

GENESIS

Lesson 19

Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and The Table of Nations; Genesis 10

In this lesson, we will examine Genesis Chapter 10, often referred to as the Table of Nations. Many believe that we can see the roots of every ethnology from this chapter (see Genesis 10:32). We can also follow the lineage of Noah and his three sons that lead to the Hebrew people and eventually to Jesus, who was born into the line of David.

Let's take a brief look at each of Noah's sons and what we know about their descendants. We begin this study by looking at Genesis 10:1-32, which describes Noah's and his three sons' lineage; they collectively fathered seventy nations.

For this week read through Genesis Chapter 10, then consider the following:

1. How many sons did Japheth father? (See Genesis 10: 2.)
2. In total, how many nations descended from Japheth and his sons? (See Genesis 10: 3-4.)
3. How many nations did Ham and his descendants father? (See Genesis 10:6-20.)
4. How many nations did Shem and his descendants father? (See Genesis 10:21:32.)

Taking a casual look through the names recorded in this chapter, we can readily identify several names as the beginning of civilizations that we encounter as we read through the Old Testament (Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites and Canaanites, for example). Other names may seem strange and are hardly mentioned after Chapter 10. In subsequent lessons in this study, we will look closer at some of these names, as we study what the land and people were like during the time of Abraham. For now, we see only a brief glimpse of those civilizations, leading up to the birth of Abraham in Genesis Chapter 11.

Continuing our exploration of Genesis Chapter 10:

5. From which of Noah's sons did Abraham descend? (See Genesis 11:10-32.)
6. How do we know that Abraham is a Hebrew? (See Genesis 14:13.)
7. While Egypt and Canaan are recognizable to most Bible students, some may not recognize the name Cush and Put. Can you identify which civilizations these two represent?
8. Can you determine from whom the Arab peoples are descended from?

9. Read the scripture Genesis 10:8-12. What else does it tell us about Nimrod, who was "a mighty hunter before the LORD?"
10. We can see from the Table of Nations that the very early origins of both the Assyrian and Babylonian nations trace back to Nimrod, who descended from Cush in modern-day Ethiopia. Now identify where the Philistines descended from by reading Genesis 10:13-14.

As we can see from our study of this brief chapter, the Table of Nations lays the groundwork for the key nations/civilizations that we will be studying throughout Genesis and the remainder of the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, Matthew 1:1-17 provides the genealogy of Jesus beginning with Abraham, who, in Genesis 11:10-32 we noted had descended from Shem.

In the next lesson, we explore the Tower of Babel and the great scattering of the nations.

In Christ,

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