

GENESIS – Lesson 25

Learn: God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything. Seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. Acts 17:24-26

Read: Genesis 10:1-32

The tenth chapter of Genesis is a remarkably accurate historical document.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, 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 remote parallel, even among the Greeks, where we find the closest approach to the distribution of peoples in genealogical framework....The Table of Nations remains an astonishingly accurate document.

Here is the one link between the historic nations of antiquity and the “prehistoric” times of Noah and the antediluvians. The grandsons and great-grandsons of Noah are listed, each of whom is identified with the city or country established by his descendants. There is nothing in any other ancient writing discovered by archaeologists which is at all comparable in scope and accuracy. It gives every appearance of being a sort of family record, kept by a venerable patriarch of the family as long as he remained alive and could keep in touch with his descendants.

Shem lived for 502 year after the Flood, which would have encompassed the entire period included in the Table of Nations. It is significant that the sons of Ham and Japheth are given only to the third generation after the Flood, whereas Shem's descendants extend to the sixth. His signature is attached in the subscript at Genesis 11:10, after he wrote of the events of Babel.

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1. In I Chronicles 1:5 to the end of the chapter we see the table of Nations listed again. Can you find any differences between the two listings?

2. To whose descendants was the term “Gentiles” especially applied? vv 1-5
3. When did the dividing of the lands, mentioned in verse 5, “after their tongues” take place? Genesis 11:9
4. Who are the four sons of Ham as listed in verse 6?

“Cush” is the same in the Bible as “Ethiopia,” and is usually so translated. The Cushites apparently first migrated southward into Arabia, and then crossed the Red Sea into the land now known as Ethiopia. The Tel el Amarna tablets call this land “Kashi.”

5. Mizraim is the ancestor of the Egyptians, and is the customary name for Egypt in the Bible. What is Egypt called in Psalm 105:23?

Phut, in the Bible, is the same as Libya, applied to the region of North Africa west of Egypt. This identification was confirmed by Josephus. Canaan is, of course, the ancestor of the Canaanites and gave his name to the land of Canaan.

6. All these genealogies may seem dry, but they are important to the LORD for He listed them for us. What understanding can we gain by tracing these descendants of Noah’s family through history and into the times prophesied to come in the Bible?
7. Verses 8-10 give special attention to the grandson of Ham named Nimrod. What is said of him?
8. The name Nimrod actually means “Let us rebel!” What does that tell us about his father Cush that gave his son that name?

Nimrod became a “mighty tyrant in the face of Jehovah.” He was a “hunter” in the sense that he was implacable in searching out and persuading men to obey his will. 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 it is said: “As Nimrod the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the Lord.”

The fossil record, in both the flood sediments and the post-Flood sediments (Ice Age) Deposits, indicates that there were tremendous animals living at the time that might well have been feared. Consequently a strong man who could hunt and slay such great animals would assume the role of hero and benefactor to mankind and would easily acquire a great following.

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9. Why was there probably no genuine danger to mankind from the animals?

Genesis 9:2

The deliberate hunting and slaughter of the animals was “against the Lord,” Genesis 10:9. It was by this means, however, that Nimrod apparently acquired his great reputation and rose to a position as world leader of the time. -Dr. Henry Morris

10. What was the name of the land where Nimrod established his kingdom? v 10

11. What four cities were part of Nimrod’s kingdom or empire? v 10

Erech (also called Uruk) is one hundred miles southeast of Babylon, and was the legendary home of Gilgamesh, a hero of the Babylonian flood story. Its excavation yielded examples of very ancient writing, long antedating the time of Abraham. Accad was immediately north of Babylon. Also spelled Akkad and Agade in the monuments, the city gave its name to the Akkadian empire, essentially synonymous with the Sumerian empire. Calneh has apparently not yet been identified; but all were in the land of Shinar, presumably equivalent to Sumer, and identified later in Scriptures (e.g., Daniel 1:2) as Babylonia.

12. Where did Nimrod go, and what cities did he build after he left Babel? v 11

Also see Micah 5:6

(The Hebrew is better translated “from that land he (Nimrod) went to Assyria.”)

Nineveh is situated on the upper Tigris River as Babylon was on the Euphrates. Nineveh was roughly two hundred miles north of Babylon and later was the capital of the great Assyrian empire. The Hamite Nimrod was the founder and first emperor of both Babylon and Nineveh. Nineveh's two satellite cities, Rehoboth and Resen, have not been definitely identified.

Calah, however, 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."

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13. Are there any familiar sounding names or places in verses 13-20, especially related to Abraham and his descendents and the land that God gave to them?

The phrase in verse 18 "afterwards were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad" suggests that these tribes eventually spread out more than any of the others. Some feel that they are the ancestors of the Mongoloid peoples and therefore also the American Indians. – Dr. Henry Morris

14. What two specific things are mentioned about Shem in verse 21?

15. What happened in the days of Peleg? v 25

16. The name Peleg actually means "division." What is the "division" spoken of?
Genesis 10: 5, 31-32

17. What is stated in verse 32?

Verse 32 is a summary verse. It is mentioned that all the people were distinct family units, distinct languages (this was subsequent to Babel), distinct regions, and, finally, actual nations. A total of twenty-six ‘nations’ is listed coming from Shem, as compared with thirty listed from Ham (not including the Philistines, as apparently referred to in an editorial by Moses in verse 14) and only fourteen from Japheth. Thus a total of seventy such primeval nations is listed here by Shem in his original Table of Nations.

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