"The Dispersion of the Nations"

(From Babel to Babble)

Genesis 10:1 – 11:9

2/8/98

INTRODUCTION: 10:1-32

The Scattering of the Nations

1. Japheth's Descendents: North (Europe & Russia) (v. 2-5)

2. Ham's Descendents: South (Canaan & Egypt) (v. 6-20)

3. Shem's Descendents: East (Persian Gulf) (v. 21-32)

***What events led to the dispersion of the nations?**

I. Man attempts Global Unity (v. 1-6)

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

A. Enabled by a common channel of communication (v. 1)

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

B. Supplied with sufficient material resources (v. 2-3)

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

C. Motivated by humanistic pride and rebellion against God's commands (v. 4)

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

D. Equipped with the potential for great inventions which would be used for sin (v. 5-6)

II. God Overrules Man's Proud Ambition (v. 7-9)

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Genesis 10:1 – 11:9

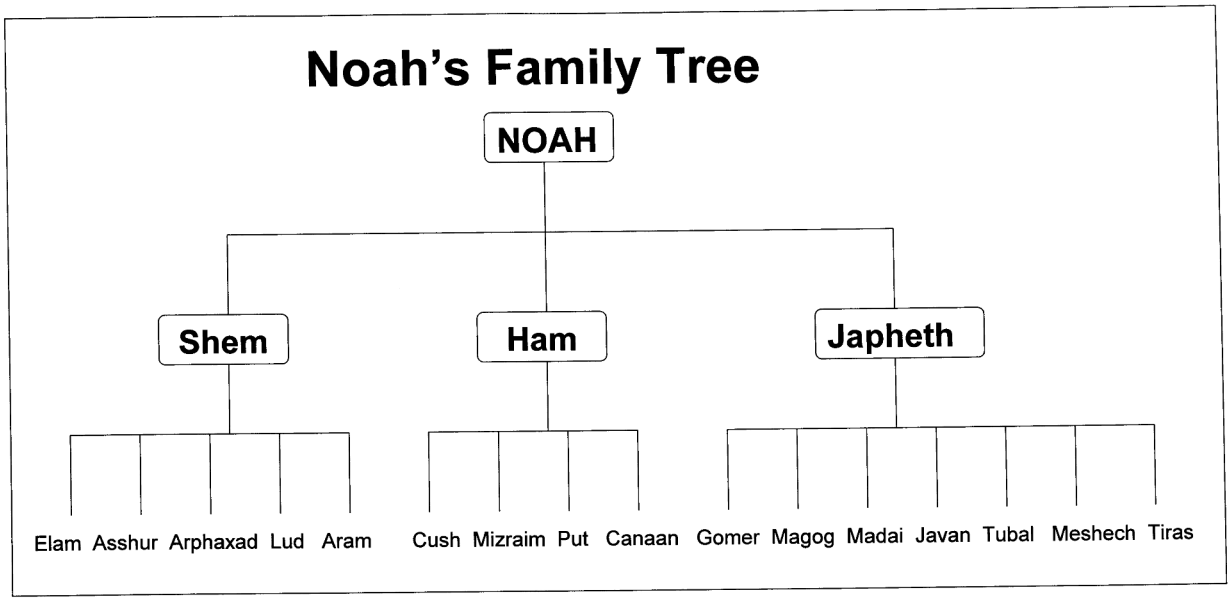
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INTRODUCTION: 10:1-32

10:1
"Shem, Ham, and Japheth" –

Everyone existing today comes from the lineage of either Shem, Ham, or Japheth, or a combination thereof.

There is actually only one race, and that is the human race, since we all stem back to Noah via his sons. Hence, there is no Biblical justification for racial prejudice.



10:2
"Gomer" was a northern people (Ezek. 38:6) who occupied the ancient land of the Ukraine.

"Magog" – mentioned in Ezek. 38:2 and Rev. 20:7-9. A northern people. Magog "was identified by Josephus as the land of the Scythians, the region north and northeast of the Black Sea and east of the Aral Sea (now occupied by Russia)." (Ryrie note)

"Meshech" and **"Tubal" –** (mentioned in Ezek. 38:2-3) evidently occupied the territory of modern Turkey.

10:6

The Hamites, who would occupy much of the Fertile Crescent (including Palestine – the Canaanites), would predominantly occupy the continent of Africa, including Egypt which is referred to as "the land of Ham" (P{s. 105:23, 27).

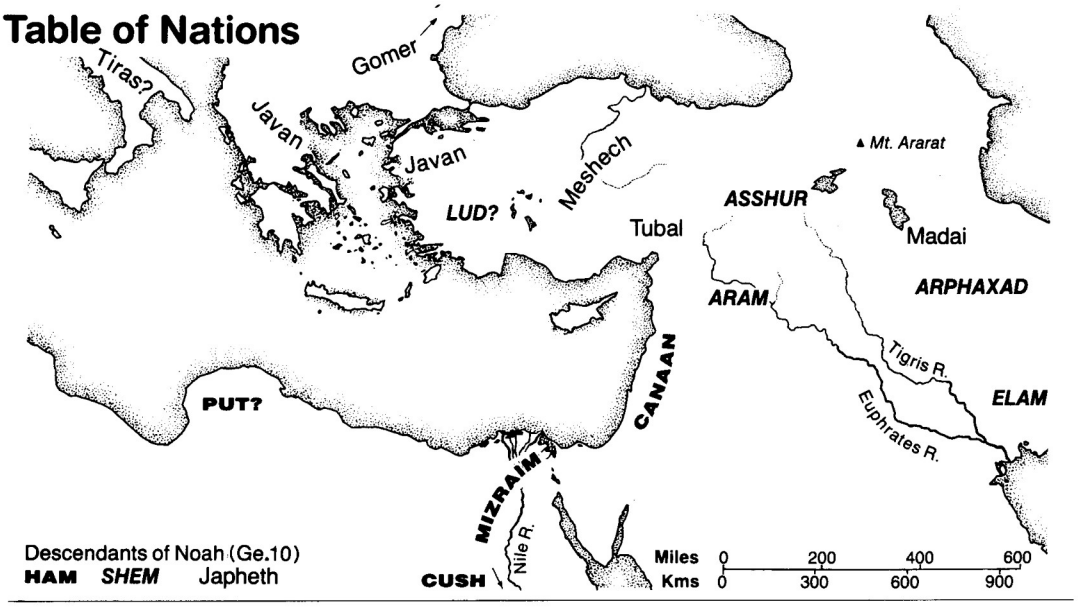
10:8
Special attention is given to Nimrod because he would be a significant builder (like Herod the Great, Nimrod was known for his city building, the most notorious of which would be Babel [v. 10], which God expands on in Gen. 11:1-9).

10:25
"In his days was the earth divided" – Moses is apparently describing the scattering of the descendents of Shem, Ham, and Japheth which occurred after the Tower of Babel. That is why after each mention of the descendents of Noah's sons, a reference is made to various languages ("tongues" – v. 5, 20, 31). Prior to Babel, everyone spoke the same language (11:1).

10:21-32
The descendents of Shem settled in the area of the eastern Persian Gulf.

Names of Descendents Listed:

Japheth - 14
Ham - 30
Shem - 26
Totaling an even 70



The Scattering of the Nations:

4. Japheth's Descendents: North (Europe & Russia) (v. 2-5)

5. Ham's Descendents: South (Canaan & Egypt) (v. 6-20)

6. Shem's Descendents: East (Persian Gulf) (v. 21-32)

***What events led to the dispersion of the nations?**

I. Man attempts Global Unity (v. 1-6)

Having shown the dispersion of the nations—each one with their own family heritage, language, and land (Gen. 10:5, 20:31), God now in chapter 11 tells us how they became scattered.

Nations historically have all strived for "social immortality." Each nation seeks to build its nation to outshine and out-endure the rest.

Because they shared a common language (v. 1), lived in a common location (v. 2), and had common motives (v. 4), they had what was necessary to build a unified humanistic society.

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

A. Enabled by a common channel of communication (v. 1)

"One language, and of one speech" – Imagine only one alphabet for the world and one dialect. One form of written and oral communication. Since all the nations stemmed from one man (Noah), all spoke one language.

The whole earth was of one language and one vocabulary.

Today, the English language—via mass media and the world-wide web—will again unite the world!

A new one-world order is in the making.

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

B. Supplied with sufficient material resources (v. 2-3)

v. 2

"As they journeyed from the east" – From the west was the not, dry Arabian desert. People would not travel from that direction.

"A plain" – level ground where a metropolitan city could be built. A place between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. It is believed to be near where "the garden of Eden" at one time stood (Gen. 2:14-15). A place where God expelled Adam and Eve

v. 3

"They said to one another, Go to" – With one language, they said, "Come, let us prepare brick and mortar."

Babylon was always known for its wealth and resources (cp. Rev. 17-18). Beware of the inherent dangers of abundance!

Rev. 3:17 - Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

C. Motivated by humanistic pride and rebellion against God's commands (v. 4)

The sin of Babel was not their desire for a city or tower; rather, it was their rebellion, pride, and humanism.

"Let us build us . . . Let us make us a name . . ." –

They did not regard God in the endeavor; it was all about "us." What "we" want. Sheer humanism. This was a man-centered project without consideration for God's will.

Outside of God's city Jerusalem ("the city of peace"), it was never His intention that the world gather in large cities. However, as people leave the security of God (trusting in God), they will seek the security they find in man. Hence, they leave the farm lands, the simple, small country life, and seek the high tech, big city life, with its bright lights, mass transit and financial opportunity.

Big cities are always "dens of wickedness." With the mass accumulation of people come also a mass accumulation of worldly ideals, a mingling of religious

ideas, a materialistic-orientated society (most people who come to NYC comes for one reason: money!).

"A tower" – a rallying point. A tall tower that would impress travelers and give man a symbol of his power and pride.

(The main attractions to NY are the tall Statue of Liberty, the Empire State building and the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center)

"Let us make us a name" – At the heart of this statement is humanistic pride. Let's have ourselves a reputation that will gain the eye and ear of the world!

Are you driven by the worldly craze of fame? Which concerns you more: your reputation, recognition, honor, and glory . . . or God's?

"Lest we be scattered" – They didn't want to do exactly what God had commanded the human race to do, and that was: "Replenish the earth" (fill the earth)

They thought they would build a secure society (such a false sense of security will precede the Lord's return in the Last Days – I Thes. 5:3).

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

D. Equipped with the potential for great inventions which would be used for sin (v. 5-6)

v. 5

"the LORD came down" – Whenever the Lord appeared on earth, it was always a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ

(NOTE: the various Christophanes in the Old Testament – Gen. 12:7, 16:7-10, 18:1; cp. Jn. 8:56)

v. 6

"God knows the danger of collected apostasy" (Ross, p. 246).

"Nothing will be restrained from them" – Unfortunately, due to man's sinful nature, with the accumulation of shared knowledge and resources comes the accumulation of wicked devices (Rom. 1:30 – "inventors of evil things").

With most every good inventions comes an evil application of the invention.

*The printing press once used to print Bibles now prints pornography.

*The radio once used to impart news and good music, now pollutes the air waves with blasphemers like Howard Stern and devilish rock and rap noise.

*The TV once used to provide wholesome entertainment now brings into our homes murder, adultery, fornication, devilish MTV, X-rated programming and a legion of other toxic shows.

*And now, most recently, the computer and the internet which has the potential of being a great help and benefit to man, will also (via the poisons flowing out of corrupt minds) be a vehicle for quick and easy access to pornography and a host of other mind-enslaving vices!

II. God Overrules Man's Proud Ambition (v. 7-9)

v. 7
"Come, let us go down" – Evidently with the use of angelic spirits, the Lord (who is the author of language) would miraculously modify man's unified communication ability and instill in groups (as He saw fit) a new alphabet, phonics, grammar, and syntax.

Can God miraculously give people the ability to speak a foreign language? He did at Pentecost (Acts 2) and during the formation of the early church (I Cor. 12-14).

Examples of God using Language as a form of judgment:

1) **At the Tower of Babel**
"The whole earth was of one language, and one speech" (Gen. 11:1). The people did not obey the command given to Noah to "replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1) but became proud (Gen. 11:4) and united without God, so God confused their languages and established the parent languages of the earth (today over 3,000 languages and dialects).

2) **Deut. 28 Blessings & Cursings** - curses were to be a "sign" (v. 46) Deut. 28:49 - "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;"

3) **Jeremiah** the "weeping prophet" preached, and Israel would not repent from her backsliding, so God said He would send judgment. Jer. 5:14-

15 - "Wherefore, thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them. Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say."

4) **In the NT** (after Mt. 12 - unpardonable sin), Christ spoke in **parables** because of the hardness of the people's hearts. They would not listen to plain talk, so He veiled His speech by parables. (READ Mt. 13:10-15).

I Cor. 14:22 - Tongues were <u>not</u> for:

1) <u>Self-edification</u> but a sign of judgment
2) <u>Entertainment or amusement</u> but a sign of judgment
3) <u>Spreading the Gospel to other nationalities</u> but a sign of judgment
4) <u>The benefit of the assembly</u> of believers (church) but a sign of judgment
5) <u>private use</u> but for <u>public</u> as a sign of judgment
6) a sign that you finally had the <u>Holy Spirit</u> (Paul said not all spoke in tongues; but all had the Holy Spirit)

The heart of unity (in any relationship) is <u>communication</u>. By striking their language, God successfully destroys their communication as a whole and thereby dismantles their proud, humanistic unity.

“It is the will of God, so long as sin is present in the world, to employ nationalism in the reduction of sin” (Stigers, commentary on Genesis, p. 129; cited by Ross, p. 234).

v. 8
“The LORD scattered them abroad” – God sovereignly determined the places the nations would be scattered to (Acts 17:26 - And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation).

Man rules, but God overrules!

God can foil man’s plans anytime He wants!

The sovereign of the universe will destroy man's future attempt at global unity when He comes back to judge the Antichrist and Satan's united kingdom in the Day of the Lord's Wrath.

v. 9
"Babel" – means confusion; we use the term "babbling" to refer to confused speech.

"The present number of languages (more than 3,000 languages, plus dialects) that form national barriers is a monument to sin" (Ross, p. 234).

Babylon serves as the prototype of all nations, cities, and empires that raise themselves in pride (Ross, p. 241).

Is. 13:19 – Babylon's glory
Is. 47:8-13 – Babylon's pleasures and sins
Dan. 4 – 5, Isl. 14:13 – Babylon's pride
Rev. 17 – 18 – Babylon's wealth

In each case, Babylon's destruction for its pride is mentioned.

CONCLUSION;

A lesson to learn: "Great nations cannot defy God and long survive" (Ross. P. 248).

Do you take pride in the carnal or the spiritual?
The worldly or the heavenly?
The terrestrial or the celestial?
The material or the immortal?
The tangible or the intangible?
The visible or the invisible?

In short, do you walk by faith or by sight?

Do you glory in man and man's achievements? Or do you glory in God? (Jer. 9:32)