

Debile fundamentum tollit opus.¹

Babel

Where did Latin come from?



Read **Genesis 11**.

This is a description of the origin of different languages. Not exactly as they are today of course – scholars distinguish about 20 different groups of languages nowadays. The groups are related within themselves but not between themselves. This is what you would expect if language was confused as in Genesis 11 and people scattered. Over time, as people spread out and split up, the original languages given at Babel would gradually change further. As people groups moved apart, variants of the original languages would gradually arise. If the ability to use language had evolved gradually you would expect to trace all languages back to *one* common language group – not about 20 unrelated groups. For more detailed information on this interesting topic you can read this article

<https://creation.com/towering-change>

or listen to this episode of Creation Live.

<https://creation.com/m/tracing-the-nations-back-to-babel-creation-magazine-live-3-12>

If you have a synchronological chart take some time to study the Babel area on the “map” and the spread of the nations/families and their languages.

Latin belongs to the Indo-European group of languages. It was spoken in the area known as “Latium” – central western Italy. It was the language of the Roman Empire although Greek was very widely spoken in the Roman Empire too – as well as the languages of the subject peoples of course.

Latin is a language
As dead as dead can be
It killed the ancient Romans
And now it's killing me!

Latin is not spoken any more is it? Can you go anywhere in the world where you would need to say *Da mihi sis bubulae frustrum assae, solana tuberosa in modo Gallico fricta, ac quassum lactatum coagulatum crassum* to get a hamburger, French fries and a thick milkshake? The answer is, no – not even Vatican City, nerve centre of the Roman Catholic Church, where more Italian is spoken nowadays than anything else.

¹ A weak foundation destroys the work.

Why did Latin die out? Just like any language used over a wide area, Latin varied quite a bit from place to place. American English is different to (not than!) British English and the Latin spoken in Gaul (modern France) was different to the Latin spoken in Italy. As the Roman Empire disintegrated the local forms of Latin became individual languages – the Romance languages we call them today, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian and French and others. Again, if you have a synchronological chart you can see this happening.

Things to do:

Look in the margin of your Bible in verse 9 to find the meaning of the word Babel.

Follow the links given above to understand more about what happened in Genesis 11.

You should have an indexed notebook for vocabulary. Write the words in the vocabulary exercise below in your notebook on the correct pages. You will need to do this every time there is vocabulary to learn.

There is an end of term test in Week 10 so prepare for it as you go along by writing brief notes in an exercise book or on file paper stored in a ring binder.

Three Latin words to learn:²

Can you think of any word in English that are related to them? The first one is rather hard so I've done it for you.

poena = punishment, penalty (pronounced “POY-na”³)

English word: subpoena, a writ or order summoning someone to a court.

Example from the Bible: *timor non est in caritate sed perfecta caritas foras mittit timorem quoniam timor poenam⁴ habet qui autem timet non est perfectus in caritate* (I John 4:18)

terra = earth, land (pronounced “TE-ra”)

English word(s)?

Example from the Bible:

terra autem erat inanis et vacua et tenebrae super faciem abyssi et spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas (Genesis 1:2)

patria = homeland (pronounced “PAT-ree-uh ”)

English word(s)?

Example from the Bible:

et dicebat eis Iesus quia non est propheta sine honore nisi in patria sua et in cognatione sua et in domo sua (Mark 6 v 4)

Look up the Bible verses and see how the vocabulary you have learnt fits in. **Always write the vocabulary words in your indexed note book.** This will help you remember them and also it will make a dictionary of exactly the words you need to learn for you to use.

Suggested answers are on the next page.

² Memorize these three words and their meanings. Test yourself until you know them.

³ Latin pronunciation is a complex issue as there are two ways of doing it. The way I teach is the way I was taught in school which is very rough and ready but fine for the exam.

⁴ *Poena* here has an *-am* ending because it is the object of the verb – see Week 2 Lesson 2. The word in the Authorised Version of the Bible is “torment.”

Answers:

Babel means confusion.

terra = earth, land

English word(s): Territory and related words such as territorial.

patria = homeland

English word(s): Patriot and related words such as patriotic. Patronise and related words such as patronising. Patriarch and related words such as patriarchal.

Let me know if you come up with others!