

## The Road to Messiah 12-10-06

### Genesis 10

We now begin the *toledot*, or account, of the sons of Noah. It begins with the first-born Japheth, then moves to Ham, the youngest, and ends with the second, Shem. A single line of Shem is continued at the end of chapter 11 that brings us to Abraham. This list of clans, languages, lands, and nations is unique in ancient literature. Other ancient works give the lineage of kings, but none make an attempt to tell of the clans of humanity and where they lived throughout the known world. As we'll see in the next chapter, the dispersion began from the Fertile Crescent (Genesis 11:2), though the descriptions in this chapter are located from the perspective of Canaan or what would later be called Palestine.

**Commented [notes1]:** 2 As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. Gen 11:2 (NIV)

No attempt is made to follow every family line. Many are left incomplete. This tells us that the writer was not pretending to make an imaginary outline of all human ancestors or he would simply have made up names to fill in the blanks. It testifies that his knowledge was incomplete but that he shared what information he did have. The purpose is not to tell us of all the lineages of man but to show the dispersion of man in fulfillment of the command of God in Genesis 9:1, "*Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.*"

We have difficulty interpreting the text precisely because some of the names could be geographical locations or clan names. Some of the names are common to two different lines. However, this is a carefully crafted account with the typical to Genesis multiples of 7 and 10. Yet there has been a confirmation of the accuracy of some of this table in archeological discoveries and ancient place names.

There are a number of clues that point to the time of the writing being in the second millennium before Christ, exactly when we believe Moses wrote it, sometime during the wilderness wandering. The immediate purpose then, for those reading this for the first time was to identify the people groups that they were running into. The descendants of cursed Canaan had settled in what became known as the land of Canaan. It is humorous that different groups are arguing over who was in Palestine first. From a Biblical perspective, the people there first were the ones under the curse of Noah. I don't know why people today would try so hard for that honor.

The message of our passage today is that we all come from the same ancestor. We are all of the lineage of Noah. Regardless of which branch you are from, even if you were of the cursed Canaanite clan, we all share a common ancestor. Biblical curses often affected only three or four generations. (Exodus 20:5) We are now all on a common footing as men and women made in the image of God. (Genesis 9:6) This truth leaves no room for the demonization of any people group or ethnicity. There is no room for prejudice or discrimination.

**Commented [notes2]:** 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, Ex 20:5 (NIV)

I'm borrowing from Kent Hughes' general description of the dispersion. "*The Japhethites made up 'the geographical horizon' of Moses' world, the outer fringes of the known world. Japheth's seven sons... lived mostly to the north and east of the*

**Commented [notes3]:** 6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man. Gen 9:6 (NIV)

*Caspian Sea. Tubal and Meshech settled around the Southern shores of the Black Sea. Tiras lived west of the Black Sea in Thrace. Madai occupied the area south of the Caspian in what became Media. And Javan populated Ionia, the southern part of Greece. The sons of Javan spread around the northern Mediterranean as far west as Tarshish or southern Spain.*

*Ham's four sons... settled primarily in northeast Africa and Egypt, the eastern Mediterranean, and Southern Arabia. Cush populated the territory of the upper Nile south of Egypt. 'Egypt' here really means 'Egypt's' and indicates Upper and Lower Egypt. No one is sure where Put was put! But Canaan settled in what was later called 'Palestine,' after the Philistines. The descendants of Canaan noted in verses 15-19 read like a 'most wanted' list of Israel's inveterate enemies.*

*The five sons of Shem...are the Semetic peoples. Elam's descendants lived between the Medes to the north and the Persian Gulf to the south. Asshur's descendants were the Assyrians in northern Mesopotamia. Arpachshad was the father of the Chaldeans in southern Mesopotamia. Lud's descendants were the Lydians of Asia Minor. And the Arameans dwelled in today's Syria. Of greatest significance among Shem's descendants was Eber. The name Eber is related to the word Hebrew – so that Eber is understood to be the ancestor of the Hebrew people. Ultimately, 'Abram the Hebrew' shared descent from Eber through Peleg as the genealogy from Shem to Abram will show."*

There is a comment on Peleg that it was in his days that the earth was divided. We'll see in the next chapter that this is in reference to the descendants of Noah divvying up the earth after Babel. Most of us are European in origin and therefore Japhethites. Though there is so much intermarriage and migration that it is likely many of us have inherited genes from two or all three of Noah's sons.

The total number of nations listed is 70, the multiple of the oft-repeated 7 and 10. The implication is that this represents all the nations of the earth. Millennia later, Jesus will send out 70 disciples to proclaim the good news. (Luke 10:1) It was also representative of the Gospel being for the whole world. (Luke 24:14)

Shem was saved for last, out of birth order, because his descendent Abram is where this whole story is heading. Chapter 10 takes us up to Peleg and even gives us his brother Joktan's descendants but neglects Peleg's. That is because that will be the focus of the second half of the next chapter.

Whether the author realized it or not, (I think he did), the focus is on the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15. God had told the serpent that one day a male child descended from Eve would crush his head, his authority. One day a Messiah would restore what was lost in the fall of man. Eve had great hopes for her first son Abel, only to see them dashed by Cain when Cain committed the first murder.

Once Seth was born, Eve's third male child, she expressed faith again that the seed had been given to her. (Genesis 4:25) His children called on the name of the Lord, but the influence of Cain's descendants over the generations prevailed.

**Commented [notes4]:** 1 After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.  
Luke 10:1 (KJV)

**Commented [notes5]:** 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.  
Matt 24:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."  
Gen 3:15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes7]:** 25 Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him."  
Gen 4:25 (NIV)

God raised up Enoch, a man who walked with God. Surely the people wondered if he was the promised One, but He walked right off this earth and into heaven. (Genesis 5:22-24) His message and life brought a great revival that kept the earth in check for almost a thousand years, but eventually sin won out again, corrupting the hearts and minds of all the people of the earth except Noah. Though the earth became filled with violence and threatened to destroy Noah as he preached righteousness, God protected Noah. (2 Peter 2:5)

**Commented [notes8]:** 22 And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters.  
23 Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years.  
24 Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.  
Gen 5:22-24 (NIV)

The earth was in such a state of corruption that an all-encompassing flood was necessary to cleanse the earth of all the wickedness. If all lives were destroyed, God's promise of the seed that would crush the head of the serpent would not come to pass. The violence of the earth and the wrath of God upon mankind would not stop God from keeping His word. He had Noah build an ark for his family and all the animals. (Genesis 6:13,14)

**Commented [notes9]:** 5 if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others;  
2 Peter 2:5 (NIV)

At the end of our last chapter we saw the name of the covenant God of Shem in Noah's blessing. (Genesis 9:26) Shem was now the bearer of the seed. Next week we will see today's table of nations concludes in a genealogy that ends in Abram. Our previous genealogy ended in Noah. Each genealogy ends with one of the key carriers of the seed of Eve, the coming Messiah. God will enter into a covenant with Abram. Listen to this promise that not only harkens back to the table of nations, but forward to what will be accomplished by the seed. <sup>3</sup> *I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.* Genesis 12:3 (NIV) All the families in that table of nations, including you and I who are their descendents, will be blessed through the seed of Abram.

**Commented [notes10]:** 13 So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.  
14 So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.  
Gen 6:13-14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes11]:** 26 He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem.  
Gen 9:26 (NIV)

If you thought the seed was endangered by Cain, the world of Noah, the flood, wait till you consider this, Abram was almost 100 and his wife Sarai almost 90 and the only child was through the servant of Sarai. God told Abram that that child wasn't the one. It would be through the aging Sarai. At 90 years of age she actually had a child. (Romans 4:19) Can God keep His word?

**Commented [notes12]:** 19 Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead.  
Romans 4:19 (NIV)

That son, Isaac, married a woman named Rebekah. Surely they would have no trouble having a male child, right? Isaac had to pray to the Lord to heal Rebekah's barrenness. (Genesis 25:21) She had twins, Jacob and Esau. Like many of the previous stories, the one that would carry the seed had a nemesis in his brother. In this case Jacob deserved all the feelings of animosity that Esau had toward him. Jacob bought Esau's birthright and stole his blessing and then left town. Esau was waiting for dad to die so he could snuff the life out of Jacob, the seed carrier. (Genesis 27:41)

**Commented [notes13]:** 41 Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob."  
Gen 27:41 (NIV)

Are you getting this idea that there is a constant life and death struggle for the seed line to continue? Jacob was gone for 20 years and finally God told him to go back. He knew he would have to face Esau, but God had softened Esau's heart.

Jacob's name was changed to Israel in an encounter with God. He was told that He was the heir of the promise. <sup>14</sup> *Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth,*

*and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.* Genesis 28:14 (NIV)  
He had 12 sons. Multiple targets might be harder to hit. Who was the bearer of the promised seed now?

Before Israel died, he blessed his sons. Looking for clues in the blessings as we did in Noah's blessing of two of his sons, we find the following blessing on Judah. <sup>10</sup> *The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.* Genesis 49:10 (NIV) The tribe Judah will rule until the one who owns the scepter of authority comes, and the nations will obey Him. Sounds like Judah is our man. Strangely enough, there were no death threats toward Judah. Maybe the 12 sons confused the enemy for that round. But Judah's sons weren't as lucky. They kept dying until he had only one son left. Surely this was the carrier of the seed.

Then in one of those sordid but honest Biblical accounts, we find that one of his widowed daughters-in-law tricked Judah into thinking she was a prostitute. He slept with her and she became pregnant with his twins. He was going to have her killed but she revealed he was the father of the babies in her womb. At birth, one of the babies stuck their hand out first, but then the other was born first. He was named Perez, which means breaking out. (Genesis 38:28,29) And wouldn't you know it. He's our man.

Now the whole family ended up in Egypt. (Genesis 46:5,6) It was a good thing at first, as it spared them from starving in a famine, but eventually they were all enslaved. If the enemy couldn't find the one, then he would enslave them all. The family of Israel became so numerous that Egypt was throwing every male baby into the Nile out of fear that the Israelites would grow too strong. Surely that would stop the hope of a Messiah. God delivered Moses in a little ark over the waters that were meant for his death. He became the instrument of deliverance, and the Israelites left for Canaan. But Moses isn't of the tribe of Judah! He's writing the story and the story points to Judah, but Moses is from the tribe of Levi.

This is where the Bible departs from historical norms. Everyone wrote history and genealogies to show that they were someone special. You would expect Moses' story to all come down to him being the promised seed. It doesn't! Moses doesn't even make it to the Promised Land.

It would take almost 500 years for the next clue to appear. During that time we have two foreign ladies enter the picture of Israel in a prominent way. The first was Rahab, the harlot of Jericho. She and her family were the only survivors when the walls of Jericho fell. (Joshua 6:25) We will discover that she married into the line of the seed. Later came Ruth, a Moabitess. She came in roundabout way as the Gentile widow of an Israelite to end up marrying way out of her class, to a man named Boaz. They were the great-grandparents of a famous shepherd boy in Scripture. (Ruth 4:17)

Samuel, the prophet, anointed that young shepherd boy named David to be king of Israel. There already was a king, a king whose ego was destroying his mind, King

**Commented [notes14]:** 28 As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand; so the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his wrist and said, "This one came out first."  
29 But when he drew back his hand, his brother came out, and she said, "So this is how you have broken out!" And he was named Perez.  
Gen 38:28-29 (NIV)

**Commented [notes15]:** 5 Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him.  
6 They also took with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan, and Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt.  
Gen 46:5-6 (NIV)

**Commented [notes16]:** 25 But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho--and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

Josh 6:25 (NIV)

**Commented [notes17]:** 17 The women living there said, "Naomi has a son." And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.  
Ruth 4:17 (NIV)

Saul, but he was from the tribe of Benjamin. Saul had David come and play the harp to ease his tormented soul. Twice he tried to pin David to the wall with a javelin. (1Samuel 18:11) How did the enemy figure out it was David who is now the seed bearer? Then Saul hunted David with his army. If God was not all powerful, we would say He went out on a limb with David the warrior, but if God preserved the seed through all the past close calls, He can do it now with David. He could have been killed many times in battle, but wasn't. He was never captured by Saul. Once he became king, his son pulled a coup on him and he still survived.

**Commented [notes18]:** 11 and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice.  
1 Sam 18:11 (NIV)

The prophetic promises to David by the prophet Nathan made it very clear that the line of the seed came through him. One of his heirs would reign forever. (2Samuel 7:12,13) Eventually the nation of Israel went into captivity. There was the threat of assimilation into foreign cultures. Many of the tribes did become assimilated, but guess which one didn't, the tribe of Judah, the tribe that was the line of the seed.

**Commented [notes19]:** 12 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom.  
13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.  
2 Sam 7:12-13 (NIV)

Upon their return from captivity, Israel was threatened with assimilating into the cultures and people that had taken up residence in their land. God sent His prophets to warn them and keep them pure. A group that descended from David settled in Nazareth. The name of the town in Hebrew means that they are **the** descendents. And finally, 1000 years after David, a descendent of Eve, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and Tamar, Perez, Rahab, Ruth, and David was born in Bethlehem to a family that came from Nazareth. (Luke 3:36c-38)

**Commented [notes20]:** the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,  
37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Kenan,  
38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.  
Luke 3:36-38 (NIV)

Did you get the idea that there was a cosmic battle to extinguish this line, to keep God from fulfilling His word? Who was most threatened by the promise about this seed of Eve? It was the one whose head would be crushed by Him, the ol' serpent, Satan. No wonder he incited so many to try and murder the bearer of the seed of Eve, the carrier of the promises of God.

It certainly wasn't due to man's ingenuity or cunning that an ark was built, a 90 year old had a child, or a shepherd boy was anointed king. This was all about the faithfulness of God to bring salvation to mankind. He was maintaining the integrity of His word to Abraham to bless the nations that we read about in Genesis 10, the sons of Noah, you and me. (Joshua 23:14)

**Commented [notes21]:** 14 "Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.  
Josh 23:14 (NIV)

As wild a ride as it was, I don't think God had any trouble preserving the seed that was eventually born in a stable. Herod sent his soldiers to kill every male child in that village, but I don't think He has any trouble fulfilling His promises to us. You see, God isn't afraid of what Satan can do to Him, He preserved the seed because He loves us and wanted to set us free from Satan's dominion. He did all that out of love for us.

There is battle raging over the soul of every man and women. The battle is over whether or not they will receive the blessing that came into the world that night Jesus was born. Consider what God did to bring Jesus into the world to crush the Serpent's head so you could be blessed! Then consider whether or not you have let that blessing He is intended to be to the nations into your life.