

Sermon for May 24th, 2026
PENTECOST

READINGS
Genesis 11:1-9

1 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. **2** And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. **3** And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. **4** Then 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.” **5** And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. **6** And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. **7** Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.” **8** So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. **9** Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

Psalm 143

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD;
give ear to my pleas for mercy!
In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

2 Enter not into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.

3 For the enemy has pursued my soul;
he has crushed my life to the ground;
he has made me sit in darkness like those long dead.

4 Therefore my spirit faints within me;
my heart within me is appalled.

5 I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all that you have done;
I ponder the work of your hands.

6 I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. *Selah*

7 Answer me quickly, O LORD!
My spirit fails!
Hide not your face from me,
lest I be like those who go down to the pit.

8 Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love,
for in you I trust.
Make me know the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.

9 Deliver me from my enemies, O LORD!
I have fled to you for refuge.

10 Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God!

Let your good Spirit lead me
on level ground!

11 For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life!
In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!
12 And in your steadfast love you will cut off my enemies,
and you will destroy all the adversaries of my soul,
for I am your servant.

Acts 2:1-13

1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. **5** Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. **6** And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. **7** And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? **8** And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? **9** Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, **11** both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” **12** And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” **13** But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

John 14:21-27

21 “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him. **22** Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” **23** Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. **24** Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. **25** “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. **26** But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. **27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

Our text for meditation this Pentecost Sunday is on our Old Testament reading.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Introduction

Aside from our Lord Jesus, there have been exactly three men in history who could rightly be called “king of the world.” By “king of the world,” I mean that each of these men was in charge of all of humanity at some point during his lifetime. Each of these three men was the Patriarch over his neighbors, and had unquestioned authority. He had a priestly station as part of his reign as well, being the main religious authority over others; this was mostly an intercessory role, as presumably he would be performing sacrifices on behalf of everyone under his authority.

The first king of the world was Adam. He was the first to receive the command from our Lord to take dominion over all the earth,¹ wherein our Lord gave him authority over all living things. At first, his reign must have been wondrous, but this was stopped short by the fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden. He and his wife ate the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and so the rest of his tenure was painful. He observed hard labors tilling the earth, and had to experience the fallout from his oldest son murdering the younger. For Adam, being king of the world was less about ruling and more about *surviving*, as he had to discover how humanity could make it through the harsher parts of living in a fallen world.

The next king of the world after Adam was Noah. Noah led his family through the lead-up to the Great Flood, and he was the first man to make offering after God extinguished all life outside of the Ark Noah built.² Like Adam, Noah and his family received a mandate to fill the earth, yet with more hard requirements for human behavior to ensure that things did not get as bad as they did before the Deluge.³ Also like Adam, Noah's life was marked by his own sins and the resultant familial difficulties.⁴ While Adam's reign was all about surviving and discovering how men must live, Noah's reign was an attempt at *recovering* the life that men were supposed to be living all along.

Presumably, Adam and Noah both did well in their office as king of the world. Adam could not have survived if he did not carry out the tilling and plowing that our Lord commanded of him,⁵ and Noah was pious enough to work on an ark in obedience to our Lord for a hundred years. Despite their mistakes and the difficulties they faced, they at least fulfilled the basic requirements of their office. Unfortunately, the third king of the world had a different idea.

Babel and its Tower

The city of Babel was founded by a man named nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah and the last king of the world in history.⁶ In our text, nimrod leads humanity to Shinar for the express purpose of building the city. Already with the act of building a city there is a grave rebellion; God had commanded Noah and his descendants to fill the earth once more, and here they were refusing to do so! In defiance of our Lord's Word, they stayed put and made plans to make sure they could keep it that way.

They proposed, likely under nimrod's direction, to build a tower. Why a tower? To make a name for themselves. Now that's an odd reasoning. With humanity there in one place without anyone else in the world, who are they thinking should respect their "name?" Ah, but that is just it my friends, these people were trying to make a name for themselves *before God*. They wanted God to respect them and their decisions, even if those decisions were against His wishes. So not only were they defying His order to spread out over the whole world, they were spitting in His Face and daring Him to do something about it. It is no surprise that "nimrod" isn't the man's real name – it is a title that means "rebel:" he was leading all humanity to do this.

Why a tower though? Well my friends, the previous judgment from God was a global flood; a massive tower that reaches into the sky would be a way to "flood proof" humanity in case another Judgment came. Perhaps they were aware of God's promise to not flood the earth anymore, perhaps they had forgotten, perhaps they simply did not believe what God said. The point of the tower was ultimately something along the lines of "because we are united, You can't rule over us anymore."

The stink of this offense rose to Heaven as soon as nimrod and his friends made the proposition to everyone in humanity. Adam and Noah, the first two kings of the world, did their job despite all their

1 Genesis 1:28

2 Genesis 6-9

3 Genesis 9:1-6

4 Genesis 9:20-27

5 Genesis 3:23

6 Genesis 10:6-14. It could be that nimrod was a further descendant, perhaps even being born after Noah's passing.

faults. Adam and Noah were faithful to the charge given to them. But Nimrod had other ideas. The final human king of the world decided that instead of faithfulness to God, he would try full-blown rebellion. By building the city and beginning to build the tower, he was declaring independence from our Lord and leading his fellow man into full-throated apostasy.

Our Lord's Response

Now, my friends does God accept that rebellion? Does He say “well then, it looks like they don't need Me anymore” and does He then leave? Of course not. Every sin we commit is an act of rebellion against God, but it might not be *consciously* so. People sin all the time without even realizing it. But what Nimrod and his contemporaries were doing was a conscious, malicious, ugly gesture of earnest hatred towards our Lord. God wasn't going to let this slide.

“And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built.” This is what our theologians call a *Theophany*, wherein God appears to mortals in a visible way. Moses does not record the details, but this was not a pleasant experience for the men and women in Babel. There must have been grave silence throughout the whole city as our Lord appeared from the sky with His angels, touched the ground, and deliberated with His servants about what to do. We can only imagine the fear on Nimrod's face as he, the king of the world, was confronted by the Divine King of the universe.

From there, a frightful thing happens. God confuses the languages of men; He had promised to never flood the entire world again, so a different universal punishment had to be inflicted on the rebels. Suddenly, children could no longer call for their fathers or mothers, for they no longer remembered their old *word* for father or mother. Husbands and wives no longer knew each other. The king himself, Nimrod, lost all the prestige his name once had; successive generations had to make up different titles for him like “marduk” or “gilgamesh” or “sargon,” while the vast majority of humanity since the Old Testament was completed simply calls him Nimrod, the rebel. The tower they were building was no longer a project that could be finished, because no one could speak with one another for planning things ahead, no one shared the words for their tools, and whatever slave labor they had was now *de facto* free because no one could give their slaves commands. Violence almost certainly rang out as a result of this, for communications breaking down over grain and water would assuredly lead to food riots. God promised He would never flood the earth again, but He still retained the ability to cause a misery that no tower could prevent, no matter how tall it was.

By confusing the languages of man, our Lord ensures that there will never be another mere man ruling the world. A single human being cannot be trusted to avoid doing what Nimrod did, for as God Himself says soon after the flood, “the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.”⁷ If one of us was made the world dictator or monarch, even if he did not rebel as blatantly as Nimrod did, his rule would still be marked by intolerable tyranny. So no more absolute world monarchs. Though we have had many empires and powerful nations, all of them have receded or dissolved at some point, making any and all globalist projects delusional fantasies doomed to failure. Before Judgment Day we shall never be rid of conflict and irreconcilable differences, for God knows that a unified humanity would result in far greater evils. Sadly, this reality does not stop those who idolize power from trying, and so human history is marked by endless bloodshed.

Conclusion

All this being said, there *is* a King who will rule over all who dwell on the earth someday. That is our Lord Jesus Christ. When He returns, He shall be the Monarch that rules with justice, grace, and

7 Genesis 8:21

mercy forever and ever. And the best part, irony of ironies, He shall rule from a city that has a skyline above the atmosphere itself. When St. John was given a vision of Christ's return, after seeing Judgment Day he saw the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven, and what were its dimensions? "The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. It's length and width and height are all equal."⁸ When Jesus tells the Apostles and all believers "I go to prepare a place for you,"⁹ this is the place He means, a city with its top not just *in* the heavens, but *beyond* them – over 1,300 miles tall. What Jesus does for humanity, nimrod did not even have the capacity to imagine.

My friends, the message is clear that we must not be like the children of man when they were at Babel. We must not covet world rule *or* entrust ourselves to a sinful man and give him authority. To the contrary, we must have confidence that we worship a Savior who does what nimrod the rebel never could. That man ruled over humanity and by his rebellion against God he doomed us all to even greater suffering than we already had: his earthly kingdoms rightfully decayed and were lost to the sands of time. But Christ Jesus, by His *obedience* to our Heavenly Father and submission to dying on a cross for all of our sins, gathers together all who would believe and brings us into an eternal Kingdom where neither moth nor rust destroy. This Pentecost Sunday, let us remember that this Kingdom to which we belong is not of this earth, and may we petition our earthly nations to bend the knee, honor and serve the one true King, and refrain from futile efforts to supplant Him.

Now the Peace of our Lord, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

8 Revelation 21:16

9 John 14:2-3