



Magnolia Bible Church Men's Group - Creation Series

Lesson #8 (Genesis 10 – The Table of Nations) | Thursday, April 6, 2017

The principal aim of this series is to explore what the Bible has to say about Creation and the early history of mankind up to the Tower of Babel. The first eleven chapters of Genesis define for us what God's Word has to say about the early days of man. For many people this portion of the Bible is nothing more than fables, while for others it is the inspired Word of God that clearly establishes the origin of man, civilization, and the universe. As Christians, it is important to know what we believe and be able to clearly communicate to others the basis of our beliefs. The world needs well-read, articulate Christians who are confident in their beliefs built on a strong, Biblical foundation.

Listed below is the basic outline for our Creation Series, along with the schedule for each lesson.

Topic	Location in Genesis	Planned Date
Introduction	N/A	February 2
Six days of Creation	Genesis 1 – 2	February 9
The Fall	Genesis 3	February 16
Cain and Abel	Genesis 4	February 23
Genealogy (Adam to Noah)	Genesis 5	March 2
Wickedness of Man	Genesis 6:1-8	March 9
Noah and the Flood	Genesis 6 – 8	March 23 (*)
God's Covenant with Noah / Sons of Noah	Genesis 9	March 30
Table of Nations	Genesis 10	April 6
Tower of Babel	Genesis 11:1-9	April 13

* Spring Break is scheduled for March 13-17; there will not be a lesson on Thursday, March 16.

In Genesis 10 we read the account of Noah's sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. As a reader it is encouraging to see that God had a plan for mankind after the Flood. More than likely He "breathed" into the hearts of Shem, Ham and Japheth a desire to build families, conduct commerce, and forge empires. Certainly within several generations after the Flood we see men building cities and making names for themselves and their clans. The world we know today started with the industrious efforts of these men.

While it is true that all humans alive today have descended from Noah's and his sons, it is equally important to note that all of our nations in some capacity derive themselves from those nations founded by the sons of Noah. In reading through Genesis 10 and its genealogies, consider several important points:

- Most humans take great pride in their respective nations, where we find our culture, values, and sense of national pride. National independence and sovereignty has become an important part of the world in which we live. In many circumstances, people are willing to die for their nation.
- Technology, science, art, literature, and a host of other "cultural icons" descend from the families and societies that are identified in Genesis 10's Table of Nations.
- More important than anything, we see that God had planned *from the beginning* that the Messiah would come through the line of Shem. In His infinite wisdom, God preserved this family line and maintained a lineage of Godly men and women who would continue to follow Him, in spite of opposing forces from the world around them.

Questions & Deep Thoughts

1. Reading genealogies is admittedly not one of the more exciting pastimes for students of the Bible. However, when considering God's plan for mankind, including the redemptive work of Christ and those who follow Him, it is mind-boggling to consider that God planned this so far in advance. Review Noah's prophecy in Genesis 9:24-27 and consider the map on the following page. From a world history standpoint, how can we attest to the accuracy of Noah's prophecies regarding the actions of the descendants who came from his three sons?

2. In Acts 17:16-34 we read of Paul's interaction with the Athenians and his explanation of God's overall purpose for mankind. In verse 26 Paul specifically states, *He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.* As you consider events since Creation, in what ways have you seen the providential hand of God? Consider major events in world history.

3. Oftentimes when we study history it is easy to overlook people and the contributions they have made to the world. In particular, we rarely take time to study leaders and why groups of people would follow certain individuals.
 - a. As you consider the time after Noah, what characteristics would men have had that would have made them effective leaders? Think especially in terms of Nimrod.

 - b. Have things changed today – what attributes do we seek as a society in our leaders?

THE TABLE OF NATIONS

Genesis 10 presents a list of nations descended from the three sons of Noah: Japheth, Ham, and Shem. This "Table of Nations" is unique in the ancient world and contains seventy names of ancestral heads of nations and peoples known to Israel. The list proceeds from the less important, for the purposes of the writer, to the most important. The fourteen descendants of Japheth are named first. Japheth's descendants generally are associated with areas north and northwest of Canaan, including mainland Greece, Asia Minor (modern Turkey), certain Mediterranean islands (Crete, Cyprus, and Rhodes), and the mountainous areas from Armenia to the Caspian Sea.

The list next names thirty descendants of Ham. The Hamites generally are located in North Africa (Egypt and the Sudan), along the coast of Somaliland and the west Arabian coasts, and in certain sections of Mesopotamia. Canaan along with

many of the people-groups Israel encountered as she entered the promised land (Amorites, Jebusites, Perizzites, Hivites, Girgashites, and others) are listed as Hamites.

The last and most extensive part of the list contains twenty-six descendants of Shem, the ancestor of Israel. Genesis 11:10–26 connects Shem with Abram (Abraham), who received God's gracious covenant of blessing and hope for the human race (Gen. 12:1–3).

Identification of many of Shem's descendants remains uncertain. Some of the names seem to refer to areas of northwest Mesopotamia (Eber, Peleg, Aram). Elam was at the bend of the Persian Gulf, while Asshur and Arpachshad are in the upper Tigris region. Several names can be located plausibly in Somaliland (Havilah, Ophir). The thirteen sons of Joktan are related to the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula.

