

# Genesis 10 Commentary

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Summary Chart of The Book of Genesis								
Focus	Foundation Events (Four Events) (Events Predominant)				Foundation People (Four People) (People Predominant)			
Divisions	Creation (Ge 1-2)	Fall (Ge 3-5)	Flood (Ge 6-9)	Nations (Ge 10-12)	Abraham's Faith (Ge 12-24)	Isaac's Family (Ge 25-26)	Jacob's Conflicts (Ge 27-36)	Joseph's Calamity (Ge 37-50)
	Beginning of the Human Race (Race As A Whole)				Beginning of the Hebrew Race (Family of Abraham)			

Topics	Faithfulness of Mankind (Noah)	Faithfulness of One Man's Family (Abraham)
	Historical	Biographical
Place	Eastward From Eden to Ur	Westward From Canaan to Egypt
Time	~2000+ Years (20% of Genesis) (~4004-2090BC)	About 300 Years 193 Yr in Canaan, 93 Yr in Egypt (80% of Genesis) (2090-1804BC)
	Primeval History of Humanity	Patriarchal History of Israel
Author	Moses	

## BEGINNINGS

- Ge 1:1-25 - The Universe (Everything)
- Ge 1:26-2:25 - The Human Race
- Ge 3:1-7 - Sin Enters the World
- Ge 3:8-24- God Promises Redemption from Bondage to Sin
- Ge 4:1-15 - Family Life
- Ge 4:16ff - Civilization
- Ge 10:1-11:32 - The Nations of the World
- Ge 12:1ff - The Story of Israel and the Jews

**Genesis 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.

- **are the** - Ge 2:4 5:1 6:9 Mt 1:1
- **and to** - Ge 9:1,7,19
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## Related Passages:

Acts 17:24-27+ 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; 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; 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, 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;

Deuteronomy 32:8+ "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, When He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the sons of Israel.

Source: Bible History Online

## NOAH'S SONS AND GRANDSON'S REPOPULATE PLANET EARTH

## Genesis 10 Noah's Legacy

- Genesis 10:1
- Genesis 10:2-5 Japheth's descendants
- Genesis 10:6-20 Ham's descendants
- Genesis 10:21-31 Shem's descendants

**Pastor Steven Cole** - In his commentary on Genesis, Dr. H. C. Leupold, includes a section with hints for preaching the passage under consideration. With great hope I turned to see what he would say about Genesis 10, only to read: "It may very well be questioned whether a man should ever preach on a chapter such as this" (Baker Books, p. 380). Yet Dr. James Boice calls it "a chapter that is surely one of the most interesting and important in the entire Word of God" (Genesis [Zondervan], p. 337)! After studying it for a few hours, I confess that I was more inclined to side with Dr. Leupold than with Dr. Boice! If I could choose one chapter from the Bible to take with me to a desert island, it would not be Genesis 10. It is history at its most bare; it lists names and people whom we no longer know or care about....The chapter is divided between the descendants of **Japheth** (Ge 10:1–5), **Ham** (Ge 10:6–20), and **Shem** (Ge 10:21–32)....We who are of European heritage are descended from Japheth. ([The Roots of the Nations Genesis 10:1-32](#))

**Dr Henry Morris** ([Genesis Record - page 244](#) - borrow) points out that "Even higher critics have often admitted that the tenth chapter of Genesis is a remarkably accurate historical document. There is no comparable catalog of ancient nations available from any other source. It is unparalleled in its antiquity and comprehensiveness. Dr. William F. Albright (not a conservative), universally acknowledged as the world's leading authority on the archaeology of the Near East, though himself not a believer in the infallibility of Scripture, said concerning this Table of Nations:

It stands absolutely alone in ancient literature, without a remote parallel, even among the Greeks, where we find the closest approach to a distribution of peoples in genealogical framework.... The Table of Nations remains an astonishingly accurate document.

**Now these are the records of the generations (toledoth) of Shem, Ham (cham), and Japheth (yepheth), the sons of Noah; and sons were born to them after the flood** - The purpose of this important chapter (also stated in Ge 10:32) is to explain how the earth was repopulated after the flood. We see a similar but not identical list in 1Ch 1:1-54. Noah's three sons are the gene pool for the rest of humanity. One can see how in some sense we are all related as were these three brother. All different nations and languages of people in Genesis 10 had their beginning in Noah and should have worshipped the God of Noah. The tragedy is that most of these people did not end up having a relationship with God like their godly ancestor Noah.

**Steven Cole** - People are quick to forget the one true God. Ge 10:1 and Ge 10:32 both contain the phrase, "after the flood." You would think that a judgment as catastrophic as the flood would cause people to fear God for many generations after. They should have realized that they could not defy God with impunity. And yet here we have a table of the nations, with no hint that any of them followed the one true God. It's overwhelming to think of all these names and to realize that they represent whole groups of people, whole nations, who lived and died, for the most part, without God. Perhaps there was more knowledge of God than we are aware of, but what we know of these nations from later history would not indicate that any of them worshiped the one true God.... If Christians would stop to ponder the implications of this rather dry tenth chapter of Genesis, racial prejudice would be dissolved. I have often been shocked to hear racist comments from Christians. Sad to say, many chapters of the Ku Klux Klan have Christian pastors serving as chaplains! But the Bible is clear that whatever your skin color, you can trace your ancestry back to one of the three sons of Noah. We're all brothers and sisters! ([The Roots of the Nations Genesis 10:1-32](#))

Note that there are 2 different formulas to introduce lineage in this chapter - "sons of" formula (13x/12v) looks back at ancestry and "became the father" formula (7x/5v) looks forward to the future development.

Note also that Genesis 1 -11 is universal history and shows God's dealing with entire world. Thing change in Genesis 12-50 which describes the patriarchal history of the chosen people Israel.

A new **toledot** or generation section begins here. The term **toledot** is used as a structural marker, introducing a new section. In total, there are 11 occurrences of the marker, although two of these serve to mark the same section (Ge 36:1 and Ge 36:9). In other words, there are 10 sections, five in each part of Genesis. The occurrences are:

1. Genesis 2:4 (heavens and earth)
2. Genesis 5:1 (Adam)
3. Genesis 6:9 (Noah)
4. Genesis 10:1 (sons of Noah)
5. Genesis 11:10 (Shem)
6. Genesis 11:27 (Terah)
7. Genesis 25:12 (Ishmael)
8. Genesis 25:19 (Isaac)
9. Genesis 37:2 (Jacob)
10. Genesis 36:1, 9 (Esau)

**Griffith Thomas:** This is an example of the characteristic, already mentioned, of dealing with collateral branches first, and only after that considering the main stream in the descendants of Shem.. . . This table of nations show their kinship with the chosen race, out of which all spiritual blessing is to become. Then the nations are dismissed from the Scripture record, and attention concentrated on the Semitic line.

- See [Arthur Custance for detailed discussion of Family of Japheth](#)
- See [Arthur Custance for detailed discussion of Family of Ham](#)
- See [Arthur Custance for detailed discussion of Family of Shem](#)

**Paul Apple** (page 150) - Actually, this account (GENESIS 10) proves to be significant on a number of levels.

1. Certainly from the standpoint of history it provides the only accurate account of the origin of so many of the ancient nations. There is no parallel to this document in the archives of any other ancient people. This is a unique list. Genesis is the Book of Beginnings.
2. This chapter serves as important preparation for the account of the Tower of Babel; chaps. 10-11 must be studied as a unit. Chiastic structure with Tower of Babel between 2 accounts of the Sons of Shem; look at the keywords in chap. 10 that anticipate the events of the Tower of Babel: territory, earth, divided, spread, languages; scattered
3. Maybe of primary importance, this chapter speaks to the global perspective of God's program for mankind – He is not just the God of Israel; He has always been interested in a salvation program that would encompass all people, everywhere – in fact the mission of Israel was to bring blessing to the Gentiles throughout the world Ps. 2:8 "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance and the very ends of the earth as Your possession."

#### Structural Elements:

1. Note 2 bookends of Ge 10:1 and Ge 10:3
2. Note common refrain in Ge 10:5, 20, 31 – a growing diversity of ethnic, linguistic, geographical and political groupings

**Parunak:** Note summaries at Ge 10:5, 20, 32, and in particular the terms "families, tongues, lands, nations." This expression is echoed later in scripture:

- Pagan kings use it to claim their worldwide dominion: Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 4:1; Darius in Dan 6:25. They are the heirs of the spirit of Nimrod – Mighty warriors on the face of the earth who rebel against God and seek dominion for themselves
- This is fulfilled in Rev. 5:9, 7:9; 11:9.

Difference between totality and completeness: **Griffith Thomas:** [Selective record] -- there is no attempt at completeness in the list. Several of the more modern nations which came later into close contact with Israel, as Moab, Ammon, Edom, Amalek, find no mention here, while on the other hand not all the most ancient of the nations are included.

**R Kent Hughes:** This Table of Nations has carefully structured symmetries. For example, when we add up the nations that came from Noah's sons, we discover that they total **seventy** – another example of the multiples of sevens, tens, and seventies that we have seen so often in Genesis (**ED: Seventy** – round number for people - Israel, Exod. 1:5; seventy elders, Exod. 24:1,9, eschatological, Dan. 9:2,24, mission team, Luke 10:1,17, forgiveness (70x7), Matt. 18:22 - BORROW [Biblical Numerology - John J Davis](#)). Here it suggests totality – all the nations of the earth. Look at Gen. 46:27 – 70 sons of Jacob end up going down into Egypt – quite the parallel Waltke calls it a parallel microcosm to the macrocosm of the table of the nations; God never intended to be portrayed as only the God of Israel; He is the God of all the nations (BORROW [Genesis : beginning and blessing](#))

**KJV BIBLE COMMENTARY (online) (page 86)** - This is the fourth time the term generations, better translated histories, has been employed (cf. Ge 2:4; Ge 5:1; Ge 6:9). It most likely ends the section that relates to these individuals, rather than depicting that which follows, just as Ge 2:4 and Ge 5:1 did. The names which follow are generally referred to as the Table of Nations. Most of these names belong to individuals, some of which were later used to identify entire nations. The chapter is designed to provide a table of the principal races and peoples known to the Israelites. They are arranged in order of seniority, except that the chosen Semite line comes last, according to the usual pattern, even though they are here traced alongside rather than directly to Israel (Ge 11:10ff.). The descendants total a conventional seventy, an indication that an exhaustive list is not intended. Apart from obvious exceptions like Nimrod, the sons are collective units genealogically related to the Noachic branch to which they are assigned. Because of early intermarriages, and later marriages between communities, certain groups could trace their lineage to more than one line. Within the three major divisions, subgroupings were distinguishable by the geographical, linguistic, ethnological, and political differences cited in the colophons (vss. Ge 10:5, Ge 10:20, Ge 10:31), (Kline, p. 91).

[Warren Wiersbe](#) has some guidelines for studying Genesis 10 - **Caution!** Before we look at some of the details of this chapter, and then try to draw some spiritual lessons from it, we need to heed some warnings.

**First**, the listing is not a typical genealogy that gives only the names of descendants. The writer reminds us that these ancient peoples had their own "clans and languages ... territories and nations" (Gen. 10:31 niv). In other words, this is a genealogy plus an atlas plus a history book. We're watching the movements of people and nations in the ancient world.

Second, the listing isn't complete. For example, we don't find Edom, Moab, and Ammon mentioned, and yet these were important nations in biblical history. The fact that there are seventy nations in the list suggests that the arrangement may be deliberately artificial, an approach often used in writing such listings.<sup>6</sup> There were seventy persons in Jacob's family when they went to Egypt (Gen. 46:27; Ex. 1:5), and our Lord sent seventy disciples out to preach the Word (Luke 10:1).

**Third**, it's difficult to identify some of these nations and give them "modern" names. Over the centuries, nations can change their names, move to different locations, modify their language, and even alter their racial composition through intermarriage

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**Generations** (08435) (toledoth from yalad = to bear, bring forth, beget) This word carries with it the notion of everything entailed in a person's life and that of his or her progeny.

**TWOT** The precise meaning of this derivative of yālad "to bring forth," will be discussed below. It occurs only in the plural, and only in the construct state or with a pronominal suffix. In the KJV it is always translated "generations" except for one case (two in the RSV) where it is rendered "birth." RSV generally translates it "generations" but occasionally uses "genealogy." In six occurrences it renders it as "descendants" and once as "history."

The common translation as "generations" does not convey the meaning of the word to modern readers. The English word "generation" is now limited almost entirely to two meanings: (1) the act of producing something or the way it is produced; (2) an entire group of people living at the same period of time, or the average length of time that such a group of people live. Neither of these meanings fits the usage of tōlēdōt.

As used in the OT, tōlēdōt refers to what is produced or brought into being by someone, or follows therefrom. In no case in Genesis does the word include the birth of the individual whose tōlēdōt it introduces (except in Genesis 25:19, where the story of Isaac's life is introduced by reference to the fact that he was the son of Abraham). After the conclusion of the account in which Jacob was the principal actor, Genesis 37:2 says, "These are the tōlēdōt of Jacob" and proceeds to tell about his children and the events with which they were connected.

In line with these usages it is reasonable to interpret Genesis 2:4, "These are the tōlēdōt of heaven and earth," as meaning, not the coming of heaven and earth into existence, but the events that followed the establishment of heaven and earth. Thus the verse is correctly placed as introducing the detailed account of the creation and fall of man. It is not a summary of the events preceding Genesis 2:4.

The often repeated statement that the book of Genesis is divided into natural sections by the word tōlēdōt does not work out on close examination. Sometimes, as in Genesis 36:9, it merely introduces a genealogical table.

In Genesis 10:32; Genesis 25:13; Exodus 6:16, 19 and in eight of the nine occurrences in 1 Chronicles the word is introduced by the preposition l and in Exodus 28:10 it is introduced by k. The significance of the prepositions is not clear, particularly since we have no other evidence relating to the history of the sons of Ishmael (Genesis 25:13) or the arrangement of the stones on the breastplate (Exodus 28:10). Therefore we do not know in accordance with what principle the arrangement was made. In both cases the word "birth" must be considered to be only a guess. ([TWOT](#) online)

**Toledoth - 39v - account(1), birth(1), genealogical registration(12), genealogies(3), generations(21), order of their birth(1).** Gen. 2:4; Gen. 5:1; Gen. 6:9; Gen. 10:1; Gen. 10:32; Gen. 11:10; Gen. 11:27; Gen. 25:12; Gen. 25:13; Gen. 25:19; Gen. 36:1; Gen. 36:9; Gen. 37:2; Exod. 6:16; Exod. 6:19; Exod. 28:10; Num. 1:20; Num. 1:22; Num. 1:24; Num. 1:26; Num. 1:28; Num. 1:30; Num. 1:32; Num. 1:34; Num. 1:36; Num. 1:38; Num. 1:40; Num. 1:42; Num. 3:1; Ruth 4:18; 1 Chr. 1:29; 1 Chr. 5:7; 1 Chr. 7:2; 1 Chr. 7:4; 1 Chr. 7:9; 1 Chr. 8:28; 1 Chr. 9:9; 1 Chr. 9:34; 1 Chr. 26:31

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## TABLE OF NATIONS [ISBE] (see [another article below](#))

1. The Table and Its Object
2. What It Includes and Excludes

3. Order of the Three Races
4. Extent of Each
5. Sons of Japheth
6. Sons and Descendants of Ham
7. Further Descendants of Ham
8. Sons of Shem
9. Further Descendants of Shem
10. Value of Table and Its Historical Notes
11. Further Arguments for Early Date of Table

#### 1. The Table and Its Object:

This is the expression frequently used to indicate "the generations of the sons of Noah" contained in Gen 10. These occupy the whole chapter, and are supplemented by Gen 11:1-9, which explain how it came about that there were so many languages in the world as known to the Hebrews. The remainder of Genesis 11 traces the descent of Abram, and repeats a portion of the information contained in Genesis 10 on that account only. The whole is seemingly intended to lead up to the patriarch's birth.

#### 2. What It Includes and Excludes:

Noah and his family being the only persons left alive after the Flood, the Table naturally begins with them, and it is from his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, that the inhabitants of the earth, as known to the Hebrews, were descended. All others--the Mongolians of the Far East and Japan, the American Indians, both North and South, the natives of Australia and New Zealand--were naturally omitted from the list. It may, of course, be argued that all the nations not regarded as descended from Shem and Japheth might be included among the descendants of Ham; but apart from the fact that this would give to Ham far more than his due share of the human race, it would class the Egyptians and Canaanites with the Mongolians, Indians, etc., which seems improbable. "The Table of Nations," in fact, excludes the races of which the Semitic East was in ignorance, and which could not, therefore, be given according to their lands, languages, families, and nations (Gen 10:5,20,31).

#### 3. Order of the Three Races:

Notwithstanding that the sons of Noah are here (Gen 10:1) and elsewhere mentioned in the order Shem, Ham and Japheth (Gen 5:32; 6:10), and Ham was apparently the youngest (see HAM), the Table begins (Gen 10:2) with Japheth, enumerates then the descendants of Ham (Gen 10:6), and finishes with those of Shem (Gen 10:21). This order in all probability indicates the importance of each race in the eyes of the Hebrews, who as Semites were naturally interested most in the descendants of Shem with whom the list ends. This enabled the compiler to continue the enumeration of Shem's descendants in Gen 11:12 immediately after the verses dealing with the building of the Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues.

#### 4. Extent of Each:

The numbers of the descendants of each son of Noah, however, probably bear witness to the compiler's knowledge, rather than their individual importance in his eyes. Thus, the more remote and less known race of Japheth is credited with 14 descendants only (7 sons and 7 grandsons), while Ham has no less than 29 descendants (4 sons, 23 grandsons, and 2 great-grandsons), and Shem the same (5 sons, 5 grandsons, 1 great-grandson, and 20 remoter descendants to the 6th generation). Many of the descendants of Shem and Ham, however, are just as obscure as the descendants of Japheth. How far the relationship to the individual sons of Noah is to be taken literally is uncertain. The earlier names are undoubtedly those of nations, while afterward we have, possibly, merely tribes, and in chapter 11 the list develops into a genealogical list of individuals.

#### 5. Sons of Japheth:

It is difficult to trace a clear system in the enumeration of the names in the Table. In the immediate descendants of Japheth (Gen 10:2), Gomer, Magog, Tubal and Mesech, we have the principal nations of Asia Minor, but Madai stands for the Medes on the extreme East, and Javan (the Ionians) for the Greeks (? and Romans) on the extreme West (unless the Greeks of Asia Minor were meant). Gomer's descendants apparently located themselves northward of this tract, while the sons of Javan extended themselves along the Mediterranean coastlands westward, Tarshish standing, apparently, for Spain, Kittim being the Cyprians, and Rodanim the Rhodians.

#### 6. Sons and Descendants of Ham:

Coming to the immediate descendants of Ham (Gen 10:6), the writer begins with those on the South and then goes northward in the following order: Cush or Ethiopia, Mizraim or Egypt, Phut (better Put, the Revised Version (British and American)) by the Red Sea, and lastly Canaan--the Holy Land--afterward occupied by the Israelites. The sons of Cush, which follow (Gen 10:7), are apparently nationalities of the Arabian coast, where Egyptian influence was predominant. These, with the sons of Raamah, embrace the interior of Africa as known to the Hebrews, and the Arabian tract as far as Canaan, its extreme northern boundary. The reference to Babylonia (Nimrod) may be regarded as following not unnaturally here, and prominence is given to the district on account of its importance and romantic history from exceedingly early times. Nevertheless, this portion (Gen 10:8-12) reads like an interpolation, as it not only records the foundation of the cities of Babylonia, but those of Assyria as well--the country mentioned lower down (Gen 10:22) among the children of Shem.

#### 7. Further Descendants of Ham:

The text then goes back to the West again, and enumerates the sons of Mizraim or Egypt (Gen 10:13), mostly located on the southeastern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. These include the "Libyans in the narrowest sense" (Lehabim), two districts regarded as Egyptian (Naphtuhim and Pathrusim), the Casluhim from whom came the Philistines, and the Caphtorim, probably not the Cappadocians of the Targums, but the island of Crete, "because such a large island ought not to be wanting" (Dillmann). The more important settlements in the Canaanitish sphere of influence are referred to as the sons of Canaan (Gen 10:15)--Sidon, Heth (the Hittites), the Jebusites (who were in occupation of Jerusalem when the Israelites took it), the Amorites (whom Abraham found in Canaan), and others. Among the sons of Canaan are, likewise, the Girgashites, the Arkites and Sinites near Lebanon, the Arvadites of the coast, and the Hamathites, in whose capital, Hamath, many hieroglyphic inscriptions regarded as records of the Hittites or people of Heth have been found. It is possibly to this occupation of more or less outlying positions that the "spreading abroad" of the families of the Canaanites (Gen 10:18) refers. In Gen 10:19 the writer has been careful to indicate "the border of the Canaanites," that being of importance in view of the historical narrative which was to follow; and here he was evidently on familiar ground.

#### 8. Sons of Shem:

In his final section--the nations descended from Shem (Gen 10:21)--the compiler again begins with the farthest situated--the Elamites--after which we have Asshur (Assyria), to the Northwest; Arpachshad (? the Chaldeans), to the West; Lud (Lydia), Northwest of Assyria; and Aram (the Aramean states), South of Lud and West of Assyria. The tribes or states mentioned as the sons of Aram (Uz, Hul, Gether and Mash), however, do not give the names with which we are familiar in the Old Testament (Aram Naharaim, Aram Zobah, etc.), and have evidently to be sought in different positions, indicating that they represent an earlier stage of their migrations. With regard to their positions, it has been suggested that Uz lay in the neighborhood of the Hauran and Damascus; Hul near the Sea of Galilee; and that Mash stands for Mons Masius. This last, however, may have been the land of Mas, West of Babylonia.

#### 9. Further Descendants of Shem:

Only one son is attributed to Arpachshad, namely, Shelah (shalach, shelach, Gen 10:24), unidentified as a nationality. This name should, however, indicate some part of Babylonia, especially if his son, Eber, was the ancestor of the Hebrews, who were apparently migrants from Ur (Mugheir) (see ABRAHAM; UR OF THE CHALDEES). Though Peleg, "in whose days the land was divided," may not have been an important link in the chain, the explanatory phrase needs notice. It may refer to the period when the fertilizing watercourses of Babylonia--the "rivers of Babylon" (Ps 137:1)--were first constructed (one of their names was peleg), or to the time when Babylonia was divided into a number of small states, though this latter seems to be less likely. Alternative renderings for Selah, Eber and Peleg are "sending forth" (Bohlen), "crossing" (the Euphrates), and "separation" (of the Joktanites) (Bohlen), respectively.

The Babylonian geographical fragment 80-6-17, 504 has a group explained as Pulukku, perhaps a modified form of Peleg, followed by (Pulukku) sa ebirt, "Pulukku of the crossing", the last word being from the same root as Eber. This probably indicates a city on one side of the river (? Euphrates), at a fordable point, and a later foundation bearing the same name on the other side.

Reu, Serug, and Nahor, however, are regarded generally as place-names, and Terah as a personal name (the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran). From this point onward the text (Gen 11:27) becomes the history of the Israelite nation, beginning with these patriarchs.

#### 10. Value of Table and Its Historical Notes:

Arguments for its early date.--There is hardly any doubt that we have in this ethnographical section of Gen one of the most valuable records of its kind. Concerning the criticisms upon it which have been made, such things are unavoidable, and must be regarded as quite legitimate, in view of the importance of the subject. The interpolated sections concerning Nimrod and the Tower of Babel are such as would be expected in a record in which the compiler aimed at giving all the information which he could, and which he

thought desirable for the complete understanding of his record. It may be regarded as possible that this information was given in view of the connection of Abraham with Babylonia. In his time there were probably larger cities than Babylon, and this would suggest that the building of the Babylonian capital may have been arrested. At the time of the captivity on the other hand, Babylon was the largest capital in then known world, and the reference to its early abandonment would then have conveyed no lesson--seeing the extent of the city, the reader realized that it was only a short setback from which it had suffered, and its effects had long since ceased to be felt.

#### 11. Further Arguments for Early Date of Table:

Limits of its information.--For the early date of the Table also speaks the limited geographical knowledge displayed. Sargon of Agade warred both on the East and the West of Babylonia, but he seems to have made no expeditions to the North, and certainly did not touch either Egypt or Ethiopia. This suggests not only that the information available was later than his time, but also that it was obtained from merchants, travelers, envoys and ambassadors. The scantiness of the information about the North of Europe and Asia, and the absence of any reference to the Middle or the Far East, imply that communications were easiest on the West, the limit of trade in that direction being apparently Spain. If it could be proved that the Phoenicians came as far westward as Britain for their tin, that might fix the latest date of the compilation of the Table, as it must have been written before it became known that their ships went so far; but in that case, the date of their earliest journeys thither would need to be fixed. Noteworthy is the absence of any reference to the Iranians (Aryan Persians) on the East. These, however, may have been included with the Medes (Madai), or one of the unidentified names of the descendants of Japheth in Gen 10:2,3.

See SHEM; HAM; JAPHETH, and the other special articles in this Encyclopedia; also, for a great mass of information and theories by many scholars and specialists, Dillmann, *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament*, "Die Genesis," Leipzig, 1882; W. Max Muller, *Asien und Europa*, Leipzig, 1893; and F. Hommel, *Grundriss der Geographic und Geschichte des alten Orients*, Munich, 1904.

T. G. Pinches

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Shem in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Shem was one of the three [sons of Noah](#). Before the great flood that God used to judge the inhabitants of the earth for their great wickedness (Genesis 6:5–7), God instructed the righteous Noah to build a great ark to save Noah and his wife, along with their sons, [Shem, Ham, and Japheth](#), and their wives. The Lord brought two of every kind of unclean animal and seven of every kind of clean animal and shut them up in the ark before the flood waters covered the earth (Genesis 7:14–16). The families and animals were in the ark for about 370 days: 40 days and 40 nights during the rains, and then the remainder of the time waiting for the flood waters to recede (see Genesis 7:1–8:19).

**Shem** is always mentioned first among the sons of Noah, possibly because he was of primary importance to Moses' audience, the Hebrews. Shem was their ancestor. In the birth order of Noah's sons, Shem was the middle child, as calculated below:

according to Genesis 5:32, Noah began having children when he was 500 years old.

- according to Genesis 7:11, Noah was 600 years old when the flood began (making his oldest child 100 years old)
- according to Genesis 11:10, Shem had a child when he was 100 years old, *two years after the flood* (making him 98 years old at the time of the flood)
- since we know that Ham was not the oldest (according to Genesis 9:24), the 100-year-old son at the time of the flood must have been Japheth

Shem, along with his brothers and their wives, fulfilled God's command to begin repopulating the earth (Genesis 9:7). Shem's line produced the Assyrians, [Chaldeans](#), Elamites, [Arameans](#), [Moabites](#), [Ammonites](#), Edomites, Arabs, and [Hebrews](#). Shem's name is the origin of the word *Semitic*; Shem's great-grandson Eber was the father of those who were eventually called "Hebrews," including Abram and the Jews (see Genesis 10 and 11 for more on Shem's line).

There is only one other story that deals with Shem, son of Noah. After the flood, Noah became something of a farmer and grew a vineyard (Genesis 9:20). He became drunk on the wine one day and passed out naked in his tent (verse 21). Noah's son Ham found him thus, but instead of covering his father or helping him in any way, he reported the incident to his brothers outside (verse 22). Shem and Japheth brought some sort of garment into the tent, and, walking backward so they would not see their father's nakedness, they covered Noah with the garment (verse 23). When Noah woke, he was angry with Ham for his neglect and cursed him, but he blessed both Shem and Japheth for the respect they showed (verses 24–27).

After Shem had fathered many children, he passed away at the old age of 600 (Genesis 11:10–11). Shem is mentioned in the New

**QUESTION - [Who was Japheth in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Japheth was one of three sons of [Noah](#), the righteous man whose family God saved from the great flood. Hundreds of years after God created the world, man had fallen into such a state of depravity that “the Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled” (Genesis 6:6). There was one righteous man named Noah, and the Lord commanded him to build an ark so his family would be saved. After bringing two of every unclean animal and seven of every clean animal to the ark, the Lord shut the door and sent the rains (Genesis 7:13–16). Noah; his wife; his sons, Shem, [Ham](#), and Japheth; and their wives were saved.

When the flood waters subsided and Noah’s family exited the ark, God commanded them to repopulate the earth. Noah began to tend the ground and grow a vineyard, but there is not much more said about Shem, Ham, or Japheth except in the account of Noah’s drunkenness in Genesis 9:20–27. This passage describes a day Noah became drunk on the wine from his vineyard and passed out naked in his tent. Ham found Noah in that shameful condition and told Shem and Japheth what he had seen (Genesis 9:22). Shem and Japheth brought in a garment and, walking backward so they wouldn’t shame their father by looking at his nakedness, covered Noah with the garment (Genesis 9:23). When Noah woke, he cursed Ham but blessed Shem and Japheth (Genesis 9:24–27). Japheth’s blessing took the form of these words:

“May God extend **Japheth’s** territory; / may **Japheth** live in the tents of Shem, / and may Canaan [Ham’s son] be the slave of **Japheth**” (Genesis 9:27).

After the flood, Japheth and his brothers did indeed multiply and repopulate the earth. Japheth himself fathered seven sons: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras (Genesis 10:2). The descendants of Japheth included various maritime peoples (Genesis 10:5) as well as the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Scythians, and Macedonians. Japheth’s descendants spread out over much of Asia and Europe and, through colonization, North America, thus fulfilling Noah’s prediction of “expansion” for Japheth. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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**QUESTION - [What is the origin of the different races?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Bible does not explicitly give us the origin of the different “races” or skin colors in humanity. In actuality, there is only one race—the human race. Within the human race is diversity in skin color and other physical characteristics. Some speculate that when God confused the languages at the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9), He also created racial diversity. It is possible that God made genetic changes to humanity to better enable people to survive in different ecologies, such as the darker skin of Africans being better equipped genetically to survive the excessive heat in Africa. According to this view, God confused the languages, causing humanity to segregate linguistically, and then created genetic racial differences based on where each racial group would eventually settle. While possible, there is no explicit biblical basis for this view. The races/skin colors of humanity are nowhere mentioned in connection with the tower of Babel.

At the [Tower of Babel](#), when the different languages came into existence, groups that spoke one language moved away with others of the same language. In doing so, the gene pool for a specific group shrank dramatically as the group no longer had the entire human population to mix with. Closer inbreeding took place, and in time certain features were emphasized in these different groups (all of which were present as a possibility in the genetic code). As further inbreeding occurred through the generations, the gene pool grew smaller and smaller, to the point that people of one language family all had the same or similar features.

Another explanation is that Adam and Eve possessed the genes to produce black, brown, and white offspring (and everything else in between). This would be similar to how a mixed-race couple sometimes has children that vary in color. Since God obviously desired humanity to be diverse in appearance, it makes sense that God would have given Adam and Eve the ability to produce children of different skin tones. Later, the only survivors of the flood were Noah and his wife, Noah’s three sons and their wives—eight people in all (Genesis 7:13). Perhaps Noah’s daughters-in-law were of different races. It is also possible that Noah’s wife was of a different race than Noah. Maybe all eight of them were of mixed race, which would mean they possessed the genetics to produce children of different races. Whatever the explanation, the most important aspect of this question is that we are all the same race, all created by the same God, all created for the same purpose—to glorify Him. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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**QUESTION - [What is the biblical account of Shem, Ham, and Japheth?](#)**

**ANSWER** - [Shem](#), [Ham](#), and [Japheth](#) were the three [sons of Noah](#) who along with their wives were carried in the ark during the great flood. Their descendants went on to re-populate the world (Genesis 10:1). Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth after he was 500 years old (Genesis 5:32). If Noah had any other children, they are not mentioned in the biblical account. Only Shem, Ham,

and Japheth are mentioned.

The Israelites came from the line of Shem; in fact, the word *Semite* comes from the name of Shem. Other descendants of Shem include the [Assyrians](#), [Chaldeans](#), Elamites, [Arameans](#), [Moabites](#), [Ammonites](#), and [Edomites](#). Japheth's line produced the [Persians](#), Romans, Scythians, and Macedonians. Ham's line produced the [Canaanites](#), the [Babylonians](#), the Phoenicians, the [Cushites](#), and the Egyptians. Each of the races and people-groups that exist today can trace their lineage back to one of these three brothers.

There is only one biblical story recorded that concerns Shem, Ham, and Japheth. After the flood waters receded, Noah was "a man of the soil" and grew a vineyard (Genesis 9:20). One day, after drinking too much wine, Noah passed out in his tent and lay there naked and exposed. Ham "saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside" (Genesis 9:22). Some have suggested that Ham—or possibly his son Canaan—performed an inappropriate sexual act on his drunken father, but that is nothing more than speculation. Whatever the extent of Ham's sin, Shem and Japheth refused to join him in dishonoring their father; instead, they walked into the tent backward without looking at Noah and lay a blanket over him to cover him (Genesis 9:23). When Noah woke up and found out what Ham had done, he [cursed Ham's child, Canaan](#), saying, "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers" (Genesis 9:25). Noah then blessed his other two sons and reiterated Canaan's servitude to both Shem and Japheth (Ge 9:26–27).

Noah's curse on Canaan was not an empty threat. In fact, it could be seen as a prophecy of events to unfold in the lives of the Canaanites. In Genesis 10, the descendants of Canaan are listed. They include the Sidonians, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 10:15–19). Noah's curse/prophecy came true during the time of Joshua. The Canaanites, descendants of Ham and Canaan, were conquered by the Israelites, descendants of Shem. True to God's Word, some of the Canaanites became slaves (Joshua 9:27; 17:12–13). It's important to note that Noah's three sons were blessed (Genesis 9:1) and, out of Ham's descendants, only the line of Canaan was cursed ([Genesis 9:25](#)). The historical record supports the fact of Noah's curse on Canaan and is powerful evidence of the accuracy of Scripture. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### QUESTION - [Who were the sons of Noah, and what happened to them and their descendants?](#)

**ANSWER** - [Noah](#) had three sons born to him, [Shem, Ham, and Japheth](#), before God sent a [flood](#) to destroy the world (Genesis 5:32). Whenever the names of Noah's three sons are recorded, Shem is always mentioned first (e.g., Genesis 9:18; 10:2, 21), even though Shem was the second-born (the Bible often lists people according to prominence rather than age). Japheth was the oldest (Genesis 10:21), and Ham was the youngest (Genesis 9:24).

Japheth was born when Noah was 500 years old, and the flood came 100 years later (Genesis 7:6–7). Since Shem was 100 two years after the flood (Genesis 11:10), he must have been born when Noah was 502 years old. There is no record of when Ham was born other than the fact that he was born sometime after Shem (Genesis 9:24).

"Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber" (Genesis 10:21), and this is important because the word *Eber* is the origin of the Hebrew word for "Hebrew." The word *Shem* means "name," which implies that Noah expected this son's name to become great. He was right—the modern words *Semitic* and *Semite* are derived from Shem's name. The Bible records that Shem had five sons: Elam, Ashur, Arphaxad, Lud, and [Aram](#) (Genesis 10:22). Shem lived to be 600 years of age (Genesis 11:10–11) and became the ancestor of the Semitic peoples (Genesis 10:1, 21–31). Abraham, a descendant of Shem, is the first person in the Bible who is referred to as a "Hebrew" (Genesis 14:13).

Noah blessed Shem above his brothers (Genesis 9:26–27), and it was through Shem that the [promised seed](#) destined to crush Satan came (Genesis 3:15). That seed is traced back to Adam's son Seth (Genesis 5:1–32), through Shem, and on to Abraham, Judah, and David, leading all the way to Christ (Luke 3:36).

Shem's son Elam was the father of the Elamites, who later settled east of Mesopotamia. Shem's son Ashur, whose name is related to the word *Assyria*, is most likely is the father of those who settled the ancient region of Assyria (Genesis 2:14). Arphaxad is thought by many scholars to be a compound form of the Hebrew word for "Chaldea," which was a region in southern Mesopotamia (Genesis 11:10–13). It was through Arphaxad that Eber came. Scholars believe that the descendants of Shem's son Lud became known as the Lydians of Asia Minor. And Aram is identified by Bible scholars with the area northeast of the Promised Land, known today as Syria (cf. 2 Kings 16:6). The sons of Aram are listed in Genesis 10:23. Of Aram's sons, Uz is later referred to in the book of Job (Job 1:1).

Noah's firstborn son, [Japheth](#), is listed as the father of Gomer, [Magog](#), Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras (Genesis 10:2). Their descendants became the people who lived to the north and west of Israel and, after Babel, spoke what today are classified as Indo-European languages.

In blessing his son Japheth, Noah said, "May God extend Japheth's territory; / may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, / and may

Canaan be the slave of Japheth" (Genesis 9:27). There are two schools of thought regarding what this prophecy about Japheth means.

Some scholars are of the opinion that the enlargement of Japheth's territory refers to a great numerical increase of his descendants. The comment "may Japheth live in the tents of Shem" means that Japheth will share in the blessings of Shem. According to this view, there was to be a time when God worked primarily with Shem (the people of Israel), but later Japheth would be brought into connection with the faith of Israel to share Israel's blessings. A similar prophecy is evident in the [Abrahamic Covenant](#), when God promises to bless all nations through Abraham's seed (Genesis 12:3). The fulfillment is found in Christ and in the gospel coming to the Gentiles at the inception of the church (Acts 15:7; Romans 15:16; Galatians 2:2). Other scholars are of the opinion that the extension of Japheth's territory refers to territorial enlargement, and living "in the tents of Shem" is the conquest of the [Semites'](#) territory by Japhethites. According to this view, the fulfillment was the Greek and Roman conquests of Israel.

[Ham](#), the youngest of Noah's three sons, had four sons: Cush, Mizraim (Hebrew for "Egypt"), Put, and Canaan (Genesis 10:6; 1 Chronicles 1:8). Egypt was later called the "land of Ham" (Psalm 78:51; 105:23; 106:22). The Hamitic peoples are shown in Genesis 10:6–20 as becoming a godless and worldly power. It was the land of Israel that was assigned to Ham's son, Canaan, and for centuries it was under the control of the Egyptians. Ham is the father of the Arabians, Canaanites, and Africans, including the Egyptians. Due to Ham's sin against his father (Genesis 9:20–25), Noah [cursed Canaan](#), saying Canaan would be a servant to Shem (Genesis 9:26). This was fulfilled centuries later when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan and subdued the inhabitants of that land (1 Kings 9:20–21). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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### Ray Pritchard - [Genesis 10 Many Nations Under God: A Biblical View of World History](#)

At first glance Genesis 10 would not seem to offer much promise as a sermon text. To the untrained eye, it appears to be just one more biblical genealogy, although a closer examination reveals that it seems oddly different from the regular genealogies. From another point of view, it reads like an Old Testament phone book with the numbers mysteriously left out. Sometimes we talk about giving a certain passage a "casual" or quick reading. That obviously does not apply to Genesis 10. If you read it casually, you will no doubt pass through the list of 70 names as quickly as possible so you can pick up the story again in Genesis 11. Some commentators suggest that it would be a mistake to preach on this chapter because it is impossible to interest modern congregations in this very ancient list of names.

Whether it is a mistake or not I will leave to the reader to judge, but we will push ahead in the belief that every word of Scripture has a message we need to hear. But I do confess that this chapter does pose certain challenges, the most obvious one being, "What's going on here?" Why does Moses plop this long list of names down in the middle of his post-flood narrative? Who are these people? Where did they come from? And most importantly, what difference does it make? The place to begin in answering those questions is the first verse of Genesis 10. "This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood." This verse is the key to everything else. If we take Genesis 9-10 literally (as I think we should), then after the flood there were only eight people living on the earth: Noah and his wife, Japheth and his wife, Shem and his wife, Ham and his wife. From those eight people came the entire population of the world. Genesis 10 tells us how it happened:

- The Descendants of Japheth, Ge 10:2-5.
- The Descendants of Ham, Ge 10:6-20.
- The Descendants of Shem, Ge 10:21-31.

The last verse of Genesis 10 summarizes the chapter: "These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood" (Genesis 10:32). So Genesis 10 describes what happened when Noah and his family left the ark and reestablished civilization. The three sons moved in three different directions. They had children, their children had children, their children's children had children, and over the years, those descendants formed families, clans, tribes and nations. Some of those nations eventually became mighty empires spread across vast regions. Alliances eventually formed among the various descendants of Noah's three sons. Some were friendly to Israel; others became bitter enemies of the Jews. That last point is very important because it appears that Moses wrote Genesis 10 sometime near the end of his life. It serves as a sort of "written map" to help the Jews as they entered the Promised Land understand the various nations and tribes that were in the land already and also scattered around the Middle East. And that's why the most space is given to the descendants of Ham. Those tribes included the Canaanites who were under the curse of Genesis 9:23-27. They lived in the land God promised to Abraham and his descendants. This chapter would help the Jews understand why they had to annihilate the Canaanites without mercy.

One other point and we can move on. Since Moses wrote Genesis 10 for a particular generation of Jewish readers, it is obviously selective in nature. For instance, Japheth had seven sons but Moses only mentions the descendants of two of those sons, Gomer

and Javan. It's not that the other sons of Japheth were childless, it's just that the tribes that sprang from them were not critical for the Jews to know about. What we have, then, is a selective but accurate account of the nations in and around the Promised Land during the time of the conquest under Joshua.

## **Playing Risk**

Perhaps an illustration will help. If you have ever played the board game Risk, you know that it contains a large map of the world. The object of the game is simple: Defeat all the other players and end up ruling the world. Each player is given armies of a different color—blue or red or black or brown or yellow or green. The first step in the game is for the players to put their armies one by one on various countries or regions on the board—Great Britain, Greenland, Japan, India, the Middle East, the Congo, Western United States, and so on. When all the armies are in place, the game can begin. But there is a moment—it happens in every game—just before the first player takes his turn, when everyone stops and studies the board to see the alignment of forces. “He’s really strong in Africa.” “I’ll bet he makes a move for Europe.” “I’m going to fight him for South America.” “If he gets India, he’ll take all of Asia.” And on it goes. There is a moment, always, when all the armies are in place and the fighting is about to begin, that things grow silent. Then someone rolls the dice and the armies go into battle.

Genesis 10 is like that moment just before the first player takes his turn. It’s a snapshot of the ancient world showing how the nations are arrayed in and around the Middle East, especially around the Holy Land. This is what the world looks like just before the “game” begins.

Those who have studied this chapter in detail remark on its amazing historical accuracy. It reveals the “genius of the Hebrew mind” and gives us a peek behind the curtain into the misty far reaches of early world history. There are 70 separate names here. Some of those names are people, some are names of cities, and others are names of tribes or nations or people groups. This is World History 101 as taught by Moses who was inspired by the Holy Spirit. If you enjoy history and geography and anthropology, and if you like to make connections between the ancient world and the 21st-century, then you’ll enjoy Genesis 10. And all of us can gain something from this chapter because this is where we came from. This is our family tree! We are all in here somewhere. Commenting on this chapter, Martin Luther said, “Look into the historical accounts of all nations. If it were not for Moses alone, what would you know about the origin of man?” We would not know these things if God did not tell us. Science and research alone can never tell us. Luther called this passage a “mirror” to see who we really are. We are so marred with sin, so divided from one another, that we cannot know our own history unless God himself tells us. This chapter is a sacred thread that joins the early morning of earth history to the rest of the Bible, and ultimately to you and to me.

## **I. An Outline of Genesis 10**

The best discussion I have seen of Genesis 10 comes from a book by Arthur Custance called Noah’s Three Sons. You can read it online at: [www.custance.org](http://www.custance.org). Click on “The Books” and follow the links to the text of Noah’s Three Sons.

### **A. Descendants of Japheth Genesis 10:2-5**

These verses list 14 names. After the flood, the descendants of Japheth spread out to the north and west of the Middle East. Gomer lived in the region north of the Black Sea, Madai became the father of the Medes, Javan founded the tribes living in Greece, Meshech and Tubal settled in Russia. One branch of Japheth’s family moved east and settled in the region of India. Thus you have the descendants of Japheth stretching from India through Russia across the Mediterranean Sea northward into Europe and Scandinavia. It is noteworthy that linguists tell us that there are amazing similarities between the languages of Europe, Iran and India, to the point that they believe there was once a common language, called by the experts “Indo-European.”

Genesis 10:5 adds the fact that the Japhethites settled the islands and were mariners, traveling and constantly expanding their territory.

Less is said about the descendants of Japheth because they lived in regions remote from the Promised Land. Since they do not largely figure into the Old Testament story, they are given very little mention in Genesis 10. The Japhethites will figure prominently in the expansion of the gospel in the New Testament.

### **B. Descendants of Ham Genesis 10:6-20**

The section on Ham’s descendants lists 30 names. After the flood, the Hamites moved south and west. Ham’s four sons were Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan. Cush is Ethiopia, Mizraim is Egypt, Put is Libya, and Canaan refers to the Holy Land, the land of Israel. Verses 8-12 mention a son of Cush named Nimrod. He was a mighty warrior, a hunter, a man of considerable skill, and a man of rebellious spirit. Nimrod means “rebel.” He was the Rambo of the Old Testament, a despot with enormous leadership skills and great military prowess. He founded (or took over) Babel (later to become Babylon) and Nineveh (later to become capital of the Assyrian empire). It is noteworthy that the Babylonians and the Assyrians were the greatest enemies of Israel in the Old Testament. Nimrod is

thus responsible for establishing vast empires in rebellion against God, filled with idolatry and greed, and kept in power through military might and unspeakable cruelty.

Verses 15-18 mention the various Canaanite tribes: Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites. These were the people Joshua and his followers had to fight when they entered the Holy Land. It is thought that after the collapse of their empire, the Hittites migrated east and settled in the region of western China. Custance offers extensive evidence that the "Sinites" later became part of the Assyrian empire and at least a portion of them became part of the early settlement of China. He offers a number of connections between the name "sin" and various Chinese words. It is noteworthy that the study of Chinese literature, history and culture is called "sinology."

Some writers speculate that a branch of the Hamite people crossed the ancient land bridge at the Bering Strait between Russia and Alaska, becoming the first settlers of North and South America. This would suggest that the various American Indian tribes along with the Aztec and Mayan people groups are descended from Ham.

It seems indisputable that the Hamites founded the first great world empires: Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Sumerian, Hittite, and possibly the Aztec and the Mayan empires as well.

One other note about those Canaanite tribes mentioned in verses 15-18. Large and powerful in Joshua's day, the Canaanites descended from a wicked father, inherited an awful curse, possessed a large area, and established a massive power base. They prospered for a long time. Only slowly were they conquered and ultimately destroyed in fulfillment of Noah's words in Genesis 9:23-27.

### **C. Descendants of Shem Genesis 10:21-31**

This section lists 26 names. From Shem come the Assyrians, the Hebrews, some of the Arab tribes, and tribes that lived in parts of Turkey, Syria and Armenia. The "Uz" who was a son of Aram (Genesis 10:23) founded a tribe in the northern Arabian desert. Job was from the "land of Uz." **Eber** (Genesis 10:25) is very significant because from his name comes the general title '**Hebrew**,' which is first used of Abraham in Genesis 14:13. From Elam comes the Elamites, from Asshur the Assyrians, and from Aram the Aramites, all important groups in Old Testament history. The modern term "Semitic" literally means "descended from Shem."

The name Peleg (Genesis 10:25) means "divided," because in his days the earth was divided. That may refer to the division of languages at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) or it may infer that after the flood, the continents were once joined together and later separated. The modern theory of continental drift is similar to this, although on a vastly different timescale.

Verse 26 lists the sons of Joktan, the brother of Peleg. Those descendants of Joktan settled in the Arabian Peninsula, in the area of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates.

The careful Bible student will note that the descendants of Ham and Shem in many cases lived side by side in very close proximity. We should not be surprised that they are continually at odds throughout the Old Testament.

By far the most important fact about Shem is that the Messiah will be his direct descendant. Genesis 3:15 predicts a coming "seed of the woman" who will one day crush the serpent's head. This will much later be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Genesis 10 lists the descendants of Shem last to emphasize that God's promise will be fulfilled in the line of Shem. That line looks like this:

- Shem
- Arphaxad
- Shelah
- Eber
- Peleg

Genesis 11 will continue the line from Peleg, climaxing in the birth of Abraham. Here is the line in a very compressed form:

- Adam
- Noah
- Shem
- Abraham

By the end of Genesis 10, the human race is hopelessly divided into a bewildering variety of tribes, nations and empires, separated from one another and from God. But even while rebellious humans separate from each other, God continues to keep his promise alive across the generations.

## II. Lessons from the Table of Nations ([see below](#))

[ALLEN ROSS](#) summarizes the The Meaning of Genesis 10

Most commentators observe that the Table demonstrates the unity of the human race. Coming from the sons of Noah, the survivors of the Flood were fruitful and multiplied.

But the passage is far more complex than that. The Table is a select list of names, and that selection must serve a purpose. The names are names of individuals, cities, tribes, and nations arranged according to the genealogical connections of the ancestors or founders. The pattern of the Table is segmented rather than linear; it is designed to show blood ties, treaties, alliances, and other connections between existing peoples.

That the promised land is central to the Table can be seen from the arrangement of the descendants. The Japhethites are spread from east to west across the northern frontier; the Hamites surround the land from south to west; and the Shemites are traced from the eastern to the southern borders of the land. Moreover, the preoccupation with the Canaanites in the land of promise shows the concern of the writer to fit the Table to the message of the book: the fulfillment of God's promise to bless Israel as a nation in that land, and to bless those nations that bless her, and curse those who are antagonistic to her.

The Table then deliberately selected these tribes and traced their development. This was done by expanding (in the יָלַד ["begot"] sections) important elements found in the basic genealogy (the בְּנֵי ["sons of"] structure). From the heading תְּקִלְדֹּרֶת, "particulars") it is clear that the passage was designed to do just this. The purpose of this תְּקִלְדֹּרֶת in Genesis is to trace what became of Noah's descendants, but the particular items included in this genealogy were selected because of their significance for Israel.

The תְּקִלְדֹּרֶת of the בְּנֵי Noah moves in four directions (in each of the יָלַד sections). Through these four sections the genealogy focuses on the dominant kingdoms of Assyria and Shinar, the powerful Egyptian tribes, the Canaanite tribes in their lands, and the Arabian tribes of the line of Shem. These are peoples with whom the new nation of Israel would have dealings in accord with the oracle of Noah in Genesis 9.

According to Genesis, the new nation of Israel was to be blessed as God's people in the land of Canaan. God's plan to bless Israel involved the movement, displacement, and subjugation of other peoples. The oracle of Noah in Genesis 9 anticipated the blessing for Shem, along with Japheth, and the cursing of Canaan, a son of Ham. This Table in Genesis 10 gives direction to that oracle. It presents the lines of Shem and Japheth as pure tribal groups around the promised land; it also presents the old block of Hamites, especially the mixed races in the land of Canaan, as the predominant powers on the earth. The יָלַד sections identify these tribes for Israel and signify their relationship to the blessing or cursing

**Genesis 10:2 The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras.**

- Ge 10:21 1Ch 1:5-7 Isa 66:19 Eze 27:7,12-14,19 38:2,6,15 39:1 Rev 20:8
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Click to enlarge and make more legible

Japheth = Green  
Shem = Pink  
Ham = Violet

### THE SONS OF JAPHETH

The sons of Japheth ([yepheth](#)) were [Gomer](#) and [Magog](#) and [Madai](#) and [Javan](#) and [Tubal](#) and [Meshech](#) and [Tiras](#) - Gomer does not refer to [Gomer in the the book of Hosea](#). [Magog](#) can mean "the place of Gog." [Madai](#) is the ancestor of the Medes.

[Wiersbe](#) - Japheth is the ancestor of the Gentile nations who located north and west of the land of Canaan. These would be the distant nations, the countries that represented the "outer limits" of civilization for the average Old Testament Jew (Ps. 72:8-10).

**Allen Ross** points out that "In the listing of Noah's sons, Japheth usually comes last. But here he is first because the tribes descended from Japheth were spread across the remote lands of the north and therefore were less involved in Israel's history." ([The Table of Nations in Genesis 10--Its Content](#))

**Henry Morris - Gomer.** The "sons of Japheth," allowing for the gradual modifications in the form of their names over the millennia, can be recognized as the progenitors of the Indo-European peoples. Japheth himself is called "Iapetos" in the legends of the Greeks, and Iyapeti is the reputed ancestor of the Aryans. Gomer is identified by Herodotus with Cimmeria, a name now surviving as the Crimea. His descendants moved westward, with the name possibly further preserved in Germany and Cambria (Wales).

**Hughes on The sons of Japheth:** lived mostly to the north and east of Canaan and spoke the Indo-European languages.. gomer dwelt north of the Caspian Sea. Tubal and Meshech settled around the southern shores of the Black Sea. Tiras lived west of the Black Sea in Thrace. Madai occupied the area south of the Caspian in what became Media. And Javan populated Ionia, the southern part of Greece. The sons of Javan spread around the northern Mediterranean as far west as Tarshish or southern Spain. All the maritime coastlands and island areas surrounding the Mediterranean (BORROW [Genesis : beginning and blessing](#))

**Ross** - Tubal and Meshech are always found together in the Bible; they represent northern military states (Ezek. 27:13; 32:26; 38:2; 39:1; and Isa. 66:19). Tubal is equivalent to Tibareni in Pontus; and Meshech is located in the Moschian mountains near Armenia.<sup>8</sup> Their range was from eastern Asia Minor to the Black Sea.

**Ray Stedman** - This division of the chapter (Genesis 10:1-5), centering on Japheth, is the shortest, yet to us in many ways it is the most important, because it is to this family of mankind that most of us belong. We are Japhethites and we find this of intense interest, although the Scripture spends the least time with it. Those who study races and peoples are known as [ethnologists](#), and one of the tools of [ethnology](#) is to trace the persistence of names through history. Some of these place names and names of individuals persist for a long time through the course of human events, and form a kind of peg or nail upon which we can hang certain important movements in history and by which we can trace certain developments. We can do this with many of the names in this passage. Letters may be transposed, endings added, prefixes taken away or added, but there is a basic root which persists for years and even centuries of the time, and these give us a way of tracing the spread of the peoples of earth.

The **family of Japheth** is essentially what we call the [Aryans](#). Hitler made much of the Aryan race, claiming that the Germans were pure Aryans and the rest were mongrels. Of course, the Jews were of a completely different family. He was right about that, for the Jews are Semitic (from Shem) while the Aryans are from Japheth. But where Hitler made his mistake (and where many people today make a mistake) is to fail to differentiate between differences which exist between people and a supposed superiority. Because people are different is no sign that they are inferior or superior. This is one of the basic things we need to understand in studying the peoples of the earth.

Early in the history of the world, the Japhethites, or Aryans, split into two groups. One group settled in India and the other group in Europe. Together they form what is known as the "Indo-European" family of nations. Any ethnographer is familiar with these divisions, but they are the same basic stock. The next time you visit India you should realize that you are visiting your cousins in the same basic family. The interesting thing is that both of these divisions, the Indian and the European, trace their ancestry back to Japheth. This is not from the Bible, but from history:

The Greeks say that their ancestor was a man named Japetos, and you can see in that the resemblance to Japheth. They regarded him as not only the father of their race, but the father of all humanity. The Indians, on the other hand, have an account of the flood similar in many respects to the Biblical account. The name of their hero is not Noah, but Satyaurata, and he had three sons. The name of the oldest was Iyapeti (you can see Japheth in that, very easily), and the other two were Sharma, and C'harma (Shem and Ham). The interesting thing about the Indian account is that C'harma was cursed by his father because he laughed at him when he got drunk, a certain echo of the story we have in Genesis.

You see from this how this chapter is embedded in history. The Word of God is dealing with realistic matters when it traces these divisions....**Ray Stedman** - From this word, **Gomer**, by a process of elision and transposition of letters, there came the word, Gaul, or Gaelic. These are the people, interestingly enough, to whom the New Testament Epistle to the Galatians is written. The Galatians were Gauls. Most of us have a Gaelic or Celtic (or Keltic) ancestry, and the Gauls and Celts (or Kelts) were descendants of Gomer. They migrated to the north and settled in Spain, France and in Britain. From these Gauls come most of the early families of Western Europe and, consequently, of the Americas as well. The oldest son of Gomer was **Ashkenaz**. He and his descendants first settled around the Black Sea and then moved north into a land which is called Ascenia, and which later became known as the Islands of Scandia, which we now know as Scandinavia. You can trace a direct link between Ashkenaz and Scandinavia. Another of the sons of Gomer was Riphath. Although we do not know too much about Riphath, we do know that he located in Central Europe, and some scholars feel that the word, Europe, itself comes from this name, Riphath. Another son is Togarmah. This name is easily traced. He was the ancestor of the present-day Turks and Armenians, who also migrated northward into Southern Germany. Certain scholars have felt that the word, Germany, derives from the word, Togarmah. If you drop the first syllable you have the basic root of Germany..... Two others of the sons of Japheth were **Madai** and **Javan**. These are easily recognizable in history: The **Madai** became the Medes, of the famous Medes and Persian Empire. Javan is unquestionably the ancestor of the Greeks. His name, Javan, is still found in Greece in the form of Ionia. The Ionic Sea and Ionian Peninsula all derive from this word *Javan*. His sons were

Elishah, from which we get the Greek word, Helles (the Greeks are still called *Hellenes*), and Tarshish, whom most scholars associate with Spain; Kittim, which is the Island of Cyprus; and Dodanim, who settled around the Black Sea, and still finds a modern parallel in the word, the Dardanelles. These can all be traced by the geographical titles and place names they left behind. ([God's Funnel](#))

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**Walton - Genesis 10:2–5. Japhethites.** Although not all of the descendants of Japheth are tied to contiguous regions, they could all be defined from an Israelite perspective as coming from across the sea (NIV: “maritime peoples” in v. 5). A Babylonian world map from the seventh or eighth century illustrates the geographical worldview that there were many peoples considered on the outskirts of civilization beyond the sea. Many named here can be identified with sections or peoples in Asia Minor (Magog, Tubal, Meshek, Tyras, Togarmah) or the Ionian islands (Dodanim), as well as Cyprus (Elisha and Kittim). There are also several that seem, based on Assyrian and Babylonian records, to originate in the area to the east of the Black Sea and in the Iranian plateau— Cimmerians (Gomer), Scythians (Ashkenaz), Medes (Madai), Paphlagonians (Riphat). Tarshish presents the most problems, since it has generally been identified with Spain and that takes it out of the geographic sphere of the others. However, the theme of Greek or Indo-European peoples for these “nations” would make a tie to Sardinia or perhaps Carthage possible. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 41](#))

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**Gomer** - Gomer identifies one man, a group of his descendants, a future nation and one woman. Gomer's descendants are usually identified as the Cimmerians. Cimmerians, according to Greek and Assyrian historical sources, were forced out of the Ukraine (along the north shore of the Black Sea) by the Scythians in the eighth century B.C. They penetrated the areas east of the Black Sea south to the kingdom of Urartu. They then went west into Asia Minor. They were in constant conflict with Assyria, living on the fringe of the empire. The Assyrian king, Sargon II, was killed by the Cimmerians in the region of Tabal in Asia Minor in 705 B.C. Succeeding Assyrian kings held the Cimmerians at bay. After the fall of Assyria, they were defeated by a Lydian (a local Asia Minor region) force which stopped renewed aggression. Through intermarriage, the people disappeared in the sixth century B.C. Gomer will be one of the tribes which will fall in the eschatological battle pitting Yahweh against Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38:6). The tribes of this passage are all located in Asia Minor. Many writers have tried to identify the Ezekiel reference with the ancient “Germani,” the predecessors of the modern Germans. Most philologists, however, agree this reference is consistent with those of 1 Chronicles, speaking of the descendants of the son of Japheth. Therefore the reference here is to the “Kimmerians” or the “Cimmerians.” ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Easton's Bible Dictionary - GOMER** - The eldest son of Japheth, and father of Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah (Gen. 10:2, 3), whose descendants formed the principal branch of the population of South-eastern Europe. He is generally regarded as the ancestor of the Celtae and the Cimmerii, who in early times settled to the north of the Black Sea, and gave their name to the Crimea, the ancient Chersonesus Taurica. Traces of their presence are found in the names Cimmerian Bosphorus, Cimmerian Isthmus, etc. In the seventh century B.C. they were driven out of their original seat by the Scythians, and overran western Asia Minor, whence they were afterwards expelled. They subsequently reappear in the times of the Romans as the Cimbri of the north and west of Europe, whence they crossed to the British Isles, where their descendants are still found in the Gaels and Cymry. Thus the whole Celtic race may be regarded as descended from Gomer.

**Magog** - (Meaning varies in several sources - "overtopping," "covering" "land of Gog", "region of Gog) - the second of the "sons" of Japheth (Gen. 10:2; 1 Chr. 1:5). In Ezekiel (Ezek 38:2; 39:6) it is the name of a nation, probably some Scythian or Tartar tribe descended from Japheth. They are described as skilled horsemen, and expert in the use of the bow. In the Apocalypse of John, Gog and Magog represent all the heathen opponents of Messiah (Rev 20:8), and in this sense these names frequently recur in Jewish apocalyptic literature.

**Madai** (middle land) the third "son" of Japheth (Gen. 10:2), the name by which the [Medes](#) are known on the Assyrian monuments.

**Javan** - The fourth "son" of Japheth (Gen. 10:2), whose descendants settled in Greece, i.e., Ionia, which bears the name of Javan in Hebrew. Alexander the Great is called the "king of Javan" (rendered "Grecia," Dan. 8:21; 10:20; comp. 11:2; Zech. 9:13). This word was universally used by the nations of the East as the generic name of the Greek race.

**Tubal** - son of Japheth, Gen. 10:2; 1 Chr. 1:5. Descendants of, become a nation, Isa. 66:19; Ezek. 27:13; 32:26; 38:2, 3; 39:1.

**Meshech** -drawing out, the sixth son of Japheth (Gen. 10:2), the founder of a tribe (1 Chr. 1:5; Ezek. 27:13; 38:2,3). They were in all probability the Moschi, a people inhabiting the Moschian Mountains, between the Black and the Caspian Seas. In Ps. 120:5 the name occurs as simply a synonym for foreigners or barbarians. "During the ascendancy of the Babylonians and Persians in Western Asia, the Moschi were subdued; but it seems probable that a large number of them crossed the Caucasus range and spread over the northern steppes, mingling with the Scythians. There they became known as Muscovs, and gave that name to the Russian nation and its ancient capital by which they are still generally known throughout the East"

**Tiras** A son of Japheth (Gen 10:2 (P); 1 Ch 1:5). Not mentioned elsewhere; this name was almost unanimously taken by the ancient commentators (so Josephus, Ant, I, vi, 1) to be the same as that of the Thracians (Thrakes) living in the area of the river Tiras.

**Genesis 10:3** The sons of **Gomer** were **Ashkenaz** and **Riphath** and **Togarmah**.

- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## THE THREE SONS OF GOMER

The sons of Gomer were **Ashkenaz** and **Riphath** and **Togarmah**. **Ashkenaz** is son of Gomer son of Japheth son of Noah and name of a people of the northern shore of the Black Sea. **Riphath** is the son of Gomer son of Japheth son of Noah. **Togarmah** is son of Gomer, grandson of Japheth, and great grandson of Noah. The Jewish Targums say that Germany was derived from Togarmah.

**Henry Morris** - Ashkenaz has long been associated with the German Jews, known still as the Ashkenazi. The name is also possibly preserved in the names Scandia and Saxon, as well as a region of Armenia once known as Sakasene.

**Ray Stedman** - From this word, **Gomer**, by a process of elision and transposition of letters, there came the word, Gaul, or Gaelic. These are the people, interestingly enough, to whom the New Testament Epistle to the Galatians is written. The Galatians were Gauls. Most of us have a Gaelic or Celtic (or Keltic) ancestry, and the Gauls and Celts (or Kelts) were descendants of Gomer. They migrated to the north and settled in Spain, France and in Britain. From these Gauls come most of the early families of Western Europe and, consequently, of the Americas as well. The oldest son of Gomer was Ashkenaz. He and his descendants first settled around the Black Sea and then moved north into a land which is called Ascenia, and which later became known as the Islands of Scandia, which we now know as Scandinavia. You can trace a direct link between Ashkenaz and Scandinavia. Another of the sons of Gomer was Riphath. Although we do not know too much about Riphath, we do know that he located in Central Europe, and some scholars feel that the word, Europe, itself comes from this name, Riphath. Another son is Togarmah. This name is easily traced. He was the ancestor of the present-day Turks and Armenians, who also migrated northward into Southern Germany. Certain scholars have felt that the word, Germany, derives from the word, Togarmah. If you drop the first syllable you have the basic root of Germany. ([God's Funnel](#))

**KJV Bible Commentary - online - page 86**- Ge 10:2-5 . The sons of Japheth: **Gomer** is usually identified with the Cimmerians of Greek mythology (cf. Ezek 38:6) and the progenitor of the Indo-European family of nations; **Magog**, originated in "the uttermost parts of the north" (Ezek 38:2, Eze 38:6; Ezek 39:1-2), presumably in the vicinity of the Black Sea in the fifteenth century B.C.; **Madai**, the name used on Assyrian inscriptions for Media, was located west of the Caspian Sea in the ninth century B.C.; **Tubal** and **Meshech**, well known from the prophecies of Ezekiel (cf. Ezek 27:13; Ezek 32:26; Ezek 38:2; Ezek 39:1), are both located in eastern Anatolia, the Muski in northern Mesopotamia; **Tiras** was the ancestor of the Thracians of northern Greece, or perhaps the Etruscans of Italy. **The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz** was located southeast of Lake Urmia in the time of Esarhaddon; Rip hath (1Cr 1:6) and his descendants lived by the Rhebas river, according to Josephus; **Togarmah** was mentioned in Ezekiel 27:14 with Javan, Tubal, and Meshech as well as in Ezekiel 38:6 with Gomer and was generally identified with the western part of Armenia, possibly near Carchemish.

**Gomer** - the eldest son of Japheth and grandson of Noah; the progenitor of the early Cimmerians and other branches of the Celtic family. The eldest son of Japheth, and father of Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah (Gen. 10:2, 3), whose descendants formed the principal branch of the population of South-eastern Europe. He is generally regarded as the ancestor of the Celtae and the Cimmerii, who in early times settled to the north of the Black Sea, and gave their name to the Crimea, the ancient Chersonesus Taurica. Traces of their presence are found in the names Cimmerian Bosphorus, Cimmerian Isthmus, etc. In the seventh century B.C. they were driven out of their original seat by the Scythians, and overran western Asia Minor, whence they were afterwards expelled. They subsequently reappear in the times of the Romans as the Cimbri of the north and west of Europe, whence they crossed to the British Isles, where their descendants are still found in the Gaels and Cymry. Thus the whole Celtic race may be regarded as descended from Gomer.

**ISBE adds - GOMER** (1) - go'-mer (gomer): Given in Gen 10:2 f; 1 Ch 1:5 f as a son of Japheth. The name evidently designates the people called Gimirra by the Assyrians, Kimmerians by the Greeks. They were a barbaric horde of Aryans who in the 7th century BC left their abode in what is now Southern Russia and poured. through the Caucasus into Western Asia, causing serious trouble to the Assyrians and other nations. One division moved eastward toward Media, another westward, where they conquered Cappadocia

and made it their special abode. They fought also in other parts of Asia Minor, conquering some portions. The Armenian name for Cappadocia, Gamir, has come from this people. In Ezek 38:6 Gomer is mentioned as one of the northern nations.

**Genesis 10:4 The sons of Javan were Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim.**

- Kittim - Nu 24:24 Isa 23:1,12 Da 11:30
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## THE FOUR SONS OF JAVAN

The sons of [Javan](#) were Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim

**Ross** - Javan is the general word for the Hellenic race, used throughout the Old Testament for the Ionians who dwelt in western Asia Minor.

**KJV Bible Commentary - online - page 87-** The **sons of Javan**: Elishah probably became the inhabitants of Sicily and Sardinia (cf. Ezek 27:7); **Tarshish** is known as "afar off" (cf. Ps 72:10; Isa 66:19), and sites have ranged from the island of Rhodes to western Anatolia and Sardinia, **Kittim** is usually identified with Kition, the capital of Cyprus (cf. Isa 23:1, Isa 23:12); **Dodanim** (Rodanim) as in 1 Chronicles 1:7 and the Septuagint of Ge 10:4 (the letters "r" and "d" in Hebrew were often confused at different times). If "Rodanim" is correct, then Rhodes is the place.

**ELISHAH [ISBE]-** e-li'-sha ('elishah, "God saves"; Elisa, Eleisai): Mentioned in Gen 10:4 as the eldest son of Javan, and in Ezek 27:7 as the source from which the Tyrians obtained their purple dyes. On the ground of this latter statement attempts have been made to identify it with Southern Italy or the north of Africa. Josephus (Ant., I, vi, 1) identified Elisha with the Aeolians. The Targum on Ezekiel gives "the province of Italy." Other suggestions include Hellas, Ells, and Alsa; the last named is a kingdom mentioned in the Tell el-Amarna Letters, but its precise location is unknown. It is impossible as yet to claim certainty for any of these conjectures. A. C. Grant

**Tarshish [EBD]** a Sanscrit or Aryan word, meaning "the sea coast." (1.) One of the "sons" of Javan (Gen. 10:4; 1 Chr. 1:7). (2.) The name of a place which first comes into notice in the days of Solomon. The question as to the locality of Tarshish has given rise to not a little discussion. Some think there was a Tarshish in the East, on the Indian coast, seeing that "ships of Tarshish" sailed from Eziongeber, on the Red Sea (1 Kings 9:26; 22:48; 2 Chr. 9:21). Some, again, argue that Carthage was the place so named. **There can be little doubt, however, that this is the name of a Phoenician port in Spain**, between the two mouths of the Guadalquivir (the name given to the river by the Arabs, and meaning "the great wady" or water-course). It was founded by a Carthaginian colony, and was the farthest western harbour of Tyrian sailors. It was to this port Jonah's ship was about to sail from Joppa. It has well been styled "the Peru of Tyrian adventure;" it abounded in gold and silver mines. It appears that this name also is used without reference to any locality. "Ships of Tarshish" is an expression sometimes denoting simply ships intended for a long voyage (Isa. 23:1, 14), ships of a large size (sea-going ships), whatever might be the port to which they sailed. Solomon's ships were so styled (1 Kings 10:22; 22:49).

**Kittim** - son of Javan son of Japheth son of Noah; an island country located off the east coast of Cilicia in the Mediterranean, the island of Cyprus

**Dodanim** son of Javan son of Japheth son of Noah

**Genesis 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.**

BGT Genesis 10:5 κ το των φωρ σθησαν ν σοι τ ν θν ν ν τ γ α τ ν καστος κατ γλ σσαν ν τα ς φυλα ς α τ ν κα ν το ς θνεσιν α τ ν

LXE Genesis 10:5 From these were the islands of the Gentiles divided in their land, each according to his tongue, in their tribes and in their nations.

KJV Genesis 10:5 By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

NET Genesis 10:5 From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to its language, according to their families, by their nations.

CSB Genesis 10:5 The coastland peoples spread out into their lands. These are Japheth's sons by their clans, in their nations. Each group had its own language.

ESV Genesis 10:5 From these the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations.

NIV Genesis 10:5 (From these the maritime peoples spread out into their territories by their clans within their nations, each with its own language.)

NLT Genesis 10:5 Their descendants became the seafaring peoples that spread out to various lands, each identified by its own language, clan, and national identity.

NRS Genesis 10:5 From these the coastland peoples spread. These are the descendants of Japheth in their lands, with their own language, by their families, in their nations.

NJB Genesis 10:5 From these came the dispersal to the islands of the nations. These were Japheth's sons, in their respective countries, each with its own language, by clan and nation.

NAB Genesis 10:5 These are the descendants of Japheth, and from them sprang the maritime nations, in their respective lands-- each with its own language-- by their clans within their nations.

YLT Genesis 10:5 By these have the isles of the nations been parted in their lands, each by his tongue, by their families, in their nations.

GWN Genesis 10:5 From these descendants the people of the coastlands spread into their own countries. Each nation had its own language and families.

- **the coastlands** - Ge 10:25 Ps 72:10 Isa 24:15 40:15 41:5 42:4,10 49:1 51:5 59:18 Isa 60:9 Jer 2:10 25:22 Zep 2:11
- after his - Ge 10:20 11:1-9
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## SEPARATION OF PEOPLES INTO THEIR LANDS

**From these the coastlands of the nations**([goyim](#); Lxx = [ethnos](#)) were separated ([parad](#); Lxx = [aphorizo](#)) **into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations**

[KJV Bible Commentary - online - page 87](#)- "Verse Ge 10:5 is quite important because it seems to imply that the events of Ge 11:1-9 occurred before the 'Gentiles' occupied the coastlands, an implication confirmed by the language of verses Ge 10:25 and Ge 10:32. Apparently the judgment at the Tower of Babel occurred during the life of Peleg" (Davis, p. 140).

**Griffith Thomas:** This early reference to "the nations" is very significant and shows that amid all the Jewish exclusiveness the Old Testament never loses sight of the great fact of universality and God's purposes for all the world.

**Morris** has an interesting note on **according to his language** - The islands and coastlands to which these first Europeans migrated were "divided . . . everyone after his tongue." This notation indicates that the author of Genesis 10 (probably Shem) wrote it after the dispersion at Babel.

**Parunak:** The closing summary differs from the other two by emphasizing "the isles of the Gentiles," lit. "coasts of the Gentiles." Most of the nations whom the Israelites thought of as coastal nations were Japhethite. Their interactions with Hamites and Shemites were more often by way of land, at least until the time of Solomon's voyages on the Red Sea.

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**Separated**([06504](#))([parad](#)) means to divide, to separate, to disperse, to be separated, to be scattered. [Parad](#) means to split into two or more parts or pieces as with a river (Ge 2:10) and the earth (Ge 10:5). [Parad](#) describes nations being separated (Ge 10:32; Ge 25:23). [Parad](#) can describe persons going their separate ways (Ge 13:9; Ru 1:17). [Parad](#) can describe the enemies of the Lord being dispersed, scattered (Ps. 92:9). Figuratively [parad](#) is used of a person's bones being out of joint from distress and oppression.

[TWOT](#) - In the sense of "to separate," [pārad](#) may refer: (1) to the separation of a river into tributaries (Genesis 2:10); (2) the separation of the wings of a bird (Ezekiel 1:11; cf. Job 41:17 [H 9]); (3) the separation of friends

on an amiable basis (Genesis 13:9, 11, 14; Ruth 1:17; 2 Samuel 1:23; (4) the dispersal of peoples (Genesis 10:5, 32; Genesis 25:23; Deut. 32:8). The verb has an interesting nuance in Proverbs, where it occurs five times. Here it may mean to drive a wedge between solid friendships. Thus Proverbs 16:28 refers to the man who destroys other people's friendships by creating discord. *pārad* is used in Proverbs 18:1 to describe the unsociable man. He is the abominable no-man. Proverbs 18:18 says that the lot "separates" powerful parties locked in a legal contest.

**Parad - 26v - decides(1), dispersed(1), divided(1), go apart(1), joint(1), parted(1), parts(1), scattered(2), separate(1), separated(12), separates(3), spread(1)** Gen. 2:10; Gen. 10:5; Gen. 10:32; Gen. 13:9; Gen. 13:11; Gen. 13:14; Gen. 25:23; Gen. 30:40; Deut. 32:8; Jdg. 4:11; Ruth 1:17; 2 Sam. 1:23; 2 Ki. 2:11; Neh. 4:19; Est. 3:8; Job 4:11; Job 41:17; Ps. 22:14; Ps. 92:9; Prov. 16:28; Prov. 17:9; Prov. 18:1; Prov. 18:18; Prov. 19:4; Ezek. 1:11; Hos. 4:14

**Nations** (01471)(**goy**, plural "**goyim**", "**haggoyim**") means nation, people, pagan, heathen. The **Septuagint** most often translate **goy/goyim** with the noun **ethnos** which in the plural is usually rendered "**Gentiles**" (See [Bible Dictionaries](#); see [Wikipedia](#)) in the NT. **Goy** is a masculine noun meaning nation, people, Gentiles, country and is used to indicate a nation or nations in various contexts. For example it indicates the offspring of Abraham that God made into a nation (Ge 12:2) and thereby set the stage for Israel's appearance in history as a nation (Ge 18:18; Ps. 106:5). Israel was to be a holy nation (Ex 19:6). Even the descendants of Abraham that did not come from the seed of Isaac would develop into nations (Gen. 21:13). In sum, **goy/goyim** gives the idea of a specific group of people, or a certain segment of a group, occurring over 500x with over 400x in the plural form **goyim**. **Gôy/goyim** is seldom used specifically to refer to Israel or Judah and its overwhelming use in reference to the pagan nations, AKA "**GENTILES**". **Gôy** is used specifically of the descendents of Abraham (Gen.12:2; 17:6; 18:18), Sarah (Gen. 17:16), Ishmael (Gen. 17:20; 21:13, 18), Jacob (Gen. 35:11; 46:3), Ephraim (Gen. 48:19), and Moses (Exo. 32:10; Num. 14:12; Deut. 9:14). It also refers to Jacob and Esau as two "nations" (Gen. 25:23). The understood nuance is that not only would there be many offspring, but they would command the power necessary to be a territorial political entity. The term is used of the "nation" of Israel (Ex. 19:6; 33:13; Deut. 4:6), of Israel and Judah as two "nations" (Ezek. 35:10; 37:22), of Judah (Isa. 26:2, 15), and of Israel or Judah as sinful and rebellious (Deut. 32:28; Isa. 1:4; 10:6; Jer. 5:9, 29; Ezek. 2:3; Hag. 2:14; Mal. 3:9). It is also used of Israel in similes (Ezek. 20:32; 25:8). Moreover, **gôy** is used in Exo. 19:6 to describe Israel as "a holy nation" and 1 Pet. 2:9, quoting Exo. 19:6, calls the Church "a holy nation." God led Israel in dispossessing the land of Canaan from these **gôyim** (Exo. 34:24; Deut. 7:1, 22; 12:2, 29; 18:14; Josh. 23:9; 1 Ki. 14:24; 2 Ki. 16:3; 1 Chr. 17:21; Ps. 10:16; 44:2; 80:8).

**Vine** - **Gôy** refers to a "people or nation," usually with overtones of territorial or governmental unity/identity. This emphasis is in the promise formulas where God promised to make someone a great, powerful, numerous "nation" (Gen. 12:2). Certainly these adjectives described the future characteristics of the individual's descendants as compared to other peoples (cf. Num. 14:12). So **gôy** represents a group of individuals who are considered as a unit with respect to origin, language, land, jurisprudence, and government. This emphasis is in Gen. 10:5 (the first occurrence): "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations." Deut. 4:6 deals not with political and national identity but with religious unity, its wisdom, insight, righteous jurisprudence, and especially its nearness to God: "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." Certainly all this is viewed as the result of divine election (Deut. 4:32ff.). Israel's greatness is due to the greatness of her God and the great acts He has accomplished in and for her. The word 'am, "people, nation," suggests subjective personal interrelationships based on common familial ancestry and/or a covenantal union, while **gôy** suggests a political entity with a land of its own: "Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people" (Exod. 33:13). **Gôy** may be used of a people, however, apart from its territorial identity: "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:6). **Gôy** is sometimes almost a derogatory name for non-Israelite groups, or the "heathen": "And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword..." (Lev. 26:33). This negative connotation is not always present, however, when the word is used of the heathen: "For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23:9). Certainly in contexts dealing with worship the **gôyim** are the non-Israelites: "They feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence" (2 Kings 17:33). In passages such as Deut. 4:38 **gôyim** specifically describes the early inhabitants of Canaan prior to the Israelite conquest. Israel was to keep herself apart from and distinct from the "heathen" (Deut. 7:1) and was an example of true godliness before them (Deut. 4:6). On the other hand, as a blessing to all the nations (Gen. 12:2) and as a holy "nation" and kingdom of priests (Exod. 19:6), Israel was to be the means by which salvation was declared to the nations (heathen) and they came to

recognize God's sovereignty (Isa. 60). So the Messiah is the light of the nations (Isa. 49:6). ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**Groningen** ([TWOT online](#)) - gôy. Gentile, heathen, nation, people. ASV and RSV differ and agree in various instances, e.g. Genesis 10:5; goy appears twice. Both translate "nations" in one instance, but RSV has "peoples" in the other. It is difficult to ascertain the exact definition of the term. However, if one takes the various usages into consideration, as well as some seemingly related terms, gaw, gēw, gēwâ, the back part of the body; gew, Aramaic for midst; and gewîyâ, living body or corpse (see below), one must conclude that the basic idea is that of a defined body or group of people, or some specific large segment of a given body. The context will generally indicate the specific quality or characteristic which is to be understood.

[The synonym 'am is used largely for a group of people or for people in general. However sometimes, especially in poetic parallel with gôyim, it may refer to a nation, whether a foreign nation or Israel. gôyim on the other hand more usually refers to nations, especially the surrounding pagan nations. le'ôm is mainly used as a poetic synonym of either of the above words in either of their usages. r.l.h.]

The term gôy is used especially to refer to specifically defined political, ethnic or territorial groups of people without intending to ascribe a specific religious or moral connotation. Thus, in Genesis 10:5 the writer speaks of defined groups of people according to their territories. When God speaks to Abraham about Egypt as a strong nation the term gôy is used. Elisha prayed that invading Syria, this gôy, might be blinded (2 Kings 6:18). In this general ethnic sense the term may even be used of Abraham's seed. Thus God said to Abraham, "I will make of you a great nation," i.e. a political, territorial, identified people (Genesis 12:2; Genesis 17:20; Genesis 21:18). In Exodus 33:13 Moses, referring to Israel, a distinct body of people, says, "This gôy (i.e., nation) is thy people ('am)." In Deut. 4:6-7, Moses speaks of the Israelite nation as a political, ethnic body (gôy) which is a wise and understanding people ('am), existing as, and recognized by other nations as, a specific national identity (Psalm 83:4 [H 5]). It is necessary to stress that the Scriptures speak of Israel's existing as a distinct nation in Moses' time because of the widespread misapprehension that Israel became a nation only after entering Canaan. Israel was a nation in Moses' time, just as it was in Joshua's time (Joshua 3:17; Joshua 4:1; Joshua 5:6). So also in Jeremiah's time and thereafter, in spite of the exile (Jeremiah 31:36).

The term (gôyim) is used in a number of specific ways. When a number of specific nations are referred to, it is this plural form that is used and the translators have rendered it as "nations" (Genesis 10:31; Judges 2:23; Isaiah 61:11) or as "people" (Zech. 12:3, KJV). The plural form is employed also to refer to the people dwelling in and around Canaan; these were definite ethnic, political, territorial groups, whom Israel as a nation was to dispossess (Deut. 4:38; Joshua 23:13) or among whom, for testing and judgment, Israel was to live (Judges 2:21, 23). But the plural form is also used occasionally to refer to the various national entities that were to proceed from Abraham (Genesis 17:4-6). Sarah also was to be a mother of nations (Genesis 17:16).

Once the descendants of Abraham had become a distinct, recognized, political, and ethnic group of people who were in a specific covenant relationship with Yahweh, the term goy and gôyim increasingly takes the meaning of "gentiles" or "heathen," in reference to the non-covenant, non-believing peoples considered as national groups. However, Israel is still repeatedly spoken of as goy also e.g. when Israel is spoken of as taking possession of territory (Joshua 3:17) or when foreigners speak of her (Deut. 4:6). Israel is spoken of as an holy nation (gôy) because of her covenant status, her redemption and circumcision (Joshua 5:8). However, the rule is that the uncircumcised are the gôyim (Jeremiah 9:25).

The surrounding nations exhibit their heathen character by their wickedness (Deut. 9:4-5), their abominations (Deut. 18:9; 2 Chron. 33:2), and the making of their own gods (2 Kings 17:29). These nations are said to rise up against God and oppress his covenant people, yet the Lord holds them in derision (Psalm 59:8 [H 9]) and causes them to perish (Psalm 10:16). Moses, and the prophets particularly, warned Israel that if they lived and worshiped as the gôyim, they would share in the judgment due the heathen (Deut. 32:28; Isaiah 1:4; Malachi 3:9).

It must not be concluded from the fact that the surrounding nations, the gôyim, although referred to as gentiles and heathen, are to be considered per se as helplessly lost, without God and hope. Rather, they are eventually to participate in all the blessings God promises to give to Abraham and his progeny upon condition of faith. The covenant people of Israel are God's people, but through them the gôyim are destined to be blessed of God in future days (Genesis 12:1-3). In the meantime God will use the nations to punish his unfaithful covenant people (Jeremiah 4:7; Habakkuk 1:5ff.); on the other hand they will some day contribute to the glory of Israel (Isaiah 60:10ff.; Haggai 2:6ff.). They too are invited to seek the Messiah that he may be a light to them (Isaiah 11:10; Isaiah 42:6). Indeed, the gôyim are to join in the great procession to Mount Zion

(Isaiah 2:2ff.) and of their children it is said that this one and that one were born in her (Psalm 87:4 [H 5]). Thus there will be basically just one people of God, made up of believers from every tribe, tongue, people and nation; however, in OT times, it was through the covenant people, the 'am, that the blessings of God were revealed to and bestowed upon the gôyim. ([TWOT online](#))

Goy/goyim - 509 verses - every nation(2), Gentiles(1), Goim(1), Harosheth-hagoyim\*(3), herds(1), nation(120), nations(425), people(4).

Gen. 10:5; Gen. 10:20; Gen. 10:31; Gen. 10:32; Gen. 12:2; Gen. 15:14; Gen. 17:4; Gen. 17:5; Gen. 17:6; Gen. 17:16; Gen. 17:20; Gen. 18:18; Gen. 20:4; Gen. 21:13; Gen. 21:18; Gen. 22:18; Gen. 25:23; Gen. 26:4; Gen. 35:11; Gen. 46:3; Gen. 48:19; Exod. 9:24; Exod. 19:6; Exod. 32:10; Exod. 33:13; Exod. 34:10; Exod. 34:24; Lev. 18:24; Lev. 18:28; Lev. 20:23; Lev. 25:44; Lev. 26:33; Lev. 26:38; Lev. 26:45; Num. 14:12; Num. 14:15; Num. 23:9; Num. 24:8; Num. 24:20; Deut. 4:6; Deut. 4:7; Deut. 4:8; Deut. 4:27; Deut. 4:34; Deut. 4:38; Deut. 7:1; Deut. 7:17; Deut. 7:22; Deut. 8:20; Deut. 9:1; Deut. 9:4; Deut. 9:5; Deut. 9:14; Deut. 11:23; Deut. 12:2; Deut. 12:29; Deut. 12:30; Deut. 15:6; Deut. 17:14; Deut. 18:9; Deut. 18:14; Deut. 19:1; Deut. 20:15; Deut. 26:5; Deut. 26:19; Deut. 28:1; Deut. 28:12; Deut. 28:36; Deut. 28:49; Deut. 28:50; Deut. 28:65; Deut. 29:16; Deut. 29:18; Deut. 29:24; Deut. 30:1; Deut. 31:3; Deut. 32:8; Deut. 32:21; Deut. 32:28; Deut. 32:43; Jos. 3:17; Jos. 4:1; Jos. 5:6; Jos. 5:8; Jos. 10:13; Jos. 12:23; Jos. 23:3; Jos. 23:4; Jos. 23:7; Jos. 23:9; Jos. 23:12; Jos. 23:13; Jdg. 2:20; Jdg. 2:21; Jdg. 2:23; Jdg. 3:1; Jdg. 4:2; Jdg. 4:13; Jdg. 4:16; 1 Sam. 8:5; 1 Sam. 8:20; 2 Sam. 7:23; 2 Sam. 8:11; 2 Sam. 22:44; 2 Sam. 22:50; 1 Ki. 4:31; 1 Ki. 11:2; 1 Ki. 14:24; 1 Ki. 18:10; 2 Ki. 6:18; 2 Ki. 16:3; 2 Ki. 17:8; 2 Ki. 17:11; 2 Ki. 17:15; 2 Ki. 17:26; 2 Ki. 17:29; 2 Ki. 17:33; 2 Ki. 17:41; 2 Ki. 18:33; 2 Ki. 19:12; 2 Ki. 19:17; 2 Ki. 21:2; 2 Ki. 21:9; 1 Chr. 14:17; 1 Chr. 16:20; 1 Chr. 16:24; 1 Chr. 16:31; 1 Chr. 16:35; 1 Chr. 17:21; 1 Chr. 18:11; 2 Chr. 15:6; 2 Chr. 20:6; 2 Chr. 28:3; 2 Chr. 32:13; 2 Chr. 32:14; 2 Chr. 32:15; 2 Chr. 32:17; 2 Chr. 32:23; 2 Chr. 33:2; 2 Chr. 33:9; 2 Chr. 36:14; Ezr. 6:21; Neh. 5:8; Neh. 5:9; Neh. 5:17; Neh. 6:6; Neh. 6:16; Neh. 13:26; Job 12:23; Job 34:29; Ps. 2:1; Ps. 2:8; Ps. 9:5; Ps. 9:15; Ps. 9:17; Ps. 9:19; Ps. 9:20; Ps. 10:16; Ps. 18:43; Ps. 18:49; Ps. 22:27; Ps. 22:28; Ps. 33:10; Ps. 33:12; Ps. 43:1; Ps. 44:2; Ps. 44:11; Ps. 44:14; Ps. 46:6; Ps. 46:10; Ps. 47:8; Ps. 59:5; Ps. 59:8; Ps. 66:7; Ps. 67:2; Ps. 72:11; Ps. 72:17; Ps. 78:55; Ps. 79:1; Ps. 79:6; Ps. 79:10; Ps. 80:8; Ps. 82:8; Ps. 83:4; Ps. 86:9; Ps. 94:10; Ps. 96:3; Ps. 96:10; Ps. 98:2; Ps. 102:15; Ps. 105:13; Ps. 105:44; Ps. 106:5; Ps. 106:27; Ps. 106:35; Ps. 106:41; Ps. 106:47; Ps. 110:6; Ps. 111:6; Ps. 113:4; Ps. 115:2; Ps. 117:1; Ps. 118:10; Ps. 126:2; Ps. 135:10; Ps. 135:15; Ps. 147:20; Ps. 149:7; Prov. 14:34; Isa. 1:4; Isa. 2:2; Isa. 2:4; Isa. 5:26; Isa. 9:1; Isa. 9:3; Isa. 10:6; Isa. 10:7; Isa. 11:10; Isa. 11:12; Isa. 13:4; Isa. 14:6; Isa. 14:9; Isa. 14:12; Isa. 14:18; Isa. 14:26; Isa. 14:32; Isa. 16:8; Isa. 18:2; Isa. 18:7; Isa. 23:3; Isa. 25:3; Isa. 25:7; Isa. 26:2; Isa. 26:15; Isa. 29:7; Isa. 29:8; Isa. 30:28; Isa. 33:3; Isa. 34:1; Isa. 34:2; Isa. 36:18; Isa. 37:12; Isa. 40:15; Isa. 40:17; Isa. 41:2; Isa. 42:1; Isa. 42:6; Isa. 43:9; Isa. 45:1; Isa. 45:20; Isa. 49:6; Isa. 49:7; Isa. 49:22; Isa. 52:10; Isa. 52:15; Isa. 54:3; Isa. 55:5; Isa. 58:2; Isa. 60:3; Isa. 60:5; Isa. 60:11; Isa. 60:12; Isa. 60:16; Isa. 60:22; Isa. 61:6; Isa. 61:9; Isa. 61:11; Isa. 62:2; Isa. 64:2; Isa. 65:1; Isa. 66:8; Isa. 66:12; Isa. 66:18; Isa. 66:19; Isa. 66:20; Jer. 1:5; Jer. 1:10; Jer. 2:11; Jer. 3:17; Jer. 3:19; Jer. 4:2; Jer. 4:7; Jer. 4:16; Jer. 5:9; Jer. 5:15; Jer. 5:29; Jer. 6:18; Jer. 6:22; Jer. 7:28; Jer. 9:9; Jer. 9:16; Jer. 9:26; Jer. 10:2; Jer. 10:7; Jer. 10:10; Jer. 10:25; Jer. 12:17; Jer. 14:22; Jer. 16:19; Jer. 18:7; Jer. 18:8; Jer. 18:9; Jer. 18:13; Jer. 22:8; Jer. 25:9; Jer. 25:11; Jer. 25:12; Jer. 25:13; Jer. 25:14; Jer. 25:15; Jer. 25:17; Jer. 25:31; Jer. 25:32; Jer. 26:6; Jer. 27:7; Jer. 27:8; Jer. 27:11; Jer. 27:13; Jer. 28:11; Jer. 28:14; Jer. 29:14; Jer. 29:18; Jer. 30:11; Jer. 31:7; Jer. 31:10; Jer. 31:36; Jer. 33:9; Jer. 33:24; Jer. 36:2; Jer. 43:5; Jer. 44:8; Jer. 46:1; Jer. 46:12; Jer. 46:28; Jer. 48:2; Jer. 49:14; Jer. 49:15; Jer. 49:31; Jer. 49:36; Jer. 50:2; Jer. 50:3; Jer. 50:9; Jer. 50:12; Jer. 50:23; Jer. 50:41; Jer. 50:46; Jer. 51:7; Jer. 51:20; Jer. 51:27; Jer. 51:28; Jer. 51:41; Jer. 51:44; Lam. 1:1; Lam. 1:3; Lam. 1:10; Lam. 2:9; Lam. 4:15; Lam. 4:17; Lam. 4:20; Ezek. 2:3; Ezek. 4:13; Ezek. 5:5; Ezek. 5:6; Ezek. 5:7; Ezek. 5:8; Ezek. 5:14; Ezek. 5:15; Ezek. 6:8; Ezek. 6:9; Ezek. 7:24; Ezek. 11:12; Ezek. 11:16; Ezek. 12:15; Ezek. 12:16; Ezek. 16:14; Ezek. 19:4; Ezek. 19:8; Ezek. 20:9; Ezek. 20:14; Ezek. 20:22; Ezek. 20:23; Ezek. 20:32; Ezek. 20:41; Ezek. 22:4; Ezek. 22:15; Ezek. 22:16; Ezek. 23:30; Ezek. 25:7; Ezek. 25:8; Ezek. 25:10; Ezek. 26:3; Ezek. 26:5; Ezek. 28:7; Ezek. 28:25; Ezek. 29:12; Ezek. 29:15; Ezek. 30:3; Ezek. 30:11; Ezek. 30:23; Ezek. 30:26; Ezek. 31:6; Ezek. 31:11; Ezek. 31:12; Ezek. 31:16; Ezek. 31:17; Ezek. 32:2; Ezek. 32:9; Ezek. 32:12; Ezek. 32:16; Ezek. 32:18; Ezek. 34:28; Ezek. 34:29; Ezek. 35:10; Ezek. 36:3; Ezek. 36:4; Ezek. 36:5; Ezek. 36:6; Ezek. 36:7; Ezek. 36:13; Ezek. 36:14; Ezek. 36:15; Ezek. 36:19; Ezek. 36:20; Ezek. 36:21; Ezek. 36:22; Ezek. 36:23; Ezek. 36:24; Ezek. 36:30; Ezek. 36:36; Ezek. 37:21; Ezek. 37:22; Ezek. 37:28; Ezek. 38:12; Ezek. 38:16; Ezek. 38:23; Ezek. 39:7; Ezek. 39:21; Ezek. 39:23; Ezek. 39:27; Ezek. 39:28; Dan. 8:22; Dan. 11:23; Dan. 12:1; Hos. 8:8; Hos. 8:10; Hos. 9:17; Joel 1:6; Joel 2:17; Joel 2:19; Joel 3:2; Joel 3:8; Joel 3:9; Joel 3:11; Joel 3:12; Amos 6:1; Amos 6:14; Amos 9:9; Amos 9:12; Obad. 1:1; Obad. 1:2; Obad. 1:15; Obad. 1:16; Mic. 4:2; Mic. 4:3; Mic. 4:7; Mic. 4:11; Mic. 5:8; Mic. 5:15; Mic. 7:16; Nah. 3:4; Nah. 3:5; Hab. 1:5; Hab. 1:6; Hab. 1:17; Hab. 2:5; Hab. 2:8; Hab. 3:6; Hab. 3:12; Zeph. 2:1; Zeph. 2:5; Zeph. 2:9; Zeph. 2:11; Zeph. 2:14; Zeph. 3:6; Hag. 2:7; Hag. 2:14; Hag. 2:22; Zech. 1:15; Zech. 1:21; Zech. 2:8; Zech. 2:11; Zech. 7:14; Zech. 8:13; Zech. 8:22; Zech. 8:23; Zech. 9:10; Zech. 12:3; Zech. 12:9; Zech. 14:2; Zech. 14:3; Zech. 14:14; Zech. 14:16; Zech. 14:18; Zech. 14:19; Mal. 1:11; Mal. 1:14; Mal. 3:9; Mal. 3:12

## F B Meyer - The Isles of the Gentiles

**Few realize the treasures that lie in this heap of names.** This chapter is the key to ancient histories and contains many of the names that lie on our modern maps. What teeming myriads are here! We learn three things.

**The Oneness of the Human Race.** - "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth." The slave that crouches in the African wood, the meanest outcast that creeps along in the dark, the veriest ruffian red-handed in crime - are bone of our bone, no less than the kings and saints, the prophets and martyrs.

**The Wealth of our Saviour's nature.** - He loved all; He gave Himself for all; He became the Propitiation for the sins of all; through Him all will rise; and He is able to satisfy all from His royal heart. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." There is not one child of man who may not find his consummation and bliss in Jesus, the One Man. All men are but broken lights of Him; and of all men that have ever lived He is the one flawless, sinless, perfect Man, the apex of the pyramid of humanity, the Head and Prince.

**The warrant for Foreign Missions.** - If the races of mankind have sprung from a common stock, the experience of one is the key to all. Each may learn from his own heart to estimate the hopes and fears, the yearnings and temptations, the weariness and sin-consciousness of the rest. The Gospel which has brought the blessing will do as much for each of those who bear, however obliterated, the print-mark of our race. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

**Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#)** - Genesis 10:5 (cf. 20, 31)—Why does this verse indicate that humankind had many languages when Genesis 11:1 says there was only one?

**PROBLEM:** Genesis 10:5, 20, 31 seem to suggest many dialects, which is an apparent conflict with Genesis 11:1 that clearly states, "the whole earth had one language and one speech."

**SOLUTION:** These texts speak of two different times. Earlier, while maintaining their tribal distinctions, the descendants of Ham, Shem, and Japheth all spoke the same language. Later, at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11), God punished their rebellious attempt by confusing their speech. As a result, tribes could no longer understand one another, though possibly the subtribes and clans were allowed a mutually understandable language so they could still understand one another.

- **The sons of Ham** - Ge 9:22 1Ch 1:8-16 4:40 Ps 78:51 105:23,27 106:22
- **Cush** - 29v in the Bible - Gen. 2:13; Gen. 10:6; Gen. 10:7; Gen. 10:8; 2 Ki. 19:9; 1 Chr. 1:8; 1 Chr. 1:9; 1 Chr. 1:10; Est. 1:1; Est. 8:9; Job 28:19; Ps. 68:31; Ps. 87:4; Isa. 11:11; Isa. 18:1; Isa. 20:3; Isa. 20:4; Isa. 20:5; Isa. 37:9; Isa. 43:3; Isa. 45:14; Jer. 46:9; Ezek. 29:10; Ezek. 30:4; Ezek. 30:5; Ezek. 30:9; Ezek. 38:5; Nah. 3:9; Zeph. 3:10
- **Put** - 8v in the Bible - Gen. 10:6; 1 Chr. 1:8; Isa. 66:19; Jer. 46:9; Ezek. 27:10; Ezek. 30:5; Ezek. 38:5; Nah. 3:9
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

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## HAM'S FOUR SONS

More attention is given to the line of Ham than to that of Japheth or Shem. Ham's four sons settled primarily in northeast Africa and Egypt, the eastern Mediterranean, and Southern Arabia. Cush populated the territory of the upper Nile south of Egypt.

**The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan** - The order of mention presumably is birth order, thus Cush would be the eldest. Cushites were people from the land of [Cush](#)/Kush (or "Cushan" in Habakkuk 3:7). Cush, the place, was named after **Cush**, the man, the oldest son of **Ham** (Genesis 10:6). **Mizraim** is the customary name for Egypt in the Bible, which is also called "the land of Ham" (Psalm 105:23; etc.). According to Josephus, **Put** is the same as Libya in the Bible. Ham is the ancestor of all the people from Phoenicia to Africa.

[Wiersbe](#) - The descendants of Ham located in areas we'd identify today as Egypt, Palestine, the Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.

[Hughes](#): Ham's four sons settled primarily in northeast Africa and Egypt, the eastern Mediterranean, and Southern Arabia. Cush populated the territory of the upper Nile south of Egypt. No tracing of the line of Put; most of emphasis is on Cush via Nimrod and Canaan

**TSK** - Ham signifies burnt or black; and this name was peculiarly significant of the regions allotted to his family. To the Cushites, or descendants of Cush, were allotted the hot southern regions of Asia, along the shores of the Persian Gulf, Susiana or Chusistan, etc.; to the sons of Canaan, Palestine and Syria; to the sons of Mizraim, Egypt and Libya, in Africa.

**Ray Stedman** - Next is the family of **Ham**, which is the family gifted with technical proficiency. Because of the great adaptability of these people to primitive conditions, the Hamites became the great pioneers of mankind. All the early civilizations were Hamitic: the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Mayans, the Aztecs, the Sumerians. These were the people most able to adapt themselves to the conditions they found wherever they settled. We owe a great deal to the Hamitic nations. Later on, these lands were occupied by Japhetic nations, and at the present day the entire Western hemisphere is peopled by Japhetic rather than Hamitic nations, though it was once the other way around. The four sons of Ham are relatively easy to trace in history: **Cush** is associated with the peoples of Southern Arabia and Ethiopia. Ethiopians still trace their ancestry back to Cush. Egypt is self explanatory. Egypt (or **Mizraim** in Hebrew, an ancient name for Egypt) became the father of the Egyptian Empire, settling in the Nile Valley. **Put** is associated with Lybia, on the west of Egypt, in North Africa. **Canaan** centered largely in and around Palestine, though the Canaanites later became much more widespread, as this account tells us further on. ([God's Funnel](#))

[KJV Bible Commentary - online - page 87](#) - Ge 10:6-20 .And the sons of Ham: **Cush**, Ethiopia (Isa 45:14; Jer 13:23); **Mizraim**, the ordinary Hebrew name for Egypt, **Phut**, the Libyans of North Africa; and Canaan, the Canaanite people occupying the land of Phoenicia. These people spoke Semitic languages, not like Ham; so the basis of relation is geographical, not linguistical, i.e., language does not always indicate race. **The sons of Cush: Seba** and **Havilah** are associated with the inhabitants of Arabia; **Sabtah** is near the western shore of the Persian Gulf. It has been identified as Shabwat, ancient Hadhramaut. **Raamah** was perhaps located on the Persian Gulf in Oman; **Sabtechah** was also on the Persian Gulf; **Sheba** was the principal city of Arabia (I Kgs 10:1); and **Dedan** was located either on the Persian Gulf or bordering Edom (Ezek 25:13; Eze 27:20).

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**Mizraim** (04714) מִצְרַיִם (miṣrayim) **Egypt**. (NOTE - MIZRAIM IS USED IN OVER 600 VERSES IN THE BIBLE). The Hebrew word is of uncertain derivation but is related to the Akkadian name Miṣr (Muṣur) and the Arabic name Miṣr for Egypt. In form, the Hebrew name for Egypt is in the dual, indicating her two basic constituent divisions: Upper Egypt (Southern Egypt) and Lower Egypt (the Delta area). The reason for the equation of upper with south and lower with north is because of the northward flow of the Nile. The Egyptians themselves referred to their land as twy "two lands" or Kemi "Black Land," this latter being a reference to the lush, irrigated soil that ran along the sides of the Nile. The name "Egypt," from Greek, possibly goes back to the Egyptian phrase Hi-ku-

Ptah, the "House of the Spirit of (the god) Ptah," an ancient designation for Memphis (biblical Noph).

Briefly, Egyptian history may be conveniently divided into and highlighted by the following important periods: (1) The Old Kingdom Pyramid Age/third-sixth Dynasties (2700-2200 b.c.); (2) The Middle Kingdom, especially the twelfth Dynasty (2000-1800 b.c.); (3) The New Kingdom or Empire Age, eighteenth-twentieth Dynasties (1570-1090 b.c.); (4) The Ethiopian period, especially the twenty-fifth Dynasty (715-663 b.c.); (5) Saitic/twenty-sixth Dynasty (633-525 b.c.); (7) Dynasty of the Ptolemies (306-30 b.c.). Generally speaking, ancient Egypt's history follows an undulating line of development. Times of innovation, greatness, expansion are followed by times of regression, retrenchment, the rise of centrifugal movements and the cycle repeats.

It is difficult, almost impossible, to pinpoint common denominators in Egyptian religion throughout almost three millennia of development. The gamut runs from a rampant polytheism to a solar "monotheism." Their religion never earmarked to everybody's satisfaction a supreme God. Was it Atum or Re or Horus or Amon-Re? No one would deny, however, that one characteristic of Egypt's religion was the emphasis on life after death. And yet this preoccupation with death was not a morbid one. Mortuary texts are inevitably gay and optimistic. The Egyptian concept of the afterlife is also an intensely materialistic one. The next life simply continues this one. This is why, for example, the body was mummified because corporeal existence was the only existence acceptable to the Egyptian.

In the OT it is the patriarchs who first have relationships with Egypt (Abraham, Genesis 12). This would correspond roughly with the twelfth Dynasty of the Middle Kingdom. The Joseph story is obviously set in an Egyptian background, even to the extent of the cycle itself being in the form of a short story in simple prose (an Egyptian creation). However, from the time of Moses on, the Bible generally casts the land of Egypt in a very negative position. It is the oppressor of God's people, refusing to give Israel her liberation. It is the prophets particularly who inveigh against Israel leaning upon Egypt. "Leave her alone; she is under judgment and will topple" is their council.

And yet for all this denunciation of Egypt two passages in the OT about her are extremely interesting. One, the saintly Judean king Josiah died because he did not listen to the word of God from the Pharaoh Necho (2 Chron. 35:20ff.). Two, Isaiah 19:16ff. anticipates the conversion of Egypt (and Assyria) to the Lord, "blessed be my people Egypt" (Isaiah 19:25). Traditional foes will be reconciled under God's blessings.

Bibliography: Gardiner, A., *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, New York: Oxford University, 1966. Wilson, J., *The Culture of Ancient Egypt*, University of Chicago, 1956. Steindorff, G. and Seele, K. C. *When Egypt Ruled the East*, University of Chicago, 1942. (Author - Victor Hamilton in the [TWOT](#) - online)

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the significance of Egypt \(Mizraim\) in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Walton - Genesis 10:6–20. Hamites.** The common theme in the genealogy of the Hamites is their close geographical, political and economic importance to the people of Israel. These nations serve as major rivals and literally surround Israel (Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syro-Palestine). Most important here is the political placement of groups within the Egyptian sphere (Cush, Put, Mizraim and his descendants) and the Canaanite sphere (various peoples like the Jebusites and Hivites), and, interestingly, several are classified ethnically as Semitic peoples (Canaanites, Phoenicians, Amorites). The list is also marked by brief narratives (Nimrod and Canaan) which break up the stereotypical genealogical framework and tie in areas (Babylon, Nineveh, Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah) which will be significant in later periods of Israelite history. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 41](#))

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#### QUESTION - [What is the significance of Cush in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** The land of Cush refers to a land south of Israel and is translated as "Ethiopia" in some Bible versions. Cush derives its name from Cush, a son of Ham, son of Noah (Genesis 10:7). The country of Cush is mentioned throughout the Old Testament, and Cushites regularly interacted with Israelites.

**Cush** is first mentioned in Genesis: "The name of the second river [flowing out of Eden] is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush" (Genesis 2:13). Although some believe that, in this passage, *Cush* could be a reference to Mesopotamia, other biblical scholars believe that it is more consistent to identify it as a general term for the African lands south of Egypt. The King James Version and Contemporary English Version translate the name of the land as "Ethiopia" in Genesis 2:13.

Cush is depicted as a powerful nation in the Bible. While [Sennacherib](#) was laying siege to Jerusalem, he felt threatened by Tirhakah, king of Cush, who had been marching to meet the Assyrians in battle, which is why Sennacherib attempted to discourage the Israelites (2 Kings 19:9–10; Isaiah 37:9). Later, Judah's [King Asa](#) and his army marched out to fight Zerah the Cushite, who is described as having "marched out against them with an army of thousands upon thousands and three hundred chariots, and came

as far as Mareshah” (2 Chronicles 14:9). Asa entrusted the battle to the Lord, and by the strength of God the Cushites were defeated (2 Chronicles 14:10–14). Isaiah also mentions Cush, describing it as a “powerful and oppressive nation” (Isaiah 18:1–2, NASB). Not only did Cush possess military might, but it was also a land of wealth known for its precious stones. Job mentions the topaz of Cush as being very valuable (Job 28:19).

The Lord pronounced judgment upon Cush in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel. Since the Egyptians were related to the Cushites, according to the lineage of Ham, **Cush** is usually mentioned alongside the judgments of Egypt (Genesis 10:6). In Isaiah, God denounces the Israelites who trusted in Cush or Egypt to save them from the Assyrians (Isaiah 20:5). God’s judgment against Cush is also seen in Ezekiel’s prophecies, which mention how Cush’s wealth and power would be taken away (Ezekiel 30:4–5, 9).

Although several Bible translations substitute the English word *Ethiopia* for *Cush*, the nation of Cush was not equivalent to modern Ethiopia. The Cush of the Bible often does seem to refer to a region in Africa (Ezekiel 30:4–6); at other times, it seems to refer to Arabia—in Habakkuk 3:7, Cush is linked to Midian, a land closer to the Red Sea. The reason for the obscurity could well be that the Cushites migrated to various areas. The Cushites were dark-skinned (Jeremiah 13:23). A couple Cushites are mentioned in the Bible. Moses married a Cushite woman (Numbers 12:1). And it was a Cushite who brought news of Absalom’s death to King David (2 Samuel 18:20–21, 31–32).

Significantly, Cush is also a nation that received the gospel and will be involved in the millennial kingdom. The evangelist Philip gave the gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch, who would have been referred to as a Cushite in Hebrew, and the eunuch was one of the first converts of Ethiopia to Christianity (Acts 8:26–39). He undoubtedly took the gospel back to his land, where he had great influence as a royal official to Queen Candace (Acts 8:27). During the millennial reign of Christ, Jesus will receive honor from Cush/Ethiopia: “From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers, my scattered people, will bring me offerings” (Zephaniah 3:10). - [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**See also** - [Who were the Cushites? | GotQuestions.org](http://Who were the Cushites? | GotQuestions.org)

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Ham in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Ham was one of the three sons of Noah. Ham and his wife, along with the rest of Noah’s family, were saved from the [great flood](#) God sent to judge the earth, which had grown increasingly wicked. Once the flood waters had receded, God commanded Noah’s family, specifically his sons and their wives, to multiply and repopulate the earth. Ham himself became the father of the Canaanites, the Babylonians, the Phoenicians, the Cushites, and the Egyptians (Genesis 10:6–20).

**Ham** was involved in a sordid family incident. As Noah’s family worked to reestablish civilization after the flood, Noah became “a man of the soil” and grew a vineyard (Genesis 9:20). One day, he became [drunk](#) after imbibing some of the wine he had produced. Ham entered Noah’s tent and found his father there, passed out and naked. Ham told his brothers of their father’s condition, and Shem and Japheth walked backward into the tent, their faces turned respectfully away, and covered their father with a garment (Ge 9:22–23). When Noah awoke, he realized “what his youngest son had done to him” (Ge 9:24). Noah blessed Shem and Japheth for their action, but he omitted Ham from the blessing. In addition, Noah cursed Ham and Ham’s son, Canaan, who it seems had also been involved in the matter somehow (Ge 9:25).

The exact reason for [Noah’s curse](#) on Ham and Canaan is unknown, because the Bible does not give any detail as to Ham’s specific actions in the tent. The curse may have been due to an *inaction* on Ham’s part—that is, Ham did not afford Noah the same respect and courtesy Shem and Japheth had shown him. Some speculate that Ham actively violated his father somehow, and rabbinic tradition states that Ham castrated Noah. Whatever happened, Noah was greatly displeased and cursed Ham’s and his line through Canaan: “Cursed be Canaan! / The lowest of slaves / will he be to his brothers” (Genesis 9:25).

The Bible does not relate exactly how Ham’s son Canaan served Japheth and Shem. Much later, however, Canaan’s line did indeed experience enslavement at the hands of Shem’s descendants. The Canaanites were destroyed or subjugated by Israel (who are Shemites) during the conquest of the Promised Land. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### QUESTION - [Why did Noah curse Canaan instead of Ham? SEE VIDEO](#) (See also [article by Arthur Custance](#))

**ANSWER** - The unbiblical idea that Noah cursed Ham, and thereby all of Ham’s descendants, was used to justify the African slave trade, and is still used by some today to justify racism, prejudice, and discrimination against people of color. Let it be clearly said. Noah did not curse Ham. Noah did not curse all of Ham’s descendants. Rather, Noah only cursed Canaan, one of Ham’s sons, and through Canaan, all of Canaan’s descendants. Why and to what end? Please continue reading. What is abundantly clear, however, is that this account in Genesis 9 regarding Noah, Ham, and Canaan does not, in any way, support slavery or racism in any form.

After the flood, “God blessed [Noah](#) and his sons, saying to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth’” (Genesis 9:1). The men and their wives, under God’s blessing, began to do just that. Sometime later, Scripture relates an unhappy episode in

Noah's life involving Noah and his three sons. In the fallout of that incident, Noah's grandson Canaan is said to be "cursed" (Genesis 9:25).

It all started when Noah planted a vineyard and used the grapes to make wine. He drank the wine, [became drunk](#), and shamefully lay naked in his tent (Genesis 9:20–21). Noah's youngest son Ham, identified as "the father of Canaan" in verse 22, saw his father's condition and the fact that Noah was naked in his tent. Rather than keep the matter quiet or attempt to help his father, Ham told his two brothers the salacious news ([Genesis 9:22](#)). Ham's response to his father's sin shows somewhat of Ham's character and disrespect for his father.

[Shem](#) and [Japheth](#) acted more nobly. They "took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked" (Genesis 9:23).

Later, Noah sobered up. He made some inquiries and "found out what his youngest son had done to him" (Genesis 9:24). This wording suggests that Ham did more than just see Noah's nakedness. He did something, but just what is unknown. It's useless to speculate. In any case, upon hearing the facts, Noah said something surprising: "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers" (Genesis 9:25). He also praised the Lord at that time and pronounced a patriarchal, prophetic blessing on Shem and Japheth (verses 26–27). Twice more in that blessing, Noah declared that Canaan would be a slave to Shem and Japheth.

Of note is the fact that Noah did not curse Ham. The curse is pronounced on Canaan, Ham's son, but nowhere does Noah directly curse Ham. It is significant, though, that the other two of Noah's sons receive a blessing, but Ham does not. That omission resulted in the [patriarchal blessing](#) passing Ham by. This was no doubt intentional, given Ham's behavior.

So, why did Noah curse *Canaan* when it was clearly *Ham* who acted inappropriately? Several theories have been put forward:

- There is an ellipsis in the text. When Genesis 9 speaks of Canaan, it is really "the father of Canaan" that is meant—the words *the father of* being understood. This theory relies on an insupportable assumption about the text.
- Canaan and Ham were both involved in the sin against Noah. This means that Canaan was present when Ham observed Noah's nakedness. This theory adds to Scripture, however; the text never mentions Canaan's whereabouts, but it does specify that it was Ham, Noah's youngest son, who "had done [something] to him" (Genesis 9:24).
- Ham had been blessed by God (Genesis 9:1), and Noah refused to curse someone whom the Lord had blessed. In the same way, the prophet Balaam could not curse the Israelites. God had told [Balaam](#), "You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed" (Numbers 22:12; cf. Numbers 23:20). So, Noah pronounces a curse on some of Ham's descendants. Ham's sin against his father brought a punishment through his son. Not all of Ham's descendants were cursed; only those through Canaan. It's possible that Canaan was chosen to bear the imprecation because he was already showing evidence that he shared his father's character.
- The "curse" on Canaan is more of a prophecy. Noah learned of Ham's sin and gave him the bad news that one line of his posterity would suffer. As a prophet of God, Noah foresaw that the [Canaanites](#), in their wickedness, would deserve their fate (see Leviticus 18 for a list of future Canaanite sins). Ham's punishment was to lack a fatherly blessing and to know that he was the ancestor of a doomed people group.

In Genesis 10, the descendants of Canaan are listed. They include the Sidonians, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 10:15–19). Noah's curse/prophecy came true during the time of Joshua. The Canaanites, descendants of Ham, were conquered by the Israelites, descendants of Shem. True to God's Word, some of the Canaanites became slaves (Joshua 9:27; 17:12–13).

The inclusion of this sordid incident in the life of Noah is interesting. Out of all that Noah did after the flood, why is this episode the only one recorded? The answer lies in the events surrounding the writing of Genesis. Moses, the author of Genesis, was leading the Israelites toward the [land of Canaan](#) to take possession of it. The story of how Canaan came to be cursed was one justification of the conquest. God had pronounced doom upon these people long ago, and it was time for that prophecy to be fulfilled. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### Related Resource:

- [What is the origin of the different races?](#)

- See also [article by Arthur Custance](#)

**Genesis 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.**

- **Seba** - Ps 72:10
- **Havilah** - Ge 2:11
- **Sheba** - 1Ki 10:1 Eze 27:22
- **Dedan** - Isa 21:13 Eze 27:15
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

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## THE FIVE SONS OF CUSH

The sons of [Cush](#) (see chart above-top right) **were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan** - Sheba and Dedan were evidently well known Arabians in the days of Abraham, since two of his grandsons through Keturah were named after them (Genesis 25:3).

**Genesis 10:8 Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth.**

BGT Genesis 10:8 Χους ὁ γ ννησεν τ ν Νεβρωδ ο τος ρξατο ε ναι γ γας π τ ς γ ς

LXE Genesis 10:8 And Chus begot Nebrod: he began to be a giant upon the earth.

KJV Genesis 10:8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

NET Genesis 10:8 Cush was the father of Nimrod; he began to be a valiant warrior on the earth.

CSB Genesis 10:8 Cush fathered Nimrod, who was the first powerful man on earth.

ESV Genesis 10:8 Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man.

NIV Genesis 10:8 Cush was the father of Nimrod, who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth.

NLT Genesis 10:8 Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth.

NRS Genesis 10:8 Cush became the father of Nimrod; he was the first on earth to become a mighty warrior.

NJB Genesis 10:8 Cush fathered Nimrod who was the first potentate on earth.

NAB Genesis 10:8 Cush became the father of Nimrod, who was the first potentate on earth.

- **Nimrod** - Mic 5:6
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Nimrod by [David Scott](#), 1832

## THE BIRTH OF MIGHTY NIMROD

**Now Cush became the father of [Nimrod](#); he became a mighty one ([gibbor](#)) on the earth** - Note that Genesis 10:8-12 functions like a "parenthesis" to focus on the life of one man, **Nimrod**. **Cush** had 6 sons but this son receives "top billing." **Nimrod** receives special notoriety because of the fact that the nations he founded (Assyria and Babylon) would play a crucial role in the future chastening of the nation of Israel. Assyria would defeat the northern 10 tribes of Israel and take them into exile in 722 BC. Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, would defeat the Southern Kingdom of Judah and take them into exile in Babylon for 70 years in 586 BC. Nimrod had a leadership role at the Tower of Babel. Some say his name means "We shall rebel" or "let us revolt" (although other sources say it means "the valiant").

**Stigers** writes that **Nimrod** "established a thoroughly autocratic, imperialistic, despotic system of tyrannical government (of a kind described in Isa 13, Isa 14), back of which stands Satan in all his rage against God" (A Commentary on Genesis).

**Henry Morris** - Nimrod, the youngest and most illustrious son of Cush, was given a name meaning "Let us rebel!" and was apparently trained by his father for this purpose. As the first great emperor, Nimrod's name is preserved in numerous legends and geographical sites in Babylonia. **Mighty hunter.** This phrase connotes a man mighty in wickedness. It is possible that his hero's reputation was gained in hunting and slaying the giant animals that proliferated after the flood and were considered dangerous to the small human population of the first century. He built a great kingdom, with the capital at Babel in the plain Shinar (no doubt equivalent to [Sumer](#) - [see map](#)) in the Tigris-Euphrates valley.

**Believer's Study Bible** - Nimrod, a descendant of Ham through Cush, is named as the founder of the first Mesopotamian "kingdom," and the civilization that became known as Assyria and Babylonia. Although God had ordained government to restrain evil, Nimrod prostituted the concept and established a "kingdom." The term "kingdom" occurs here for the first time in the Bible, suggesting the beginning of those world systems characterized by idolatry and opposition to the Lord (cf. Ge 11:1-9; Rev. 17:1-18), which will be overthrown at the return of Christ (cf. Dan. 2:44; 7:13). Nimrod is reminiscent of the wicked warriors at the time of the Flood (Ge 6:4). Israel would experience during its history the oppression of these warlike nations to the east; they were characterized by empire building, like that of their father, Nimrod.

**Borgman:** Father of Babylonians and Assyrians Connected back to Ge 6:4 "mighty hunter before the Lord" is not positive – not only a tyrant, but violent and oppressive. He is a city builder – godly line builds altars

**Walton on 10:8-12 Nimrod** - Interpreters over the years have attempted to identify Nimrod with known historical figures such as Tukulti-Ninurta I (an Assyrian king during the period of the biblical judges), or with Mesopotamian deities such as Ninurta, a warrior god and patron of the hunt, who in one myth hunts down a number of fantastic creatures and defeats or kills them. In Genesis, however, Nimrod is clearly a human hero rather than divine or even semidivine. Late Jewish tradition picked up occasionally by church fathers envisioned him as the builder of the Tower of Babel and the originator of idolatry, but these ideas have no basis in the text. The extension of his kingdom from southern Mesopotamia (v. 10) to northern Mesopotamia (v. 11) corresponds to the growth of the first known empire in history, the dynasty of Agade ruled by Sargon and Naram-Sin (about 2300 B.C.), among the greatest of the heroic kings of old. Nimrod's kingdom included Erech (=Uruk), the city where Gilgamesh reigned and one of the oldest and greatest centers of Sumerian culture. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 41](#))

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**Nimrod (05248)(nimrod)** Nimrod is mentioned four times in the OT (Gen. 10:8; Gen. 10:9; 1 Chr. 1:10; Mic. 5:6). Māradh, "to rebel," is commonly proposed as the root of the name. Another speculation is that it is related to nimr, the name given to the hunting leopard, nimrut being its plural. Many hold that the name is a shortened form of Ninurta, the Assyrian god of hunting and warfare. He is assumed to be the son (or descendant) of Cush (Gen. 10:6). This is not the same Cush referred to in v. 8, but refers either to the Kassites who occupied Babylonia in the seventeenth century b.c., or perhaps to the city of Kish, the place where kingship was established after the Mesopotamian flood (according to Mesopotamian myth). Significantly, his name elicits a notable historical sketch (Ge 10:8-12) among the many names in the Table of Nations. Nimrod is described as the first of the postdiluvian mighty men and the founder of Babel (or Babylon, Ge 10:10). A number of identifications have been proposed for this individual from dim antiquity. Some associate his name with a Mesopotamian god, either Ninurta or Marduk. Another view considers him a legendary Babylonian hero, such as Gilgamesh, king of Erech and hero of the Gilgamesh epic. One identification is with Orion, the mighty hunter of Greek mythology. Others say the name is an eponym denoting a name for Mesopotamia. The genealogy of Gen. 10 describes people in a Mesopotamian setting. Naram Sin (ca. 2275 b.c.) of the Agade dynasty is equated most often with Nimrod. He ruled territory from the Persian Gulf reputedly to the Mediterranean Sea. He is regarded as a key figure in the spread of Sumerian civilization and culture. Tukulti-Ninurta, an Assyrian king (ca. 1234-1197 b.c.), has also been suggested. Nimrod's fame gave rise to the proverb, "like a mighty hunter before Yahweh" (v. 9). Keil-Delitzsch prefers "against Yahweh" (ordinarily, "before the face of," i.e., "in the presence of"), understanding it to mean the consequence of Nimrod's character and exploits. His activities were directly in opposition to God. Different place names may reflect the appellation. The hunter motif is prevalent in the art and literature of the region, notably in Assyria, which is called "the land of Nimrod" in Mic. 5:6. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Wikipedia** - The son of [Cush](#) and therefore a great-grandson of [Noah](#), Nimrod was described as a king in the land of [Shinar](#) ([Lower Mesopotamia](#)). The [Bible](#) states that he was "a mighty hunter before the Lord [and] ... began to be mighty in the earth".<sup>[2]</sup> Later extra-biblical traditions identified Nimrod as the ruler who commissioned the construction of the [Tower of Babel](#), which led to his reputation as a king who was rebellious against God.

**Mighty (01368) gibbor** cp related verb **gabar** = be strong, accomplish, excel, prevail) is from a root which is commonly associated with warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of the successful warrior. And thus this adjective means powerful, strong,

brave, mighty. Warrior. Hero. Mighty man (cp "mighty [gibbor] men of David" - 2Sa 23:8). See discussion of this word group from TWOT - [Gibbor Word Group](#) The noun can denote "powerful" individuals. For example, Nimrod was a "mighty" hunter (Gen. 10:9). The Nephilim were described as the "mighty ones" of old; men of the Name (Gen. 6:4). The most common usage of the word is to denote military warriors. It can refer to troops in general (Hos. 10:13; 2 Ki. 24:16). Frequently it denotes troops who have distinguished themselves in battle. Among these are Goliath (1 Sam. 17:4), Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 2:4).

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Nimrod in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Nimrod in the Bible was the great-grandson of [Noah](#) through the line of Ham and Cush (Genesis 10:8). What we know of him comes from four verses in Genesis:

Cush was the father of Nimrod, who began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; so it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord." His kingdom began in Babylon, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went forth into Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen, which is between Nineveh and the great city of Calah. (Genesis 10:8–12, BSB)

There is one other mention of Nimrod in Micah 5:6, which refers to Assyria as "the land of Nimrod."

In Genesis 10, Nimrod is called "a mighty warrior on the earth" (verse 8) and "a mighty hunter before the Lord" (verse 9a). So famous was Nimrod's prowess as a hunter of wild animals that his skill became proverbial, and the ancients used to compliment people by saying, "This man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world" (verse 9b, NLT).

Nimrod was obviously a mighty man with great skill and plenty of ambition. The fact that Genesis 10:8 calls Nimrod "a mighty one" (KJV) has led some to associate him with the [Nephilim](#), which are called "mighty men" in Genesis 6:4 (KJV). This association, although untenable, has led still others to believe that Nimrod was a giant.

Many legends have sprung up around Nimrod. In Jewish legends, Nimrod promoted the worship of many gods and was the sworn enemy of Abraham, whom Nimrod tried to murder (see Genesis Rabbah 38:13). Islamic literature also teaches that Nimrod and Abraham battled one other (Qur'an 21:68–70; 37:97–99). Scottish minister and writer Alexander Hislop claimed that Nimrod was married to [Semiramis](#), a famous queen in the ancient world. **All of this is speculation.**

Equally unsubstantiated are the descriptions of Nimrod from Jewish historian [Josephus](#), who links Nimrod to the building of the [Tower of Babel](#):

"[Nimrod] said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to reach. And that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 1, Chapter 4).

So, the motive for building the Tower of Babel, according to Josephus, was to protect humanity against another flood. Further, according to Josephus, Nimrod "persuaded [his subjects] not to ascribe [their strength] to God, as if it were through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness" (*ibid.*). Of course, construction of the Tower of Babel ended with another show of God's power: the Lord confused the languages of the people, making it impossible for them to communicate effectively enough to finish the job.

Nimrod has lent his name to our vocabulary: today, a "nimrod" is "a hunting expert or devotee." (And, for a brief time in the 1980s, *nimrod* was a less-than-heroic slang term for "geek" or "socially awkward person.") Nimrod appears as a character in the mythology of many ancient cultures; he shows up in Hungarian, Greek, Arabic, Syrian, and Armenian legends. There is evidence that the Epic of Gilgamesh and the myth of Hercules both find their origins in Nimrod's life. Nimrod was undoubtedly a powerful, charismatic hero-figure of the ancient world. It isn't hard to see why so many myths and legends would spring up in the wake of such a man. In the end, however, Nimrod's power and glory came to nothing, because God is stronger than even the mightiest of men, and He cannot be thwarted. Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord, but humility before the Lord is the posture of the wise (Proverbs 3:34; 11:2; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Genesis 10:9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD."**

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BGT Genesis 10:9 ο τος ν γ γας κυνηγς ναντ ον κυρ ου το θεο δι το το πο σιν ς Νεβρωδ γ γας κυνηγς ναντ ον κυρ ου

LXE Genesis 10:9 He was a giant hunter before the Lord God; therefore they say, As Nebrod the giant hunter before the Lord.

KJV Genesis 10:9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

NET Genesis 10:9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. (That is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD.")

CSB Genesis 10:9 He was a powerful hunter in the sight of the LORD. That is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a powerful hunter in the sight of the LORD."

ESV Genesis 10:9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. Therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD."

NIV Genesis 10:9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD."

NLT Genesis 10:9 Since he was the greatest hunter in the world, his name became proverbial. People would say, "This man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world."

NRS Genesis 10:9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD."

NJB Genesis 10:9 He was a mighty hunter in the eyes of Yahweh, hence the saying, 'Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter in the eyes of Yahweh'.

NAB Genesis 10:9 He was a mighty hunter by the grace of the LORD; hence the saying, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter by the grace of the LORD."

YLT Genesis 10:9 he hath begun to be a hero in the land; he hath been a hero in hunting before Jehovah; therefore it is said, 'As Nimrod the hero in hunting before Jehovah.'

GWN Genesis 10:9 He was a mighty hunter whom the LORD blessed. That's why people used to say, "He's like Nimrod, a mighty hunter whom the LORD blessed."

BBE Genesis 10:9 He was a very great bowman, so that there is a saying, Like Nimrod, a very great bowman.

RSV Genesis 10:9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD."

- **a mighty** - Ge 6:4 25:27 27:30 27:30 Jer 16:16 Eze 13:18 Mic 7:2
- **before the Lord** - Ge 6:11 13:13
- **Even** - 2Ch 28:22 Ps 52:7
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## NIMROD A MIGHTY HUNTER

**He was a mighty ([gibbor](#)) hunter before the LORD** - Some say that "before the Lord" may mean "in opposition to the Lord." None of the translations above would suggest that sense. However the Septuagint translates "before" with the Greek preposition *enantios* which can mean before or in the presence of, but is the neuter of *enantios* which can mean opposite or against ("hostile" in 1Th 2:15). Interesting, especially in view of MacArthur's comment below!

**Therefore it is said, "Like [Nimrod](#) a mighty hunter before the LORD** - Ancient rulers boasted of their skill in the chase to show their courage, and their ability to protect the people from wild beasts. The Septuagint translation is interesting in that it calls Nimrod a "giant hunter," but the sense is not clear. The idea is probably that his prowess was so widely known was the hunting prowess of Nimrod that his name became proverbial for a great hunter. Arab traditions record ruins named after him at Birs-Nimrod, which is [Borsippa](#), and the [Nimrud of Calah](#).

**John MacArthur** on [Nimrod](#) - This powerful leader was evidently the force behind the building of Babel (see Ge 11:1-4). (BORROW [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Ray Stedman** on **mighty hunter** - Now it was the work of kings in those ancient days to be hunters. This was a time when civilization was sparse and wild animals were a constant threat to the peoples. Kings, having nothing much else to do, organized

hunting parties and acted as the protectors of their people by killing wild animals. Nimrod evidently gained a great reputation as such a hunter, but he was more than a hunter of wild animals. The Jewish Talmud helps us here, for it says that he was "a hunter of the souls of men." ([God's Funnel](#))

**Henry Morris - mighty hunter.** This phrase connotes a man mighty in wickedness. It is possible that his hero's reputation was gained in hunting and slaying the giant animals that proliferated after the Flood and were considered dangerous to the small human population of the first century. He built a great kingdom, with the capital at Babel in the plain Shinar (no doubt equivalent to Sumer) in the Tigris-Euphrates valley.

**Jerusalem Targum on [Nimrod](#)** - He was powerful in hunting and in wickedness before the Lord, for he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them, "Depart from the judgment of the Lord, and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod!" Therefore is it said: "As Nimrod the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the Lord."

**Nimrod** - "the mighty tyrant in the face of the Lord" or "a mighty hunter against Jehovah" Nimrod's name became like a PROVERB in these times.

So summing up the characteristics of Nimrod:

- 1). Name = "Let us rebellion" or rebellion
- 2). Mighty before = could also be translated mighty against
- 3). Hunter = not just of animals but Bible uses it for hunting men, so Nimrod could have been a hunter after men!!!
- 4). Mighty is mentioned 3x
- 5). His name and reputation was so prominent that he became a PROVERB "It is said 'Like Nimrod a mighty...'"
- 6). He had a kingdom = so he was a king (God was to be the only King)
- 7). First use in Bible of "KINGDOM"

**HUNTER:** This root is used metaphorically to indicate one who pursues the life of another to destroy it. The adulterous woman stalks a man's very life; i.e. she yearns for more than he can provide and she holds power over his whole life (Prov 6:26 "an adulteress hunts for the precious life.") Even more intense than she is the woman who through magic hunts the souls of God's people (Ezek 13:18). God is against them and will free the hunted souls (Ezek 13:20). God too pursues man, especially in judgment (Jer 16:16; cf- Job 10:16). Because of Israel's waywardness God decreed, "I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks" (Jer 16:16). Lam says that this assertion became the experience of the people, "I have been hunted like a bird by those who were my enemies without cause" (Lam 3:52). The Jerusalem Targum says: "He was powerful in hunting and in wickedness before the Lord, for he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them"Depart from the judgment of the Lord and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod!" Therefore is it said: "As Nimrod the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the Lord."

**Griffith Thomas:** Babylon henceforward stands for everything that is godless, and for the great opponent of the people of God.

**Parunak:**

- Question: Why is he said to rebel? Answer: civil government is one of the two forces that have always been opposed to God; the other being organized religion. People are not content to live directly under God's rule, but insist on setting themselves up over one another
- Question: How was he first gibbor? Answer: He was the first to exalt himself above others and organize political structures. The earlier giants had simply exalted themselves individually (6:4) and filled the earth with violence (6:11). Nimrod organizes people to legitimize this grasp for power. Compare Isa 3:2, which lists the gibbor as the first of the various people involved in leading a country successfully.
- Question: Why the emphasis on his skill in the hunt? Answer: Ancient rulers boasted of their skill in the chase to show their courage, and their ability to protect the people from wild beasts

**[Paul Apple](#)** - Key Lesson: The world often exalts those who are leaders in rebelling against God and against His program of redemption; don't be impressed by what impresses the world; seek to glorify and exalt the God who is sovereign over all

**Genesis 10:10 The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.**

Σεννααρ

LXE Genesis 10:10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, and Orech, and Archad, and Chalanne, in the land of Senaar.

KJV Genesis 10:10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

NET Genesis 10:10 The primary regions of his kingdom were Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar.

CSB Genesis 10:10 His kingdom started with Babylon, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

ESV Genesis 10:10 The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

NIV Genesis 10:10 The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Akkad and Calneh, in Shinar.

NLT Genesis 10:10 He built his kingdom in the land of Babylonia, with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh.

NRS Genesis 10:10 The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar.

NJB Genesis 10:10 The mainstays of his empire were Babel, Erech and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar.

NAB Genesis 10:10 The chief cities of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar.

YLT Genesis 10:10 And the first part of his kingdom is Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar;

GWN Genesis 10:10 The first cities in his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Accad, and Calneh in Shinar Babylonia.

- **The** - Jer 50:21 Mic 5:6
- **Babel** - Septuagint = Babylon, Ge 11:9 Isa 39:1 Mic 4:10
- **Calneh** - Isa 10:9 Am 6:2
- **Shinar** - Ge 11:2 14:1 Isa 11:11 Da 1:2 Zec 5:11
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## **NIMROD BUILDS BABEL IN SHINAR**

**The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of [Shinar](#)** - **Babel** is rendered in Septuagint with Greek noun Babylon. **NLT** = "He built his kingdom in the land of Babylonia, with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh."

**Erech** (ancient Uruk, modern Warka), one of the most ancient civilizations, was located southeast of Babylon. **Accad**, or ancient Agade, was associated with Sargon and located north of Babylon.

**Shinar** is the land in which the great cities of Babylon, Erech, and Akkad were located and the plain where the city and tower of Babel were built (Ge 11:2) so that the term eventually came to be used for the region of Babylonia and another name for Babylonia. **Shinar** was the southern region in Mesopotamia (in the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers) and Asshur the northern, in an area coinciding with Iraq.

### **SHINAR:**

- Shinar as a designation for Mesopotamia (Gen 10:10).
- The tower of Babel was built in Shinar (Gen 11:2-9).
- The King of Shinar opposed Abraham (Gen 14:1). -Isaiah prophesied that God would bring out a remnant of His people from Shinar (11:11).
- Daniel 1:1-2 equates Babylon and Shinar (In two of the eight passages Shinar is called Babylonia in the LXX )...."And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of

God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god."

Zechariah 5:11 Then he said to me, "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal."

**GotQuestions.org** - **Shinar** is significant in its connection to the world's historical rebellion against God: everything from the construction of the Tower of Babel to its association with idols, its mistreatment of Israel, and its future association with the Antichrist. Despite the many evils in the land of Shinar, God has preserved His people there.

**TWOT** on **Shinar** - Shinar is the OT designation for southern Mesopotamia, the alluvial plain between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. The area was known by the Sumerians as Sumer and Akkad. It later became known as Babylonia. In two of the eight passages Shinar is called Babylonia in the LXX (Isaiah 11:11 and Zech. 5:11). In Genesis 10:10 we are told that the great tyrant and empire builder Nimrod founded his kingdom in Babel, Erech (Sumerian Uruk), Akkad (Agade) and Calneh in the land of Shinar. From here he pushed north into Assyria. It was here also, in Shinar, that rebellious man built the well-known tower of Babel in direct defiance of God (Genesis 11:2). In Daniel 1:2 it is the land of Shinar to which Nebuchadnezzar removes the vessels of the temple of God, and in Isaiah 11:11 we are told that Shinar is one of the lands from which regathered Israel will return when the Millennial age is established. In Zech. 5:11 the woman in the ephah, representing a concentration of evil (Zech. 5:8), is removed to the land of Shinar where a temple is built for her. All of this points to a sinister significance for Shinar as being the major center for the development of a culture and civilization built on counterfeit religion, rebelliousness against the true God and his revealed word, the cradle of imperial tyranny and the enemy of God's people, in short, the epitome of wickedness. (Cf. as well the many biblical references to Babylon.) In addition to the above passages, Amraphel, who makes war on the king of Sodom is stated to be king of Shinar (Genesis 14:1, 9). Also, part of the illegal spoil taken by Achan (Joshua 7:21) is a garment from Shinar. (Hermann Austel)

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**Ray Stedman** - If you drop the first consonant of Nimrod's name and take the others -- M, R, D -- you will have the basic root of the god of Babylon, whose name was **Marduk**, and whom most scholars identify with Nimrod. In the Babylonian religion, Nimrod (or Marduk) held a unique place. His wife was **Semiramis**. (Some of you who have been at Cairo have stayed at the Semiramis Hotel, which is named after her.) Marduk and Semiramis were the ancient god and goddess of Babylon. They had a son whom Semiramis claimed was virgin-born, and they founded the mother and child cult. This was the central character of the religion of ancient Babylon, the worship of a mother and child, supposedly virgin born. You can see in this a clever attempt on the part of Satan to anticipate the genuine virgin birth and thus to cast disrepute upon the story when the Lord Jesus would later be born into history. This has been the effect of it.

This ancient Babylonian cult of the mother and child spread to other parts of the earth. You will find it in the Egyptian religion as Isis and Osiris. In Greece it is Venus and Adonis and in Hindu it is Ushas and Vishnu. The same cult prevails in various other localities. It appears in the Old Testament in Jeremiah, where the Israelites are warned against offering sacrifices to "the Queen of Heaven." This Queen of Heaven is Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod, the original mother of the mother and child cult. The cult has also crept into Christianity and forms the basis for the Mariolatry that has prevailed in Roman Catholic Church, where the Mother and Child are worshipped as joint redeemers.

If you would like to read more on this, there is a book by Alexander Hislop, a very authoritative writer in this field, called **The Two Babylons**. I am sure you will find it of great interest if you desire to pursue this further.

This idolatrous religion culminates at last in the Bible in the book of Revelation. You remember the "great harlot" that appears there whose name is "Mystery Babylon the Great," (Rev 17:5+) the originator of all the harlotries and false religions of earth. The essence of Babylonianism, as we understand from Scripture, is the attempt to gain earthly honor by means of religious authority. That is Babylonianism, and it has pervaded Christian churches, Hindu temples, Buddhist shrines, and Mohammedan mosques. Everywhere it is the element that marks falseness in religion, this attempt to gain earthly power and prestige by means of religious authority. That is Babylonianism. That is what Nimrod began and what God will ultimately destroy, as we read in the book of Revelation. (**God's Funnel**)

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#### **QUESTION** - **What is the significance of the land of Shinar in the Bible?**

**ANSWER** - The land of Shinar is referenced eight times in the Old Testament (Genesis 10:10; 11:2; 14:1, 9; Joshua 7:21; Isaiah 11:11; Daniel 1:2; Zechariah 5:11), always in connection to the geographical location of Babylonia. In certain passages, some versions of the Bible translate the word for "Shinar" as "Babylonia" for clarity's sake. Shinar is significant for these reasons:

*Shinar was the location of the **Tower of Babel**.* Genesis 10:10 mentions that Nimrod, a descendant of Ham, built "Babylon, Uruk, Akkad and Kalneh, in Shinar." A plain in Shinar was the site chosen to construct the notorious Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-4). As punishment for the people's wickedness, God confused their language, and thus the land of Shinar earned the name of "Babel" or

“Babylon” (Genesis 11:5–9). Babylon and Babylonia both derive their names from *Babel*, which means “confusion.”

**Shinar was ruled by a king that Abraham fought.** During [Abraham's](#) time, four kings, including Amraphel, king of Shinar, fought against the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and three other kings (Genesis 14:1–3, 8–9). After overpowering the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, the four kings plundered the cities, carrying away [Lot](#) and all he owned (Genesis 14:10–12). To save his nephew, Abraham and 318 of his men routed the raiding party, defeated the four kings, and recovered Lot, his family, and his possessions (Genesis 14:13–17).

**Shinar was associated with temptation.** After taking Jericho, the Israelites failed in conquering Ai because of sin in the camp (Joshua 7:10–12). [Achan](#) had stolen devoted items from Jericho, which the Lord had specifically commanded against (Joshua 6:18–19). Included in the plundered items was a finely crafted, beautiful robe from Shinar (Joshua 7:21). Because of Achan's sin, about thirty-six people lost their lives during the failed attempt at taking Ai (Joshua 7:4–5). After his sin was discovered, Achan and his family were stoned to death in accordance with God's command (Joshua 7:24–26).

**Shinar was associated with [Babylon's](#) wickedness.** Zechariah the prophet [recorded a vision](#) of a basket with a lead cover. The angel guiding Zechariah identified the meaning of the basket: “This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land” ([Zechariah 5:6](#)). Then the angel raised the cover of lead, revealing to the prophet that there was a woman in the basket. The angel said, “‘This is wickedness,’ and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed the lead cover down over its mouth” ([Zechariah 5:8](#)). The basket with the woman was then carried through air to the land of Shinar where a temple would be built for it (verse 11). This strange vision pictures the suppression of wickedness and its banishment to Shinar/Babylon. In Shinar, the wickedness would eventually be freed and even worshiped (cf. [Revelation 17](#)). Shinar is associated with the wicked worship of false gods, and in the end times, Babylon the Great is the center of wickedness and demon worship ([Revelation 18:2–3](#)).

**Shinar was the location of Judah's exile.** When the nation of Judah was finally taken into [exile to Babylonia](#), Nebuchadnezzar carried off the devoted things of the Lord's temple and placed them in a temple to the god he worshipped ([Daniel 1:1–2](#)). Nebuchadnezzar probably placed the precious items into the temple of Marduk, also called Bel, which was the chief god of the Babylonians. Because of disobedience and idol worship, the Jews were exiled from their land to Shinar ([2 Chronicles 36:15–21](#)).

**Shinar is a place that will contain a faithful remnant of Israel.** Isaiah 11 mentions the future millennial kingdom of the “Root of Jesse” who will “stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious” (Isaiah 11:10). During His reign, Jesus will “recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea” (Isaiah 11:11, ESV). This promise assures us that God's people will be regathered—even from Shinar—to worship the Lord in His future kingdom.

Shinar is significant in its connection to the world's historical rebellion against God: everything from the construction of the Tower of Babel to its association with idols, its mistreatment of Israel, and its future association with the Antichrist. Despite the many evils in the land of Shinar, God has preserved His people there. Believing Israelites in Shinar will participate in Jesus' millennial kingdom in the future, demonstrating God's grace and redemption. [GotQuestions.org](#)

#### Related Resources:

- [What happened at the Tower of Babel? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the significance of the Babylonian Empire in biblical history? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Genesis 10:11** From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah,

- went forth into Assyria, Mic 5:6
- Asshur - Nu 24:22,24 Ezr 4:2 Ps 83:8 Eze 27:23 32:22 Ho 14:3
- Nineveh - 2Ki 19:36 Isa 37:37 Jon 1:2 3:1-10 Na 1:1 2:8 3:7 Zep 2:13, the city of, or, the streets of the city
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Micah 5:6 They will shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, **The land of Nimrod** at its entrances; And He will deliver us from the Assyrian When he attacks our land And when he tramples our territory.

**NIMROD BUILDS  
NINEVEH IN ASSYRIA**

From that land he ([Nimrod](#)) went forth into [Assyria](#), and built [Nineveh](#) and Rehoboth-Ir and [Calah](#) - [Nimrod](#) did not let Babel stop him from pursuing his goal of building a city to make a name for himself! Indeed the other name of [Calah](#) is Nimrud!

**Morris** - Asshur, a son of Shem, had evidently founded a settlement, but Nimrod went forth into Asshur (better rendering of "out of that land went forth Asshur"), extending his empire and establishing also what would later become the Assyrian empire. Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrians, was named after "Ninus," evidently another name for Nimrod. Although both Babylonia and Assyria were later conquered by Semites, the Hamite Nimrod was their founder and first king. Nineveh was 200 miles north of Babylon, on the Tigris River.

[Calah \(Nimrud\)](#) has been excavated, on the Tigris about twenty miles south of Nineveh. It is still called "Nimrud," after its founder. Resen was said to be between Nineveh and Calah, so that the entire complex of cities was called "a great city," that is, a large metropolitan area. The Assyrian legends speak of "Ninus" as the founder of Nineveh. This is evidently a form of "Nimrod."

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the significance of Assyria in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the significance of the city of Nineveh in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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

- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

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

**Morris** on **great city** - About twenty miles south of Nineveh, [Calah](#) has been excavated. It is still called "[Nimrud](#)." These three satellite cities, with Nineveh, made up a metropolitan complex and is thus called a "**great city**."

**Genesis 10:13 Mizraim became the father of Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim**

- **Ludim** - 1Ch 1:11,12 Jer 46:9 Eze 30:5
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

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## MIZRAIM'S SONS

[Mizraim](#) (see chart - top right) **became the father of Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim**

**Mizraim** ([see note above](#)) is another name for Egypt which becomes a "major player" in the Old Testament because of her interactions with the descendants of Shem (the Jews). Here are over 600 verses that use the Hebrew word **mizraim**, and most are translated Egypt

Mizraim - 603 verses - Egypt(588), Egypt's(2), Egyptian(1), Egyptians(87), Mizraim(4). Gen. 10:6; Gen. 10:13; Gen. 12:10; Gen. 12:11; Gen. 12:14; Gen. 13:1; Gen. 13:10; Gen. 15:18; Gen. 21:21; Gen. 25:18; Gen. 26:2; Gen. 37:25; Gen. 37:28; Gen. 37:36; Gen. 39:1; Gen. 40:1; Gen. 40:5; Gen. 41:8; Gen. 41:19; Gen. 41:29; Gen. 41:30; Gen. 41:33; Gen. 41:34; Gen. 41:36; Gen. 41:41; Gen. 41:43; Gen. 41:44; Gen. 41:45; Gen. 41:46; Gen. 41:48; Gen. 41:53; Gen. 41:54; Gen. 41:55; Gen. 41:56; Gen. 41:57; Gen. 42:1; Gen. 42:2; Gen. 42:3; Gen. 43:2; Gen. 43:15; Gen. 43:32; Gen. 45:2; Gen. 45:4; Gen. 45:8; Gen. 45:9; Gen. 45:13; Gen. 45:18; Gen. 45:19; Gen. 45:20; Gen. 45:23; Gen. 45:25; Gen. 45:26; Gen. 46:3; Gen. 46:4; Gen. 46:6; Gen. 46:7; Gen. 46:8; Gen. 46:20; Gen. 46:26; Gen. 46:27; Gen. 46:34; Gen. 47:6; Gen. 47:11; Gen. 47:13; Gen. 47:14; Gen. 47:15; Gen. 47:20; Gen. 47:21; Gen. 47:26; Gen. 47:27; Gen. 47:28; Gen. 47:29; Gen. 47:30; Gen. 48:5; Gen. 50:3; Gen. 50:7; Gen. 50:11; Gen. 50:14; Gen. 50:22; Gen. 50:26; Exod. 1:1; Exod. 1:5; Exod. 1:8; Exod. 1:13; Exod. 1:15; Exod. 1:17; Exod. 1:18; Exod. 2:23; Exod. 3:7; Exod. 3:8; Exod. 3:9; Exod. 3:10; Exod. 3:11; Exod. 3:12; Exod. 3:16; Exod. 3:17; Exod. 3:18; Exod. 3:19; Exod. 3:20; Exod. 3:21; Exod. 3:22; Exod. 4:18; Exod. 4:19; Exod. 4:20; Exod. 4:21; Exod. 5:4; Exod. 5:12; Exod. 6:5; Exod. 6:6; Exod. 6:7; Exod. 6:11; Exod. 6:13; Exod. 6:26; Exod. 6:27; Exod. 6:28; Exod. 6:29; Exod. 7:3; Exod. 7:4; Exod. 7:5; Exod. 7:11; Exod. 7:18; Exod. 7:19; Exod. 7:21; Exod. 7:22; Exod. 7:24; Exod. 8:5; Exod. 8:6; Exod. 8:7; Exod. 8:16; Exod. 8:17; Exod. 8:21; Exod. 8:24; Exod. 8:26; Exod. 9:4; Exod. 9:6; Exod. 9:9; Exod. 9:11; Exod. 9:18; Exod. 9:22; Exod. 9:23; Exod. 9:24; Exod. 9:25; Exod. 10:2; Exod. 10:6; Exod. 10:7; Exod. 10:12; Exod. 10:13; Exod. 10:14; Exod. 10:15; Exod. 10:19; Exod. 10:21; Exod. 10:22; Exod. 11:1; Exod. 11:3; Exod. 11:4; Exod. 11:5; Exod. 11:6; Exod. 11:7; Exod. 11:9; Exod. 12:1; Exod. 12:12; Exod. 12:13; Exod. 12:17; Exod. 12:23; Exod. 12:27; Exod. 12:29; Exod. 12:30; Exod. 12:33; Exod. 12:35; Exod. 12:36; Exod. 12:39; Exod. 12:40; Exod. 12:41; Exod. 12:42; Exod. 12:51; Exod. 13:3; Exod. 13:8; Exod. 13:9; Exod. 13:14; Exod. 13:15; Exod. 13:16; Exod. 13:17; Exod. 13:18; Exod. 14:4; Exod. 14:5; Exod. 14:7; Exod. 14:8; Exod. 14:9; Exod. 14:10; Exod. 14:11; Exod. 14:12; Exod. 14:13; Exod. 14:17; Exod. 14:18; Exod. 14:20; Exod. 14:23; Exod. 14:24; Exod. 14:25; Exod. 14:26; Exod. 14:27; Exod. 14:30; Exod. 14:31; Exod. 15:26; Exod. 16:1; Exod. 16:3; Exod. 16:6; Exod. 16:32; Exod. 17:3; Exod. 18:1; Exod. 18:8; Exod. 18:9; Exod. 18:10; Exod. 19:1; Exod. 19:4; Exod. 20:2; Exod. 22:21; Exod. 23:9; Exod. 23:15; Exod. 29:46; Exod. 32:1; Exod. 32:4; Exod. 32:7; Exod. 32:8; Exod. 32:11; Exod. 32:12; Exod. 32:23; Exod. 33:1; Exod. 34:18; Lev. 11:45; Lev. 18:3; Lev. 19:34; Lev. 19:36; Lev. 22:33; Lev. 23:43; Lev. 25:38; Lev. 25:42; Lev. 25:55; Lev. 26:13; Lev. 26:45; Num. 1:1; Num. 3:13; Num. 8:17; Num. 9:1; Num. 11:5; Num. 11:18; Num. 11:20; Num. 13:22; Num. 14:2; Num. 14:3; Num. 14:4; Num. 14:13; Num. 14:19; Num. 14:22; Num. 15:41; Num. 20:5; Num. 20:15; Num. 20:16; Num. 21:5; Num. 22:5; Num. 22:11; Num. 23:22; Num. 24:8; Num. 26:4; Num. 26:59; Num. 32:11; Num. 33:1; Num. 33:3; Num. 33:4; Num. 33:38; Num. 34:5; Deut. 1:27; Deut. 1:30; Deut. 4:20; Deut. 4:34; Deut. 4:37; Deut. 4:45; Deut. 4:46; Deut. 5:6; Deut. 5:15; Deut. 6:12; Deut. 6:21; Deut. 6:22; Deut. 7:8; Deut. 7:15; Deut. 7:18; Deut. 8:14; Deut. 9:7; Deut. 9:12; Deut. 9:26; Deut. 10:19; Deut. 10:22; Deut. 11:3; Deut. 11:4; Deut. 11:10; Deut. 13:5; Deut. 13:10; Deut. 15:15; Deut. 16:1; Deut. 16:3; Deut. 16:6; Deut. 16:12; Deut. 17:16; Deut. 20:1; Deut. 23:4; Deut. 24:9; Deut. 24:18; Deut. 24:22; Deut. 25:17; Deut. 26:5; Deut. 26:8; Deut. 28:27; Deut. 28:60; Deut. 28:68; Deut. 29:2; Deut. 29:16; Deut. 29:25; Deut. 34:11; Jos. 2:10; Jos. 5:4; Jos. 5:5; Jos. 5:6; Jos. 5:9; Jos.

9:9; Jos. 13:3; Jos. 15:4; Jos. 15:47; Jos. 24:4; Jos. 24:5; Jos. 24:6; Jos. 24:7; Jos. 24:14; Jos. 24:17; Jos. 24:32; Jdg. 2:1; Jdg. 2:12; Jdg. 6:8; Jdg. 6:9; Jdg. 6:13; Jdg. 10:11; Jdg. 11:13; Jdg. 11:16; Jdg. 19:30; 1 Sam. 2:27; 1 Sam. 4:8; 1 Sam. 6:6; 1 Sam. 8:8; 1 Sam. 10:18; 1 Sam. 12:6; 1 Sam. 12:8; 1 Sam. 15:2; 1 Sam. 15:6; 1 Sam. 15:7; 1 Sam. 27:8; 2 Sam. 7:23; 1 Ki. 3:1; 1 Ki. 4:21; 1 Ki. 4:30; 1 Ki. 6:1; 1 Ki. 8:9; 1 Ki. 8:16; 1 Ki. 8:21; 1 Ki. 8:51; 1 Ki. 8:53; 1 Ki. 8:65; 1 Ki. 9:9; 1 Ki. 9:16; 1 Ki. 10:28; 1 Ki. 10:29; 1 Ki. 11:17; 1 Ki. 11:18; 1 Ki. 11:21; 1 Ki. 11:40; 1 Ki. 12:2; 1 Ki. 12:28; 1 Ki. 14:25; 2 Ki. 7:6; 2 Ki. 17:4; 2 Ki. 17:7; 2 Ki. 17:36; 2 Ki. 18:21; 2 Ki. 18:24; 2 Ki. 21:15; 2 Ki. 23:29; 2 Ki. 23:34; 2 Ki. 24:7; 2 Ki. 25:26; 1 Chr. 1:8; 1 Chr. 1:11; 1 Chr. 13:5; 1 Chr. 17:21; 2 Chr. 1:16; 2 Chr. 1:17; 2 Chr. 5:10; 2 Chr. 6:5; 2 Chr. 7:8; 2 Chr. 7:22; 2 Chr. 9:26; 2 Chr. 9:28; 2 Chr. 10:2; 2 Chr. 12:2; 2 Chr. 12:3; 2 Chr. 12:9; 2 Chr. 20:10; 2 Chr. 26:8; 2 Chr. 35:20; 2 Chr. 36:3; 2 Chr. 36:4; Neh. 9:9; Neh. 9:17; Neh. 9:18; Ps. 68:31; Ps. 78:12; Ps. 78:43; Ps. 78:51; Ps. 80:8; Ps. 81:5; Ps. 81:10; Ps. 105:23; Ps. 105:38; Ps. 106:7; Ps. 106:21; Ps. 114:1; Ps. 135:8; Ps. 135:9; Ps. 136:10; Prov. 7:16; Isa. 7:18; Isa. 10:24; Isa. 10:26; Isa. 11:11; Isa. 11:15; Isa. 11:16; Isa. 19:1; Isa. 19:2; Isa. 19:3; Isa. 19:4; Isa. 19:12; Isa. 19:13; Isa. 19:14; Isa. 19:15; Isa. 19:16; Isa. 19:17; Isa. 19:18; Isa. 19:19; Isa. 19:20; Isa. 19:21; Isa. 19:22; Isa. 19:23; Isa. 19:24; Isa. 19:25; Isa. 20:3; Isa. 20:4; Isa. 20:5; Isa. 23:5; Isa. 27:12; Isa. 27:13; Isa. 30:2; Isa. 30:3; Isa. 30:7; Isa. 31:1; Isa. 31:3; Isa. 36:6; Isa. 36:9; Isa. 43:3; Isa. 45:14; Isa. 52:4; Jer. 2:6; Jer. 2:18; Jer. 2:36; Jer. 7:22; Jer. 7:25; Jer. 9:26; Jer. 11:4; Jer. 11:7; Jer. 16:14; Jer. 23:7; Jer. 24:8; Jer. 25:19; Jer. 26:21; Jer. 26:22; Jer. 26:23; Jer. 31:32; Jer. 32:20; Jer. 32:21; Jer. 34:13; Jer. 37:5; Jer. 37:7; Jer. 41:17; Jer. 42:14; Jer. 42:15; Jer. 42:16; Jer. 42:17; Jer. 42:18; Jer. 42:19; Jer. 43:2; Jer. 43:7; Jer. 43:11; Jer. 43:12; Jer. 43:13; Jer. 44:1; Jer. 44:8; Jer. 44:12; Jer. 44:13; Jer. 44:14; Jer. 44:15; Jer. 44:24; Jer. 44:26; Jer. 44:27; Jer. 44:28; Jer. 44:30; Jer. 46:2; Jer. 46:8; Jer. 46:11; Jer. 46:13; Jer. 46:14; Jer. 46:17; Jer. 46:19; Jer. 46:20; Jer. 46:24; Jer. 46:25; Lam. 5:6; Ezek. 16:26; Ezek. 17:15; Ezek. 19:4; Ezek. 20:5; Ezek. 20:6; Ezek. 20:7; Ezek. 20:8; Ezek. 20:9; Ezek. 20:10; Ezek. 20:36; Ezek. 23:3; Ezek. 23:8; Ezek. 23:19; Ezek. 23:21; Ezek. 23:27; Ezek. 27:7; Ezek. 29:2; Ezek. 29:3; Ezek. 29:6; Ezek. 29:9; Ezek. 29:10; Ezek. 29:12; Ezek. 29:13; Ezek. 29:14; Ezek. 29:19; Ezek. 29:20; Ezek. 30:4; Ezek. 30:6; Ezek. 30:8; Ezek. 30:9; Ezek. 30:10; Ezek. 30:11; Ezek. 30:13; Ezek. 30:15; Ezek. 30:16; Ezek. 30:18; Ezek. 30:19; Ezek. 30:21; Ezek. 30:22; Ezek. 30:23; Ezek. 30:25; Ezek. 30:26; Ezek. 31:2; Ezek. 32:2; Ezek. 32:12; Ezek. 32:15; Ezek. 32:16; Ezek. 32:18; Dan. 9:15; Dan. 11:8; Dan. 11:42; Dan. 11:43; Hos. 2:15; Hos. 7:11; Hos. 7:16; Hos. 8:13; Hos. 9:3; Hos. 9:6; Hos. 11:1; Hos. 11:5; Hos. 11:11; Hos. 12:1; Hos. 12:9; Hos. 12:13; Hos. 13:4; Joel 3:19; Amos 2:10; Amos 3:1; Amos 3:9; Amos 4:10; Amos 8:8; Amos 9:5; Amos 9:7; Mic. 6:4; Mic. 7:15; Nah. 3:9; Hag. 2:5; Zech. 10:10; Zech. 10:11; Zech. 14:18; Zech. 14:19

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

- **Pathrusim** - Isa 11:11 Jer 44:1 1Ch 1:12
- **Casluhim** - 1Ch 1:12 Jer 47:4
- **Caphtorim** - De 2:23 Jer 47:4 Am 9:7 1 Chr. 1:12
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

and Pathrusim and Casluhim (from which came the [Philistines](#)) and [Caphtorim](#).

## Genesis 10:15 Canaan became the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth

- **Canaan** - 1Ch 1:13
- **Sidon** - Heb. Tzidon, Ge 49:13 Jos 11:8 Isa 23:4, Zidon
- **Heth** - Ge 15:18-21 28:3-20 Ex 3:8 34:11 Nu 34:2-15 Jos 12:8-24 2Sa 11:3
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

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## SONS OF CANAAN

**Canaan** became the father of **Sidon**, his firstborn - The city of Sidon, chief city of the Phoenicians, still exists today. "The city of Zidon or Sidon is thought to have been founded by Canaan's son Sidon (Genesis 10:15); at any rate, Sidon's descendants settled in that area, and the city of Zidon is quite ancient." ([See note below](#)).

and **Heth** - Esau marries a Hethite. Heth is the ancestor of the [Hittites](#), prominent in both the Bible and secular history, ruling a great empire in Asia Minor for over 800 years. When the Hittite empire finally crumbled, many of its people migrated east. The Hittites are identified in Egyptian inscriptions as the "Kheta." In the cuneiform inscriptions in Babylonia, this name is identified as "Khittae," which may have been modified eventually to "Cathay," a synonym for China. Archaeologists have noted similarities between the Monguls and Hittites.

**Ray Stedman** points out that "**Heth** is the father of the [Hittite](#) nation. The [Hittites](#) were once regarded by archaeologists as a biblical blunder. Archaeologists said the Bible was absolutely wrong when it mentioned the Hittites, for there was no such people. But since that time, Hittite relics have been discovered in abundance, and scholars are now well aware of the great civilization that flourished under the Hittites. The Hebrew form of this word, Hittite, is *Khettai* and from this comes the word *Cathay*, which many of you will recognize as an ancient name for China. Certain of the Hittites migrated eastward and settled in China. Also, another name in this list, the Sinites, is linked with China. It derives from a presumed son of Canaan whose name was Sin. The Sinites migrated eastward until they came into Western China, where they founded the ancient Empire of China and gave their name to the land. There is a direct connection between the word *China* and the word *Sinim*, the biblical name for China. They pushed eastward and toward the north over the land bridge into Alaska. The Sinites are the people who settled the Americas in prehistoric days and became the ancestors of the Eskimos and Indians who, to this very day, betray their Mongoloid ancestry." ([God's Funnel](#))

[Gotquestions.org](#) - The Bible's truth claims concerning world history have also been substantiated. Skeptics used to criticize the

Bible for its mention of the [Hittite people](#) (e.g., 2 Kings 7:6). The lack of any archaeological evidence to support the existence of a Hittite culture was often cited as a rebuttal against Scripture. In 1876, however, archaeologists discovered evidence of the Hittite nation, and by the early 20th century the vastness of the Hittite nation and its influence in the ancient world was common knowledge.

[Gotquestions.org](#) - Though rather obscure in the scope of world history, the Hittite nation played an important role in the history of the Old Testament, and has since helped verify the accuracy of the Bible. For many years, archaeologists and historians knew nothing of the Hittites, and critics of the Bible treated the Hittites as proof of the “mythology” contained in the Bible. The critics reasoned that, since they had no archaeological evidence of a Hittite civilization, it must never have existed, and the Bible must perforce be wrong. However, many archaeological discoveries, beginning in 1876, have since proved that the Hittites were a powerful people in the 15th and 16th centuries B.C.

[Armstrong Institute](#) - The Hittite civilization is mentioned often in the Bible. Scripture describes Abraham burying his wife in land purchased from Hittite merchants. The Hittites were allied with the king of Israel in fending off the Syrian Empire. Yet until the 20th century, no evidence of the Hittite civilization had been uncovered. Historians said it probably never existed, and even if it did, it couldn't have been a very strong regional power. In 1906, however, an immense, sprawling fortified city found in modern-day Turkey was confirmed to have been the Hittite capital, Hattusha ([SEE MULTIPLE PICTURES](#)). A royal library of around 10,000 tablets helped prove to archaeologists that these people were indeed the people of the *land of Hatti*, the kingdom of *Kheta* in the Egyptian texts, and the *Hittites* of the Bible. This massive empire controlled what became modern-day Turkey, and its power and influence expanded as far south as Syria and around parts of northern Canaan, just as described in the Bible.

*The Bible is unique in facing its critics.*

*There is no book in all of history like it.*

**Josh McDowell** in [Evidence that Demands a Verdict - page 22 \(borrow\)](#) writes about the Hittites - The "assured results of higher criticism" said there were no Hittites (a people found at that time only in the Old Testament); there are no other records of them. They must be myth. Well, wrong again. As the result of archaeology, there are now hundreds of references overlapping more than 1200 years of Hittite civilization. Earl Radmacher, president of Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, quoting Nelson Glueck (pronounced Glek), former president of the Jewish Theological Seminary in the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and one of the three greatest archaeologists, says: "I listened to him [Glueck] when he was at Temple Emmanuel in Dallas, and he got rather red in the face and said, 'I've been accused of teaching the verbal, plenary inspiration of the scripture. I want it to be understood that I have never taught this. All I have ever said is that in all of my archaeological investigation I have never found one artifact of antiquity that contradicts any statement of the Word of God.'" The Bible is unique in facing its critics. There is no book in all of history like it. A person looking for truth would certainly consider a book that has the above qualifications. (ED: I WOULD ADD THE BIBLE IS SO TRUE THAT IT IS NOT SO MUCH THAT ARCHAEOLOGY PROVES THE BIBLE IS TRUE, BUT THAT THE BIBLE PROVES THE ARCHAEOLOGY TO BE TRUE!)

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#### QUESTION - [Who were the Canaanites?](#)

**ANSWER** - The Canaanites were a group of ancient people who lived in the [land of Canaan](#) on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Canaan is described in the Bible as extending from Lebanon toward the Brook of Egypt in the south and the Jordan River Valley in the east. In the Bible, notably in Genesis 10 and Numbers 34, this was called the “land of Canaan” and occupies the same area that is occupied by modern Lebanon and Israel, plus parts of Jordan and Syria.

The Canaanites are mentioned over 150 times in the Bible. They were a wicked, idolatrous people descended from Noah's grandson Canaan, who was a son of Ham (Genesis 9:18). Canaan was cursed because of his and his father's sin against Noah (Genesis 9:20–25). In some passages, *Canaanites* specifically refers to the people of the lowlands and plains of Canaan (Joshua 11:3); in other passages, *Canaanites* is used more broadly to refer to all the inhabitants of the land, including the Hivites, [Girgashites](#), Jebusites, Amorites, Hittites, and [Perizzites](#) (see Judges 1:9–10).

The land of Canaan was the land God [promised](#) to give to Abraham's descendants (Genesis 12:7). The Canaanites are described in the Bible as a large and fierce people, not easily defeated, so the Israelites would need divine help to come against them, defeat them, and take their land away. God promised Moses and Joshua that help (Joshua 1:3).

After the Exodus, when the Lord told Moses to invade Canaan, Moses sent a group of spies into the land of Canaan to see what the people were like. The spies came back with a report that was both encouraging and daunting. The fruit of the land was huge—it took

two men to carry back one cluster of grapes (Numbers 13:23)—and the land was bountiful in many other ways. However, the Canaanites were strong, and the cities were large and fortified. Also, the Israelite spies had seen what they described as Nephilim and the [descendants of Anak](#) there (Numbers 13:28, 33)—next to these fierce people, the Israelites saw themselves as “grasshoppers” (verse 33). In the end, the Israelites were so afraid of the Canaanites that they refused to go into the land God had promised to them. Only Joshua and Caleb were confident that God would help them defeat the Canaanites. Because of their unwillingness to trust God, that generation of Israelites was denied entry into Canaan (Numbers 14:30-35).

After Moses' death, Joshua was called by God to lead the people of Israel through the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. The first city they came to was Jericho, a strong-walled city of the Canaanites. Joshua believed God and told the people that God would drive the Canaanites out of the land so that Israel could take the land of Canaan (Joshua 3:10). The fall of Jericho was a supernatural event, as God overthrew that city (Joshua 6). This victory was a sign to the people of Israel and to the people of Canaan that God had given the land of Canaan to the Israelites.

Despite a long campaign against the inhabitants of Canaan, there remained several pockets of Canaanites in Israel after the land had been divided among the twelve tribes (Judges 1:27–36). Some of the Canaanites who remained in Israel were pressed into forced labor, but many strongholds remained in the land. The partial obedience of Israel, resulting in these Canaanite citadels, caused much trouble throughout the time of [the Judges](#).

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#### QUESTION - [Who were the Zidonians in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Zidon, also called Sidon, was the capital city of Phoenicia, located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea approximately 20 miles south of its sister city, [Tyre](#). Today, Zidon is called Saida (or Sayda) and remains a port city in Lebanon. Tyre and Sidon (Zidon) are often mentioned together in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament (Isaiah 23; Jeremiah 27:3; 47:4; Matthew 11:22; 15:21). Although Tyre appears to have been the more prominent city, the term *Zidonians* was sometimes used to refer to all Phoenicians (Joshua 13:6; Judges 18:7).

**The city of Zidon or Sidon is thought to have been founded by Canaan's son Sidon** (Genesis 10:15); **at any rate, Sidon's descendants settled in that area, and the city of Zidon is quite ancient.** Zidon was well-known as a center of commerce and for its artisans. Solomon made arrangements with King Hiram of Tyre to procure lumber for the building of the temple, saying, “Give orders that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me. My men will work with yours, and I will pay you for your men whatever wages you set. You know that we have no one so skilled in felling timber as the Sidonians” (1 Kings 5:6; cf. 1 Chronicles 22:4). The Zidonians were also renowned as men of the sea and capable sailors (see 1 Kings 9:27 and Ezekiel 27:8).

The land containing the city of Zidon was given to the [tribe of Asher](#) as their inheritance from the Lord (Joshua 19:24–31). Zidon was thus a part of Canaan that the Israelites were commanded to overthrow, but they did not (Judges 1:31–32). Soon, the Zidonians were oppressing the Israelites in the Promised Land (see Judges 10:12).

The ancient Zidonians were wicked idolators. Their god was [Baal](#), and their goddess was Ashtoreth (1 Kings 11:33), and because Israel failed to completely cast the Zidonians out of the land God gave them, the idol worship continued and became a problem for the Israelites. King Solomon unwisely married Zidonians (1 Kings 11:1), and his reign was corrupted by Zidonian idolatry (1 Kings 11:5). Later, the infamous [King Ahab](#) of Israel married [Jezebel](#), a daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians (1 Kings 16:31). Soon, Baal worship was rampant in Israel.

Although the Bible does not give us many details about Zidon, other historical documents tell us that Zidon seems to have flourished during the Persian domination, even surpassing Tyre in prominence. However, around 351 BC, Zidon's King Tennes betrayed the city to the king of the Persians, Ochus. When the Zidonians realized destruction was imminent, they shut themselves and their families into their own homes and set fire to them. It is thought that forty thousand Zidonians died in those fires.

Eventually, Zidon emerged from the ashes and once again began to flourish. Zidon appears to have been the northernmost city to which Christ traveled during His time on earth (Matthew 15:21). On Paul's voyage to Rome as a prisoner, the ship made a stop at Zidon, where Paul had friends (Acts 27:3). Jesus mentioned Zidon in reference to its reputation of wickedness. Jesus pronounced woe on unrepentant Jewish cities in which He'd done most of His miracles, saying that, had He done those works in Tyre and Zidon, the people there would have repented. Judgment would be more bearable for the wicked towns of Tyre and Zidon, who did not know Christ, than for the people who rejected Jesus outright (Matthew 11:20–24; Luke 10:12–16).

Many Old Testament prophecies record God's pronouncement of judgment on Tyre and Zidon (Isaiah 23; Jeremiah 25; 27; 47; Ezekiel 26—28; Joel 3; Amos 1:9–10; Zechariah 9:1–4). God's judgment is righteous (Psalm 9:4; 50:6). Even though God is the Judge, He brings redemption for those who repent and put their faith in Him. The prophet Elijah was fed by a [widow woman](#) in the area of Zidon (1 Kings 17:9), a fact that Jesus points out to the Jews in Nazareth (Luke 4:26). Inhabitants of Zidon

were some of the early followers of Jesus (Mark 3:8; Luke 6:17), and Jesus interacted with a Canaanite woman from the region of Zidon, healing her daughter and commending her faith (Matthew 15:21–28). Sinners were drawn to Jesus then, and they are still drawn to Him by the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit today (John 6:44; 16:8–11). Though God's righteous judgment is coming (Romans 1:18–32; 2 Peter 3:8–10), God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ is still available to all (John 3:16–18; 2 Corinthians 5:18–21). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

### Genesis 10:16 and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Gergashite

- **Jebusite** - Jdg 1:21 2Sa 24:18 Zec 9:7
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Joshua 15:63+ Now as for the **Jebusites**, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the sons of Judah could not drive them out; so the Jebusites live with the sons of Judah at Jerusalem until this day.

Judges 1:21+ But the sons of Benjamin did not drive out the **Jebusites** who lived in Jerusalem; so the Jebusites have lived with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

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And the [Jebusite](#) and the [Amorite](#) and the [Gergashite](#) -- Jebusites lived in Jerusalem when Israel conquered Canaan. Later [Jebusite](#) was associated with city of David and with Jerusalem.

### Genesis 10:17 and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite

- **Hivite** - Ge 34:2
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

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#### and the [Hivite](#) and the [Arkite](#) and the [Sinite](#)

**Morris** - The other nine sons of Canaan were the Canaanite tribes that inhabited the land when the Israelites entered it. The Amorites are identified in the tablets as the Amurru. The Sinites may be connected in ethnology with the wilderness of Sin and Mount Sinai in the south, and with the Assyrian god "Sin," and even with Sinim (Isaiah 49:12) which the people of secular history called "Sinae," or Chinese.

**HIVITE [ISBE]** - hi'-vit (chiwwni; Heuaios): **Name:** A son of Canaan (Gen 10:17), i.e. an inhabitant of the land of Canaan along with the Canaanite and other tribes (Ex 3:17, etc.). In the list of Canaanite peoples given in Gen 15:19-21, the Hivites are omitted in the Hebrew text, though inserted in Septuagint and S. Gesenius suggests that the name is descriptive, meaning "villagers." The difficulty of explaining it is increased by the fact that it has been confused with "Horite" in some passages of the Hebrew text. In Josh 9:7 the Septuagint reads "Horite" as also does Codex A in Gen 34:2, and in Gen 36:2 a comparison with 36:24,25 shows that "Horite" must be substituted for "Hivite." **Geographical Situation:** In Jdg 3:3 the Hittites are described as dwelling "in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon unto the entrance of Hamath," and in accordance with this the Hivite is described in Josh 11:3 as being "under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh," and in 2 Sam 24:7 they are mentioned immediately after "the stronghold of Tyre." Hence, the Septuagint (Codex Alexandrinus) reading must be right in Gen 34:2 and Josh 9:7, which makes the inhabitants of Shechem and Gibeon Horites instead of Hivites; indeed, in Gen 48:22 the people of Shechem are called Amorite, though this was a general name for the population of Canaan in the patriarchal period. No name resembling Hivite has yet been found in the Egyptian or Babylonian inscriptions. A. H. Sayce

**ARKITE [ISBE]** - ark'-it (ʿarqi): An inhabitant of the town of Arka, situated some ten or twelve miles Northeast of Tripoli, Syria, and about four miles from the shore of the sea. The Arkites are mentioned in Gen 10:17 and 1 Ch 1:15 as being the descendants of Canaan, and they were undoubtedly of Phoenician stock. The place was not of much importance, but it is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions, under the name Irkatah and taken by Tiglath-pileser III in 738 BC. Not being on the sea its trade was small and it probably belonged to Tripoli or Botrys originally. It was the birthplace of Alexander Severus, hence its Roman name, Caesarea

Libani. Its site is marked by a high mound near the foothills of Lebanon. H. Porter

**SINITES [ISBE]** - si'-nits (cini): A Canaanite people mentioned in Gen 10:17; 1 Ch 1:15. The identification is uncertain. Jerome mentions a ruined city, Sin, near Arka, at the foot of Lebanon.

**Genesis 10:18 and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanite were spread abroad.**

- **Arvadite** - Eze 27:8
- **Zemarite** - Jos 18:22 2Ch 13:4
- **Hamathite** - Nu 34:8 2Sa 8:9 2Ki 17:24,30 Isa 10:9 Eze 47:16,17 Zec 9:2
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

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**And the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanite were spread**([puts](#); Lxx - [diaspeiro](#)) **abroad** - The same verb **spread** ([puts](#); Lxx - [diaspeiro](#)) plays a major role in Genesis 11 (Ge 11:4, Ge 11:8, Ge 11:9).

**Morris - spread abroad.** This statement becomes especially significant if, as intimated above, the descendants of Canaan include the Mongol peoples, who eventually spread not only throughout most of Asia but also across the Bering Strait into North and South America, becoming the American Indians.

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**ARVAD; ARVADITES [ISBE]** - ar'-vad, ar'-vad-its ('arwadh; Arados; modern Ruad): An island city off the coast of Syria some 30 miles North of Tripolis, and the race inhabiting it. It was a barren rock covered with fortifications and houses several stories in height. The island was about 800 ft. long by 500 wide, surrounded by a massive wall, and an artificial harbor was constructed on the East toward the main land. It developed into a trading city in early times, as did most of the Phoenician cities on this coast. It had a powerful navy, and its ships are mentioned in the monuments of Egypt and Assyria. It seems to have had a sort of hegemony over the northern Phoenician cities, from Mt. Cassius to the northern limits of Lebanon, something like that of Sidon in the South. It had its own local dynasty and coinage, and some of the names of its kings have been recovered. Its inhabitants are mentioned in the early lists of Gen (10:18), and Ezek (27:8,11) refers to its seamen and soldiers in the service of Tyre. It brought under its authority some of the neighboring cities on the main land, such as Marathus and Simyra, the former nearly opposite the island and the latter some miles to the South. Thothmes III, of Egypt, took it in his campaign in north Syria (1472 BC) and it is noticed in the campaigns of Rameses II in the early part of the 13th century BC (Breasted, Ancient Records). It is also mentioned in the Tell el-Amarna Letters as being in league with the Amorites in their attacks upon the Egyptian possessions in Syria (44 and 28, B.M. Tell el-Amarna Letters). About the year 1200, or later, it was sacked by invaders from Asia Minor or the islands, as were most of the cities on the coast (Paton, Syria and Palestine, 145) but it recovered when they were driven back. Its maritime importance is indicated by the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings. Tiglath-pileser I (circa 1020) boasts that he sailed in the ships of Arvad. Asshur-nazir-pal (circa 876) made it tributary, but it revolted and we find 200 men of Arvad mentioned among the allies of Benhadad, of Damascus, at the great battle of Quarqar, when all Syria seems to have been in league against Shalmaneser II (circa 854). At this time the king of Arvad was Mattan Baal. It was afterward tributary to Tiglath-pileser III and Sennacherib, the king who paid it to the latter being Abdi-ilihit (circa 701). Ashurbanipal (circa 664) compelled its king Yakinlu to submit and send one of his daughters to become a member of the royal harem (Rawlinson, Phoenicia, 456-57). Under the Persians Arvad was allowed to unite in a confederation with Sidon and Tyre, with a common council at Tripolis (ib 484). When Alexander the Great invaded Syria in 332 BC Arvad submitted without a struggle under her king Strato, who sent his navy to aid Alexander in the reduction of Tyre. It seems to have received the favor of the Seleucid kings of Syria and enjoyed the right of asylum for political refugees. It is mentioned in a rescript from Rome about 138 BC, in connection with other cities and rulers of the East, to show favor to the Jews. It was after Rome had begun to interfere in the affairs of Judea and Syria, and indicates that Arvad was of considerable importance at that time (see 1 Macc 15:16-23). The town is not mentioned in the New Testament, and in modern times has sunk to a small village, chiefly inhabited by fishermen. H. Porter

**ZEMARITE [ISBE]** - zem'-a-rit (ha-tsemari; ho Samaraioi): A Canaanite people named in Gen 10:18; 1 Ch 1:16. The occurrence of the name between Arvadite and Hamathite gives a hint as to locality. A place called Cumur is mentioned in the Tell el-Amarna Letters along with Arvad. The name probably survives in that of Sumra, a village on the seacoast between Tripolis and Ruwad, about 1 1/2 miles North of Nahr el-Kebir. We may with some certainty identify this modern village with the site of the town from which the inhabitants were named "Zemarites."

**HAMATH [ISBE]** - ha'-math (chamath; Hemath, Haimath; Swete also has Hemath): The word signifies a defense or citadel, and such designation was very suitable for this chief royal city of the Hittites, situated between their northern and southern capitals,

Carchemish and Kadesh, on a gigantic mound beside the Orontes. In Am 6:2 it is named Great Hamath, but not necessarily to distinguish it from other places of the same name.

**Early History:** The Hamathite is mentioned in Gen 10:18 among the sons of Canaan, but in historic times the population, as the personal names testify, seems to have been for the most part Semitic. The ideal boundary of Israel reached the territory, but not the city of Hamath (Nu 34:8; Josh 13:5; Ezek 47:13-21). David entered into friendly relations with Toi, its king (2 Sam 8:9 ff), and Solomon erected store cities in the land of Hamath (2 Ch 8:4). In the days of Ahab we meet with it on the cuneiform inscriptions, under the name mat hamatti, and its king Irhuleni was a party to the alliance of the Hittites with Ben-hadad of Damascus and Ahab of Israel against Shalmaneser II; but this was broken up by the battle of Qarqar in 854 BC, and Hamath became subject to Assyria. Jeroboam II attacked, partially destroyed, and held it for a short time (2 Ki 14:28; Am 6:2). In 730 BC, its king Eniilu paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser, but he divided its lands among his generals, and transported 1,223 of its inhabitants to Sura on the Tigris. In 720, Sargon "rooted out the land of Hamath and dyed the skin of Ilubi'idi (or Jau-bi'idi) its king, like wool" and colonized the country with 4,300 Assyrians, among whom was Deioces the Mede. A few years later Sennacherib also claims to have taken it (2 Ki 18:34; 19:13; 1 Ch 36:19; 37:13). In Isa 11:11, mention is made of Israelites in captivity at Hamath, and Hamathites were among the colonists settled in Samaria (2 Ki 17:24) by Esarhaddon in 675 BC. Their special object of worship was Ashima, which, notwithstanding various conjectures, has not been identified.

**Later History:** The Hamathite country is mentioned in 1 Macc 12:25 in connection with the movements of Demetrius and Jonathan. The Seleucids renamed it Epiphaneia (Josephus, Ant, I, vi, 2), and by this name it was known to the Greeks and the Romans, even appearing as Paphunya in Midrash Ber Rab chapter 37. Locally, however, the ancient name never disappeared, and since the Moslem conquest it has been known as Hama. Saladin's family ruled it for a century and a half, but after the death of Abul-fida in 1331 it sank into decay.

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**Spread** (06327)(puts) means to scatter, be dispersed, to be spread abroad. The first use is of men scattered throughout the earth (Ge 10:18, Ge 11:4). Israel's dispersion (Ezek 34:5), like sheep scattered (Zech 13:7). Be scattered - army (2Ki 25:5, Jer 52:8); people (Ge 11:8, 9); Israel's being scattered (Dt. 4:27; 28:64; Jer. 9:16; Ezek. 11:16) Lightning scattering an enemy (2Sa 22:15, Ps 18:14). A second meaning for **put** is to shatter, to crush, to break in pieces. It points out figuratively the Lord's apparent attack on Job in sickness (Job 16:12). God's word, shatters or crushes rock like a sledgehammer (Jer. 23:29). God's look breaking, shattering mountains (Hab. 3:6).

**Victor Hamilton** - The word is first used in Scripture to describe the "scattering" of the families of the Canaanites in Genesis 10:18. On the heels of this is the famous Tower of Babel incident (Genesis 11) in which the builders of the tower(?) did not want to be "scattered abroad" upon the face of the earth (Genesis 11:4). The Lord, however, made such a scattering inevitable (Genesis 11:8-9) by destroying their language. This made further communication among the peoples impossible, and thus brought to a halt their building project. It should be observed in this passage that no mention is made of God confusing the languages. Rather, what was destroyed was the universal language (Genesis 11:1), an international lingua franca. The individual dialects (Genesis 10:5, 20, 31) remained intact.

There is no substantial change in the meaning of the verb as it is used in one of the above mentioned three stems. The only perceptible difference is that in the Qal and Niphal pûš is intransitive and in the Hiphil it is transitive.

There are three repeated categories which most often serve as the subject or object of pûš. (1) It may refer to the scattering of armies, either that of the enemy (Numbers 10:35; Psalm 68:1 [H 2]) or one's own (1 Samuel 11:11; 1 Samuel 14:34; 2 Kings 25:5=Jeremiah 52:8). (2) The subject/object of pûš may refer to sheep, (a) as subject, in Jeremiah 10:21; Ezekiel 34:5-6, 12; Zech. 13:7; (b) as object, in Jeremiah 23:1. Sheep may get lost inadvertently. They may, quite literally, nibble their way to lostness. But that is not the nuance inferred by the verb under consideration. Sheep scatter, if possible, impulsively when there is some external threat to their safety and security. It is the shepherd's duty at that time to take command of the situation and repulse the threat. Ezekiel 34:5 mentions the hapless sheep who were scattered because of the absence of a shepherd. (3) Most frequently, the object of pûš is Israel, who sometimes is likened to scattered sheep (1 Kings 22:17 = 2 Chron. 18:16). In a few passages not only Israel, but Israel's enemy, Egypt, is scattered abroad (by God): Ezekiel 29:12-13; Ezekiel 30:23, 26.

There are two things of interest when the Bible speaks of God's "scattering" Israel. One, the phrase, "I/He/the Lord scatters Israel" is confined to the prophetic books of the Bible (and here, either in the past, Ezekiel 20:23; Ezekiel 28:25, or as a threat, Ezekiel 22:15 for example). The only exceptions to this are: Deut. 4:27; Deut. 28:64; Deut. 30:3; Neh. 1:8. Two, when in this phrase God is the subject and Israel is the object, the verb is

always in the Hiphil stem. It is not the Assyrians or Babylonians who scatter the people of God. They are simply instrumental. God himself is the scatterer. ([TWOT](#) online)

**Puts - 66v - KJV uses = scatter 48, scatter abroad 6, disperse 3, spread abroad 2, cast abroad 2, drive 1, break to pieces 1, shake to pieces 1, dash to pieces 1, retired 1;** Gen. 10:18; Gen. 11:4; Gen. 11:8; Gen. 11:9; Gen. 49:7; Exod. 5:12; Num. 10:35; Deut. 4:27; Deut. 28:64; Deut. 30:3; 1 Sam. 11:11; 1 Sam. 13:8; 1 Sam. 14:34; 2 Sam. 18:8; 2 Sam. 20:22; 2 Sam. 22:15; 1 Ki. 22:17; 2 Ki. 25:5; 2 Chr. 18:16; Neh. 1:8; Job 16:12; Job 18:11; Job 37:11; Job 38:24; Job 40:11; Ps. 18:14; Ps. 68:1; Ps. 144:6; Prov. 5:16; Isa. 24:1; Isa. 28:25; Isa. 41:16; Jer. 9:16; Jer. 10:21; Jer. 13:24; Jer. 18:17; Jer. 23:1; Jer. 23:2; Jer. 23:29; Jer. 30:11; Jer. 40:15; Jer. 52:8; Ezek. 11:16; Ezek. 11:17; Ezek. 12:15; Ezek. 20:23; Ezek. 20:34; Ezek. 20:41; Ezek. 22:15; Ezek. 28:25; Ezek. 29:12; Ezek. 29:13; Ezek. 30:23; Ezek. 30:26; Ezek. 34:5; Ezek. 34:6; Ezek. 34:12; Ezek. 34:21; Ezek. 36:19; Ezek. 46:18; Nah. 2:1; Hab. 3:6; Hab. 3:14; Zeph. 3:10; Zech. 1:17; Zech. 13:7

**Genesis 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.**

- And the - Ge 13:12-17 15:18-21 Nu 34:2-15 De 32:8 Jos 12:7,8 14:1-21:45
- as thou comest - Ge 13:10
- Gerar - Ge 20:1 26:1
- Gaza - Heb. Azzah, Judges 16:1 Jer 25:20
- Sodom - Ge 13:10-13 14:2 18:20 19:24,25 Ho 11:8
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Map of Canaan, with the border defined by Numbers 34:1–12 shown in **red**.

## CANAANITE TERRITORY

**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** - These towns roughly forms a triangle that covers the land of Palestine. See [Wikipedia on Canaan](#). The boundaries of Canaan's territory are described because that is the particular region Israel was to conquer. Many of these lesser-known tribes bordered the land of Palestine. Moses wrote this so that Israel would know who these peoples were in relation to God's promises of blessing and cursing on the descendants of Noah.

**THOUGHT** - Key Lesson: Remember the oracle of Noah that the sons of Canaan would end up serving the sons of Japheth and of Shem – doesn't happen right away ... it may appear like the godless have the supremacy ... but in the end they will not be on the throne ([Paul Apple](#))

**Genesis 10:20 These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, by their nations.**

- Ge 10:6 11:1-9
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

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**These are the sons of Ham**(see chart - top right), **according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, by their nations** ([goyim](#); Lxx = [ethnos](#)) - **There are the sons of Ham** relates to the previous listing beginning in Ge 10:6.

**Morris on by their nations.** The division of the original population into "nations" was both "after their tongues" and "after their families," suggesting that each family living at Babel was given a distinctive tongue at the dispersion.

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**AFRICAN TOUCH POINTS - SONS OF HAM** ([African Study Bible](#))

After the Flood, Noah's family was given the same command that Adam and Eve had been given: "Multiply, and repopulate the

earth” (Genesis 9:7). Genesis 10 describes how Noah’s sons obeyed that command and tells us where the nations of the world came from. The first three sons of Ham (**ED**: see chart above - top right) are traditionally seen as the ancestors of African peoples. Cush’s descendants settled in the upper Nile region (ED: see map below) , including southern Egypt and the northern part of Sudan. The tribe of Mizraim settled in Egypt. The tribe of Put settled in either Libya or Somalia.

When Ham looked at his naked father, his son Canaan was cursed to be the servant of Shem and Japheth. Because Ham was the father of the African people, some Christians, Jews, and Muslims **have misused this passage to justify enslaving Africans**. But the passage only says that Canaan is cursed. Even though the rest of Ham’s sons settled in Africa, Canaan did not. Much later, God told Israel (descendants of Noah’s son Shem) to conquer the land of Canaan, and Canaan’s descendants became servants, just as Noah had said.

“I understand that there are Christians among you who try to justify segregation on the basis of the Bible,” said Martin Luther King, Jr., who was of African descent. “They argue that the Negro is inferior by nature because of Noah’s curse upon the children of Ham. Oh my friends, this is blasphemy. This is against everything that the Christian religion stands for. I must say to you as I have said to so many Christians before, that in Christ ‘there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus.’ ”

As Africans, we are not descendants of Canaan, but of Ham’s other sons—Cush (Egypt and Sudan), Mizraim (Egypt) and Put (Libya or Somalia). This chapter is part of our history, and the Bible is the story of our people—both as Africans and Christians. ([See background of this ground breaking study Bible at Oasis International](#)).

**Genesis 10:21 Also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, and the older brother of Japheth, children were born.**

- **Shem** - Shem signifies name or renown; and his, indeed, was great both in a temporal and spiritual sense, inasmuch as he was destined to be the lineal ancestor of the promised Seed of the woman, to which Noah might allude in his pious ejaculation, ch. 9:26.
- **the father** - Ge 11:10-26
- **Eber** - Nu 24:24
- **the brother** - Ge 10:2
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Approximate historical distribution  
of the Semitic languages in the Ancient Near East.

## INTRODUCTION OF SONS OF SHEM

In Genesis 10:21-31 we encounter a list of 26 names. From Shem come the Assyrians, the Hebrews, some of the Arab tribes, and tribes that lived in parts of Turkey, Syria and Armenia. Shem gives us our modern word "Semitic."

**Also to [Shem](#), the father of all the children of Eber, and the older brother of Japheth, children were born-** Shem is usually mentioned first in the list of Noah’s 3 sons, but here is mentioned after Japheth and Ham, presumably so the narrative can move into the story of Babel and the genealogy of Abraham, who was descended from Shem (Ge 11:10-32).

**Technical note** - The English translations say "To Shem....the elder brother of Japheth . . . " but the commentaries state that Japheth was the eldest. What is the truth? First note that even the translations seem to be a bit confused. Compare the original version of the Amplified and the revised version of the Amplified and notice that the latter gives the correct interpretation...

**AMP** Also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber [including the Hebrews],**the older brother of Japheth**, children were born.

**AMPC (REVISED VERSION - CORRECT READING)** To Shem also,**the younger brother of Japheth** and the ancestor of all the children of Eber [including the Hebrews], children were born.

Here is a good summary from [Revealed Truth](#) (see that site for more detailed explanation)...

**Noah’s Son’s Q&A** - This section contains answers to three commonly asked questions about Noah’s sons.

**(1) Who was Noah’s Oldest Son?**

- [Japheth](#) was Noah's oldest son, born when Noah was 500 years old

## (2) When was Shem born?

- [Shem](#) was Noah's second son, born when Noah was 503 years old

## (3) Why is Shem listed first in Bible Genealogies?

- [Shem](#) is listed first because he was most important in propagating the Godly line that led from Noah to Abraham, through whose seed (Jesus Christ, the Son of God) all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; Acts 3:25).

**Walton** on Ge 10:21-31 - Even though Shem is the oldest son of Noah, his genealogy appears last, as is typical in Genesis for the son the text seeks to follow most closely. There is a mixture of Semitic and non-Semitic nations (by our ethnic criteria) in this list. For instance, Elam (east of the Tigris) and Lud (Lydia in southern Asia Minor) are considered non-Semitic, but there are close historical ties to both areas in later periods. Sheba, Ophir and Havilah are all part of the Arabian region, and Aram originated east of the Tigris and north of Elam but came to be associated with the Aramaeans, who dominated Syria and northwest Mesopotamia at the end of the second millennium B.C. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 41](#))

**Ray Stedman** - Shem was the father of the children of Eber. Actually, **Eber** was a great-grandson of Shem, but from Eber comes the word *Hebrew*. Abraham, who was really the founder of the Hebrew nation, was six generations beyond Eber. Yet Eber is of such note that Abraham is identified as an Eberite, or Hebrew (Genesis 14:13). **Elam**, the next son of Shem, is associated with Southern Mesopotamia. Archaeologists have now found that the earliest inhabitants of this area were Semites, not Hamites, as they once thought. Asshur is the one who gave his name to Assyria. The genealogy closes with Eber's two sons, Peleg and Joktan. The tribes listed as from Joktan are all associated with Arabia. The boundaries of Mesha and Sephar given here are both within the Arabian Peninsula. Our main interest, however, centers on **Peleg** and this cryptic comment made about him, "in his days the earth was divided." What do you think that means? *Peleg* in Hebrew, means "Division," but in Greek it means "Sea." We get our present English word *archipelago* from this: *archi-pelagos*, the first sea. The Greeks called the Aegean Sea "The Archipelago," the first sea, drawing the name from this man, Peleg.

**Shem** is put last of the sons of Noah because God is narrowing the flow of sacred history down to the Semitic races. Shem is the neck of the funnel. God is restricting the stream of humanity that he will deal with personally and directly down to one family group, the family of Shem. In Chapter 11, Verse 10 on to the end of the chapter, he takes this up again and narrows it still further to one man, Abraham. From there it begins to broaden out again to take in Abraham and all his descendants, both physical and spiritual. The rest of the Bible is all about the children of Abraham, physically and spiritually. Here we have then one of the most important links in understanding the Bible.

Why does God do this? He has been accused of showing favoritism in picking the people of Israel for his link with humanity. But it is not that. God is no respecter of persons, as we are told. He does this because it is necessary in view of the limitations of our minds, not of his. No one man can grasp the whole widespread, varied, world of mankind. We cannot do so even today. At election time we take polls to determine what people are thinking, because we cannot grasp or assimilate in any way what the entire mass of a people are thinking. We must take polls, samples. God is doing this with Israel. Israel becomes the sample nation, the sample people. Through the rest of the Bible, whatever is true of Israel is true of everyone; their story is our story -- your story and my story. Their stubborn rebellion is the same rebellion that we display, and their spiritual blessing under God is the same kind that we can expect if we open ourselves to respond to the grace of God. One fact comes drumming through all this otherwise dry genealogy: that is that God is seeking somehow to break through into our hearts and wills. He presses upon us in great historic sweeps and in the minor incidents that happen to each of us.

The great question we must raise in a service like this is: Are you listening? Are you getting the message God wants you to get?

He writes it large upon the landscape of history, and also he writes it small in the incidents of your daily life. But in every case it is the same truth pressing through to us. God is essential to us. We cannot live without God. You cannot fulfill yourself, you cannot find yourself without him. He loves you, is seeking you, wants you, and is drawing you to himself. Forever this finds its confirmation in all of life around us. ([God's Funnel](#))

## Related Resources:

- [Who was Japheth in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Ham in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Shem in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

- [What is the biblical account of Shem, Ham, and Japheth? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who were the sons of Noah, and what happened to them and their descendants? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who are Semites? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Genesis 10:22 The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram.**

- children - Ge 9:26 1Ch 1:17-27
- Elam - Ge 14:1-9 2Ki 15:19 Job 1:17 Isa 11:11 21:2 22:6 Jer 25:25 Jer 49:34-39 Ac 2:9
- Arphaxad - Heb. Arpachshad
- Lud - Isa 66:19
- Aram - Nu 23:7
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## FIVE SONS OF SHEM

**The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram** - These are the 5 sons who are named. Ge 11:11 adds "**and he had other sons and daughters.**"

**Elam** was one of the most ancient nations, originally established by a son of Shem (Gen 10:22, Jer 49:35). At the time of Jeremiah, in spite of its long and eminent history, it had been subjugated by the Assyrians and then the Babylonians. Eventually, however, with its capital Susa (or Shushan), it would become the key section of what would expand into the great empire of Persia. Then the combined empire of Media and Persia would finally conquer Babylon itself.

**Genesis 10:23 The sons of Aram were Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash.**

- Uz - Job 1:1 Jer 25:20
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**The sons of Aram were Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash** (- Aram is given only brief mention but the focus then shift to Arphaxad who would be the ancestor of Abraham and ultimately would be the son of Shem from whose line the Messiah would come.

**Morris** - Uz gave his name to Job's homeland (Job 1:1) but little is known of the other three sons of Aram. Evidently the children of Aram had more contact with Shem than his other grandsons (except through Arphaxad) since none of the others are listed.

**Genesis 10:24 Arpachshad became the father of Shelah; and Shelah became the father of Eber.**

- Salah - Heb. Shelah, Ge 11:12-15
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**Arpachshad** (see left side of chart halfway down) **became the father of [Shelah \(Selah\)](#); and Shelah became the father of [Eber](#)** - **Eber** is related to the word *Hebrew* – so that Eber is understood to be the ancestor of the Hebrew people.

Note he is in the line of the Messiah.

Luke 3:35-36+ the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Heber, the son of Shelah, 36 the son of Cainan, the son of **Arphaxad**, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,

**ARPHAXAD [ISBE]** - ar-fak'-sad: (1) the King James Version form (Gen 10:22,24; 11:12,13; 1 Ch 1:17) of the Revised Version (British and American) ARPACHSHAD, which see. See also TABLE OF NATIONS. (2) In Apocrypha (Judith 1) a king of the Medes,

who reigned in Ecbatana. He was defeated and slain by Nebuchadrezzar.

**EBER [ISBE] - e'-ber** (ˈebher; Eber, in Gen; Obed, in Ch):

(1) Occurs in the genealogies (Gen 10:21,25; 11:14 ff) as the great-grandson of Shem and father of Peleg and Joktan. The word means "the other side," "across," and the form "Hebrew," which is derived from it, is intended to denote the people or tribe who came "from the other, side of the river" (i.e. the Euphrates), from Haran (Gen 11:31), whence Abraham and his dependents migrated to Canaan.

(2) A Gadite (1 Ch 5:13).

(3) (4) Two Benjamites (1 Ch 8:12,22).

(5) The head of a priestly family (Neh 12:20). A. C. Grant

**Genesis 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.**

- **Eber** - 15x in Bible = Gen. 10:21; Gen. 10:24; Gen. 10:25; Gen. 11:14; Gen. 11:15; Gen. 11:16; Gen. 11:17; Num. 24:24; 1 Chr. 1:18; 1 Chr. 1:19; 1 Chr. 1:25; 1 Chr. 5:13; 1 Chr. 8:12; 1 Chr. 8:22; Neh. 12:20
- **Peleg** - 7x in Bible = Gen. 10:25; Gen. 11:16; Gen. 11:17; Gen. 11:18; Gen. 11:19; 1 Chr. 1:19; 1 Chr. 1:25
- **in** - Ge 10:32 De 32:8 Ac 17:26-27
- **Joktan** - 6x in Bible = Gen. 10:25; Gen. 10:26; Gen. 10:29; 1 Chr. 1:19; 1 Chr. 1:20; 1 Chr. 1:23
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Luke 3:35+ (LUKE'S MESSIANIC LINEAGE) the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of **Peleg**, the son of Heber, the son of Shelah,

Source: [MacArthur Study Bible - page 30](#)

## EBER'S SONS PELEG AND JOKTAN

**Two sons were born to [Eber](#); the name of the one was Peleg** (see [chart above](#)), **for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan** - This division of the earth does not refer to the "continental drift" but to the division that occurred at the tower of Babel (Ge 11:1-9). The descendants of Ham and Shem in many cases lived side by side in very close proximity so we should not be surprised that they are continually at odds throughout the Old Testament.

**Henry Morris - the earth was divided.** The "division" that took place was, most likely, the traumatic upheaval at Babel. A division in Genesis 10:5,32 is mentioned, where the division is "after his tongue." Nimrod was in the same generation as Eber, and this is the only place in the Table of Nations where the meaning of a son's name is given, indicating the importance of the event it commemorated. However, it is true that two different words are used (Pelag in Genesis 10:25, parad in Genesis 10:5,32). Although the two words are essentially synonymous, this might indicate a different type of division. **Many Bible teachers have suggested, therefore, that Genesis 10:25 might refer to a splitting of the single post-Flood continent into the present continents of the world.** They associate the modern scientific model of sea-floor spreading and continental drifting with Genesis 10:25. It should be remembered, however, that **the [continental drift hypothesis](#) has by no means been proved, and the verse seems to refer more directly to the division into families, countries and languages.** Furthermore, even if the continents have separated from a single primeval continent, such a split more likely would have occurred in connection with the continental uplifts terminating the global deluge (Psalm 104:6-9). ([The Defender's Study Bible](#) BORROW)

**Walton - Ge 10:25. dividing of the earth.** While this has traditionally been taken to refer to the division of the nations after the Tower of Babel incident (Gen 11:1-9), other possibilities exist. It could, for instance, refer to a division of human communities into sedentary farmers and pastoral nomads; or, possibly a migration of peoples is documented here that drastically transformed the culture of the ancient Near East—perhaps one represented in a break-off group traveling southeast in Genesis 11:2. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 41](#))

**PELEG [ISBE]** - pe'-leg (pelegh, "watercourse," "division"): A son of Eber, and brother of Joktan. The derivation of the name is given: "for in his days was the earth divided" (niphlegah) (Gen 10:25; compare Lk 3:35, the King James Version "Phalec"). This probably refers to the scattering of the world's population and the confounding of its language recorded in Gen 11:1-9. In Aramaic pelagh and Arabic phalaj mean "division"; in Hebrew pelegh means "watercourse." The name may really be due to the occupation by this people of some well-watered (furrowed), district (e.g. in Babylonia), for these patronymics represent races, and the derivation in Gen 10:25 is a later editor's remark. S. F. Hunter

**PELEG [SMITH]** (division, part), son of Eber and brother of Joktan. (Genesis 10:25; 11:16) The only incident connected with his history is the statement that "in his days was the earth divided." an event embodied in the meaning of his name --"division." The reference is to a division of the family of Eber himself, the younger branch of which (the Joktanids) migrated into southern Arabia, while the elder remained in Mesopotamia.

**Peleg [EBD]** division, one of the sons of Eber; so called because "in his days was the earth divided" (Gen. 10:25). Possibly he may have lived at the time of the dispersion from Babel. But more probably the reference is to the dispersion of the two races which sprang from Eber, the one spreading towards Mesopotamia and Syria, and the other southward into Arabia.

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**QUESTION - [In what way was the earth divided in Peleg's time?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The first reference to Peleg is found in Genesis 10:25, which reads the same as 1 Chronicles 1:19. Immediately following, in Genesis 11, is the event that describes this division of the earth: the [Tower of Babel](#).

At the Tower of Babel, the Lord was displeased with the actions of people who sought to build a tower to the heavens and "make a name" for themselves (Genesis 11:4). In judgment, God confused their languages so they could no longer understand one another. The account ends with this summary: "That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:9).

Peleg's family history is noted once again following the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:16–19). The fact that Peleg is mentioned before and immediately after the account of the Tower of Babel helps clarify that this is the key event that divided the earth. It seems the earth was not divided geologically, but its *people* were divided into various language groups.

Today, more than 7,000 languages exist worldwide. While many of these languages were developed after the Tower of Babel, they can be traced to different linguistic roots. The languages that exist today still serve as a dividing point in culture. These divisions have existed since the Tower of Babel in the time of Peleg.

Interestingly, one final mention of Peleg is found in the New Testament. In Luke 3:35, Peleg is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus. During the time of Peleg, God divided the earth with language. But all the while He had a plan—one that included Peleg—to send Jesus Christ, the One who can reconcile all divisions. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**QUESTION - [Is the theory of Pangea possible? Does the Bible say that there was once a Pangea / Pangaea?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Pangea is the concept that all of the land masses of the earth were at one time connected as one giant super-continent ([Wikipedia article](#)). On a world map, some of the continents look like they could fit together like giant puzzle pieces (Africa and South America, for example). Does the Bible mention Pangea? Not explicitly, but possibly. Genesis 1:9 records, "And God said, 'Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.' And it was so." Presumably, if all the water was "gathered to one place," the dry ground would also be all "in one place." Genesis 10:25 mentions, "...one was named Peleg, because in his time the earth was divided..." Some point to Genesis 10:25 as evidence that the earth was divided after the Flood of Noah.

While this view is possible, it is most definitely not universally held by Christians. Some **(ED: LIKE CREATIONIST DR HENRY MORRIS)** view Genesis 10:25 as referring to the "division" that occurred at the Tower of Babel, not the division of the continents via "continental drift." Some also dispute the post-Noahic Pangea separation due to the fact that, at the current rates of drift, the continents could not possibly have drifted so far apart in the time that has transpired since the Noahic Flood. However, it cannot be proven that the continents have always drifted at the same rate. Further, God is capable of expediting the continental-drift process to accomplish His goal of separating humanity (Genesis 11:8). Again, though, the Bible does not explicitly mention Pangea, or conclusively tell us when Pangea was broken apart.

The post-Noahic Pangea concept does possibly explain how the animals and humanity were able to migrate to the different continents. How did the kangaroos get to Australia after the Flood if the continents were already separated? Young-earth creationist alternatives to the standard continental drift theory include the Catastrophist Plate Tectonics Theory (see [http://www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v16/i1/plate\\_tectonics.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v16/i1/plate_tectonics.asp)) and the Hydroplate Theory (see <http://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/HydroplateOverview2.html>), both of which place accelerated continental drift within

the cataclysmic context of Noah's Flood.

However, there is another explanation offered by Christian scientists that does not require a post-Noahic Pangea. According to this view, intercontinental migration most likely began while sea levels were still low during and immediately following the post-Flood Ice Age when much of the water was still trapped in ice at the poles. Lower sea levels would have left the continental shelves exposed, connecting all of the major land masses through land bridges.

There are (or at least were) shallow underwater land bridges connecting all of the major continents. North America, Southeast Asia, and Australia are all attached to continental Asia. Britain is attached to continental Europe. In some places, these intercontinental bridges are only a few hundred feet below our current sea level. The theory can be summarized as follows: (1) After the Flood, an Ice Age occurred. (2) The vast amount of water that was frozen resulted in the oceans being much lower than they are today. (3) The low level of the oceans resulted in land bridges connecting the various continents. (4) Human beings and animals migrated to the different continents over these land bridges. (5) The Ice Age ended, the ice melted and the ocean levels rose, resulting in the land bridges being submerged.

So, while Pangea is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, the Bible does present the possibility of a Pangea. Whatever the case, either view presented above presents a viable explanation for how humanity and animals were able to migrate to continents now separated by vast oceans. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

#### Genesis 10:26 Joktan became the father of Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah

- **Joktan** - 6x in Bible = Gen. 10:25; Gen. 10:26; Gen. 10:29; 1 Chr. 1:19; 1 Chr. 1:20; 1 Chr. 1:23
- **Almodad** - 2x in Bible = Gen. 10:26; 1 Chr. 1:20
- **Sheleph** - 2x in Bible = Gen. 10:26; 1 Chr. 1:20
- **Hazarmaveth** - 2x in Bible = Gen. 10:26; 1 Chr. 1:20
- **Jerah** - 2x in Bible = Gen. 10:26; 1 Chr. 1:20
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**Joktan became the father of Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah** - In Ge 10:26-29 Moses lists all 13 sons of Joktan before returning to the line of Arphaxad. Why all these sons are mentioned is not clear from the text.

**JOKTAN** [ISBE] - jok'-tan (meaning unknown): "Son" of Eber, and "father" of 13 tribes (Gen 10:25,26,29; 1 Ch 1:19,20,23). Gen. 10:25; Gen. 10:26; Gen. 10:29; 1 Chr. 1:19; 1 Chr. 1:20; 1 Chr. 1:23

#### Genesis 10:27 and Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah

- **Hadoram** - 4x in Bible = Gen. 10:27; 1 Chr. 1:21; 1 Chr. 18:10; 2 Chr. 10:18
- **Uzal** - 3x in Bible = Gen. 10:27; 1 Chr. 1:21; Ezek. 27:19
- **Diklah** - 2x in Bible = Gen. 10:27; 1 Chr. 1:21
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

and Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah

#### Genesis 10:28 and Obal and Abimael and Sheba

- **Obal** - 1x in Bible = Gen. 10:26
- **Abimael** - 2x in Bible = Gen. 10:28; 1 Chr. 1:22
- **Sheba** - 23x in Bible = Gen. 10:7; Gen. 10:28; Gen. 25:3; 1 Ki. 10:1; 1 Ki. 10:4; 1 Ki. 10:10; 1 Ki. 10:13; 1 Chr. 1:9; 1 Chr. 1:22; 1 Chr. 1:32; 2 Chr. 9:1; 2 Chr. 9:3; 2 Chr. 9:9; 2 Chr. 9:12; Job 1:15; Job 6:19; Ps. 72:10; Ps. 72:15; Isa. 60:6; Jer. 6:20; Ezek. 27:22; Ezek. 27:23; Ezek. 38:13
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**Genesis 10:29 and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan.**

- **Ophir** - 12x in Bible = Gen. 10:29; 1 Ki. 9:28; 1 Ki. 10:11; 1 Ki. 22:48; 1 Chr. 1:23; 1 Chr. 29:4; 2 Chr. 8:18; 2 Chr. 9:10; Job 22:24; Job 28:16; Ps. 45:9; Isa. 13:12
- **Havilah** - 7x in Bible = Gen. 2:11; Gen. 10:7; Gen. 10:29; Gen. 25:18; 1 Sam. 15:7; 1 Chr. 1:9; 1 Chr. 1:23
- **Jobab** - 9x in Bible = Gen. 10:29; Gen. 36:33; Gen. 36:34; Jos. 11:1; 1 Chr. 1:23; 1 Chr. 1:44; 1 Chr. 1:45; 1 Chr. 8:9; 1 Chr. 8:18
- **Joktan** - 6x in Bible = Gen. 10:25; Gen. 10:26; Gen. 10:29; 1 Chr. 1:19; 1 Chr. 1:20; 1 Chr. 1:23
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan** Thirteen sons of Joktan are listed, most of whom are believed to have settled in Arabia.

**Genesis 10:30 Now their settlement extended from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the hill country of the east.**

- mount of the east - Nu 23:7
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Japheth = Green  
Shem = Pink  
Ham = Violet

**Now their settlement extended from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the hill country of the east - Mesha** and **Sephar** are only mentioned in this verse in the Bible. **Mesha** is a region marking one of the limits of the territory when they first settled in Arabia (see map above). The Joktanites occupied the southwestern portion of the peninsula of Arabia. In the map above note Arphaxad toward the lower portion of the Mesopotamia Valley (Tigris and Euphrates Rivers) which becomes important as Arphaxad's famous descendant Abram/Abraham would come from this area, specifically from Ur of the Chaldees.

**Genesis 10:31 These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, according to their nations.**

- Ge 10:5,20 Ac 17:26
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, according to their nations** ([goyim](#); Lxx = [ethnos](#)).

**Morris on according to their nations** - This concludes the "nations" listed in Genesis 10--fourteen from Japheth, thirty from Ham, and twenty-six from Shem. Thus a total of seventy such primeval nations was included by Shem in his Table of Nations. All are descendants of Adam, through Noah. There is no hint anywhere in Scripture of any "hominids" or other "pre-Adamites" in man's ancestry. The so-called "ape-men" can all be shown to be either remains of extinct apes or of true men, probably all living after the Flood.

**Genesis 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.**

- **are the** - Ge 10:1,20,31 Ge 5:29-31
- **nations** - Ge 10:25 Ge 9:1,7,19 Ac 17:26-27
- [Genesis 10 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## Related Passages:

Acts 17:24-27+ 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; 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; 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, 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;

Deuteronomy 32:8+ "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, When He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the sons of Israel.

[Click to enlarge and make more legible](#)

## SUMMARY OF THE "TABLE OF NATIONS"

**These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations([goyim](#); Lxx = [ethnos](#)); and out of these the nations ([goyim](#); Lxx = [ethnos](#)) were separated on the earth after the flood.** This verse anticipates the event of the Tower of Babel which is when God separated the nations on the earth.

**Morris** - The word "**genealogies**" (Hebrew [toledoth](#)) indicates that actual genealogical records were available to Shem as he compiled the Table of Nations. **Separated** - The seventy nations from Noah's three sons are the progenitors of all other nations (Genesis 9:19). These three streams of nations should not be interpreted as three races, however. The concept of race is not found in the Bible and is purely an evolutionist concept with no basis in either Scripture or true science. In evolutionary terminology, a race is a sub-species in the process of evolving into a new species, but the Bible speaks only of kinds. Where mankind is concerned, there are nations, tribes, tongues, peoples, and families, but these are not races.

**TSK Note** - Any man who can barely read his Bible, and has but heard of such people as the Assyrians, Elamites, Lydians, Medes, Ionians, and Thracians, will readily acknowledge that Asshur, Elam, Lud, Madai, Javan, and Tiras, grandsons of Noah, were their respective founders.

## Related Resources:

- Dictionary [Article on Table of Nations](#)

## Paul Apple - DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Do you think this chapter is worthy of a sermon or not?
- 2) What is the significance of the link between Nimrod and the mighty men of renown identified in Gen 6?
- 3) How did Israel lose focus on God's interest in the nations of the world?
- 4) What would be some of the significant spiritual lessons from a study of your family's genealogy?

## QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Dr. John Whitcomb:** Background to the Tower of Babel They did not obey God's commission to spread all over the world; they were terrified at that prospect; Basic ideas of Chap. 10 – Key words: separation and languages Peleg = division Chap. 11 tells us how God separated the nations by way of different languages

**David Thompson:** Many endure the chapter rather than enjoy the chapter; historical accuracy; no parallel document anywhere in the world; historical roots of various nations and languages and tribes and places; Common theme: all these people connected to Noah All different nations and languages of people all had their beginning in Noah and should worship the God of Noah; Tragedy is that most of these people don't end up having a relationship with God like Noah did; What became of those who survived the wrath of God in the flood?

2 different formulas to introduce lineage: "sons of" formula – 12 times – looks back at ancestry "become a father" formula – 5 times – looks forward to the future development

3 Descendent lines presented in this chapter – map from John Davis

1) Enlarge Japheth by blessing him and expanding his boundaries and territory; 2 sons singled out: Gomer is father of Europeans – most of us from this line Javin father of Greeks We could come from a great spiritual lineage and end up a spiritual dud North of the Promised Land and then fans out

2) Ham's descendants – Promised Land inhabited now by other peoples; Israelites had not yet taken it over; Promise that this line thru Canaan would end up serving sons of Japheth and Shem; God allow those who are godless to prosper for a time; The godly will end up on top in the end; Nimrod gets the most attention – Micah calls Babylon the land of Nimrod; he was a powerful man; skilled in tracking down and destroying men; people attracted to his leadership; he influenced men; father of Babylonianism; founded many powerful cities like Nineveh; took an opposition position against God Don't let godless powers intimidate you; some of the most famous were the most godless; South of the Promised Land and then fans out

3) Shem's descendants – Messiah would come through this line Peoples of the Middle East; 5 generations after the Flood you go from righteous Noah to chaotic mess of religion after Babel;

Is. 66:19 – survivors of the Tribulation will be sent to the nations – look at the list – 4 from Japheth; 1 from Ham; 1 from Shem; by faith anyone can share in Christ's kingdom blessings

**Brian Borgman:** Setting the Table for Grace Gen. 1-11 is universal history; God's dealing with entire world; things change in chap. 12-50 – patriarchal history

Chaps. 10-11 form a unit together; right in the middle you have the story of the Tower of Babel; it explains how the Table of Nations came about; Multiples of 7 and 10 dominate these chapters = sense of completeness; 70 nations Many of these nations become traditional enemies of Israel

Introduced by toledot; 10:32 gives us another one; 11:10, 27 – 4 of the 10 toledots Terah became father of Abraham

Genealogies made up of - Persons - Tribes - Place names

This Table of Nations unique among all ancient literature

#### **Observations:**

- Echoes genealogy found in Gen. 5; gives us the two seed perspective but with some obscurity; God has the final word in the conflict
- We see both God's sovereignty and God's grace; nation Israel is not explicitly mentioned; most of emphasis here is on Gentile nations;
- 70 sons of Jacob end up in Egypt (Gen. 46:27); Israel is a microcosm similar to the macrocosm of the 70 nations; God is not against the nations; blessing the sons of Israel in order to bless the nations

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#### **G Campbell Morgan - Gen 10.32.**

The reader will observe that in this tenth chapter we have an account of how the nations were "divided in the earth." It precedes the story of the occasion of this division, which is found in the next chapter. It is here that the national idea emerges in the Bible story. Up to now there had been one race. There would still be one race, but henceforth in its growth and development, it would consist of different branches, families, nations, each having peculiar characteristics, which in the Divine economy are intended to be held in trust for the commonwealth, that so the race, being communal, might be the richer. Babel was an attempt to evade this wider purpose of God. Thus the writer describes the division, which followed Babel first, because it was the first Divine purpose. All this should be very carefully pondered. The national idea is Divine, but its principle is co-operation, and its purpose communion. Man has made its principle competition, and its experience has become conflict. When the nations are last seen in the Biblical Revelation, they are walking in the light of the City of God (Rev. 21. 24); and then the commonwealth of man will be realized in the Kingdom of God, and all conflict will have ended for ever. The last glory of the race will not be monotony, but harmony, the cultivation by every nation of its own peculiar powers and resources, in the interest of all the other nations. That is the far-off Divine event, to which the whole creation moves; and that the glory of the vision which inspires to all sacrifice and service till it be realized.

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**Warren Wiersbe** summarizes the significance of Genesis 10, the Table of Nations:

**First** - This list of names and places carries with it some important theological truths, not the least of which is that Jehovah God is the Lord of the nations. God gave the nations their inheritance (Deut. 32:8) and "determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26). In spite of despots like Nimrod, Jehovah is the God of geography and of history; He is in control. What God promises, He performs, and Noah's prophecy about his sons came true.

**Second**, in spite of external differences, all nations belong to the same human family. God made us all “of one blood” (Acts 17:26), and no race or people can claim to be superior to any other race or people. While in His providence, God has permitted some nations to make greater progress economically and politically than other nations, their achievements don’t prove that they are better than others (Pr 22:2).

**Third**, God has a purpose for the nations to fulfill. The account in Genesis 9:24-11:32 makes it clear that God’s chosen nation was Israel. From chapter 12 on, Israel will be center stage in the narrative. But God also used Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Media-Persia, and Rome to accomplish His purposes with reference to the Jewish people. God can use pagan rulers like Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Darius, and even Augustus Caesar.

**Fourth**, God is concerned for all the nations. Frequently in the book of Psalms you find the phrase “all ye lands” or “all nations.” Psalms 66:1–8 and 67 both express this universal vision that all the nations of the earth come to know God and serve Him. The

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the Table of Nations?](#)**

**ANSWER - Genesis chapter 10, commonly known as the Table of Nations, is a list of the patriarchal founders of seventy nations which descended from [Noah through his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth](#). Twenty-six of the seventy descended from Shem, thirty from Ham, and fourteen from Japheth.** Genesis 10:32 sums up the chapter succinctly: “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.” Chapter 11 recounts their division at Babel.

The text seems to imply, though it never explicitly states, that the list was intended to be an exhaustive account. It has traditionally been interpreted as such. Nevertheless, this interpretation is speculative.

All of the biblical genealogies are abridged. Key historical figures are included while “lesser,” or less culturally relevant, siblings are left out. It is possible that such is the case for the Table of Nations. The compiler of the Table may have focused his study on nations most significant to his own nation at the time of the Table’s compilation, while neglecting the founders of other far-flung, perhaps even long-forgotten nations. While every nation is ultimately related to every other nation through Noah, this ancestral tie does not indefinitely perpetuate mutual cultural significance among his descendants.

While some of the nations listed are easily identifiable, some remain obscure. Numerous scholars have attempted to identify these unknown nations with varying degrees of success. Due to the archaic nature of the source material, there remains considerable ambiguity.

The accuracy of the Table has been called into question by the fact that some of the relationships described do not match up with modern comparative linguistics. For example, the Elamites are said to have descended from Shem, yet their language was not Semitic. The Canaanites are said to have descended from Ham, yet their language was Semitic.

This objection assumes that these languages never experienced any dramatic change. The region’s history seems to suggest that this is a dubious assumption. The cultures of the region were constantly subject to migrations and invasions by foreign powers. The conquering empires often imposed their language and culture upon the vanquished.

The Hellenizing of the Persian Empire following Alexander the Great’s conquest is a classic example. Or consider the Israelites, who primarily spoke ancient Hebrew up until the Babylonian captivity and the Persian conquest. Then they adopted Aramaic, the official language of the Persian Empire. The Jewish Talmud was written in Aramaic, as were large portions of the books of Daniel and Ezra. Aramaic is thought to have been Jesus’ native language. Following Alexander’s conquest of Persia, the Jews adopted Greek as a second language. As a result, all of the New Testament was written in Greek. The languages of the region were not static.

The Hebrews invaded and conquered Canaan long before the Greeks, Persians, and Babylonians. Is it surprising that the Canaanites of the region adopted a Semitic language almost identical to ancient Hebrew? As for the Elamites, if we want to make a case from Elamite we have to start with proto-Elamite. Proto-Elamite remains undeciphered, so it cannot form the basis for a polemic against the Table of Nations. There is no evidence that the later, non-Semitic Elamite underlies proto-Elamite, and we do not know what influences may have altered the language at any time.

Another objection to the Table of Nations is that several of the nations listed do not appear in the historical record (as we have it today) until as late as the first millennium BC. This has led some critical scholars to date the Table no earlier than 7th century BC.

This is a recurring criticism of the Bible. Rather than give the Bible the benefit of the doubt whenever it mentions a city or culture that doesn’t appear anywhere else in the historical record, or whenever it places a culture in an era that antedates any other record we have from our other limited sources, critics generally assume that the biblical authors were either disingenuous or ignorant. Such was the case for the ancient metropolis of Nineveh and the ancient Hittite civilization of the Levant, both of which were rediscovered

in modern times, in the 19th and 20th centuries, respectively, in a remarkable vindication of the Bible's historical witness. The fact of the matter is our knowledge of ancient cultures is extremely fragmented and often dependent upon key assumptions. It is therefore speculative to argue that the Table of Nations was written so late based solely on the fact that some of the nations mentioned appear nowhere else than in later historical records.

One final objection concerns the fact that [Nimrod](#) is said to have been a son of Cush (Genesis 10:8), who is believed to have founded Nubia just south of Egypt. Yet Nimrod established several cities in Mesopotamia that show no sign of Nubian origin (Genesis 10:8-12). Does this mean, as some critics claim, that the Table is therefore manifestly wrong, either about Nimrod's lineage or his role in establishing the Mesopotamian cities?

Skeptics who make this argument overlook the fact that Cush also fathered the founders of at least six Arabian nations (Genesis 10:7), none of which show signs of Nubian origin. This is because Nubia developed along its own cultural path over many generations. Nimrod was an immediate son of Cush. We have no reason to expect him or the cities he helped establish to show any sign of Nubian origin.

In summary, the Table of Nations presents the biblical, ethnological view that all nations descend from Noah through three of his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. It is not known whether the list of seventy was meant to be exhaustive or if there were some nations left out, intentionally or accidentally. The accuracy of what we do know about the Table has been called into question by skeptics whose polemical objections tend to be defective and insubstantial. Due to the archaic nature of the source material, the veracity of the Table ultimately remains undeterminable. In the end, those who accept it do so by faith, taking it for granted as part of a larger, justifiable perspective. Those who reject it essentially do so for the same reasons. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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### **Steven Cole - [The Roots of the Nations \(Genesis 10:1-32\)](#)**

The chapter is a genealogy, but not in the sense of Genesis 5 and 11, which trace lineage from father to son (or grandson). Rather, it contains individual names, place names, and many names of tribes or people groups, some of which may be derived from the patriarch of that group. Thus it is not just tracing individual histories, but the development of nations, especially as they related to Israel at the time of the conquest of Canaan. It isn't a complete catalog of all nations, but rather a list that would help Israel understand the origins of the people they would encounter during the conquest, especially in light of the blessings and cursings of Noah's oracle (Ge 9:25-27).

The chapter is divided between the descendants of Japheth (Ge 10:1-5), Ham (Ge 10:6-20), and Shem (Ge 10:21-32). There is debate among scholars as to the birth order of Noah's sons. Some translate verse 21 so that Shem is the older brother of Japheth (NASB), whereas others understand Japheth to be the eldest (NIV, NKJV). There is also debate as to whether Ham was the middle son (he is always listed second) or the youngest (see 9:24). We probably cannot know for certain, but I'm inclined toward the view of Keil & Delitzsch (*Commentary on the Old Testament* [Eerdmans], 1:156) that the birth order is Shem, Ham, and Japheth. In chapter 10, Japheth's descendants are probably listed first because they were the most remote and thus the least important to Israel (which is Moses' common pattern in Genesis, to dispose of the least important matters first). Since the line of Shem will occupy the rest of the book, it comes last.

I'm not going to attempt to work through every name in the chapter. There is a lot of speculation involved in trying to trace every name to a particular group of people, since names change in spelling over the years and from language to language. But we can be fairly certain about some of the broad trends and people movements.

We who are of European heritage are descended from Japheth. His descendants fanned out to the east and west from the probable landing site of the ark in eastern Turkey. It is generally agreed that Gomer's, Javan's and Tiras's descendants moved into what is now Europe; Magog, Tubal, and Meschech moved north into what is now Russia; and Madai was the ancestor of the Medes and Persians, who eventually migrated into India. Thus the Indo-European languages are related, stemming from a common ancestor. The relationship of the languages of India and of western Europe was largely unknown until the 19th century, when comparative and historical study established their descent from a common language ancestor somewhere in eastern Europe. Yet Genesis 10 establishes this linkage.

The sons of Ham spread out primarily toward Africa. Cush is mentioned often in Scripture, and refers to Ethiopia. One notorious son of Cush, Nimrod, is listed. He moved east into the area of Babylon and Ninevah. (I'll say more about him later.) Mizraim is Egypt, Put probably refers to Libya, and Canaan, of course, to the many peoples inhabiting the land of Palestine during the conquest.

One obvious question from this table of the nations is, Where are the Oriental races? They may be omitted, since the list is not necessarily comprehensive. But they may be related to the Sinites (Ge 10:17), which name is still preserved in the word "Sino-" in reference to China (such as Sino-American relations). Another possibility is that some of the Hittites (called Heth in Ge 10:15), when their empire fell, fled eastward into China. The word Hittite has also been spelled "Khittae," from which may come the word "Cathay,"

another designation of China.

The boundaries of Canaan's territory are described (Ge 10:19) because that is the particular region Israel was to conquer. Many of these lesser-known tribes bordered the land of Palestine. Moses wrote this so that Israel would know who these peoples were in relation to God's promises of blessing and cursing on the descendants of Noah.

Of the sons of Shem, Eber is named at the head of the list (Ge 10:21) and again later (Ge 10:24) because the word "Hebrew" probably comes from his name. Elam was the ancestor of the Elamites, who lived in southeast Mesopotamia. Asshur was apparently the founder of the Assyrians, although nothing is known of him. Arpachshad was in the line leading to Abraham (Ge 11:10-26). Lud was probably the Ludbu of the Assyrians, situated on the Tigris River. Aram is the name of the Aramean tribes which lived on the steppes of Mesopotamia (from Allen P. Ross, "The Table of the Nations in Genesis 10--Its Content," *Bibliotheca Sacra* [Jan.-Mar., 1981], pp. 22-34).

A mysterious note is attached to the name of Peleg (10:25, whose name in Hebrew means "divided"), that "in his days the earth was divided." Most likely this refers to the dividing of the nations at Babel. Thus chronologically, Genesis 11 fits in here, which may be during Nimrod's time (three or four generations after the flood). If Nimrod built Babylon, then God could have scattered the nations in his time, after which he moved north to conquer Nineveh.

Some have suggested that this division of the earth is a reference to continental drift, the idea that the continents were once together in one great land mass, but have drifted apart. There is scientific evidence to support that theory, although most would date it far earlier than this. But even in the last century, before scientists advanced that idea, some suggested this interpretation. It's interesting that in Greek the word for sea is *pelagos* (we get "archipelago" from this). If there was a catastrophic upheaval in Peleg's day, in which the continents moved apart and the seas broke in on the land, both the Greek and Hebrew meaning of Peleg's name would make sense. But we can only be very speculative on the point.

With that as an overview of these verses, what can we learn from them spiritually? Three lessons:

### **1. People are quick to forget the one true God.**

Verses 1 and 32 both contain the phrase, "after the flood." You would think that a judgment as catastrophic as the flood would cause people to fear God for many generations after. They should have realized that they could not defy God with impunity. And yet here we have a table of the nations, with no hint that any of them followed the one true God.

It's overwhelming to think of all these names and to realize that they represent whole groups of people, whole nations, who lived and died, for the most part, without God. Perhaps there was more knowledge of God than we are aware of, but what we know of these nations from later history would not indicate that any of them worshiped the one true God.

Nimrod is a case in point. Apparently his name was proverbial in Moses' day, so that people compared a powerful man to Nimrod (10:9), much as we may say, "a dictator like Stalin." At first glance, you might think that Nimrod was a good guy, since he is called a mighty hunter "before the Lord." But the point is rather that Nimrod asserted himself against the Lord.

There are several clues which point us in this direction. First, the term "mighty one," (used three times of Nimrod, 10:8, 9), recalls the powerful, but wicked Nephilim (Gen. 6:4). Nimrod was like them, mighty in their own exploits, but not mighty in godliness. Second, Nimrod was the founder of both Babylon and Ninevah, which later became enemies and conquerors of Israel. If you trace the word Babylon through the Bible, you find that it was first a city and later a symbolic word for a system that exalts man in opposition to God and oppresses man under tyranny.

In Genesis 11:4 the builders of the tower of Babel boasted that their tower would reach into heaven and that they would make a name for themselves. Centuries later, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, boasted in his own great power. He set up a gold statue as a symbol of his glory and power and forced everyone to bow down to it. Later he boasted as he walked on the roof of his palace, "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan. 4:30). He exalted himself against God who is the ruler over mankind, who bestows human sovereignty to whomever He wishes (Dan. 4:32). And he used his power to force people to bow before false gods.

Later, in Revelation 17 & 18, we encounter both religious and political Babylon, the great harlot, who exalts herself against God and slaughters the people of God. She is said to sit on many waters, which are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues (Rev. 17:15). The wording reminds us of the families, languages, lands, and nations of Genesis 10:5, 20, and 31. Babylon oppresses the nations and turns them away from God.

For this reason, many commentators suggest that when the text says that Nimrod was a mighty hunter, it should be taken to mean not that he was a hunter of game, but a hunter of men. The Hebrew word is used elsewhere in reference to "a violent invasion of the persons and rights of men" (George Bush, *Notes on Genesis* [Klock & Klock] 1:171). Nimrod used his skill and force in warfare to

build a kingdom for himself at others' expense. Josephus wrote, "[Nimrod] was a bold man, and of great strength of hand; and he gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them to a constant dependence on his own power" (cited by Bush, p. 172).

Thus when it says that Nimrod was a mighty hunter "before the Lord," the Hebrew is, "in the face of the Lord," or "against the Lord" (as the Septuagint translates it). Moses is reminding his readers that Nimrod's tyranny did not go unnoticed by God. His name itself comes from a word meaning "we will revolt." He established his kingdom in defiance of God.

Note also that Nimrod was a nephew of Canaan, who was cursed by Noah. James Boice imagines Nimrod, who would have been aware of this curse, saying, "I don't know about the others, but I regard this matter of the curse of God on Canaan as a major disgrace on my family, one that needs to be erased. Did God say that my uncle Canaan would be a slave? I'll fight that judgment. I'll never be a slave! What's more, I'll be the exact opposite. I'll be so strong that others will become slaves to me. Instead of 'slave,' I'll make them say, 'Here comes Nimrod, the mightiest man on earth'" (*ibid.*, 1:332).

An Italian proverb states, "Once the game is over, the king and the pawn go back into the same box." What good is it to become the founder of a mighty kingdom if you do not know the living and true God? Fame and power are fleeting in light of eternity. I have read that Mao Zedong, the powerful Chinese dictator, viewed by many of his people as divine, shortly before his death, said on several occasions, "I am soon going to meet God." Alfredo Stroessner ruled Paraguay as dictator for 34 years. He had named over 10,000 streets and public places after himself. But in February, 1989, he was deposed. The day after the coup, crews were already at work changing all of these names.

No matter how great we become in the eyes of men, the day comes quickly for us all when we must go to meet God. That fact should help us to remember Him all our days and to order our lives rightly before Him. We dare not forget, as Nimrod and all of these nations were so quick to do, that we must stand before Him. There's a second lesson for us in Genesis 10:

## **2. People are quick to forget the oneness of the human race.**

There is one true and living God; there is also one human race which He has created in His image. We all are descended from the same family. We who are theologically conservative sometimes hesitate to talk about the brotherhood of man, because the liberals use it to imply that everyone is in the family of God, apart from personal salvation. But there is a true biblical doctrine of the brotherhood of all men. Paul referred to it in his sermon at Athens when he said that God "made from one, 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 17:26). In that same sermon he calls us all "the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29).

If Christians would stop to ponder the implications of this rather dry tenth chapter of Genesis, racial prejudice would be dissolved. I have often been shocked to hear racist comments from Christians. Sad to say, many chapters of the Ku Klux Klan have Christian pastors serving as chaplains! But the Bible is clear that whatever your skin color, you can trace your ancestry back to one of the three sons of Noah. We're all brothers and sisters!

Why then are we so quick to divide from one another and to oppress one another? The history of the human race has been one of power struggles in every level of society and among the various nations. Why? Because the one human race has one basic need: "... there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22b-23). As God said to Noah after the flood, "the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21). That's your need and mine: to repent of our sin, pride, and prejudice, and to know God's forgiveness, so that His gospel of reconciliation can flow through us to those who have not heard. That's the third lesson here:

## **3. God wants all people to hear of His one means of salvation.**

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6). "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Jesus Christ and His sacrificial death on the cross is God's one means of salvation. He wants all to hear.

Perhaps you're wondering, "But what about all these nations before Abraham? They never heard about salvation through Christ." Paul gives an answer in his sermon at Lystra when he says, "And in the generations gone by [God] permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:16-17). God's witness was around them; if men will seek Him, He is not far from each one (Acts 17:27).

Although I admit that it's a difficult problem, we know that God will be fair and just with every person. But the real question we need to face is, *what about us who have heard?* What are we to do? First, we must come to Christ, repent of our own sins, and receive His pardon. Then we are responsible to tell others. His plan is to use His people to tell the message of salvation to every family,

language, land, and nation.

We will see in Genesis 12 how God chose Abraham and promised to bless all nations through him and his descendants. From Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob, in the fulness of time, the promised Savior was born. His own people did not receive Him, and so the Gentiles were grafted into the promise; as Noah prophesied, Japheth would dwell in the tents of Shem (Gen. 9:27). Christ has purchased with His blood men “from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9). Now we, who have received the blessings of God through Abraham, are commissioned to tell the good news of salvation and forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ to those who haven’t heard.

Though people are quick to forget God and the oneness of the human race, God wants all people to hear of His one means of salvation.

## Conclusion

You can count the number of nations in Genesis 10 in different ways and come up with slightly different figures. Jewish scholars counted 70 (26 from Shem, 30 from Ham [not including the Philistines, mentioned in passing; 10:14], and 14 from Japheth). Perhaps when our Lord chose 70 to go out to preach the gospel (Luke 10:1), He was saying, “I want a worker for every nation.” His Great Commission makes it clear that we are to go to every nation (people group). That is the thrust of the missions movement in our day, to see a church for every people by the year 2000.

**Robert Woodruff was a man of vision. At the end of World War II, he said, “In my generation it is my desire that everyone in the world have a taste of Coca-Cola.” As president of Coca-Cola from 1923 to 1955, Woodruff motivated his colleagues to reach their generation around the world for Coke. It is no accident that Coke is now sold from the deserts of Africa to the interior of China.**

**If they can do it with Coke, can’t we do it with Christ? I want to leave you with two questions to ask yourself soberly before God:**

1. *Am I doing all I can to reach as many for Christ as I can?*
2. *If not, what am I going to change in order to do something about it?*

God wants all the nations to hear the good news about the Savior.

## Discussion Questions

1. What are some practical ways most of us could be more involved in the Great Commission?
2. Which is more difficult: To give money to missionaries or to tell your neighbor about Christ?
3. How do we know how much we should give to world missions? What guidelines can help us to be faithful in this matter?
4. How would you answer a critic’s question, “What about those who have never heard the gospel?”

## Lessons from the Table of Nations

### Ray Pritchard

- Source - [Many Nations Under God: A Biblical View of World History - Genesis 10](#)

I find it fascinating to study this chapter from the standpoint of history, geography, and the unfolding evidence of God’s hand at work across the ages. There are also important spiritual lessons to be learned from Genesis 10.

### A. The Unity of the Human Race.

This may seem like an odd lesson after studying a chapter that emphasizes the division of humanity. Yet the broader point is clear. After the flood everyone on earth is descended from one of three men—Japheth, Seth or Ham. That includes all six billion people who presently inhabit planet earth. We all descend from these three sons of Noah. This means that today’s diversity is not the last word. The human race is diverse in geography, language, culture, skin color, physical capabilities, dress, habits, diet, and so on. But those differences, as real and profound as they are, are not the final truth. We are all branches from the same family tree. And every person is related to every other person on earth. Here is the proof. You can take the blood of an Irishman and transfuse it into the body of a woman from Japan and his blood will save her life. Or you can take her blood and transfuse it into a man from Brazil, and her blood will save his life. Researchers tell us that human DNA is so stable that you can take two people from any place on earth,

compare their DNA, and it will be 99.8% identical. Furthermore, of the 0.2% difference, the visible characteristics (such as skin color, eye shape, and so on) account for only 0.012% of the genetic difference. This means that the so-called “racial” differences, which seem so important to many people, are trivial to the point of insignificance. (For a fascinating discussion of this whole question, see *One Blood: The Biblical Answer to Racism* by Ken Ham, Carl Wieland, and Don Batten, Master Books, 1999.)

This leads us to many other important truths. We are all made in God’s image. All are sinners who fall short of God’s glory. We are all highly valued, deeply fallen, and greatly loved. And all of us can be saved through Jesus Christ.

Last Wednesday night 3,500 people gathered in Mills Park for a September 11 Memorial Service sponsored by eight local churches. Of the many comments I have heard since then, one has been repeated over and over again. “It was so good to see people from so many different backgrounds worshipping the Lord together.” One man said, “This is like a little bit of heaven.” All those churches, all those people. All those backgrounds, colors, languages, joining together in a public park to remember, to honor, and to proclaim our hope in Christ. This is truly what heaven will be like. Revelation 7 tells us that there will be some from every tongue, tribe, nation, and from every people group on earth gathered round the throne, praising the Lamb that was slain. God’s redemptive vision encompasses the whole wide world.

## **A Humbling and Exalting Truth**

**What a humbling truth this is.** We Americans can sometimes act arrogant, as if we are somehow innately superior to people from other countries. (If you doubt my words, ask someone born and raised outside this country.) We are not genetically superior to other people in other places. That was Hitler’s mistake. He truly believed the “Aryans” were superior to the “mongrel” races that deserved to be enslaved and then destroyed. But Hitler was mistaken. The foulest person on earth is my brother, part of my family tree. One way we deny this is by using demeaning terms to attack one another—insults and stereotypes that lift us up and put others down.

**But this is also an exalting truth.** All the kings and heroes, all the soldiers who marched in righteous battles, all the wise and strong and good, all are my brothers and my sisters, too. Let’s face it. Our ancestors are a mixed lot. There are heroes and villains in every family tree. Every man has a chicken thief among his ancestors. (When I said that on Sunday morning, a man came up to me and said, “I don’t have a chicken thief in my family, but my uncle robbed the First National Bank.” “That qualifies,” I replied.) And every woman has a Florence Nightingale back there somewhere. We’re all in the same boat, aren’t we? Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief. King, pauper, prince, clown, murderer. This is our common lot. The earth is one, and humanity is one, and there is only one God over all.

**From this truth we get a clear view of world missions.** Sometimes we talk about “home” versus “foreign” missions. But where does home end and where does foreign begin? These days you can walk down the street and meet people from six nations living on the same block. The world has come to America, and especially to the big cities of America. This world is my home; all men are related to me. We are all in the same human family. “The world is my parish,” declared John Wesley. We should say the same thing.

**It is easy to grow narrow and provincial and to say, “Us four and no more.”** Just my kind. Just my color. Just my culture. Just my language. Just my people. Just my background. Just my tradition. Just my preferences. Pretty soon you end up with a church all by yourself because no one else fits there. Christ came to redeem us from our smallness, our littleness, our narrowness. Jesus said, “Go and teach all nations,” and “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” The great Apostle Paul declared, “I am a debtor to all men.” We are called to care for the people of the world. Christianity will not allow the heart to be small, but opens the heart to the whole wide world of men and women made in God’s image.

If we have narrow visions and small ideas and exclusive claims that we are better than others because of our heritage or background or skin color, then we do not understand the gospel message.

## **B. The Sovereignty of God over Every Nation.**

Genesis 10 emphasizes this truth by the very fact that the nations are listed by clans and languages, in their territories and nations (v. 20). Lest we think this happens by accident, consider the words of Deuteronomy 32:8, “When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.” Though it may seem that “might makes right,” history testifies that God is in charge of where men and nations end up. He apportions their places and boundaries.

I have often meditated on the amazing words of Acts 17:26, “From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.” The King James Version of the first phrase is very picturesque: God “hath made of one blood” all the nations that dwell on the earth. One blood. What a powerful image.

- No such thing as American blood.
- No such thing as French blood.

- No such thing as Pakistani blood.
- No such thing as Israeli blood.
- No such thing as Finnish blood.
- No such thing as Filipino blood.

There is only one blood. Human blood. It flows in endless varieties but it is all “one blood.”

The theory of racial superiority has led to horrible results in history. Just over a half-century ago the Nazis elevated the “pure Aryan” race and used that as an excuse to murder 12 million Jews, Slavs, Ukrainians, Russians, and others deemed inferior and unworthy. In our own country the belief in white superiority fueled slavery, segregation, and the Jim Crow Laws. It still causes men to loathe and fear others of a different color.

Against the evils of racism Paul declares, “We’re all from the same stock. Fruit from the same branch. Born into the same human family.” This is the basis for Christian reconciliation between the races and the various ethnic groups in society and in the church.

### **More Alike Than Different**

It is also confirmed by common sense. The more you travel around the world, the more common humanity seems to be. Superficially we are very different in our appearance, background, language and customs. But scratch deeper and you discover that all people are substantially the same. Once past the surface, you discover no fundamental difference between a savage in the jungle and a corporate lawyer on Wall Street or between a woman in a brothel in Rio and a refined graduate of Vassar College. Everywhere we are the same—the same longings, regrets, dreams, hopes, the same need to love and be loved, the same desire to bear children and raise a family, with the same sense that there must be a God of some kind who made us.

As long as we live together on the earth there will be various races, colors, pigments, backgrounds, languages and cultures. These differences are not evil and should not be ignored or deprecated. There is much to appreciate in the various differences in humanity. But let us be clear on this point: There is only one race in God’s eyes—the human race. Secondary differences do not matter to him the way they seem to matter so much to us. Paul’s point is clear. Since we all descend from the same person, there is no room for inordinate pride or a feeling of superiority over others. We’re all in this together—and we all need the saving touch of Jesus Christ.

This truth provides the biblical basis for civil rights and for fair treatment of all people. This is the biblical argument against all prejudice and racial discrimination.

### **C. The Narrowing of God’s Purposes.**

Ray Stedman called his sermon on Genesis 10, “[God’s Funnel](#).” A funnel is an instrument for concentrating the flow of something from a wide area into a small area. That’s what’s happening here. Although it appears that God is working only with nations, the end of the chapter reminds us that the line of promise goes from one man to another. Shem is the neck of the funnel. The line that started with Adam goes to Noah, then to Shem, on to Peleg, eventually to Abraham, and thousands of years later will climax with the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. The flow of the biblical story moves from many nations to one man, Abraham, through whom all the nations on earth will be blessed. And how will this blessing come to the nations? Through the ultimate “Seed of Abraham,” the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus at the end of Genesis 10, we come face to face with Jesus Christ. This is where every biblical sermon must end. He is the goal of every part of the Bible. Genesis 10 ends with the nations divided and in rebellion against God. And to a world in a rebellion, God says, “I love you! I love you! I love you!” This is the message of the gospel. And the question becomes very personal. If God has arranged all the events of history to bring his Son to the world, then you must eventually answer this question: “What have you done with Jesus?” Truth demands a personal response. All that I have written is just an academic exercise if it does not lead you to personal faith in Christ.

### **History is His Story.**

You cannot live without him. He is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus. Do you know him? “I Just Didn’t Know His Name”

In her book [God’s Story on page 214](#) (BORROW), **Anne Graham Lotz** tells the following story:

Elizabeth Carter was a young American woman who taught English in mainland China. On a weekend outing with friends, she hiked up Tai Shan, a holy mountain, not too far from the city where she worked. At the base of the mountain, as she began her ascent, she saw an old beggar sitting by the path. She felt very impressed to speak with him and tell him about God. Because her friends hurried on up the path, Elizabeth suppressed the urge to stop and speak, and so she passed him by.

During the afternoon exploration on the mountain, her thoughts kept returning to that old beggar. She began to deeply regret having not spoken to him, knowing that he would most likely have left before she returned. As she descended the summit in the early evening she resolved to make time to speak to him if he was still there.

When Elizabeth reached the base of the mountain, to her eager surprise, the old beggar was still sitting exactly where he had been before. This time she went over to him and gently began to speak to him. She told him that there is a God Who created all things, that the great Creator God had created him because he loved him and wanted to be known by him. She told the old man that God had sent his Son to die on a cross as a sacrifice for the man's sin, and that if he placed his faith in God's Son, Jesus, he would be forgiven and would receive eternal life.

As Elizabeth continued telling the old man about God, tears began to slip down his weather-beaten face, moistening his few wispy white whiskers. Thinking she had offended him in some way, Elizabeth asked what was wrong. The old man smiled through his tears and said softly, 'I have worshiped him all my life. I just didn't know his name.'

It doesn't matter who you are or where you are or what family or group or clan or tribe or race or nation you come from. You might be a beggar on a street corner in Calcutta or a businessman in a Singapore high-rise. You might be a taxi driver in Madrid or a farmer in Belarus. You might live in a village in Chad or you might be an entertainer at a nightclub in Sao Paulo. You could be a housewife in Tulsa or a Drivers Ed teacher in Cicero. You could be married or single, male or female, rich or poor, old or young, healthy or very sick. The specific circumstances of your life do not change the fundamental truth. All of us were with born with a desire to know the God who made us. But most people living on earth do not really know his Name.

His name is Jesus.

Here is the question you must answer:

"What have you done with Jesus?"

History truly is His Story.

You cannot live without him.

What have you done with Jesus?