

# What does it truly mean to be “Pentecostal”?

([Acts 2](#)) 5783 B”H

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Infilling. Indwelling. Whatever you’d like to call it, you need it! We all do.

The infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Often called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the infilling, indwelling presence of the Third Person of the Trinity is the [Promise from the Father](#), a gift that all believers may receive!

[“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Luke 24:49](#)



## Pentecostal Christianity

Despite the fact that the largest organized evangelical Christian fellowship in the world ([the Assemblies of God](#)) just so happens to be Pentecostal in belief and practice, most Americans do not know very much about Pentecostal Christianity.

**Globally, here are the number of adherents in some of the largest and most well-known classical Pentecostal movements or denominations:**

[Assemblies of God: 85 million](#)

[Pentecostal Holiness: 4 million](#)

[Church of God \(Cleveland\): 7 million](#)

[Church of God in Christ: 3 million](#)

These particular denominations are **Trinitarian** with **sound doctrine**. Pentecostal fellowships in general, but particularly the Assemblies of God, have always emphasized global missions.

The fruit of that determined investment are these combined 99 million+ members around the world. This is proof that Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered evangelism is effective!

“Send it on down, LORD, let the Holy Ghost come on down.”  
Hosanna Music

## The Erroneous Jesus-only doctrine

The [United Pentecostal](#) (UPCI) Oneness denomination is growing, currently with 5 million members, but this group **denies** the Triune nature of God. In most cities, UPCI churches are known as “The Pentecostals of . . .” leading many to believe all Pentecostals share this type of erroneous doctrine. The UPCI teaches what is termed, “apostolic doctrine.” This is a doctrinal problem that new leaders need to be able to confront and correct with love because it is more than just a semantic issue. These churches are often known as “Jesus-only” churches because they do not baptize in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but rather in the Name of Jesus, only.

The UPCI teaches that women must have uncut hair, may not wear makeup, and that men should not wear shorts. I applaud their efforts to emphasize modesty, but I do believe they have gone a bit too far.

Because of outward appearance (particularly of UPCI women), many people in the United States have equated *all Pentecostals* with this type of legalism.

But the reality is, being **Pentecostal is about what the Holy Spirit has done on the *inside***, and yes, our outward appearance should reflect holiness, but in a balanced way, not infringing on personal freedom. I personally **choose** to wear skirts and dresses, but **I am not required to do so** by the organization with which I am affiliated.

# What makes a person “Pentecostal?”

We need to reclaim the term “Pentecostal” for all who are [genuinely filled with the Holy Spirit.](#)

Clothing or hairstyle does not make a person “Pentecostal.”

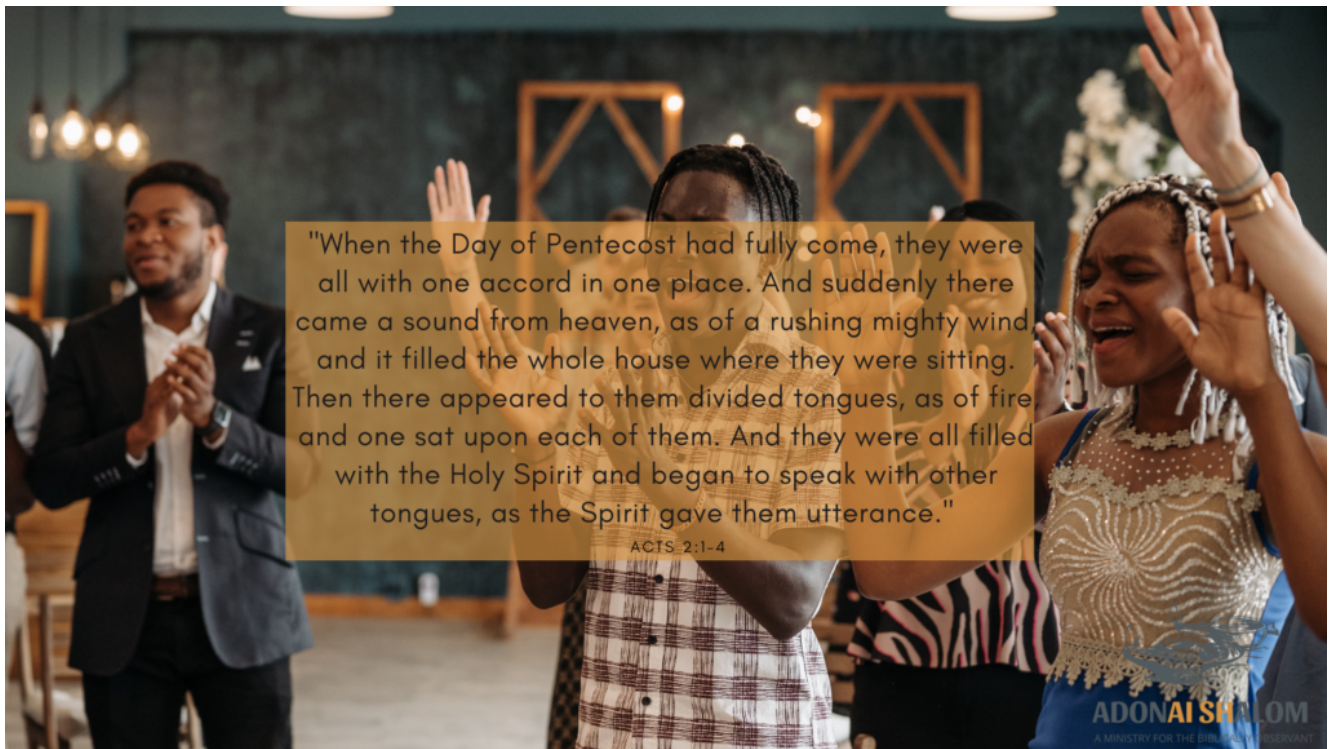
Nor does emotionalism. Sometimes Pentecostals have a reputation for being expressive or “too” emotional. God has given us emotions and there are appropriate moments even in the context of a worship service when emotion can and should be expressed and even encouraged! But emotion for the sake of a show or drawing attention to oneself... that is not what makes a person a “Pentecostal.” A true Pentecostal person has a healthy understanding of how God ministers to our emotions.

***The Spirit of the LORD*** makes a person [“Pentecostal.”](#)

Power from on high makes a person “Pentecostal.”

Being filled with the Holy Spirit (with evidence) (more on that later), makes a person truly “Pentecostal.”

[“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:1-4, NKJV](#)



## The Full Gospel

Notice that [Acts 2:1](#) says “When the Day of Pentecost had **fully** come . . . .” (*emphasis added*)

The [Day of Pentecost](#) was actually the [Feast of Shavu’ot](#), that had been celebrated for years. It’s just that this time, in Acts, God was going to do something so much greater. If you are interested in learning about the [Feast of Shavu’ot](#) and the [Biblical Spring Feasts](#), click [here](#) for my [post](#) that goes more in-depth on that particular subject.

When I usually read this, I focus on the fact that the Jewish Feast day had come, but let’s look at the important adverb there: fully.

The Feast day had **fully** come. It was the precise day . . . but also: this was a day of fulfillment. The Day prophesied by the Prophet [Joel](#) had **fully come** – the LORD was going to even more **fully** work in the lives of His people.

[“And it shall come to pass afterward  
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;](#)



Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
Your old men shall dream dreams,  
Your young men shall see visions.  
And also on My menservants and on My maidservants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”

Joel 2:28-30, NKJV

There is a fullness to the Gospel. Never again shall you hunger or thirst for Living Water because that Living Water will come to you and indwell you.

The **Full** Gospel is that which the Pentecostal communities proclaim: that the Gospel didn't end at the Resurrection! There was more yet to come! The LORD would unite His people through the power of the Holy Spirit and dwell **inside** of them.

Prior to the Pentecostal outpouring of Acts 2, the Spirit of the LORD came upon God's servants, but only for a certain moment or occasion, for a certain purpose. After Acts 2, the Spirit of the LORD would dwell within those who are called by His Name. Hallelujah!

## **Pentecostalism is about receiving all that the LORD has for you**

I love how God does things holistically.

We find this to be true throughout the Bible. For example, a Biblical term, “*shalom*,” meaning “peace,” is more than a simple “peace” that we understand in our English language today. The Hebrew “*shalom*” that the Bible talks about is holistic – an all-encompassing wholeness that only the Prince of Shalom could bring.

So God doesn't just deal with one part of us – its not just “accept Jesus in your heart” and that's it. Our heart is vitally important and so is our soul and spirit, but also this

physical body we are living in right now.

The LORD of All wants you to have a relationship with Him that includes aspects that are very experiential. Being baptized in water is a *physical* symbol of your dying to your sin and rising with Him to new life. Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is also physical! Your physical *body* will feel the glorious spiritual effects – you will be filled with a uncontainable joy and your tongue will speak praises to God with amazing fluidity.

Yes, God can use people who have not (yet!) received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But He can use you for so much more greatness if you receive the awesome gift He has for you. He wants so much for you – don't limit your experience with the LORD because of your preconceived notions of what it might mean to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Don't fear! The LORD designed all of this so beautifully. Receive what He offers you!

## **What is the Biblical Evidence of the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit?**

The Biblical Evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is often called the ["Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit."](#)

["And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."](#)  
[Acts 2:4, NKJV, emphasis added](#)



The people were ALL filled with the Holy Spirit (all of them – there were no exceptions or exemptions. No one was left out. The LORD blessed those who had gathered in the Upper Room to wait for the Promise of the Father by pouring out His Spirit upon every.single.one.

The Biblical pattern is this: when people are filled with the Holy Spirit **then** they begin to speak with other tongues as given by the Holy Spirit.

Speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

But some churches don't "believe" in speaking in tongues.

Some even preach against the practice, saying that this occurred only on that particular Pentecost Day.

But read your Bible carefully!

No where does the Word of God suggest that people stopped receiving the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit, so certainly He continues to fill His people!



Most people who claim not to believe in the Holy Spirit baptism are people who have actually prayed and asked God for it, but did not (yet!) receive it. They conclude that because they have not received it, then it must not exist. A very poor conclusion indeed.

Some people are quite nervous or frightened about the whole idea of speaking in tongues. I know I wasn't raised around that and I didn't quite understand what it was all about until I received the blessed outpouring. The Bible tells us to not be afraid! Seek Him with your whole heart and He will fill you!

Speaking in tongues will give you a holy boldness to share the Good News with others and will help your prayer life tremendously! If you want to be able to pray effectively and with power, you need the baptism of the Holy Ghost!

## **“Pentecostal” or “Spirit-filled?”**

Being “Pentecostal” is fairly synonymous with being “Spirit-filled.”

It has become more widely accepted and more popular to be “Spirit-filled,” perhaps because this term carries less baggage as I explained with the Trinitarian vs. Oneness doctrinal controversies.

“Spirit-filled” carries its own set of issues at times because some of the new age movements (I may be harsh, but I call it “charismatic witchcraft”) are also comfortable calling themselves Spirit-filled and this causes confusion and division *within* the Pentecostal movement.

Both terms are appropriate. It is just important to know to what exactly you are referring!

Pentecostal and Spirit-filled worship services are vibrant and full of life! If you've never visited a Pentecostal church, I

encourage you to find one to visit in your area! Expect to see people raising their hands in praise and worship and plenty of music and prayer!

## **Pentecost Sunday (*The Feast of Weeks/The Feast of Shavu'ot*)**

This Sunday, followers of our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) from around the world will celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday (*Shavu'ot*). I encourage you to go beyond a once-a-year celebration.

Know this: the Holy Spirit can endue you with Pentecostal power, a gift you may enjoy every single day of the year. If you don't receive the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit right away, do not get discouraged. It will happen in God's perfect timing.

Pray today that the Holy Spirit will baptize you in His Holy Fire!

Are you seeking the Holy Spirit baptism? I'd love to pray for you. Leave a comment below!

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## **The Waters of Creation, the Great Flood, & Babel's attempt at Post-Flood**

# Disaster Recovery

Parashat Noach ([Genesis 6:9-11](#)) 5783 B"H

## The Holy Spirit hovered over the Waters at Creation

In studying [Parashat B'reishit](#), I emphasized how [Genesis 1:2](#) can help you share the Gospel. You may recall that I shared how this particular verse can be especially powerful when interacting with members of the Jehovah's Witness organization. (*Here is that [post](#) in case you missed it*).

Today we move further into Genesis and we will see the *consequences* of what happens when people choose not to walk in the way of the LORD, but choose their own ways and their own misguided understandings at Babel.

[B'reishit/Genesis 1:2](#) tells us:

[“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” Genesis 1:2, NKJV](#)



The Spirit of God (*Ruach Elohim*) was present at creation. Not some limited “active force.” Not something nebulous, unknown, or impersonal. We are talking about the Spirit of God here!

**The very *Spirit* of the Most High God.** The Holy Spirit. The Glorious, Marvelous, Wonderful, Precious Holy Spirit. So very near, so very known to those who seek Him, and so very personal that He indwells those who receive Him. Today, many do not focus on the Holy Spirit’s power and His ongoing work to empower believers. Yet, right away in [verse 2 of the entire Bible](#) is the Spirit of God made mention.

The Holy Spirit was **hovering over the face of the waters.**

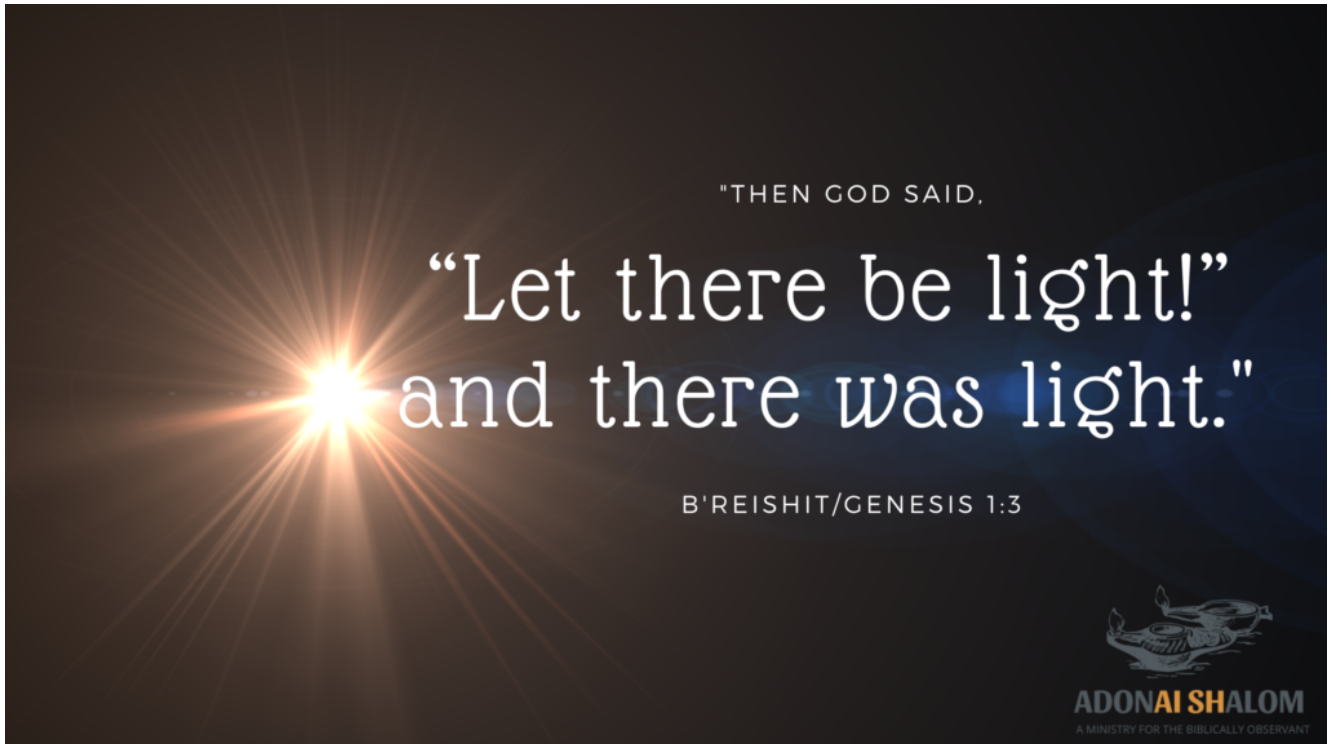
In a sense, the earth was flooded – the waters at creation were parted on Day 3 so there could be dry land. The Spirit of God hovered because this implies a closeness, a nearness.

*Not quite touching – not yet – but ever so near.*

Not yet touching because there was yet *darkness* on the surface. But:

[“Then God said, “Let there be light!” and there was light.”](#)

## [Genesis 1:3](#)



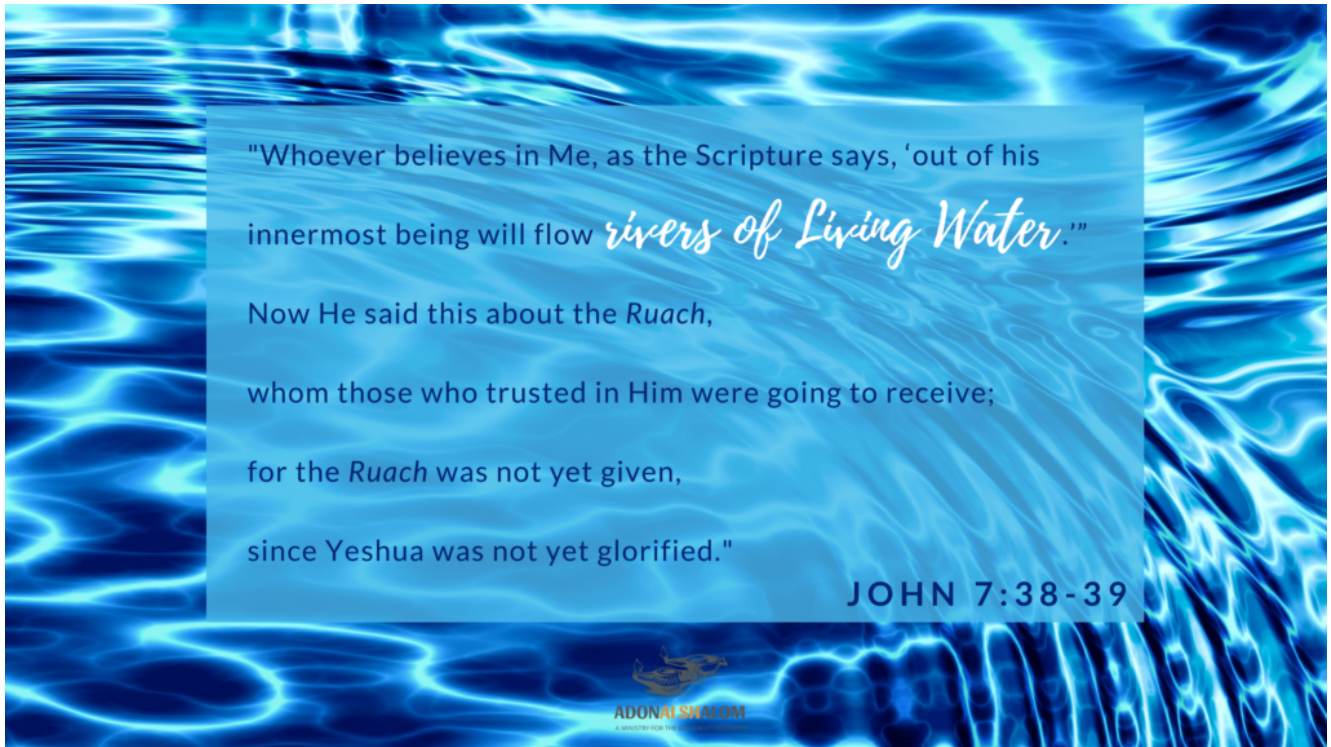
I imagine this was such a powerful, explosive moment!

The creative power of the Holy Spirit poured forth to bring form to the earth and fill that which Scripture calls a void. All-inspiring, awesome power. And LIGHT.

We so desperately need the Holy Spirit of the LORD and the Light of His Truth!

As we just celebrated during the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), He is the [Living Water](#)!





"Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture says, 'out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" Now He said this about the *Ruach*, whom those who trusted in Him were going to receive; for the *Ruach* was not yet given, since *Yeshua* was not yet glorified." John 7:38-39

## **Sinful humanity preferred the darkness rather than the Light**

The LORD provided a beautiful world for us, but sin entered in. Yochanan (John) so eloquently wrote of this in his Gospel account:

"Now this is the judgment, that **the light has come into the world and men loved the darkness instead of the light**, because their deeds were evil." John 3:19, *emphasis added*

It took ten generations from the time of Adam, but divine patience had run out. People repeatedly chose immorality and corruption over righteous living. The earth would be flooded.

# Noach and his family survived the Great Flood

Noach נח (Noah) chose to walk in the Light.

[Genesis 6:9](#) documents for us that Noach “walked with God!”

Surely Noach knew the priceless value of having the Spirit of the LORD guiding him in life.

When God told him to build the ark, Noach recognized God’s voice and followed the instructions given to him.

He believed God at His Word.

If age should teach us anything, it is that God’s Word always stands the test of time. [Noach was 600 years old when the floodwaters came \(Genesis 7:6\)](#). He knew God is reliable, and he chose to do as he was commanded.

[Genesis 6:8](#) reveals that Noach found favor in the sight of the LORD.

Why? Because he *dared to believe*. He *dared to trust* God!

Noach’s boldness to believe spared him and his family.

After the Great Flood, it didn’t take long for humanity to once again make poor decisions.

## Babel’s connection to the Flood

The Hebrew root word for flood, “*mabbul*” מַבּוּל, is actually related to the term “*Babel*” בָּבֶל.

You can hear the relatedness in the endings of the words: “*ma-bul*”. “*Ba-bel*.”

# **The Shared Memories of the Babel Community**

The Flood was a part of the collective, or shared, memory of the Babel community.

As a group, the people living in that region of Shinar – known today as Babel – knew that they were descendants of flood survivors.

They had grown up hearing stories about great Grandpa Noach!

They knew the Flood had been real.

There was probably evidence in the vegetation and foliage around them. Perhaps downed trees or short shrubs growing back following the aftermath of the Flood.

People grew up in disaster recovery/survivor mode knowing their parents had either seen the days after the Flood firsthand or knew someone who had.

## **Post-Flood Disaster Recovery: Was the idea of building a tower so bad?**

# BABEL'S TOWER:

POST-FLOOD DISASTER RECOVERY?



*If your closest relatives had survived a major flood, wouldn't you be interested in building on higher ground?*

*Wouldn't you consider building "up" in hopes of avoiding a future deluge?*

A watchtower could be incredibly useful. Someone could be assigned the job to check for rising water levels from afar!

Even if a future flood wasn't the concern, a watchtower to provide **advance warning** of enemy advances could surely prove useful.

**Building a tower wasn't such a bad idea *in and of itself*.**

And perhaps what happened in that place serves as a reminder to us to not rush quickly to judgment when considering the motives of others. Nonetheless, the Scriptures do indicate that the people did have selfish motives.

The problem was their rebelliousness:

# The People Wanted MORE than a Tower

The generations after Noach who lived in Babel did not learn from previous generations' mistakes. The disaster of the Flood wasn't enough for them – they brought disaster upon themselves once again:

"Then they said, "Come! Let's build ourselves a city, with a tower whose top reaches into heaven. So let's make a name for ourselves, or else we will be scattered over the face of the whole land." Genesis 11:4, *emphasis added*



The people wanted to make a name for themselves.

They wanted to establish a city and make *themselves* great.

**They make no mention of building a city to honor the God who had rescued their families from the Flood.**

They feared being scattered, so they united to build a tower whose top was to reach into heaven.

The people at Babel didn't want to reach the edge of the sky or the edge of heaven, they wanted to reach *into* heaven: to go

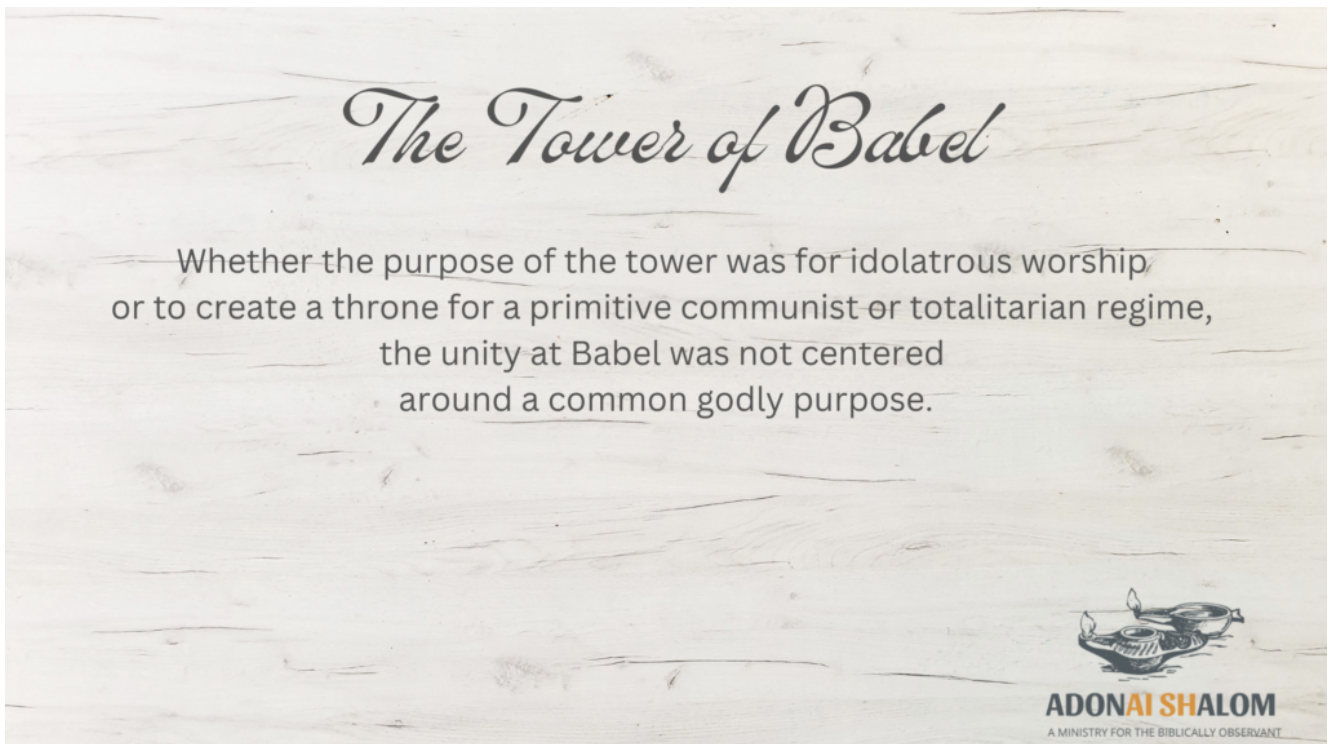


beyond the natural, God-ordained boundaries.

Their ambition got the best of them.

At Babel, the people demonstrated that unity *can* be productive. These people worked together – motivated by fear – to build a high place. They all spoke the same language and were able to communicate with ease.

**Whether the purpose of the tower was for idolatrous worship or to create a throne for a primitive communist or totalitarian regime, the unity at Babel was not centered around a common *godly* purpose.**



The city construction project and its tower had to be stopped. Sadly, the people unwittingly predicted their own demise: they certainly *would* be scattered over the face of the whole land:

[“Then ADONAI came down to see the city and the tower that the sons of man had built.” Genesis 11:5](#)

Notice: the LORD *came down*.

The tower may have been tall according to human standards, but it was short enough to God that He chose to come down to get a

closer look at it.

## Confusion of Languages

Do you enjoy foreign language study? Learning another language wasn't necessary before that tower was built so if you find foreign languages hard, **blame the Babel-onians**.

[“Come! Let Us go down and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand each other’s language. So ADONAI scattered them from there over the face of the entire land, and they stopped building the city. This is why it is named Babel, because ADONAI confused the languages of the entire world there, and from there ADONAI scattered them over the face of the entire world.” Genesis 11:7-9](#)

The word “*babel*” is also closely related to “*balal*” בָּלַל, a verb that [Strong’s Concordance](#) describes as meaning not only “**to confuse**” or “**to confound**,” but also “*to mix*,” “*to mingle*,” and intriguingly, “*to anoint*.”

I have studied many languages and I actually enjoy it. What really intrigues me is when there are linguistic similarities between languages on complete opposite sides of the globe. There is so much evidence that what the Bible tells us occurred at Babel truly, historically, did happen. The world’s languages are mixed and mingled and they all came from one source.

So the LORD caused language to become mixed and the people’s communication confounded. But what about the possibility to translate this term “*babel*” with the kingly concept of “anointing?”

I think of it like this: the tower was anointed for its burial! There is speculation that the [ruins of the Tower of Babel are being uncovered in Iraq](#), so there may be part of the tower still standing to this day, but all of these years . . .

it has been dead and buried.

The true King of all kings, the True Anointed One, was showing these people who was still in charge.

## **The reversal of Babel at Pentecost** **(Shavu'ot)**

Babel caused a lot of issues even for us today:

*How much time and money goes into translation projects!*

*How difficult it can be to share the Good News that Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) has come with those who do not speak our language!*

But thankfully, the LORD God *reversed* what happened at the Tower of Babel when He sent His *Ruach haKodesh*, His Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Shavu'ot):

"They were all filled with the *Ruach ha-Kodesh* and began to speak in other tongues as the *Ruach* enabled them to speak out. Now Jewish people were staying in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound came, the crowd gathered. They were **bewildered, because each was hearing them speaking in his own language.**" Acts 2:4-6, *emphasis added*



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Acts 2:4-6



I have witnessed [miracles](#) in which people who do not speak the same language have been able to understand each other thanks to the gift of tongues. I have heard testimonies of the [Gospel](#) preached in a foreign tongue the speaker does not know, but the congregation does. The power of God is real, and there is restoration and freedom from every curse when we place our trust in Him, and Him alone.

The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, just as He came upon the waters at the time of creation. Seek the LORD and you will surely receive the blessings He has for you.

## Rising Above the Waters

[The LORD will never flood the whole earth again](#), but natural disasters will still affect certain places at times. Floods have become so very frequent, and many have suffered great losses due to these catastrophic events.

*Have **you** ever lost your home to a flood?*

*Have you ever worked or volunteered on a disaster response team and seen firsthand such widespread destruction?*

*Has a recent hurricane affected you or your loved ones?*

Know this: God is a God of restoration. He will help you to rise above the waters. Just as Yeshua (Jesus) rose from the dead, He can resurrect what has been lost – whether in this life or the life to come. He had mercy on us when He sent His Son and His Spirit to give us a future and a hope after the Flood and after the Tower incident. He is a forgiving and loving Father, and He wants to care for you.

**Will you be like Noach and walk with Him today?**

Differentiate yourself from those who would take matters into their own hands. Instead, seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit when you make decisions and in this way, He will help you get through any situation!

**We would love to hear from you. Comment below and share this post with your friends! Also, please subscribe to our monthly newsletter so you can stay updated on our ministry!**