

Multiply and Divide: A Family of Nations

Genesis 10

After the flood, God blessed Noah and his sons, and told them to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 9.1). Gen. 10 records their descendants, but something's wrong: Divided nations, with different languages, scattered across the world.

All from one: Descendants of Noah's Sons

- From Japheth came: *Indo-Europeans, Greeks, Asia Minor*
- From Ham came: *Egyptians, Phoenicians, Canaanites*
- From Shem came: *Arabians, Mesopotamians, Hebrews*

Ominous Names: Nimrod and Peleg (8-12; 25)

Nimrod – “we shall rebel”

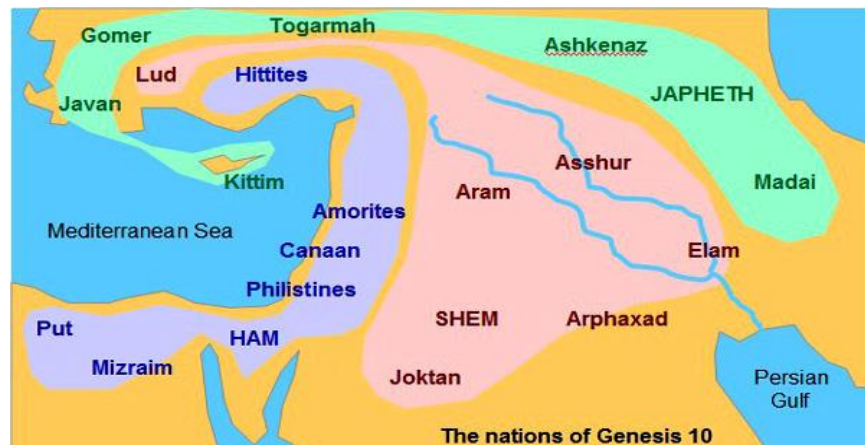
Peleg – “division”

Lessons for Today

The human race is united: God is concerned for all nations.

The human race is divided: Sin leads to judgment.

Our sovereign God has a plan...a plan to bless.

**Digging Deeper**

1. The descendants of Noah's sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth is a collection of individuals, tribal groups, and places. The purpose of Genesis 10 is to show God's blessing on Noah's sons (9.1), and reveal the full extent of the impact of the cursing of Ham, and the blessing of Shem and Japheth, in the previous section (9.18-29). How many names/tribes/places can you identify? (See the map on the flip side!)
2. The story of Nimrod (vv.8-12) stands out in this chapter, since no other individual is given such attention. His name means 'we shall rebel,' and he is a 'mighty one in the earth' (the Heb. word גִּבּוֹר (gibbôr) means 'tyrant, one who magnifies himself'). For the first time in history, we have a man aspiring to conquer and control the world. What aspects of human sinfulness do Nimrod's actions display? How does he factor in the decisive events of Genesis 11.1-9?
3. One other individual – Shem's great-great-grandson Peleg, is given a *very brief* biographical note: *...in his days the earth was divided* (25; his name means 'division'). What does this cryptic reference refer to?
4. Time to get the 'big picture' – and see where we're going. This tôledôt section is Genesis 10.1-11.9 – the Table of Nations (ch. 10) and the Tower of Babel (11.1-9). These two episodes go together. What do they tell us in the larger context? What is God doing here? Go back to the beginning, after the fall, when God promises hope for fallen mankind through the 'seed of the woman' (3.15). The first child of hope was Abel; he was killed. The second child of hope was Seth. What came of the world of his descendants? Who was the next 'child of hope'? Do you see a pattern developing here? After the flood, God has a new plan – and He is going to let us watch it 'develop'. Who is the new 'child of hope'? Where is all this leading? Can you 'follow the dots' through Old Testament history...and to the ultimate Redeemer?