



## Study #12

## Genesis Chapter 10

**Summary:** Chapters 10 & 11 form a table of nations. It is the link between pre-history and the history of nations and peoples of this world. All the peoples of the world find their origin in the line of Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Verses 2 – 5 list the sons of Japheth and how they formed nations.

Verses 6 – 20 record the sons of Ham, and their future nations.

Verses 21- 32 record the sons of Shem, and how they were divided into nations.

Without this information we would have no knowledge of how the world was divided into people groups, and how they came to be scattered around the world.

This history is vital to counter racism. There is only one human race, though it is diverse in culture with people of different colour and physical characteristics, even different temperaments.

Embedded in this history of the nations is the confusion of languages at the tower of Babel. The division and dispersion of peoples into family groups was the result of their inability to function with people of other “tongues” (v.5, 20, 31).

### Key verse:

*“These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth and after the flood.” V. 32.*

This verse summarises the content of the chapter and declares that the families of Noah’s sons became distinct nations after the flood.

### Observations – Lessons from Genesis 10.

1. **These family genealogies record the rise of the nations of the world.** After each family genealogy (v 5, 20 and 31) it refers to “nations.”

To a large degree, ethnologists can trace cities, and peoples to the names listed in Genesis 10. Dr. W. F. Albright, universally acknowledged as the world’s leading authority on the archeology 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.” [Recent Discoveries of Bible Lands – article appended to Robert Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible & cited by H. Morris The Genesis Record pg. 245].

Dr. Morris went on to say, “There is nothing in any other ancient writing discovered by archeologists which is at all comparable in scope and accuracy.”

Some names stand out with names of nations that existed in later Biblical and secular history, such as: Babel and Nineveh, which were associated with Nimrod.

Canaan, son of Ham, and Canaan the land of the Canaanites is an obvious example. Others can be listed such as, Eber (v24), and Hebrews; Mizraim (v6) and Egypt; Asshur (v22) and Assyria; Lud (v22) and Lydia; Aram (v22) and Aramea; Uz (v23) and the land associated with Job.

It is difficult to be specific in every instance. A lot of effort has gone into tracing each people group and their line of descent with each particular name listed in this table of nations. It is fascinating to history buffs, but the principle that we all descend from Noah and his sons is what counts to the Bible reader. It is enough to accept this table of nations and its summary in v 32 as inspired and therefore as a reliable record of the formation of the individual peoples and nations of the world.

While we take care to note that the line of Christ came down through Shem, the forefather of Abraham, the line of the Messiah does not limit the gospel message as good news to sinners of all

nationalities. The gospel is for the Gentile as much as for the Jew. The gospel is to be preached to every creature – people of every tribe, nation and tongue.

**2. Nimrod became a rebel to God and the architect of the tower of Babel.**

Nimrod was a great grandson to Noah. Ham was the father of Cush who “begat Nimrod” (v8).

At first reading, the reference to him being a hunter in the earth seems innocent enough, as the need to hunt for food was real and he seemed to excel at hunting. He probably had his trophies to show for it!

**The real character of Nimrod began to show at the establishment of a kingdom called Babel** (v10).

This associates him as the chief architect behind the project to build the tower of Babel in defiance of God. That tower got its name from God’s judgment upon it sending confusion of languages, whereby people spoke in confusing sounds to one another to the point they were perceived to be babbling. The Hebrew word “babel” means confusion.

Nimrod was an aspiring leader who wanted all the peoples of the earth under his control in one location. Note what the promoters of the tower of Babel stated, “Let us make a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the whole face of the earth” (Ch. 11:4). They were aspiring to be one people under the control of one leader. That was in defiance of God’s will to multiply and replenish the earth (Gen. 1:28, 9:1).

**3. The name Peleg refers to the division of the people after the tower of Babel was stopped by God.**

The scripture states that Eber named his son, “Peleg, for in his days was the earth divided” (11:25).

Some might take this as a reference to some catastrophic opening of the earth’s crust, or a mega earthquake. It is, however, more in keeping with the theme of these two chapters, which we call the table of nations, to interpret this as the division of the people into different groups according to language. This conviction is further bolstered by the references to “tongues” or languages in Ch. 10 v5, 20 & 31. Prior to God’s intervention at the tower of Babel, the people were of one language. So, we learn that the division of nations recorded in chapter 10 followed the history recorded about Babel in chapter 11.

God’s confounding the languages was the cause of the division of families into their own nations as they went in different directions and settled amongst their own language groups.

**Application: – How this applies to me.**

- **Secular history which promotes the idea of the evolution of man from lower forms of life is in greater danger of racial profiling than Christianity.** This table of nations is our foundation to minister to our fellow man. Whatever our nationality we are equally human and are all made in God’s image.
- **The Lord’s command to “love thy neighbour as thyself”,** applies to people of all nations. The church of Jesus Christ is an international church, and we need an international attitude in ministry, and evangelism. We must repent of any prejudices we may hold toward people of other nationalities for to love our neighbour is our duty before God. This is the proper basis for fellowship in the church and for evangelism. New Testament Christians displayed this new attitude in their evangelism when Jewish converts preached to the Samaritans.
- **People of every nationality need the knowledge of God.** They need Bible teaching and regeneration to know God. We need to lift them up to God in prayer for His blessing that they may be brought to salvation in Christ.
- **As Canadians living in a country of immigrants, we have a greater opportunity and therefore a greater duty to minister to peoples of differing nationalities and cultures.** If there is coldness toward sinners of other nationalities and unwillingness in our hearts to love all kinds of people for their soul’s sake we fail to fulfil the great commission. We must remember that Christ died for all kinds of men. The scriptures plainly teach that all kinds of men and women are sinners according to the law of God and those who are saved, whether they be Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female “are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:22-29).

**To do:** Take a family of another nationality, or culture, to heart and find ways to witness to them.

