

Devotional—day 3

"Prologue" & "Tower of Babble"

Prologue

Socrates (470-399BC) *Tried and put to death for questioning the actions and power of Greek gods*

Wherefore, o men of Athens, I say to you therefore: acquit me or not, but whichever you do, I shall never alter my ways, Never adjust my approach to the maze, never reform to the end of my days—even if I have to die many times.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) *Italian priest—Natural theologian (theology based on reason & ordinary experience*

God is apprehended by imagination, intuition, reason, touch, opinion, sense, and name (and so on). But on quite the other hand, we find we can't begin to understand Him, so to some it seems a shame to go on. But, He is all things in all—And He is nothing in any. He is often found in one thing small, conversely, He is often missed in many.

Galileo (1564-1642) *Required to recant his discovery of the sun as the center of the universe by the Church*

God endows us with sense and intellect, God endows us with reason we neglect. So, despite the abolition by the current inquisition of any intuition that *they* don't choose when it comes to God, I find I can't believe that he designed a human being with a mind...he's not supposed to use.

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) *Colonial American Congregational preacher & evangelical theologian*

The wrath of God is natural, we are despicable! If man's malefaction sends God into a rage, we can hardly be aghast...that down we're cast...that God damns us for all time!

Leonardo DaVinci (1452-1519) *Artist, anatomist, & inventor—painted "Mona Lisa" & "The Last Supper"*

The rise of man...was natural and explicable. If God by inaction has given man the stage, we can hardly be aghast that up we're raised, that we should be sublime for all time!

L. Ron Hubbard (1911-1986) *Founder of the Church of Scientology*

Nothing is true unless observed by you.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) *French existentialist philosopher, dramatist, novelist, & critic*

Atheistic existentialism, which I represent, is more coherent—I do believe it.

There is no such thing as human nature, not in all or few men, since there is no God to conceive it.

Marianne Williamson (living) *Author, lecturer, & Co-leader of the non-profit organization—The Peace Alliance*

The glory of God we are born to make manifest... our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. But as we let our own light shine, we give others permission to do the same.

That is why we are, each of us, a child of God.

Tower of Babble

All

So high in my lovely ivory Tower of Babel (Babble, Babble, Babble, Babble, Babble, Babble)

High above the rabble (Rabble, Rabble, Rabble, Babble, Rabble, Babble, Babble, Rabble, Babble)

Greatest mind of history,

Solving life's sweet mystery,

So listen to me, (so listen to me)

Know how life should be. (know how life should be)

Ok what does it matter if they don't agree?

Other Philosophers used in variations of the prologue:

Leonardo DaVinci (1452-1519) *Artist, anatomist, & inventor—painted “Mona Lisa” & “The Last Supper”*
The rise of man...was natural. Man is so levitable! Instead of admiring man’s filling of the void, we should rather be surprised that God had man so tyrannized. Man will be strong, so long.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) *Leader of the Reformation*

God Almighty has made our rulers mad, God Almighty has turned our people bad; for the German nobility, with typical agility, have so applied their skill at egregious laws—that the people are lead astray; they feel beholden to obey. It may be just the German way, but God, it gives one pause!

Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) *Historian, Wrote The Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire*

The decline of Rome was natural, and inevitable. Instead of inquiring why Rome was destroyed, we should rather be surprised...that Rome remains so strong...so long.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) *Stated “God is dead!”*

What...is noble now-a-days?

Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983) *American inventor/systemic worldview/“spaceship earth”*

Man is a complex of patterns, of processes—Man is a complex of patterns, of processes...I live on Earth at present, and I don’t know what I am. I know that I am not a category, I am not a thing — a noun. I seem to be a verb, an evolutionary process—an integral function of the universe.

Stephen Schwartz says....

“The original Prologue was a series of monologues John-Michael had put together, quoting passages from eight of the most noted philosophers of Western culture. The concept was that each had his own point of view and was sticking to it dogmatically, which put him into philosophical conflict with the others; these conflicts led ultimately to physical violence (depicted humorously in the original *Godspell* by their throwing garbage at one another.) But the metaphor that wars are often at least partially engendered by clashes of cultures and philosophies was clear. At the height of their violence and despair, the point was that the arrival of a new philosopher was heralded (“Prepare Ye”), and that this new presence (Jesus) would bring a different way of looking at life that could ultimately unite them all.

When I came to work on the show, I felt that it would help theatrically if these monologues were musicalized, and in doing so, invented the title (“Tower of Babble”, a pun on the word “Babel”) and the use of the phrase “ivory tower” in the lyrics. But I did attempt to maintain John-Michael’s original conception, which as I say was not so much “making fun” of these philosophies, but showing in a humorous way (since most of *Godspell* is humorous) that each came into conflict with the others.”

Scripture says...

Genesis 11:2-9 (The Message)

2 It so happened that as they moved out of the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled down. 3 They said to one another, "Come, let's make bricks and fire them well." They used brick for stone and tar for mortar. 4 Then they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower that reaches Heaven. Let's make ourselves famous so we won't be scattered here and there across the Earth." 5 God came down to look over the city and the tower those people had built. 6 God took one look and said, "One people, one language; why, this is only a first step. No telling what they'll come up with next - they'll stop at nothing! 7 Come, we'll go down and garble their speech so they won't understand each other." 8 Then God scattered them from there all over the world. And they had to quit building the city. 9 **That's how it came to be called Babel, because there God turned their language into "babble."** From there God scattered them all over the world.

Psalms 33:1-11 (The Message)

1 Good people, cheer God! Right-living people sound best when praising. 2 Use guitars to reinforce your Hallelujahs! Play his praise on a grand piano! 3 Invent your own new song to him; give him a trumpet fanfare. 4 For God's Word is solid to the core; everything he makes is sound inside and out. 5 He loves it when everything fits, when his world is in plumb-line true. Earth is drenched in God's affectionate satisfaction. 6 The skies were made by God's command; he breathed the word and the stars popped out. 7 He scooped Sea into his jug, put Ocean in his keg. 8 Earth-creatures, bow before God; world-dwellers - down on your knees! 9 Here's why: he spoke and there it was, in place the moment he said so. 10 **God takes the wind out of Babel pretense, he shoots down the world's power-schemes.** 11 God's plan for the world stands up, all his designs are made to last.

Zechariah 10:1-4 (The Message)

1 Pray to God for rain - it's time for the spring rain - to God, the rainmaker, Spring thunderstorm maker, maker of grain and barley. 2 **"Store-bought gods babble gibberish.** Religious experts spout rubbish. They pontificate hot air. Their prescriptions are nothing but smoke. And so the people wander like lost sheep, poor lost sheep without a shepherd. 3 I'm furious with the so-called shepherds. They're worse than billy goats, and I'll treat them like goats." God-of-the-Angel-Armies will step in and take care of his flock, the people of Judah. He'll revive their spirits, make them proud to be on God's side. 4 God will use them in his work of rebuilding, use them as foundations and pillars, Use them as tools and instruments, use them to oversee his work.

Matthew 5:17-20 (The Message)

17 "Don't suppose for a minute that I have come to demolish the Scriptures - either God's Law or the Prophets. **I'm not here to demolish but to complete. I am going to put it all together, pull it all together in a vast panorama.** 18 God's Law is more real and lasting than the stars in the sky and the ground at your feet. Long after stars burn out and earth wears out, God's Law will be alive and working. 19 "Trivialize even the smallest item in God's Law and you will only have trivialized yourself. But take it seriously, show the way for others, and you will find honor in the kingdom. 20 Unless you do far better than the Pharisees in the matters of right living, you won't know the first thing about entering the kingdom."

2 Peter 2:1-3 (The Message)

1 **But there were also lying prophets among the people then, just as there will be lying religious teachers among you. They'll smuggle in destructive divisions, pitting you against each other--biting the hand of the One who gave them a chance to have their lives back! They've put themselves on a fast downhill slide to destruction, 2but not before they recruit a crowd of mixed-up followers who can't tell right from wrong.** They give the way of truth a bad name. 3They're only out for themselves. They'll say anything, anything, that sounds good to exploit you. They won't, of course, get by with it. They'll come to a bad end, for God has never just stood by and let that kind of thing go on.

Time for personal reflection (Day 3):

*** Be prepared for Group Discussion*

Where (or in what) do I see what could be considered “iv’ry tower” destroying “babble” in the world today?

How does this “babble” affect the realm in which I live?

How can the good news of Jesus’ arrival silence this particular “babble”?

How can I personally fight or prevent the “babble” & “gibberish” that surrounds me everyday?

What would a member of the “God-of-the-Angel-Armies” (as mentioned in Zechariah 10:3) look like in today’s world?

In what ways can I be sure to present these attributes to the people I come in contact with during this tour (as well as my fellow *Godspell* team members)?