

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #28

Genesis 10:1-32

Genesis 10 is a very important chapter because in this table of nations we learn of the historical roots of lands, languages, families and nations (10:5, 20, 31). **Even liberals have acknowledged that Genesis 10 is a remarkably accurate historical document for there is no parallel document anywhere in existence.** We learn about our origin and the origin of all others. We learn exactly what Paul knew; God “hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation” (Acts 17:26). If we add up the names in chapter 10, there were originally 70 nationalities of people, which mean 70 different geographical locations and political philosophies.

ALL NATIONS AND LANGUAGES AND LOCATIONS OF PEOPLE, WHETHER BLESSED OR CURSED BY GOD, HAD THEIR BEGINNING IN NOAH AND THEREFORE SHOULD PURSUE THE SAME RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THAT NOAH HAD.

This chapter is the link between all nationalities of the world and Noah. Our DNA all comes from one source, not an ape or monkey, but righteous Noah. Every lineage of people has at least one person who really knew the God of the Bible and that was Noah.

Chapter 10:1 begins a new toledoth (‘generations’) section which is designed to inform us what became of Noah and his sons who survived the wrath of God. There are two ways in which this lineage is developed - 1) The “sons of” formula (10:1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 (twice), 20, 22, 23, 31, 32); and 2) The “begot or became the father of” formula (10:8, 13, 15, 24, 26). The “sons of” formula presents lineage originating from a father or ancestor, whereas the “beget or become the father of” formula presents lineage progressing from the father. The first term looks back and the second looks forward. The “sons of” formula is more interesting in ancestry and the “begot” or “became the father of” formula is more interested in development.

Since all nations have their link to Noah, one would think that they would all have a good relationship with God, but that is not the story of the majority.

DESCENDANT LINE #1 - The descendants of Japheth. 10:2-5

In Genesis 9:27, God promised to “enlarge” Japheth and these verses indicated God kept His word because there is remarkable expansion of vast territory and remarkable prosperity.

The descendants of Japheth are listed first and is the shortest lineage section in the chapter. However, this is one of the most important for us, because we, who are of European descent, came from this line.

Japheth had seven sons (10:2) - Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras. Two are singled out for special attention - Gomer (10:3) and Javan (10:4). Gomer is the father of the Europeans and Javan is the father of the Greeks. We know one of Javan’s sons “Tarshish” moved afar off (Spain) a place that shows up in Scripture - Jonah attempted to flee there (Jonah 1:3; I Kings 10:22; Isaiah 66:19).

Gomer has been identified as the father of the ancient Cimmerians and Cimbri, from whom the Celtic family originated. This family left traces of themselves in North Germany and Wales. Josephus, the famed Jewish historian, who claimed that he had carefully studied these historical accounts and lineage developments, wrote that Japheth's seven sons inhabited the land that began at the mountains Taurus and Amanus and proceeded along Asia as far as the river Tanis and along Europe to Cadiz and settled in land never before populated.

Josephus said that Gomer founded the Galatians (Gauls), Magog founded the Waning Magogites, who were Scythians, Madai founded the Medes. Javan founded the Grecians. Tubal founded the Iberes (those who live in mountainous areas), Meshech founded the Cappadocians. Tiras founded the Thracians who occupied the coastlands along the Aegean (Josephus, pp. 29-31).

If we study the locations of these people - Japheth's lines became the source of all people born in the north which would be the European area, which included Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Russia.

It is also significant to point out that Magog, Meshech and Tubal ended up being cursed by God (Ezekiel 38:2; 39:6). If we keep in mind that Japheth's lineage was supposed to be a lineage of blessing (Genesis 9:27), not one of cursing, we see that **just because one has a great lineage that once had a great relationship with God, does not mean that one now has a great relationship with God.**

DESCENDANT LINE #2 - The descendants of Ham. 10:6-20

The descendants of Ham went south and west. According to Josephus, Cush became the father of the Ethiopians and when Josephus wrote his history (AD 70), the Ethiopians were called the Chusites (Josephus, p.31). Mizraim became the father of the Egyptians. Put became the father of the Libyians. Canaan became the father of the Canaanites, who lived in Judea, which of course was the land of Canaan (Ibid., p. 31).

The Canaanites controlled Palestine at the time Moses wrote (10:15-19). The Jebusites settled near Jerusalem (Joshua 15:8). The Amorites settled in the mountainous areas on both sides of the Jordan River (Joshua 9:1; Genesis 14:7; Joshua 10:5). The Hivites also dwelt in the hill regions of the Jordan valley (Joshua 9:1, 7). The Arkites lived at the foot of Lebanon. So the Canaanites dominated Palestine from Sidon in the north (10:19), to the Gaza Strip to the southwest.

From this line of Ham came the Babylonians (10:10), the Philistines (10:14), the Hittites (10:15), the Jebusites (10:16a), the Amorites (10:16b) and the Gergashites (10:16c). This family became known for its military power, its building power (10:12a) and its rebellion (10:19).

This is significant because God promised that Ham's lineage through Canaan would end up servicing Shem and Japheth (9:25). But at the time Moses wrote, they were dominating the Middle East world. What this teaches us is that even though God allows those who are godless to prosper for a time, in the final analysis, He will curse and destroy them and bless those who are godly.

The most emphasized character in this lineage list is Nimrod (10:8-12). He was a great hunter (10:9), and builder (10:11). His prowess was such that he became the father of the Babylonians (10:9-10). In fact, Babylon is called in Micah the “land of Nimrod” (Micah 5:6). He was a godless rebel who was characterized by idolatry and immorality. According to historical accounts, Nimrod was a great oppressor of people and a great oppressor of God.

The fact that he is called a “mighty hunter” means he was very skilled in tracking and destroying both animals and men. He was in rebellion against God and Revelation 17 describes Babylonianism as the ultimate rebellion against God, which leads to the whole world receiving the wrath of God.

Ham’s line also features Mizraim (10:13-14). This is the land of Egypt, both northern and southern part, which would include Africa. It would be from this line through whom the Philistines would originate, another major enemy of Israel.

The main emphasis of Genesis 9:18-27 is that Ham’s line would have Canaan in it. The people listed in 10:15-18, were powerful people who totally dominated the land of Israel, but in the end they ended up serving, just as predicted by God (I Kings 9:20-21).

Japheth’s line went to the northwest and Ham’s to the southwest.

DESCENDANT LINE #3 - The descendents of Shem. 10:21-31

It is significant that the section opens with the statement that Shem is the father of all the children of Eber (10:21). From this name is derived the name “Hebrew”, which of course refers to Israel.

Shem had five sons all named in **verse 22**. From Elam came the Persians. From Asshur came the Assyrians. From Arpachshad came the Chaldeans, who lived north of Assyria. From Lud came the Lydians. From Aram came the Syrians. So all the people of the Middle East are rooted in Shem’s line.

It is important to see that Peleg, Eber’s son (10:25), is said to have existed when the earth was divided. This seems to pinpoint the **time of Babel (11:1-9), which took place five generations after the flood**. Eber’s other son, Joktan (10:25-30), is the father of the Arabs.

In Isaiah 66:19, it is predicted that when Jesus reigns on earth many from Japheth’s line, and some from Ham and Shem’s line will truly worship God (Tarshish- grandson of Japheth-10:4; Put- son of Ham- 10:6; Lud- son of Shem- 10:22; Meshech- son of Japheth- 10:2; Tubal- son of Japheth- 10:2; Javan- son of Japheth- 10:2). So regardless of your ethnicity or your previous geographical locations or sins, you too can share in God’s eternity, by faith in Jesus Christ.

