

## Genesis 10 (2011)

- Last week we officially ended our study of Noah
  - And this week we begin the next *toldat* or genealogy in the story of redemption
    - Chapter 10 and 11 work together as a single unity
      - Chapter 10 is a “zoom out” view of the beginning of all nations on earth
      - Chapter 11 is a “zoom in” on a part of Chapter 10
      - In fact, the events of Chapter 11 actually explain the events of Chapter 10
    - Together they finish the story of ancient man and ancient civilization
    - What will follow is a narrowing of the focus of Genesis to examine the beginning of a new nation, called by God
  - So we leave the generations of Noah and move to the generations of Noah’s three sons

**Gen. 10:1** Now these are the records of the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah; and sons were born to them after the flood.

- Noah had only three sons, according to Scripture
  - So all people on earth today trace their origins to one of these three men
    - The next time you sit in a sports stadium or watch a crowd at the mall, consider that everyone is related
    - Every 1 in 3 people came from the same grandfather
  - And now we’re reminded that all the children from these boys were born after the Flood
    - Since only 8 were on the Ark
- The names of the boys in this list are in order of age, from oldest to youngest

- But in the genealogy to follow, Moses reverses the list
- This makes sense when we understand that Genesis focuses on the seed line of the promise
  - Since we know that Shem is the seed line, then he is saved for last
  - Moses gets the other two sons out of the way first
- Before we look at the genealogy, let's take notes of two important qualities of this chapter
  - First, we can't help but notice that God is making deliberate and purposeful decisions concerning where His promise will rest
    - For example, Noah had three sons but only one was able to give fulfillment to the promise of God
      - Japeth and Ham are excluded from the honor to carry the promise forward
      - Only Shem is permitted this honor and blessing
    - Similarly, only one of Shem's children will carry the promise forward
    - On and on this pattern will continue until we reach Jesus Himself
      - Both Matthew and Luke give us genealogies, precisely so that we could trace the birth of Jesus back to Abraham and to Adam
      - These genealogies proved that Jesus was qualified to lay claim to being the promised seed
  - Secondly, Chapter 10 is unparalleled among ancient texts in explaining the origins of all mankind
    - There is simply no other document from antiquity that comes close to explaining the origins of modern nations and cultures
      - In fact, many later documents refer to Genesis 10 as an authoritative record of how the Earth was settled
      - This is why Chapter 10 is often called the table of nations

- The genealogy is horizontal rather than vertical like Chapter 5
  - The list isn't a descending list of people through time
  - Instead it's a description of how the family immediately after Noah moved out over the Earth
- We get the next vertical list in Chapter 11, when we focus again on the seed line of Seth
  - I have found a map to help you visualize the dispersion of the people groups
- Many of the names of Noah's grandsons can be directly traced to nations of people still existing today
  - In other cases, the names are supposed to relate to present-day people
- Finally, other names have lost their meaning and their people groups are a mystery today
  - So as we read through the list of names and places, reflect on how the world we see today was settled by a few families moving outward
- And all this took place about 4,500 years ago

[Gen. 10:2](#) The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras.

[Gen. 10:3](#) The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah.

[Gen. 10:4](#) The sons of Javan were Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim.

[Gen. 10:5](#) From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.

- Moses starts with Japheth, the son who would eventually give rise to most of the people and wealth of the world
  - Japheth had seven sons in total, who move NE and NW from Mesopotamia
    - As a general rule, the farther a people group move from Israel, the less important they are in the Bible

- Gomer settled south of the Black Sea and became the Cimmerians of the ancient world
- Magog settled in southern Russia and became the Scythians
  - The people who descend from Magog combine with the descendants of Meshech and Tubal to fight Israel in a future war described in Ezek. 38
- The third son is Madai, who becomes the Medes and later settle India
  - In fact, a tribe of India still refer to an ancient ancestral father as Iyapeti, which comes from Yapeth, the Hebrew name for Japeth
- The fourth son was Javan, who was the father of Greece
  - Interestingly, Greek legend names the father of Greeks as Iapetos, which is the Greek form of Yapeth, or Japeth again
- The fifth son was Tubal, who settled parts of Russia
  - They get the Russian word Tobolsk in Siberia from the name Tubal
- The sixth son was Meshech, who was also in southern Russia
  - Meshech, Tubal and Magog lived near each other in modern Russia and Iran
  - Which is why the coming war from Ezek. 38 – in which Magog and Tubal and Meshech attack Israel – is thought to be a war lead by Russia and Iran
- Finally, Japeth's seventh son was Tiras who went to modern day Italy
- Moses then list the grandsons for two of the sons of Japeth
  - And he ends with the statement that from these the coastlands were separated
    - Japeth's family move toward the coasts and later move into Europe and Asia, moving by the sea in many cases
    - Since Japeth's family move away from Israel, they are given minimal treatment in this chapter
      - Notice in v.5 we're told that this outward movement led to a separation in lands

- For the first time, we see land ownership
      - Previously, men used land, but there is no indication that people thought of themselves as separate tribes or groups
      - Now, people separate and think of themselves as different
  - Then we're told that the separation is according to each person's language
    - This reference raises the point of different languages
      - This reference is the clue to tell us that Chapter 11 is a zoom in on the events of Chapter 10
    - Finally, v.5 confirms that this separation produces nations of people; distinct groups with different cultures and identities

[Gen. 10:6](#) The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan.

[Gen. 10:7](#) The sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

[Gen. 10:8](#) Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth.

[Gen. 10:9](#) He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD."

[Gen. 10:10](#) The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

[Gen. 10:11](#) From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-ir and Calah,

[Gen. 10:12](#) and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.

[Gen. 10:13](#) Mizraim became the father of Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim

[Gen. 10:14](#) and Pathrusim and Casluhim (from which came the Philistines) and Caphtorim.

[Gen. 10:15](#) Canaan became the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth

[Gen. 10:16](#) and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite

[Gen. 10:17](#) and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite

[Gen. 10:18](#) and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanite were spread abroad.

[Gen. 10:19](#) The territory of the Canaanite extended from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; as you go toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

[Gen. 10:20](#) These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, by their nations.

- Ham has four children and numerous grandchildren
  - Ham settled northern Africa and later the rest of the continent
  - His first son is Cush, which has become synonymous with Ethiopia
  - The second is Mizraim, which is the Hebrew name for Egypt
  - Third is Put, which is Libya
  - Finally, Canaan, who we know settles in the Land to be occupied by Israel
    - His descendants become the various “ites” of the land Israel later occupies
    - Interestingly, Moses gives the borders of the people of Canaan according to location names we can still identify today
      - Based on this description, Canaan’s territory roughly equals the land that God promised to Abraham
      - Israel was given the land first occupied by Canaan, in keeping with Noah’s prophetic curse on Canaan
  - Of all the grandsons of Ham, one gets an extended treatment here, and again in Chapter 11
    - Nimrod was born to Cush
      - His name means “to rebel” and this gives us the key to appreciating his spotlight in this list
      - We’ll learn more about him in Chapter 11 but there’s some detail here
    - He is a “mighty one” on the earth
      - This title suggests he was a leader among men, perhaps the first conquerer or leader post-flood
    - In v.9 we hear he was also a mighty hunter
      - Men had been given the right to eat meat a few decades or centuries earlier, but now Nimrod raises hunting to an art
    - But the important phrase is “before the Lord”

- In fact, a proverbial saying developed from Nimrod's example
- What is the full meaning of this phrase?
  - In ancient thinking, to be "before" someone meant to be in opposition to them
    - Being before them meant to be antagonistic or to be standing in defiance before them
- And then knowing Nimrod was a mighty man on earth and a hunter, we can put all this together to arrive at a clearer picture of Nimrod
  - He was a man who commanded obedience and used the threat of force to compel followers
    - He was skilled in implements of battle and in taking life
  - He stood opposed to God and brought others with him against God
  - So the phrase came to mean an evil person who tries to provoke God by his rebellion
- Look at the parallels to Chapter 4 of Genesis
  - Each of the 8 on the Ark were believers
    - And here we have a grandson of one of the eight leading the rebellion against the same God Who saved his grandfather
    - It never takes long for the evil heart of man to take over and bring him back into rebellion
  - Only God's saving grace can rescue us from this never-ending cycle
- Nimrod becomes a type or picture for the antichrist, the ultimate empire builder who stood opposed to God
  - In fact, look at Nimrod's empire in v.10
    - It stretches from Babel to Calneh
    - It's called the land of Shinar
      - These are all terms for Mesopotamia or Babylon

- This is the same region as the original Garden of Eden
- This is also the land that will later become the headquarters for the Antichrist
- Here we find the familiar East-West theme of Scripture
  - Scripture is filled with pictures or themes to reinforce basic truths
  - These themes help us learn and remember the message of Scripture
  - One such theme or picture is the difference between East and West
    - East is the direction associated with Satan and evil and sin
    - Conversely, West is associated with God's promises and faith
    - Furthermore, in keeping with the East-West motif, Babylon is always associated with Satan
      - It's his "home field"
    - And the land of Israel, the Promised Land, is associated with faith and salvation
      - This is the home field for God and His people
  - We saw this pattern in the story of the Garden
    - Adam and Eve are sent out of the Garden to the East
  - Abel and Cain repeat the motif
    - Cain is sent East to wander after he is banished for killing Abel
  - Now we see the rise of an evil world leader who claims his home in Mesopotamia
- We should remember what Paul taught concerning the real forces at work around us

**[Eph. 6:12](#) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

- The story of Genesis reinforces this truth at every turn
  - The work of men is set on a backdrop of Satan's work to undermine God
  - And each unbeliever is merely a pawn of the enemy
- As we study this pattern, it's important that we take this learning outside the pages of the Bible and apply it in our everyday lives
  - We need to learn to see the people around us as either brothers and sisters, or potential brothers and sisters
  - But in the meantime, we should also be wise to understand that they are people who are tools of the enemy
  - Even as they fight and oppose us from time to time, we don't war with them
    - We war with the enemy who manipulates them behind the scenes
- Finally, we reach the most important line; the line of Shem who carries forward the seed promise

[Gen. 10:21](#) Also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, and the older brother of Japheth, children were born.

[Gen. 10:22](#) The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram.

[Gen. 10:23](#) The sons of Aram were Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash.

[Gen. 10:24](#) Arpachshad became the father of Shelah; and Shelah became the father of Eber.

[Gen. 10:25](#) Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.

[Gen. 10:26](#) Joktan became the father of Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah

[Gen. 10:27](#) and Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah

[Gen. 10:28](#) and Obal and Abimael and Sheba

[Gen. 10:29](#) and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan.

[Gen. 10:30](#) Now their settlement extended from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the hill country of the east.

[Gen. 10:31](#) These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, according to their nations.

- Shem's line begins with the distinction that he is the father of all the children of Eber

- Eber, as we saw, was a grandchild of Shem
  - Why make that point here at the top of the list?
  - The answer is to remember why genealogies are even included in Scripture
    - Moses wants us to know where the promise of God given in the garden lands in each generation
    - In this case, Eber will carry the promise forward
- In fact, Eber is the name from which we get the word Hebrew
  - So Shem was the father of the Hebrews to come later
- Shem had five sons
  - The first son was Elam, who settled in Persia, modern-day Iran
  - The second son was Asshur, who founded Assyria
  - The third son was Arpachshad
    - He became the father of the Chaldeans, the people of Abraham
    - He carries the seed promise forward
  - The fourth son was Lud, who lived in the region of Lydia of Asia Minor
  - The fifth son was Aram, who settled Syria
- Eber has only two sons
  - The first is called Peleg, which means to divide
    - He was born when the earth was divided
    - Since we know that Chapter 10 is a zoom out that includes the events of Chapter 11, we can safely assume the division here refers to the division of languages
    - Peleg was born when the languages of the earth were divided up
    - He is the seed son of Eber
  - Peleg's brother was Joktan, who founded the Arabian tribes by his thirteen sons

- At the end of this list, we have seventy families coming from Noah
  - Do we think that it's a coincidence that the number of families in this list equals seventy?
    - The number 70 is commonly associated with God ruling through a representation of men
    - There were 70 elders in Israel and 70 men on the committee who translated the Hebrew scriptures into Greek
  - This is a clear sign that God is at work in dividing up the families of the earth to ensure His purpose is done

[Acts 17:24](#) "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;

[Acts 17:25](#) nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;

[Acts 17:26](#) and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,

[Acts 17:27](#) that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

- God is at work dispensing grace by ruling over men's sinful hearts
  - As we'll study next week in Chapter 11, God will disperse men to mitigate against their sin gaining traction too fast, and leading them in the ever great acts of sin
  - Just as the chapter ends...

[Gen. 10:32](#) These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood.