Catechism Story 25 *The Third Article of the Creed*
Memory Verse and Catechism Prayers from Congregation at Prayer

BIBLE STORY: THE TOWER OF BABEL

Genesis 11:1-9

Central Thoughts

- Man made a god out of himself and exalted his own name above God's name.
- The Tower of Babel is a symbol of man's idolatry and rejection of the LORD.
- The diversity of human language and race is a result of the LORD confusing their language and scattering mankind over the face of all the earth.
- Faith in in the Triune God is created only by the clear and pure voice of the Gospel.

Discussion Questions

How many languages did man speak at creation?

The whole earth had one language and one speech.

With what words did man mimic the words of the Triune God at the time of man's creation?

"Come, let us make bricks…Come let us build ourselves a city… let us make a name for ourselves…" This is similar to the LORD'S Word, "Let us make man in our image…"

What was man doing with these words?

He was exalting himself in the place of the LORD, the Holy Trinity.

What reason did man give for building the Tower of Babel?

"Let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

What was man's sin?

Unbelief, rejection of the LORD, self-righteousness, and arrogant pride directed against God.

What did the LORD do because of mankind's idolatry?

He confused their language so that they could not understand one another and He scattered them abroad from over the face of the whole earth.

What is the result of the Lord having confused the language of man?

Mankind is divided up into many different languages and races of people. Man's arrogance and pride is not only against the Lord, but is also turned inward and manifests itself in hatred, racism, and prejudice.

What does the word Babel mean?

Confusion

The Lord's act of confusing man's language at the Tower of Babel is parallel to what act of God after the fall into sin?

The Curse of the Fall

How is faith and our relationship with God restored?

Through the Word of God we are called to repentance and faith in Christ.

What New Testament story includes the preaching of the Gospel in many different languages?

The day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Apostles who preached the one message of the Gospel in many different languages.

What does the Holy Spirit create from many languages and races through the preaching of the Gospel?

One nation and people: "one holy Christian and apostolic church." (See 1 Peter 2:9-10, "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy").

Meditation on the Bible Story

At the beginning of creation, mankind spoke only one language. Through the spoken word, man's relationship with God and one another was established. Man's sin of self-righteousness, wanting to be God for himself, was manifested in the desire to build a tower as a monument to his own accomplishments. He wanted to "make a name" for himself and take the LORD'S place as his own god. This sin was a denial of the Triune God, the source of man's life, and a sin against God's holy name. Man's attempt to usurp the LORD as God is depicted in man's mimicking of the plural pronoun for God at the time of man's creation "*let us*." The triune name is alluded to and reasserted by the LORD as He resolves to confuse man's language: "Come, *let Us* go down and there confuse their language." By this word, God multiplies the languages and races of mankind so that man's self-righteousness and pride toward God is now more intensely manifest in his relationships with other men. The unity of man's arrogance toward God is now seen in his arrogance toward his fellow man in the form of racism, prejudice, and bigotry. This "babble" of languages and races still manifests itself today in the strife and warfare among all the people of the earth in every human relationship. Our relationship with God and one another is restored only through the pure preaching of the Gospel. On the day of Pentecost, the apostles spoke the one Gospel in many different languages to make of the many one, through the forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name.

Prayer on the Bible Story

O Lord, You confused man's language at the Tower of Babel because he made a god out of himself. Call us from every language and race of people to be Your own holy nation, that with one voice we might confess the true faith and proclaim the Gospel of Your forgiveness in all the earth; for you live and reign, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



The Tower of Babel

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