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Genesis 10

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Genesis 10.

Topics.

- The generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth.
- The descendants of Japheth.
- The descendants of Ham.
- Nimrod was the first on earth to be a mighty man.
- The tower of Babel, what happened at Babel and divided languages.
- The sons of Canaan.
- The descendants of Shem and his territory.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

The previous chapter: in chapter nine the LORD told Noah to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and that the dread of him would be upon every living creature. It speaks of eating flesh with its life; of murderers; of the rainbow; of Shem, Ham, and Japheth populating the earth and of Noah becoming drunk.

GENESIS 10:1

The Generations of the Sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth.

- **Genesis 10:1:** These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood.

All of the people, nations and races mentioned in the following verses are descendants of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. From these the entire earth was populated.

Here in this chapter we have the origin of every single nation that would inhabit the face of the Earth. Every civilization that would arise in the post-flood world can trace its beginnings to one of these seventy descendants of the sons of Noah in one way or another.

GENESIS 10:2-5

The Descendants of Japheth.

- **Genesis 10:2-5:** The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ³The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. ⁴The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. ⁵From these the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations.

An overview of Japheth: (Europe) Japheth comes from the Hebrew word (*Yepheth*) it literally means expansion and carries the idea, "God will enlarge." He was Noah's third and oldest son and part of the family of eight who survived the great flood. Japheth and Shem were both greatly blessed for respecting their father Noah when he was found naked. They were known for their intellectual endeavours and all the descendants of Japheth mentioned in this chapter the European (Caucasian) nations which mean that Noah's blessing on Japheth was far reaching.

The seven nations of Japheth are:

- 1 Gomer (the Cimmerians) they settled north of the Black Sea, but afterwards his descendants probably occupied Germany, France, Spain and the British Isles.
- 2 Magog (the Scythians) they lived north of the Caspian Sea.
- 3 Madai (the Medes) they settled south of the Caspian Sea.
- 4 Javan (the Ionians or Greeks) Javan is the Hebrew name for Greeks, they settled in Greece.
- 5 Tubal (the Turks) lived south of the Black Sea.
- 6 Meshech (the Slavs) lived between the Black and Caspian Seas.
- 7 Tiras (the Etruscans) located west of the Black Sea. (Taken from Bible History online, the Table of Nations).

GENESIS 10:6-14

The Descendants of Ham.

- **Genesis 10:6-13:** The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. ⁷The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. ⁸Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. ⁹He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. Therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD." ¹⁰The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. ¹¹From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and ¹²Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. ¹³Egypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, ¹⁴Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom the Philistines came), and Caphtorim.

Nimrod was the first on earth to be a mighty man: (v8) in the Table of Nations mentioned in this Chapter many of the names are upon cities, countries and tribes, but the one individual name that does stand out clearly is Nimrod. The beginning of his kingdom was Babylonia in the plain of Shinar from where he moved northward and became the founder of Nineveh and other cities in or near Assyria. Though the Bible never actually states that Nimrod was the leader of those who built the tower of Babel in the land of Shinar, Hebrew and Christian tradition and many writings of historians agree that Nimrod stood as the head of the builders of Babel and was the primary force that influenced the people of the land to build Babel. This idea is especially supported by the fact the Bible states:

- Nimrod was the first on earth to be a mighty man. ⁹He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. Therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD." ¹⁰The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. (Gen. 10:8-10)

The word mighty comes from the Hebrew word (*gibbowr*) it literally means powerful, warrior, chief, giant man, mighty man, strong man, valiant man or champion. It can also apply to a strong tyrant, dictator and oppressor. In these verses we are told that Nimrod's kingdom began in the land of Shinar and that he was the first to be a mighty hunter before the LORD. This expression does not mean that Nimrod was a good and great man before the LORD, but rather signifies that he was mighty in opposition to the LORD. Based upon these facts it is reasonable to suppose that Nimrod was the head ruler leading the people in the building of the tower of Babel and the city. This place was given the name Babel (Gen. 11:5-9) which comes from the Hebrew word (*balal*) it literally means confusion and includes Babylonia and the Babylonian Empire.

It was from here (the land of Shinar) that the LORD dispersed all people over the face of all the earth by giving them different languages. In Babylon the world was united against God and from this time onward Babylon, the first world power became the type of hostile world power opposed to God. Today the entire world is affected by what happened at Babel, much time, study and trouble is taken to learn the language of a foreign country and the diversity of language is a powerful factor in keeping nations apart and in hindering mankind from building another tower of Babel. God's divine purpose in changing the languages was to counteract man's ambitious and ever-recurring dream of universal sovereignty over the entire world. Throughout history this same spirit to create a New World Order that controls the world with one powerful man at its head, is still very much alive today and has at certain periods of time throughout history been manifested in certain kings and rulers of nations and countries. The children of men never did and never will come together again in peace until that glorious day, when the Lord Jesus Christ sits upon the throne of his glory and all nations are gathered before him.

The tower of Babel: the people were not trying to build a structure that would actually reach the heavens it is simply described in this way because of its massive height, relative to the height of structures built in those ancient times. It was most likely a structure with a temple at its top, built to worship the host of heaven (i.e., the sun, the moon and stars etc.) perhaps much like a modern day sky scraper that is built to rise far above every other building within the city or country it is built in, so that it become a symbol of that city or the country to all the world. The difference between the modern day sky scraper and the tower of Babel is that Nimrod's tower was built to be a place that people of all nations would come to for the purpose of worshipping the host of heaven whereas no skyscraper is built for such purposes.

NOTE: building a city and a tower is not a sin, but to build it to stop the emigration of people across the face of the earth was foolish and an act of rebellion against God's will.

Things that took place at Babel: in the following chapter we read:

- Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." (Gen. 11:4).

The statement, "let us make a name for ourselves," shows that the focus is not God, but themselves. They desire to build a monument not to honour God, but honour themselves. In Genesis chapter nine God told man to:

- Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. (Gen. 9:1).

In contrast to this these people under Nimrod set about to build a capitol city that would be the seat of their empire so that they would not be scattered. Within this city they were attempting to build a high and magnificent tower that would act as a worship center for all nations with Nimrod being the head. The city and tower would serve to establish Nimrod's kingdom on the earth for future generations. It could be somewhat likened to God ordaining Israel to build a temple at Jerusalem for all Israelites at certain times of the year to go up to and offer their sacrifices and give praise and honour to Him. The difference in Nimrod's case is that the praise and honour would not be directed toward God, but toward man and his gods.

Divided language: man said, "let us let us build ourselves a city," and "let us make a name for ourselves," (Gen. 11:4), God responds to man's pride, self-will and rebellion, by saying, "let us go down and confuse their language." (Gen. 11:7). God could have wiped them from the face of the earth, but chose instead to divide mankind by confounding their language in this way He compelled mankind to obey His command, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." (Gen. 9:1).

The power of language: in Genesis Chapter eleven it says, "This is only the beginning of what they will do," (Gen. 11:6) this is an amazing statement the LORD is saying that should mankind be of one language nothing that they plan and purpose to do would be impossible for them to achieve. This firstly applies to the building of the city and the tower of Babel. But since God says, "It is only the beginning of what mankind could do," it can apply to future generations especially when we look and what man has achieved on earth today and this amongst foreign languages, wars, violence and all types of confusion amongst governments and nations. Imagine what could be achieved if all nations spoke one language and were all one people with one mind with a set purpose and freely shared their knowledge. However, should mankind be united as one it would not be a magnificent kingdom that honours God that they would build, but one that honours and appeals to the pride of man.

Different cultures and languages: serve as a barrier that prevents mankind from attaining to such power since it is certain if all nations of the world were united in one language and culture and all were able to unite together in their efforts with one purpose they would again be as Nimrod was and say to the people of the earth, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves" (Gen. 11:4), not to glorify God, but themselves.

The Day of Pentecost: on the Day of Pentecost, (Acts Chapter 2), God lifted this language barrier so that people from all nations were able to hear the Gospel preached in their own tongue (language) and understand what was being spoken so that all could respond accordingly and be united as one nation and one people in the Lord Jesus Christ. As the confounding of languages divided the children of men, and scattered them abroad, so the gift of understanding languages contributed greatly to the gathering together of the children of God who took the Good News of the Gospel to nations, cities, villages and towns uniting men and women with one mind in Christ who received the message of the Gospel and glorified God. When the faithful of all nations and languages enter the next life and dwell directly in God's presence they will again share a common language and a common purpose, but not to celebrate their own glory, but to honour God and to glorify their Saviour and celebrate together with their King the Lord Jesus Christ.

The wisdom of God: the LORD compelled the people to fulfill His will to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (Gen. 9:1) not by violence or war, but by changing their language. Those who cannot understand each another cannot help or enjoy one another and in this way God by peaceful means compels them to separate and fill the earth. It is also certain that the people at this time recognized that the hand of the LORD had gone out against them.

GENESIS 10:15-20

The Sons of Canaan.

- **Genesis 10:15-20:** Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth,¹⁶ and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites,¹⁷ the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites,¹⁸ the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the clans of the Canaanites dispersed.¹⁹ And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.²⁰ These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

An overview of Ham: (Africa) Ham comes from the Hebrew word (*Cham*) it literally means hot. He was Noah's second oldest son and part of the family of eight who survived the great flood. Ham and his wife bore four sons who became the fathers of the nations of Africa. Ham's fourth son Canaan was prophetically cursed because he gazed at his father's nakedness while he was drunk.

This curse would mean later that Canaan would lose his land to the Hebrews and would be subservient to the descendants of Shem. The Hamites were known for their physical endurance.

The four nations of Ham:

1. Cush (the Ethiopians) they settled in Ethiopia south of Egypt, also early in their history some of them migrated to an area north of the Persian Gulf (Genesis. 10:8-10).
2. Mizraim (the Egyptians) they settled in north-eastern Africa. (Mizraim is the Bible name for Egypt).
3. Phut (the Libyans) sometimes translated Libya, they settled in northern Africa.
- 2 Canaan (the Canaanites) they settled above Africa east of the Mediterranean (Later it was given to the Hebrews). (Taken from Bible History online, the Table of Nations).

The story of Noah cursing Ham, in Genesis chapter nine we are told that Noah cursed Canaan: (Gen. 9v25-27) Noah planted a vineyard and drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent (perhaps the heat was too much for him or he passed out while getting ready for bed because he had drank far too much, whatever the reason Ham saw the nakedness of his father and went out to get his two brothers to come and look, but rather than look Shem and Japheth showed their father respect and took a garment and walked in backwards so they would not see their father's nakedness. This is the only recorded sin of Noah it reminds us that even the most-godly of people have weaknesses and can fall prey to temptations of this world.

- Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. ²²And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁴When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." (Gen. 9:20-24).

Noah and Ham's sin: Noah's son Ham was amused by the sight of his father's nakedness and instead of covering him he went and got his brothers so that they could see too. But they were respectful towards their father, and shielded their eyes and approached their father backwards while they covered him. When Noah woke up and heard what had happened, he cursed Ham and all his descendants for the son's lack of respect. Ham's offspring would be servants while Noah's other two sons (Shem and Japheth) would prosper as would their descendants. Ham was the father of Canaan, who was the forefather of the Canaanites who were traditional enemies of the Hebrew people. This story highlights one of the primary reasons for the enmity between the Canaanites and the Hebrews.

NOTE: Noah drinking an excess of wine was wrong and Ham's sin was not that he saw his father naked, but that he failed to show respect to his father and deliberately went to get his brothers so they could also mock and stare at their naked father.

GENESIS 10:21-32

The Descendants of Shem and His Territory.

- **Genesis 10:21-32:** To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born. ²²The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. ²³The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. ²⁴Arpachshad fathered Shelah; and Shelah fathered Eber. ²⁵To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one

was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan.
²⁶Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,
²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan.
³⁰The territory in which they lived extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar to the
hill country of the east. ³¹These are the sons of Shem, by their clans, their languages,
their lands, and their nations. ³²These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their
genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after
the flood.

In Peleg's days the earth was divided: (Gen. 10:25). Peleg stands out in this chapter because the statement "In Peleg's days the earth was divided," is associated with his name, which raises the following two questions:

1. What is the meaning of the earth being divided?
2. What time does, "his days," refer to?

Some suggest that the expression "The earth was divided," refers to the continents of the earth being divided at this time. But should this be so it would have to have occurred within a very small period of time and this type of catastrophic and world changing event would result in such enormous geological and cataclysmic violence that it would be like another flood (as in Noah's time) all over again. It is far more likely that all continental separation occurred during the Great Flood and that the expression, "The earth being divided," refers to the inhabitants of the earth being divided when God changed their languages and the people of the earth separated from each other into their various nations and tribes according to the language they spoke at the time God miraculously altered their language at Babel as recorded in (Gen. 11). This is also supported by the fact that it is in this context that the statement is made and it is hard to find any other event in Peleg's life in which the expression, "the earth was divided," could apply to more than the scattering of mankind into their separate nations because of their altered languages. This singular event explains the nature of that momentous change by which mankind passed from being one family speaking the same language into many nations of different languages and lands. The following verse shows that even though God had to compel the people to separate by changing their languages they departed (knowingly or unknowingly) according to His will to the countries and places He had allotted to them.

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- God made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place. (Acts 17:26).

What time does, "his days," refer to? Some commentators believe that the actual time refers to the time of Peleg's birth when he was named, while others believe it applies to sometime during his life. Both scenarios have valid points so we will look at the two of them.

1. **At Peleg's birth:** after the flood the descendants of Noah settled and enjoyed the produce of the undivided land (Gen. 11:10-16), but according to God's will and power the inhabitants of the earth were divided by different languages. It is believed by many that Eber gave his son the name Peleg (meaning divided) when he was born in memory of this momentous event. Some feel that there would not be enough families on earth to form tribes and nations because Peleg was born in the one hundred and first year after the flood. However, we are told that Peleg was born four generations after Noah (Gen. 10:25). If we suppose there were only a few families on the earth and each averaged an increase of ten children over the four generations it would result in hundreds of families at the time of Peleg's birth. We also know that Eber (also called Heber) is the fifty-fifth name (Gen. 10:24) listed in the Table of nations and that all the others listed are descended from him which means that there could be no more than fifty-five different individual nations and languages at the time of the dividing and

scattering of the people. Added to this, if three families (Shem Ham and Japheth) were sufficient to propagate the race after the flood, nine or ten families would be more than enough to establish tribes and nations. Based upon these facts it seems reasonable to accept that at the time God altered the languages at Babel Peleg was born and his parents gave him a name that would forever stand as a memorial or reminder of this world changing event.

2. **During Peleg's life:** others believe that Eber Peleg's father gave him his name by the Spirit of prophecy, foreseeing that this great event would come sometime in the future since it is not unusual for biblical children to be given prophetic names. The primary support for this scenario is that it allows for a longer space of time for the population to increase before being divided into tribes and nations. Supporters of this scenario feel that the one hundred and one years from the flood to Peleg's birth and even after it does not seem long enough for the population to have grown large enough to allow a separation into nations. Whether languages were changed at Peleg's birth or sometime afterward during his lifetime cannot be stated with absolute confidence and certainty however what we do know for certain is that the earth was divided by language into nations and tribes. It should also be noted, whether Peleg was given his name at his birth or later in life does not affect the chronological order of things.

An overview of Shem: (Asia) Shem comes from the Hebrew word (*shem*) it carries the idea of someone notable in individuality and having a character of honour and a position of authority and a name of fame and renown as a mark or memorial. Shem consists of ten generations. It is from his bloodline that the Messiah the Christ came. He was Noah's oldest son and part of Noah's family of eight who survived the great flood. Shem and his wife were childless before the flood, but after the flood Shem bore a son at 110 years of age. He was father to five sons who became the fathers of the five Semitic nations and the father of the nations of the ancient Near East including the Israelites. The Jewish religion; Judaism; Islam and Christianity all sprang up from the line of Shem. The Semites were particularly known for their religious zeal.

The five Semitic nations:

1. Elam (the Persians) they settled northeast of the Persian Gulf.
2. Asshur (the Assyrians) the biblical name for Assyria, they settled between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.
3. Arphaxad (the Babylonians) they settled in Chaldea.
4. Lud (the Lydians) they settled in Asia Minor, but some of them sailed across the Mediterranean and settled in northern Africa.
5. Aram (the Syrians) the biblical name for Syria, it is located north and east of Israel. (Taken from Bible History online, the Table of Nations).

AN OVERVIEW OF THE TABLE OF NATIONS

The seventy generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth born to them after the flood, from these seventy the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood. (Genesis 10:32).

The sons of Japheth (Gen. 10:2-0).

1. Gomer
2. Magog
3. Madai

4. Javan
5. Tubal
6. Meshech
7. Tiras

The sons of Gomer (Gen. 10:3).

- 8 Ashkenaz
- 9 Riphath
- 10 Togarmah

The sons of Javan (Gen. 10:4).

- 11 Elishah
- 12 Tarshish
- 13 Kittim
- 14 Dodanim

The sons of Ham (Gen. 10:6).

- 15 Cush
- 16 Egypt
- 17 Put
- 18 Canaan

The sons of Cush (Gen. 10:7).

- 19 Seba
- 20 Havilah
- 21 Sabtah
- 22 Raamah
- 23 Sabteca

The sons of Raamah(Gen. 10:7).

- 24 Sheba
- 25 Dedan
- 26 Cush (he fathered Nimrod) (Gen. 10:8).

The sons of Egypt (Gen. 10:13-14).

- 27 Ludim
- 28 Anamim
- 29 Lehabim
- 30 Naphtuhim
- 31 Pathrusim

32 Casluhim (from whom the Philistines came)

33 Caphtorim.

The sons of Canaan (Gen. 10:15-18).

34 Sidon his firstborn

35 Heth

36 The Jebusites

37 The Amorites

38 The Gergashites

39 The Hivites

40 The Arkites

41 The Sinites

42 The Arvadites

43 The Zemarites

44 The Hamathites

The sons of Shem (Gen. 10:21-22).

45 Elam

46 Asshur

47 Arpachshad

48 Lud

49 Aram

The sons of Aram (Gen. 10:23).

50 Uz

51 Hul

52 Gether

53 Mash

The sons of Arpachshad (Gen. 10:24).

54 Shelah

The sons of Shelah (Gen. 10:24).

55 Eber (also called Heber)

The sons of Eber (Gen. 10:25).

56 Peleg, (in his days the earth was divided)

57 Joktan

The sons of Joktan (Gen. 10:26-29).

58 Almodad

- 59 Sheleph
- 60 Hazarmaveth
- 61 Jerah
- 62 Hadoram
- 63 Uzal
- 64 Diklah
- 65 Obal
- 66 Abimael
- 67 Sheba
- 68 Ophir
- 69 Havilah
- 70 Jobab

These are the seventy clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these seventy the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood. (Gen. 10:32).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.