

Culture Bible Study 2: **The Creation of Culture**

We often take for granted the creation of the multitude of cultures. This diversity, however, resulted from Yahweh's response to the building of the infamous Tower of Babel. In this passage we can see both the reasons for multiculturalism and the benefits it can bring. As usual, God's response to human sinfulness brings with it blessings we might not have expected.

Read Genesis 11:1-9.

1. What was the world like at this time in terms of culture (v. 1)?

2. From verses 3 and 4, what were the people's motivations for building this city and tower?

3. Have you seen anything like this in your own time, or can you see parallels from other periods of history?

4. What do you think God means when he says in verse 6, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them"?

5. How is God's response an act of mercy to the people (vv. 7-9)?

6. With this passage in mind, why do you think God created culture?

7. Have you ever experienced a different language or culture? How did you feel?

- 7A. How did the experience affect the way you think?

8. Identify the specific influences in your life that have given you a negative view of other cultures and peoples (parental prejudices, national policy, etc.).

9. Consider the role arrogance has played in your view of other cultures. What role do you think arrogance has in stereotypes?

10. If God created a multitude of cultures to check our pride, no one can boast overmuch of his or her background. We can still relish our distinctives, just as God surely enjoys his creation of a multitude of societies. What are the positives and negatives for people of "one language" who remain tightly together?

In Revelation we get a picture of how God desires to unite the people once again.

Read Revelation 7:9-10.

11. The variety of cultures can be a curse—keeping us from one another and feeding pride in what is "our own"—or it can open our eyes to the beauty, as well as the ugliness, of every system of values. Revelation gives us a picture of "every nation, tribe, people, and language ruling together." Discuss ways you have seen multiculturalism used as a blessing in your own life, city, church and/or history.

12. *Response:* As a group or individually consider organizing an event that expresses in tangible terms the diversity of God's family. Be creative.

This study is available online at: www.intervarsity.org/ism/article/8213
For Further Reading: Revelation 5:9-10; Isaiah 19:18-25.