

#890 Benjamin Franklin and America as Babel – Franklin’s Speech of September 17, 1787, and the United States as a Second Babel

*Genesis 11:1, 7 (KJV) And **THE WHOLE EARTH WAS OF ONE LANGUAGE, and ONE SPEECH.***

*7 Go to, **LET US GO DOWN, AND THERE CONFOUND THEIR LANGUAGE**, that they may not understand one another’s speech.*

The ‘Babel’ speeches. During the course of the U.S. Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin wrote/delivered two speeches – the one of June 28, 1787, and another on September 17, 1787, the day the U.S. Constitution was signed – in which he offered the comparison of (a) the “builders of Babel” in Genesis 11 to (b) the constitutional efforts to combine the thirteen colonies into the government of the United States.



Franklin’s September 17, 1787, ‘we are not Babel’ speech. On September 17, 1787, Benjamin Franklin rose to give a speech to the Constitutional Convention prior to the signing of the final draft of the Constitution. Too weak to actually give the speech himself, he had fellow Pennsylvanian James Wilson deliver the speech.

James Wilson (*left*) delivered Benjamin Franklin’s speech on September 17, 1787, at the U.S. Constitutional Convention

Here is a portion of Franklin’s speech of September 17, 1787.

I doubt too whether any other Convention we can obtain, may be able to make a better Constitution. For when you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men, all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected? **It therefore astonishes me, Sir, to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does; and I think it will astonish our enemies, who are waiting with confidence to hear that our councils are confounded like those of the Builders of Babel; and that our States are on the point of separation, only to meet hereafter for the purpose of cutting one another’s throats.** Thus I consent, Sir, to this Constitution because I expect no better, and because I am not sure, that it is not the best.



Key Understanding: *Franklin’s speech of September 17, 1787, and the United States as a second Babel.* Again, as in the June 28, 1787, speech, Benjamin Franklin was likening the efforts of uniting the former colonies into “united states” to the builders of Babel, *if* the efforts were confounded by the Lord and resulted in failure, since that is what occurred at

the building of the *first* Babel. However, the Lord did *not* confound the uniting of the former colonies into “united states,” but instead ordained Benjamin Franklin’s analogy to reveal that the success of the U.S. Constitutional Convention in completing the uniting of the former colonies into “united states” of the United States was indeed the successful building of a *second* Babel of Genesis 11.



Here is **#890–Doc 1**, which contains **the entirety of Benjamin Franklin’s speech to the Constitutional Convention on September 17, 1787**. The speech was actually delivered by James Wilson, who was one of only six people who signed both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

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