

Genesis

Memorize the TRUTH!

Lesson 5 New Nations, Old Sins Genesis 10–11

God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

Acts 17:27

Descendents of Noah – Genesis 10

Day 1

- List some of the descendants of each of Noah's sons.
Shem

Ham

Japheth
- Review Genesis 9:24-27.
 - According to Noah's prophecy, which son's clan would dominate the others?
 - What would be the relationship between the sons of Shem, Japheth and Canaan (Ham's son)?

Learn the TRUTH!



Though the waters had barely receded from the Flood, mankind soon shows how determined they are to ignore God's ways as they pridefully attempt to build a monument to themselves. In what areas of your life are you trusting in your own abilities instead of trusting in God? Ask Him to forgive you and help you depend on Him.

Descendents of Noah – Genesis 10 continued

Day 2

- Why do you think God gave us the list of Noah's descendents?
- Read Acts 17:24-28.
 - How do we know that the development of these families (nations), as well as their time and place in history, is not accidental?
 - Knowing the ultimate purpose for these nations and their boundaries, how does this understanding relate to you and the time and place in which you live?

The Tower of Babel
Genesis 11:1-9

Day 3

5. a. What did the people of Shinar decide to do?

b. What was their reason?

c. What does this reveal about these people?
6. How did God respond to their plan?
7. a. What evidence of defiance toward God's will do you see in our world today?

b. What is God saying to you in this passage?

The Chosen Nation
Genesis 11:10-26

Day 4

8. Which family line is the focus in these verses?
9. What does the inclusion of all of these names and details in Chapters 10 and 11 tell you about God?
10. a. According to Acts 7:2-4, where was Abram (later called Abraham) living when he first heard God's call?

b. What does Joshua 24:2 tell us about his family's religious practices at that time?

Abram
Genesis 11:27-32

Day 5

11. a. Who accompanied Abram when they first set out to answer God's call?

b. What was their destination?
12. a. How do you think you would respond if God led you in a definite direction without telling you where it would end?

b. What kind of faith would that require?

Live the TRUTH!

The pride of the people of Shinar undoubtedly offended God. They ignored His plan in favor of their own, like many people today. Spiritual longing is inherent in humanity, but pride, lifestyle choices, or spiritual deception prevent us from seeking or serving God. Churches that emphasize "self" and feeling good about ourselves miss God's command to "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). The narrow road that leads to life (Matthew 7:14) is not through "self-fulfillment," but through submitting to God's plan for us.

Commentary Genesis Lesson 5

Genesis 10 is often called the "Table of Nations." God's purpose here is to help the chosen nation, Israel, appreciate their connection with the rest of mankind. The chapter emphasizes the common family of humanity from Adam through Noah and his sons and explains God's determination to bless the world through the Hebrew line. The Bible does not recognize the concept of distinct "races," yet Genesis 10 does recognize the differences among Noah's descendants.

Chapter 10 gives the names of the offspring of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham's most famous grandchild is named Nimrod, who is called "a mighty warrior on the earth." The meaning of Nimrod's name, *we shall rebel*, betrays his inclinations. Nimrod founds cities that, in time, become large population centers. In this region, cities band together to form the first great powers built upon plunder and cruelty: the Babylonian and Assyrian Empires.

For the purposes of Genesis, the most important son of Ham is Canaan. Cursed in connection with his father's disrespect of Noah, Canaan becomes the father of the people who inhabit the Promised Land when Israel comes out of Egypt. By the time of the Exodus, the children of Canaan are notoriously immoral, practicing child sacrifice and ritual prostitution. Among the Canaanites are the offspring of Sidon, whose best-known native daughter will become the wicked queen of Israel, Jezebel. Moses opens his discussion of the Shemites by noting that Shem is the father of Eber. Eber is the ancestor of Abraham and is most noted for his connection with the term *Hebrew*, meaning *descendant of Eber*. The Shemite line is traced quite selectively.

Chronologically, Genesis 11:1-9 is a flashback and belongs before chapter 10. Originally, "the whole world had one language and a common speech." The population probably settled close to where the ark came to rest southeast of the Black Sea. The population of earth spreads and moves into the Tigris Valley, a region known as Shinar. They resist God's command to disperse and fill the earth, choosing instead to congregate in a huge city. God knows that if they remain together, their arrogance will know no limits. The Tower of Babel story actually has little to do with the tower referred to in verse 4. It is the city that is offensive to God. They resent the loss of power that will come if they obey God's command and scatter throughout the globe, so they determine to "not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

God correctly reasons that one expression of rebellion will lead to another: "Nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them." God intervenes with a simple solution. He confuses the language of Shinar's inhabitants and makes communication impossible. The people will be forced to do what they should have done from the beginning. God scatters them over the globe and halts their building of the city, which becomes known as *Babel*. The Hebrew word appears 238 times in the Old Testament and is translated *Babylon* 236 of those times. Only in Genesis 10:10 and 11:9 is the word translated Babel. The word is related to the Hebrew term meaning *to confuse*. The city and its related projects align themselves with the serpent's purpose to confuse and deceive humanity by the glorification of man and the defiance of God. Eventually, history will draw to a close with Babylon destroyed (Revelation 18) and the Tempter cast into the lake of burning sulfur (Revelation 20:19).

Check It Out:

What can we learn from the lists in Genesis 10 and 11? They are a powerful statement from God against racial prejudice. We are all descended from one man. What an effective argument these chapters make against discriminatory thinking! If only all the people of the world knew and applied the Bible, we might experience peace between individuals and nations now instead of having to wait for the Prince of Peace to return, straighten out our thinking, and rid the world of the ill will people have created with our pride and prejudice.

What is our responsibility as Christians? What a great thing it is to apply what we know even at the most basic level, like avoiding racially directed jokes. It greatly pleases God when we reach out in His name to those of ethnic origins other than our own.

While men challenge divine authority and show themselves worthy of judgment, God moves ahead with His own plans. Abraham, who will become the central figure of Genesis beginning in chapter 12, will be the divine channel of blessing. Genesis 11:10-32 traces his origins through 10 generations from Shem, who began a family two years after the Flood, through Peleg, to Abram himself. The final stage of preparing the chosen line comes in the family of Terah, who has three sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran. This family's original home is "Ur of the Chaldeans." The location is uncertain, but the biblical language suggests a location in the northern end of the Mesopotamian valley, because there is no trace of the Chaldeans living in the southern plain for a thousand years after Abraham comes on the scene. While he lives in Ur, God first speaks to Abram (compare Acts 7:2-4). The patriarch Terah then takes part of the family and starts the long journey to Canaan. However, their journey is interrupted for unknown reasons — perhaps Terah's health — and Abram's trip stalls in the city of Haran.



Terah was dead long before he died — spiritually dead, that is. Joshua 24:2 makes clear that he “worshiped other gods.” Abram had heard God’s call to go to the land of God’s promise and moved himself and his family out of Ur and in the right direction (Acts 7:2-3). However, under his father Terah’s leadership, they went as far as Haran and stopped (Genesis 11:31). The Bible is silent about why they stopped. Certainly Terah slowed down his son, who did not take one step farther on his God-appointed journey until after his father’s death (Acts 7:4). Jesus calls us and says, “Come, follow Me” (Matthew 4:19). Choose to respond to His call today; don’t get “stuck in Haran.” Resolve never to prevent or delay anyone from obeying God’s call on their life.



What does Paul say about God's desire for unity in Christ?

Galatians 3:28