mercy by God so people would no longer try to reach Him by their own efforts. Instead, they will have to listen to Him and do what He says by His grace that gives them trust in Him and His Word.

Scatter them: Their desire was that they would not be scattered and become weaker. It is God's gracious will that people be limited. God does not despise a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 57:15).

We must not be concerned with making a name for ourselves

4. Therefore was called its name Babel, because there Yahweh confused the language of all the earth, and from there Yahweh scattered them over the face of all the earth. (Verse 9)

Name: The Covenant God, Yahweh, gave the name to the place where the self-centered plans of humanity to make a 'name' for themselves (at His expense) were brought to an end when their language was confused – which is what 'babel' means in English. He also fulfilled His first Word to *adam* in spite of their wrong desires!

We must not be concerned with making a name for ourselves

II. The Covenant God fights for His people who love Him, but they must guard themselves to not mingle with idol worshippers or they will perish. (Joshua 23:9-13)

A. Joshua reminds God's people that God drove out great nations for them, fighting for them according to His Word to them, so they must guard themselves to love Yahweh. (Verses 9-11)

1. [Joshua continued] 'Yahweh has driven out from before y'all nations great and strong; and (for) y'all, no man (able) to stand before y'all until this day'. (Verse 9)

Yahweh: Yahweh had told Abram that after four hundred years, He would bring Abram's descendants out of Egypt to give them the land of ten nations (Genesis 15:12-21). This was Yahweh's judgment on them after their sins had reached a point where they had to be punished (Genesis 15:16). The Israelites had to advance against the people of the land by faith in God's Word to Abram, but it was Yahweh who did the heavy fighting as an act of His grace.

2. One man of y'all will pursue a thousand because Yahweh the God of y'all, He is fighting for y'all, as He spoke to y'all. (Verse 10)

Extreme odds: Imagine one Israelite successfully pursuing a thousand men of the ten nations! This can only be done when Yahweh and His heavenly hosts of strong angelic spirit beings are fighting for His people, Israel.

His Words: And all of this is because of The Covenant God Yahweh's Word that He gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob-Israel.

3. Y'all must greatly guard to yourselves (in order) to love Yahweh, The God of y'all. (Verse 11)

Exhortation: This is the most important sentence we have heard. Until now we have seen the sinful and selfish tendencies of people. But now Joshua (Yah saves – the very name the angel told Joseph to give Mary's Son – Matthew 1:18-21) exhorts all God's people to guard their hearts so they will continue to fully love Yahweh, their God; then He will graciously give them strength to do His will.

Yahweh increases the strength of people fully loving Him

B. Then Joshua warns them that if they ever mingle with idolatrous nations, these will be a snare to them and they will perish. (Verses 12-13)

1. Because if to turn back, y'all will turn back and follow closely the remnant of these nations being left here with y'all, and y'all make marriages with them, and y'all have come in them, and they in y'all ... (Verse 12)

Warning: Joshua is strongly warning God's people, who did not fully devote themselves to eliminating all the wicked people who had greatly sinned against their Creator God, to make sure they do not turn to these people and their ways.

2. ... to know, y'all will know that not He will continue, Yahweh the God of y'all to drive out these nations from before y'all; and, (they) are to y'all a snare, a trap, and a scourge in the sides of y'all, and thorns in the eyes of y'all, until y'all perish from this good land which He gave to y'all: Yahweh The God of y'all. (Verse 13)

Snares: In very strong language Joshua details all the painful punishment God will put on His people if they forsake Him and all He has done for them according to His Word. If they become like the people they had been commanded to remove from the land and did not remove them due to their disobedience, then these people will ensnare them in a trap and inflict harm on them.

Result: And the ultimate result will be that God will cause them to perish from off the land that He gave to them as a result of His Word to their ancestors.

Application: All people IN Jesus by grace through faith, have the same warning from The Three-IN-One God: we must all guard our hearts to fully love God, so He will give us victory over idol worshippers.

Then, we will not be snared by idol worshippers to worship idols and perish before God.

Application: Finally, we must all understand the danger of trying to make a name for ourselves rather than humbly and gratefully following The God who loves us. So, let's all be sure our hearts are fully dedicated to Him. And we can only be fully dedicated to God when we surrender to His Son, The Savior, who died in our place on The Cross to cover our sin and selfishness once for all; then, He rose from His grave to give us new life IN Him. This new life becomes like His as we become unified as one IN Him using our diverse gifts in harmony for Him.

Conclusion: When all people spoke the same language they worked together to build a tower toward heaven for their own sake. The Covenant God, Yahweh, sees this as rebellion against Him, confuses their language and scatters them. Over five hundred years later, He fought for His people who loved Him. Then, through His servant Joshua, He warned them to guard themselves so they do not mingle with idol worshippers and perish.

We must not be concerned with making a name for ourselves