

Genesis Chapter 10 Notes (Defenders Study Bible by Henry Morris)

10:1 *the generations.* This is the fourth *toledoth* of the book of Genesis (previously noted at Genesis 2:4; 5:1; and 6:9), presumably marking the signatures of Shem, Ham and Japheth after completing their narrative of the Flood and the immediate post-Flood years. Shem then took over the task (Genesis 11:10) and his family records, now known as the Table of Nations, constitute (according to premier archaeologist William P. Albright) an “astonishingly accurate document.”

10:1 *Japheth.* It is possible that the name Japheth was later corrupted by the Romans to Jupiter (or Iu-pater—the “father” of the gods).

10:1 *after the flood.* This marks the end of the first—and only authentic—account of the great Flood, written down by the only eye-witnesses who could record it accurately, the men who experienced it and survived to tell about it. As their descendants scattered over the earth, especially after their dispersion from Babel (Genesis 11:9), they carried the story with them. However, with the changes in language and the passage of time, the story assumed different forms in the different cultures, though always still recognizable as coming from the same source. One of the earliest of the more than three hundred of these “flood legends” from all over the world is the one found in Babylon itself, the famous Gilgamesh Epic.

10:2 *Gomer.* The “sons of Japheth,” allowing for the gradual modifications in form of their names over the millennia, can be recognized as the progenitors of the Indo-European peoples. Japheth himself is called “Iapetos,” in the legends of the Greeks, and Iyapeti is the reputed ancestor of the Aryans. Gomer is identified by Herodotus with Cimmeria, a name now surviving as the Crimea. His descendants moved westward, with the name possibly further preserved in Germany and Cambria (Wales).

10:2 *Magog.* Magog can mean “the place of Gog,” possibly now Georgia in the former USSR.

10:2 *Madai.* Madai is the ancestor of the Medes.

10:2 *Javan.* Javan is identified with “Ionia,” and is often translated as “Greece” in the Old Testament.

10:2 *Tubal.* Tubal is a name probably preserved in the modern Tobolsk and the ancient Tibareni. He is associated with Magog and Meshech in Ezekiel 38:2 and other passages, all probably ancestral to modern Russia.

10:2 *Meshech.* Meshech is preserved in the names Muskovi and Moscow.

10:2 *Tiras.* Tiras gave rise to the Thracians, and possibly to the Etruscans.

10:3 *Ashkenaz.* Ashkenaz has long been associated with the German Jews, known still as the Ashkenazi. The name is also possibly preserved in the names Scandia and Saxon, as well as a region of Armenia once known as Sakasene.

10:3 *Riphath.* Josephus associates Riphath with the Paphlagonians. There is a possibility that the name Carpathia, and even Europe, come from Riphath.

10:3 Togarmah. Togarmah is probably the ancestor of the Armenians. The Jewish Targums say that Germany was derived from Togarmah. The name may also have a connection with Turkey and Turkestan.

10:4 Elishah. Elishah is preserved today as Hellas (Hellenists, Hellespont), another name for Greece. The Iliad mentions them as the “Eilesians.”

10:4 Tarshish. Tarshish is a name frequently mentioned in the Old Testament as a sea-faring people. Apparently the name somehow became later associated with the Phoenicians and their cities of Carthage (North Africa) and Tartessos (Spain), even though these were Canaanites. Perhaps the first settlers of these cities were Japhethites, later conquered and expanded by Phoenicians.

10:4 Kittim. Kittim is another name for Cyprus. The name “Ma-Kittim” (land of Kittim) is possibly preserved as Macedonia.

10:4 Dodanim. Dodanim is the same as Rodanim (I Chronicles 1:7 in some manuscripts). The name is probably found today in the names Dardanelles and Rhodes.

10:5 after his tongue. The islands and coastlands to which these first Europeans migrated were “divided...everyone after his tongue.” This notation indicates that the author of Genesis 10 (probably Shem) wrote it after the dispersion at Babel.

10:6 Cush. Cush, the same as “Kish,” is usually translated in the Old Testament as “Ethiopia,” a land identified in the Tell El Amarna tablets as “Kashi.” Some of the Cushites evidently stayed in Arabia while others sailed across the Red Sea into Ethiopia.

10:6 Mizraim. Mizraim is the customary name for Egypt in the Bible, which is also called “the land of Ham” (Psalm 105:23; etc.). It is barely possible that Mizraim is the same as Menes, Egypt’s first king.

10:6 Phut. According to Josephus, Phut is the same as Libya in the Bible.

10:6 Canaan. Canaan, Ham’s youngest son, is obviously the progenitor of the Canaanites.

10:7 Sabtecha. The five first-named sons of Cush apparently all settled in Arabia, although Seba later migrated into the Sudan, giving his name to the Sabean (Isaiah 45:14).

10:7 Dedan. Sheba and Dedan were evidently well known Arabians in the days of Abraham, since two of his grandsons through Keturah were named after them (Genesis 25:3).

10:8 Cush begat Nimrod. As the “son of Cush” (that is, “bar-Cush”) Nimrod probably was later deified and worshipped as Bacchus by the Romans. As the founder of Babylon, he also later became the chief god of the Babylonians “Merod-ach” or “Marduk.” His name is preserved in various ways, in many geographical sites or names of deities, having been the most influential leader of mankind when the nations were dispersed at Babel. One of the chief cities of the Assyrians was called Nimrud. He has also been identified as the tyrant Gilgamesh, in the famous Gilgamesh Epic found in the ruins of Nineveh.

10:8 Nimrod. Nimrod, the youngest and most illustrious son of Cush, was given a name meaning “Let us rebel!” and apparently trained by his father for this purpose.

10:9 mighty hunter. This phrase connotes a man mighty in wickedness. It is possible that his hero's reputation was gained in hunting and slaying the giant animals that proliferated after the flood and were considered dangerous to the small human population of the first century. He built a great kingdom, with the capital at Babel in the plain Shinar (no doubt equivalent to Sumer) in the Tigris-Euphrates valley.

10:10 Accad. Erech is also "Uruk," one hundred miles southeast of Babylon, the legendary home of Gilgamesh. Accad gave its name to the Akkadian empire, perhaps the same as the Sumerian empire. Calneh is unidentified.

10:11 Asshur. Asshur, a son of Shem, had evidently founded a settlement, but Nimrod "went forth into Asshur" (better rendering of "out of that land went forth Assur"), extending his empire and establishing also what would later become the Assyrian empire.

10:11 Nineveh. Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrians, was named after "Ninus," evidently another name for Nimrod. Although both Babylonia and Assyria were later conquered by Semites, the Hamite Nimrod was their founder and first king. Nineveh was two hundred miles north of Babylon, on the Tigris River.

10:11 Rehoboth. Rehoboth and Resen have not yet been identified.

10:12 a great city. About twenty miles south of Nineveh, Calah has been excavated. It is still called "Nimrud." These three satellite cities, with Nineveh, made up a metropolitan complex and is thus called a "great city."

10:14 Caphtorim. The sons of Mizraim are mostly yet unidentified in secular records; perhaps most of them migrated south and west from their father's home in Egypt, deeper into Africa. However, the Pathrusim dwelt in Pathros, or upper Egypt. The Caphtorim are identified in the Bible with the Philistim, or Philistines, and by secular writers with Crete. These people evidently migrated from Egypt to Crete and then, later, in successive waves to Philistia on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean.

10:15 Sidon. The city of Sidon, chief city of the Phoenicians, still exists today.

10:15 Heth. Heth is the ancestor of the Hittites, prominent in both the Bible and secular history, ruling a great empire in Asia Minor for over eight hundred years. When the Hittite empire finally crumbled, many of its people migrated east. The Hittites are identified in Egyptian inscriptions as the "Kheta." In the cuneiform inscriptions in Babylonia, this name is identified as "Khittae," which may have been modified eventually to "Cathay," a synonym for China. Archaeologists have noted similarities between the Mongols and Hittites.

10:17 Sinite. The other nine sons of Canaan were the Canaanite tribes that inhabited the land when the Israelites entered it. The Amorites are identified in the tablets as the Amurru. The Sinites may be connected in ethnology with the wilderness of Sin and Mount Sinai in the south, and with the Assyrian god "Sin," and even with Sinim (Isaiah 49:12) and the people of secular history called "Sinae," or Chinese.

10:18 spread abroad. This statement becomes especially significant if, as intimated above, the descendants of Canaan include the Mongol peoples, who eventually spread not only throughout most

of Asia but also across the Bering Strait into North and South America, becoming the American Indians.

10:20 in their nations. The division of the original population into “nations” was both “after their tongues” and “after their families,” suggesting that each family living at Babel was given a distinctive tongue at the dispersion.

10:21 Eber. The term “Hebrew” comes from Eber, but the descendants of Eber also include the “Habiru.” Discoveries at Ebla, in northern Syria, seem to indicate the founder and king of Ebla to be “Ebrim.”

10:21 Japheth. Japheth was evidently the oldest son of Noah, Ham the youngest (Genesis 9:24).

10:22 Elam. Elam is the ancestor of the Elamites, who later merged with the Medes (descendants of Madai) to form the Medo-Persian empire.

10:22 Asshur. Asshur gives his name to the Assyrians, although his settlement on the Tigris was later taken over by Nimrod (Genesis 10:11).

10:22 Lud. According to Josephus, Lud was the ancestor of the Lydians.

10:22 Aram. Aram is the father of the Aramaeans, or Syrians. The Aramaic language was almost a world language in the ancient world, and even some parts of the Old Testament were first written in Aramaic.

10:23 Uz. Uz gave his name to Job’s homeland (Job 1:1) but little is known of the other three sons of Aram. Evidently the children of Aram had more contact with Shem than his other grandsons (except through Arphaxad) since none of the others are listed.

10:25 Peleg. Peleg means “division,” and he was apparently given the name by Eber because of the great event that took place just before his birth. He may also have given his name to the Pelasgians.

10:25 the earth divided. The “division” that took place was, most likely, the traumatic upheaval at Babel. A division in Genesis 10:5,32, is mentioned, where the division is “after his tongue.” Nimrod was in the same generation as Eber, and this is the only place in the Table of Nations where the meaning of a son’s name is given, indicating the importance of the event it commemorated. However, it is true that two different words are used (*Pelag* in Genesis 10:25, *parad* in Genesis 10:5,32). Although the two words are essentially synonymous, this might indicate a different type of division. Many Bible teachers have suggested, therefore, that Genesis 10:25 might refer to a splitting of the single post-Flood continent into the present continents of the world. They associated the modern scientific model of sea-floor spreading and continental drifting with this verse. It should be remembered, however, that the continental drift hypothesis has by no means been proved; and the verse seems to refer more directly to the division into families, countries and languages. Furthermore, even if the continents have separated from a single primeval continent, such a split more likely would have occurred in connection with the continental uplifts terminating the global deluge (Psalm 104:6-9).

10:29 sons of Joktan. Thirteen sons of Joktan are listed, most of whom are believed to have settled in Arabia. The fact that *none* of Peleg’s sons are listed may indicate that Shem was living near Joktan’s family.

10:31 *after their nations.* This concludes the “nations” listed in Genesis 10–fourteen from Japheth, thirty from Ham, and twenty-six from Shem. Thus a total of seventy such primeval nations was included by Shem in his Table of Nations. All are descendants of Adam, through Noah. There is no hint anywhere in Scripture of any “hominids” or other “pre-Adamites” in man’s ancestry. The so-called “ape-men” can all be shown to be either remains of extinct apes or of true men, probably all living after the Flood.

10:32 *generations.* The word “generations” (Hebrew *toledoth*) indicates that actual genealogical records were available to Shem as he compiled the information in the Table.

10:32 *nations divided.* The seventy nations from Noah’s three sons are the progenitors of all other nations (note also Genesis 9:19). These three streams of nations should not be interpreted as three races, however. The concept of race is not found in the Bible and is purely an evolutionist concept with no basis in either Scripture or true science. In evolutionary terminology, a race is a sub-species in the process of evolving into a new species, but the Bible speaks only of kinds. Where mankind is concerned, there are nations, tribes, tongues, peoples, and families, but these are not races.