

GENESIS

10:1-11:9

Genesis 10:1-11:9

Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 1st October 2023 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: 1 John 2:15-17

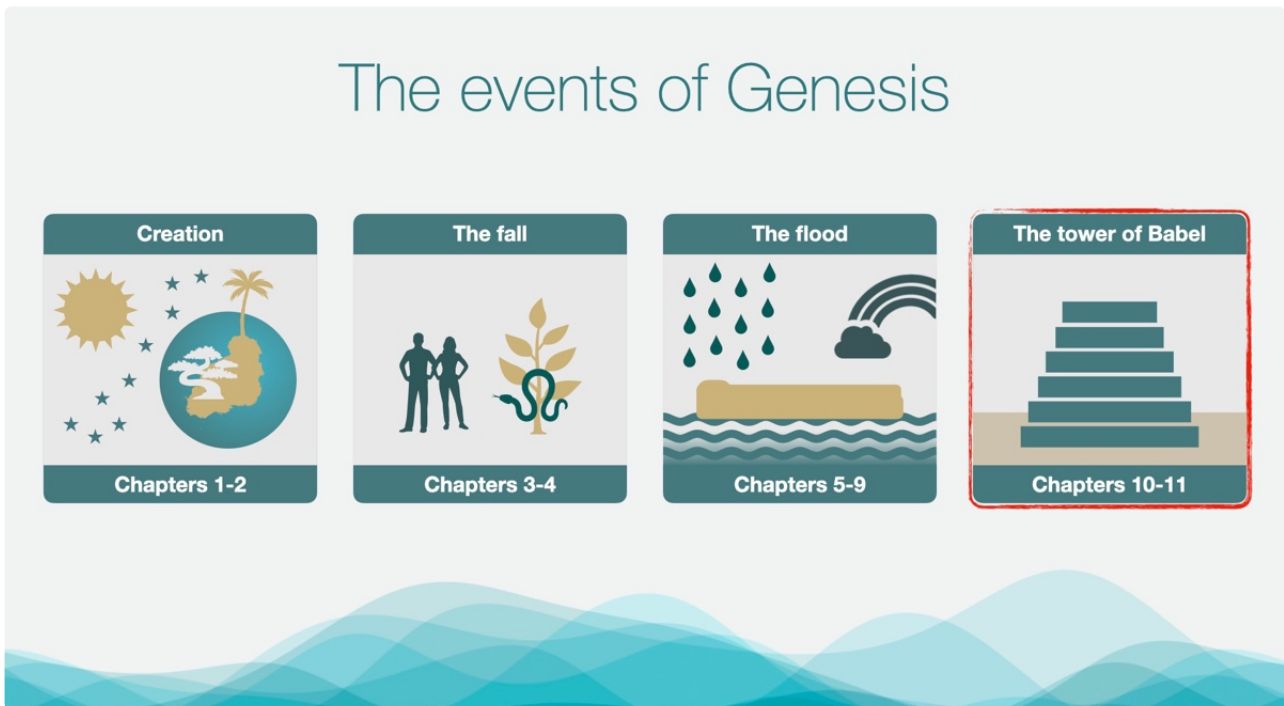
Introduction

We're studying the book of Genesis, and last week we studied chapter 9 which saw the conclusion of what Moses wrote about Noah's flood — a global, devastating flood, that destroyed every living thing, except for Noah, his sons, their wives, and the animals that entered the ark with them.

As they *exited* the ark, at *God's* command, we see that things start well in this new world — we see Noah offer a sacrifice to God of his own free will, no doubt thanking Him for saving them. But as time goes on, and Noah settles into life, it seems he drops his guard and we read that he becomes drunk on the wine from his vineyard. And all of a sudden, we see that while it is a new beginning, sin is still very much present.

The flood may have destroyed the wicked giants that lived before it, but it hadn't erased sin. And as we now enter these subsequent chapters of Genesis, we see that sin once more abounds. But just as Paul wrote, that where sin abounded, grace much more abounded (speaking of Jesus sacrifice for us), so we will see here the hand of God orchestrating events that would ultimately lead to Jesus being born so that He could die in our place to pay for our sin. Much grace is shown throughout the subsequent pages.

Now, this morning we're going to study all of chapter 10, and the first 9 verses of chapter 11 — which record the children and family lines born to Noah's sons, and also the fourth of four key events that take place in Genesis, namely, the tower of Babel:



And as we'll see, this not only left its mark on society, but on the landscape too. So as we begin a verse by verse study of these chapters, let's look at them with a birds eye view first:

Overview of chapter ten

Overview of chapter ten

- **v1** — Introduction
- **v2-5** — Japheth's early descendants
- **v6-20** — Ham's early descendants
- **v21-31** — Shem's early descendants
- **v32** — Summary

After the opening verse, we see Japheth's descendants recorded — his seven sons, and seven of his grandsons — in verses 2-5. Then, in verses 6-20 we see more than 20 of Ham's descendants recorded, with a couple of notable mentions being Nimrod, whom v8-12 are dedicated to, and the Philistines who are mentioned in verse 14. In verses 21-31 we see Shem's descendants recorded — 26 in total, with Peleg being a notable mention in v25 — before the final verse summarises this.

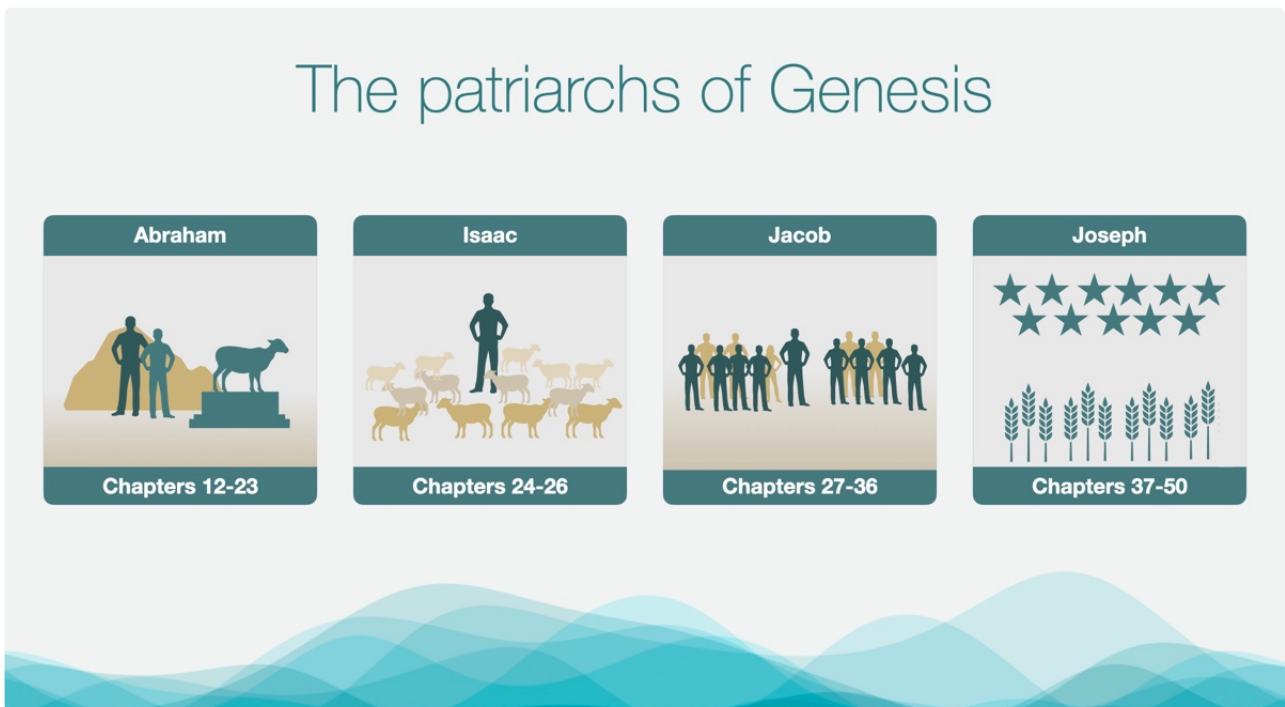
As we get to chapter 11, we'll find that the beginning of it overlaps with the timing of chapter 10; that is, it gives us more detail of what was going on at that time.

Overview of chapter eleven

- **v1-9** — The tower of babel
- **v10-26** — Shem's descendants through to Abram (Abraham)
- **v27-32** — Abraham's family, and their wanderings

That is, the first 9 verses record what led to and followed the tower of Babel being built, in what is modern day Iraq. And then verses 10-26, which we'll look at next week, it records the family line from Shem through to Abram, whom we better know as Abraham, before in verses 27-32 we will learn more of his family and their wanderings.

And this will set up the following 11 chapters of Genesis that focus on Abraham, the first of the four patriarchs in Genesis...



The others being Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. But that's what's to come in later weeks as we study our way through the book of Genesis. Now, in these 2 chapters that we'll look at this morning and next, there are a lot of names. And we might easily think we don't need them, but these chapters are both pivotal in us understanding how we get from Noah to Abraham, and also important in showing a contrast between man's way of doing things, and God's way.

Chapter ten

So, let's get into our study of chapter 10. We read in verse 1:

Genesis 10:1

Now this is the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And sons were born to them after the flood.

There were 8 people that went onto the ark, and 8 people that came off it. And as we *read* at the end of chapter 9, it was now down to Noah's sons and their wives to repopulate the earth. And indeed by the end of chapter 9 that had already started, for we *read* about Canaan, Noah's grandson whom he cursed. And as we read through the subsequent verses we see the sons in each generation recorded, but that doesn't mean that daughters were not born at the same time — rather the family line was recorded through the male descendants, much like today in our culture where the bride typically takes the groom's last name, that is, his family name. And actually, only *some* of the sons are recorded, as increasingly Moses begins to focus on the family line through to an individual named Abram.

But as we'll see, the 60 or so names that follow not only show the line through to Abram, and ultimately to Christ, but they also give us the earliest history of the nations of our world as we know it today, and help us understand more about the nations that Israel had so many conflicts with.

Moses starts with Japheth, moves on to Ham, then onto Shem. That is, while Shem always comes first in any list of his brothers (for it is through him that the line to Jesus would come), his descendants are the last to be listed here, as from this point on the Bible will *focus* on *his* offspring, and not chronicle the descendants of his siblings in as close a way as it does his. We read:

Genesis 10:2

The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

So Japheth and his wife had 7 sons, and while we are not given all the detail in the Bible, we know from multiple sources that many modern nations or peoples can trace their roots back here.

From Gomer came the ancient Galatians and Phrygians, out of whom came the Gauls and Celts, and later on the Germans, French, Welsh, Irish, Britons and various other Anglo-Saxon tribes and nations. Also, present day Germany is identified as Gomer, sometimes rendered as *Germania*.

From Magog came groups such as the Scythians, referenced in Colossians, and ultimately modern day Russians, Bulgarians, Poles, Croatians and more. In fact, the area between the Black Sea and Caspian sea also became known as Magog, and the Great Wall of China, which was built to keep out their enemies, is known as the *Wall of Magog* there. And what is significant about this particular son of Japheth, is the yet to be fulfilled prophecy that an invasion will come from Magog, from the north, into Israel, which we find recorded in Ezekiel chapters 38 & 39. And so it's worth noting that Moscow is due north of Jerusalem. It seems Russia yet has a big part to play in Biblical prophecy.

From Japheth's next son, Madai, came the ancient Medes and Persians, who lived in modern day Iran. While from Javan came the Greeks, Italians, Spanish and Portuguese among others — possibly including the French, thus these descendants are the ones that ended up speaking the romance languages we have today.

From Tubal came the Iberians, Georgians, and Cappadocians — that is, those that settled in modern day Turkey. And from Meshech came other Muscovite tribes that now live in Russia. And finally, from Japheth's seventh son, Tiras, came the Thracians of modern day Turkey, and possibly the Etruscans who migrated to Italy. One commentator suggests the Scandinavians also descended from him. I find it fascinating to think how each one of us descended from Noah's sons, whether from Japheth's son's listed here, or Ham or Shem's descendants.

Now, of Japheth's 7 sons, only two have *their* son's listed — we read:

Genesis 10:3-4

The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

There are a couple of folks to note here, the first being Gomer's son Ashkenaz — remember that Gomer is modern day Germany — and Jews who later settled there and in surrounding nations became known as Ashkenazi Jews, not because of their lineage (that is, their ancestry), but because of their geographical location. And it was indeed these communities that were particularly decimated during the holocaust. The second grandson of Noah that should jump out at us is Javan's son, Tarshish, who it seems settled in modern day Spain — and that name should seem familiar to us, for Tarshish was the place where Jonah later set sail for, as he tried to avoid going to Nineveh.

And so ultimately, Japheth's descendants populated Europe, as we read in verse 5:

Genesis 10:5

From these the coastland peoples of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.

And we'll see as we move on through our study, that Ham's descendants settled in Africa, while Shem's settled in the Middle East. But note that already in verse 5 Moses is talking about the gentiles being separated into their lands, according to their language. So, when did that happen? That's what we'll get to at the start of chapter 11.

Continuing here, we read:

Genesis 10:6

The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

So Ham had four sons. From his first, Cush, came various Ethiopian tribes that settled south of Egypt, while Mizraim's descendants were the Egyptians themselves, with Egypt also being known as the land of Ham. From Mizraim's descendants also came the Philistines, Israel's old arch-enemy, who are specifically mentioned later in verse 14. From Put came the Libyans and other tribes in northern Africa, while from Canaan came the tribes that settled in the *land* of Canaan — in the areas of Arabia, Tyre, Sidon and more — including the area often called Palestine, which was ultimately promised to Abraham, and inherited by his descendants. We'll come back to that land and those people in a moment.

As we continue, we'll see further detail recorded about the descendants of Cush, Mizraim and Canaan — but not of Put. Why is that? Well, simply put, those that *are* recorded are there because of the impact their descendants had on the children of Israel, and indeed us. That is, understanding more about these descendants helps explain much more of what we read in the Bible, as well as what we see today.

And we read of Cush:

Genesis 10:7

The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtechah; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

So then, a couple of Cush's grandsons (Sheba and Dedan) are mentioned here (where others are not), who settled in modern day Saudi Arabia. And they or the lands they settled in are mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, with Dedan mentioned in both Ezekiel 38 and a couple of places in Jeremiah, and Dedan even more often — first in Genesis 25, but also in Joshua, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, Job, Psalms, Isaiah and also in Ezekiel.

But the focus turns to one particular son of Cush, not mentioned until verse 8. We read:

Genesis 10:8-9

Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD."

And so enters the scene another son — a man named Nimrod, whose name comes from the Hebrew word **marad** that means *to rebel* (I'm not sure that's quite what the RAF had in mind when they named an aircraft *Nimrod!*). And indeed Nimrod did rebel against God, for rather than obey God's command to fill the earth, he tried to centralise people in Babel under his own leadership, where he built the tower of Babel in defiance of God, even taunting Him to send another global flood, which He had promised not to do.

Furthermore, the Hebrew word **gibbôr** translated *mighty* here, also implies that he was a tyrant — a word that is used of the giants before the flood who were renowned for their wickedness, and of other wicked men after the flood. In fact, it seems that Nimrod's lineage was somehow compromised by the fallen angels, leading to him being one of the first giants *after* the flood, being described by Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived around AD 37-100, as mighty in stature and cruel. Similar language as used of the earlier giants.

Indeed, Josephus further notes that Nimrod tried to persuade people to ascribe their happiness to *him* rather than God. So perhaps it isn't a surprise to find that Nimrod, son of Cush — that is, *bar-Cush* — later became known as the Roman god *Bacchus*.

And in this, and other ways, he is a foreshadow of the antichrist — in that he tried to unite the world under a single government, of which he was the leader, and with a single false religion, instead of worshipping the one true God. So influential was this man that traces of the false religion that began in Babel, still permeate the world today, and significantly so in the Catholic Church. How is this possible? Well the Babylonian goddess *Ishtar* (where we get the word *Easter* from), was in fact the mother of Nimrod, who, when he died — in an effort to keep power — made Nimrod a god, with her depicted as a queen with her child son. Later, Constantine the Great (the first Roman emperor to be both Caesar and Pope) immortalised this pagan concept of the Madonna and Child that the Roman Catholic church still worships today. That reality is quite shocking to some. More could be said, but a good book to read if you want more insight on this topic is a book called *The Two Babylon's* written by *Alexander Hislop*.

But for now, here in chapter 10 we read more about Nimrod's actions:

Genesis 10:10-12

And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city).

So here we see the cities that he built, the first being Babel, that later became known as Babylon. “Bab-el” meaning gateway to God, but later concatenated, that is linked together as *Babel* to mean *confusion*, and we’ll see why in chapter 11. And of course, we know that later the Babylonians both took Israel into captivity, and also destroyed Jerusalem. Quite the legacy, eh?

Nimrod also went on to found the other cities mentioned here, including Nineveh who both Jonah and Nahum prophesied about.

Returning to Ham’s other sons, Moses notes:

Genesis 10:13-14

Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, and Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim).

And so we see how many troublesome nations came from Ham’s descendants, for as noted earlier, the Philistines (who are mentioned over 200 times in the Bible) were Israel’s arch-enemy, who Samson fought against, and of whom was Goliath of Gath — the most famous of the giants — and his four brothers, whom King David also killed.

Furthermore we read:

Genesis 10:15-18

Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and Heth; the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed.

As with other of these early descendants of Noah, their names became synonymous with the places they settled, and Sidon of course is mentioned in many places — including in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke by Jesus, when referring to Tyre and Sidon.

But remember that there’s more going on here, for we know that Noah had cursed Canaan specifically. Why was that? Was it because of what he had done? Was it because of how he reacted as his dad, Ham, mocked his grandfather, Noah? Was it because Noah could see Canaan was going to be trouble? We’re not sure. But what we can be sure of is that Canaan’s descendants *were* trouble. These tribes listed here are among those Israel encountered as they entered the land promised to them, and in some cases lived along side while there — often with conflict. And that’s because they were giant nations — that is they were, to be clear, made up of actual giants, such as we read of in Genesis chapter 6:

Genesis 6:4

There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

That is, as we looked at a few weeks ago, fallen angels slept with women on the earth, and produced these giant offspring. Why? Because it was Satan's attempt, as indeed it was before the flood, to destroy the line through to the Messiah, to Jesus — our Saviour. Only now, God had promised not to destroy the earth in a flood again, so I imagine Satan thought his plans stood a chance. However, God used the nation of Israel to destroy these giant nations, not merely for their own protection, but for our Salvation! We read God's words to Israel through Joshua:

Joshua 24:11

Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the men of Jericho fought against you—also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I delivered them into your hand.

What are regarded by some as bloodthirsty and even morally wrong battles in the Old Testament, were actually critical for Jesus to be born, and ultimately therefore, for you and I to be saved.

This passage continues, giving us more of the geography:

Genesis 10:19

And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

And so we see Ham's early descendants settled both in northern Africa, and the area we know as Israel today, including the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah which we'll read about in Genesis until their destruction in chapter 19. Verse 20 says:

Genesis 10:20-21

These were the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands and in their nations. And children were born also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder.

And so having read of Ham's descendants, our focus is now turned towards Shem and his descendants. And we start by seeing that Eber specifically is called out. Why? Because it through him and his descendants that Israel came, and it is from his name that we get the term Hebrew — *Eber-ew* if you like — for both the people and language.

And so we read:

Genesis 10:22-24

The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. The sons of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. Arphaxad begot Salah, and Salah begot Eber.

From Elam would come the Elamites, who settled near the Persian Gulf. And from Asshur came the Assyrians. Then from Arphaxad, through whom the line to Jesus would flow, came the Israelites (from Jacob), the Arabians, the Edomites (from Esau), the Moabites, Ammonites, Ishmaelites (through Hagar's son, Ishmael), Midianites and other tribes of Asia.

From Shem's final two sons came the Lydians of Asia Minor, and the Ludim of Chaldea and Persia - both through Lud. And from Aram came the Aramaeans, later called Syrians — and where the Aramaic language came from.

Focussing on the line through to Christ, we read on:

Genesis 10:25

To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.

Out of these two sons, Peleg is the one whom through the line to Christ would go. But there is a detail added here that has caused some question over the years, because we read "*for in his days the earth was divided*". And some have suggested, including some generally sound Bible commentators, that it was at this moment the earth was literally broken up into the continents and islands we have today, having previously been a single land mass.

However, there are two problems with this viewpoint. The first is that the absolutely colossal changes this would have entailed would have caused catastrophic destruction throughout the world — indeed, just consider the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami which killed nearly 230'000 people. And the forces required to shift continents a matter of miles, not inches, would have been much more significant.

So rather, any rapid change to the continents would almost certainly have occurred during Noah's flood which we know did cause utter destruction. Remember what we *read* in chapter 7:

Genesis 7:11

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

These fountains of the deep being broken up certainly indicates seismic activity at *that* point.

But the second problem with the view (that the division of the earth in the days of Peleg was a shifting of the continents), is that we're *already* given the explanation for what went on right here in Genesis. For while we read throughout this chapter where nations *ended up*, we read at the start of chapter 11 that mankind actually came *together* at Babel, and from there were *scattered*, or *divided* throughout the earth. It's a clear explanation for what we read here in verse 25, and thus we can time the scattering from the Tower of Babel to the time that Peleg lived — somewhere between 2242 and 2206 years before Christ.

Now, as for Joktan (Peleg's brother), we read that he had a large family — 13 children in all! That's as many as Jacob, and I don't see a reason his children are mentioned by name beyond noting that fact, for the most part they are not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible other than in 1 Chronicles where this genealogy is repeated. But we are given where they lived too, which no doubt provided context for the children of Israel as they read Moses words he wrote here. Indeed some left their mark as place names:

Genesis 10:26-30

Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling place was from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the mountain of the east.

Some believe Mesha refers to southern Arabia, though the exact location is not known. However, we're more sure of names such as Havilah which is mentioned in Genesis 25 and 1 Samuel 15 as being East of Egypt.

As we read verse 31, Moses concludes his notes on the descendants of Shem, and indeed on all three of his sons — at least for now:

Genesis 10:31-32

These were the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands, according to their nations. These were the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.

It doesn't mean that the division occurred *immediately* after the flood, but that it was the descendants of these initial families that were divided at Babel, at the time of Peleg — Japheth's descendants settling in the north, west and east of Europe (as well as in Asia), Ham's descendants settling in Africa (and for a while in Israel), and Shem's settling in the Middle East as we call it today.

Chapter eleven

So then, chapter 10 gives us insight as to where all the nations came from that we'll find in the Bible, and it sets the scene for much of what we'll read in Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch (the first 5 books of the Bible) with the giant nations that descended from Ham, such as the Philistines. But more immediately, it gives the context for the events of the first 9 verses of chapter 11. And we'll conclude with these first 9 verses this morning, starting at verse 1 of course:

Genesis 11:1

Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.

And this would have been the language spoken since creation. What was it? Well, some suggest it was Hebrew, and that seems very reasonable to me. For that is not only the language which God chose the Old Testament to be written in, but it is also the language Jesus used when speaking to Paul — even though Paul was a fluent Greek speaker. We read in Acts 26:

Acts 26:14

And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

But whether Hebrew or not, there was just one language at that time.

Genesis 11:2

And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.

So having moved down from the Ark which rested on the mountains of Ararat, Noah and his immediate descendants had evidently settled to the east of the river Euphrates, but *now* as the years moved on they travelled en masse to the land of Shinar, which is modern day Iraq.

Genesis 11:3-4

Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

Evidently, mankind was somewhat united in this endeavour — but ultimately it would seem that they were following Nimrod's lead, whether out of awe at this literal giant of a man who wanted people to think he was responsible for their happiness, or under duress given his wicked nature.

And they set about plans to build both a city and a tower, using brick rather than stone (since there was no stone there), but also baking the bricks rather than sun-drying them which was the norm, suggesting they were in a hurry, as people often are when they are rebelling against God. And we read they used asphalt for mortar — which archaeologists in this area have found to be so strong that it's almost impossible, even today, to detach things they have found that were cemented with it.

What did this tower look like? Well, we have a pretty good idea for there are many examples in that area that still exist today. And it definitely didn't look like this...



No disrespect to Meister der Weltchronik's handiwork, but this is almost a cartoon illustration. Because we're talking about something on a much larger scale, such as the *Ziggurat of Ur* you can see here...



This layered structure, with progressively smaller platforms, is thought to have been built as far back as 2100 BC, which would mean it would have been built within 100-150 years of the tower of Babel. Another example can be seen here...

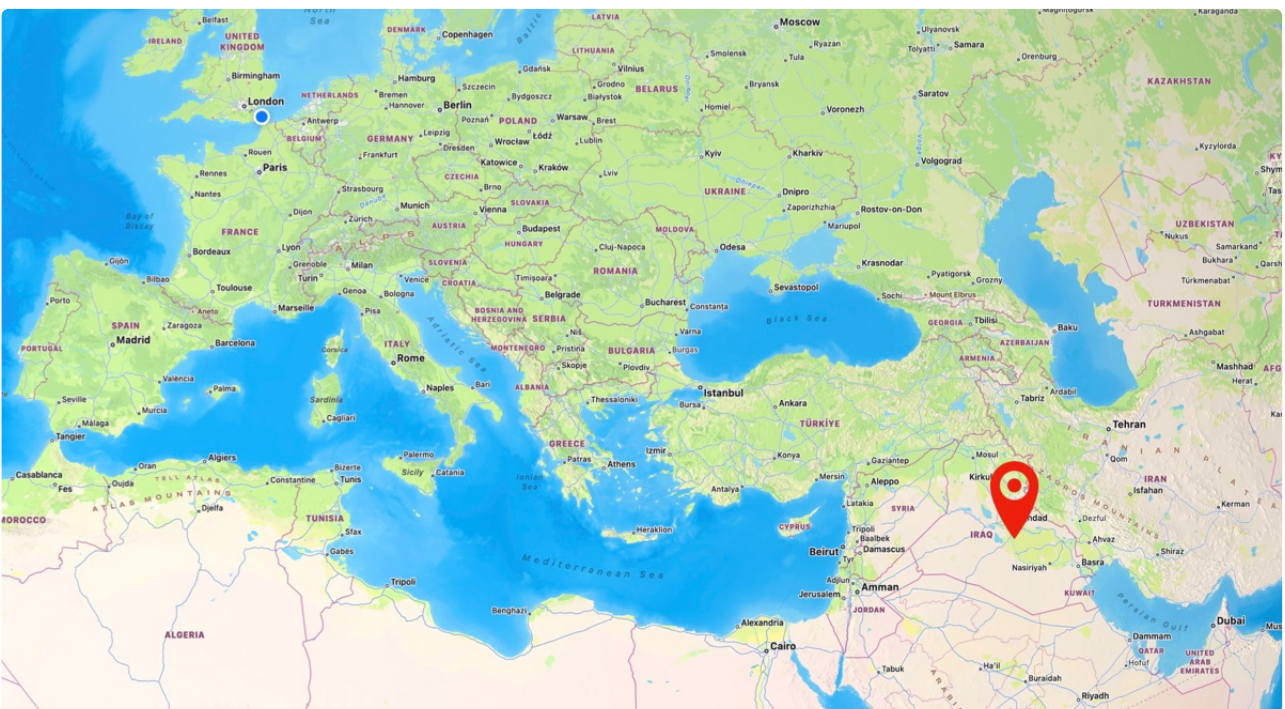


...which is the *Chogha Zanbil Ziggurat* in Iran. Here you can see it from another angle...



These structures were not small or insignificant in any way, and would have required a large group of people working together to build them. Indeed, a Babylonian description of the Tower of Babel discovered in 1876 suggests it was surrounded by a grand court some 900 feet by 1156 feet in size, with the tower itself 300 foot square at its base, reaching 300 foot high at its tallest and narrowest point — that's over 90m square and 90m tall!

And we're not talking mere legends here, for the foundations of the tower of Babel remain today — though the tower itself does not, in part due to Alexander the Great who had it removed in order to rebuild it; an action that never took place due to his early death.



To get our bearings, here we are — the blue dot in the top left...
And the red pin shows where the remains are in modern day Iraq...



Zooming in to this immediate area you can see the river Tigris snaking through from top to bottom, and the Palace that Saddam Hussein tried to rebuild towards the top centre. And zooming into the red box here, you can see the foundation of the Tower of Babel itself:



Some excavation work has taken place, but it's complicated as the foundations sit below the flood plain, and so are submerged in the water that surrounds it.

The reason I show you this is that I don't want you to think that what we are reading here in Genesis is mere storytelling. No, no. This is actual history recorded for us to read. But just as the record of the flood pops up in distorted form around the world in various cultures, so does this incident here at the Tower of Babel — from Sumerian and Assyrian stories, to one in Greek mythology that was later adopted by the Romans, to traditions in Mexico, Arizona, Nepal, Botswana and more.

Now, that gives some of the detail on what was built. But *why* was it built? Essentially it was built out of rebellion against God. First, God had said "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth." but Nimrod rebelled, and said "Let's all stay here". And now, with people gathered round him, the tower was built as a religious focal point — with the purpose of it being to worship the stars.

J Vernon McGee describes it like this:

All through that valley, as I have indicated, there are ruins of ziggurats. They were places where people worshiped the creature rather than the Creator. Some ziggurats were round, others were square, but all of them had runways leading to the top, and on the top the people carried on the worship of the sun, moon, and stars. After all, when they could see the sun, moon, and stars, they knew they were not going to have a flood, and they felt that God had been pretty mean to have sent the Flood.

J Vernon McGee

So then, the people stood in defiance of God, turning their hearts from Him to His creation instead.

Genesis 11:5-6

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.

That is, while God would let mankind have their own way in most things, He graciously intervened — why? Because if he hadn't, and the whole world had turned from him, they might well have corrupted themselves with the fallen angels, as all but Noah's family did before the flood, and in doing so would have removed any possibility of a pure line coming through to Jesus. And so we read:

Genesis 11:7-8

Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.

And so here in the days of Peleg, we see the Trinity at work, the Lord scattering the people, and the work on the city stopped — at least for now — though the tower itself may have been complete at this time.

And as we read in chapter 10, they gathered into their families and languages, and filled the earth. Of course, the result of this persists today — with over 7000 languages around the world, and even those speaking the same language not entirely understanding each other (as anyone who has American colleagues like me can probably attest to, with the UK and USA being 2 nations divided by a *common* language!).

Genesis 11:9

Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

So what man designed as *Bab-el*, meaning *gateway to God*, was now *Babel*, meaning *confusion*. Man had attempted to make his own way to God. But through God's intervention, God Himself would actually provide a way to Him. He would provide *the* way. And he would do that on *His* terms. Not by man's efforts. Not by man's pride. Not by his works. But by God's grace. And as we pick up from here next week, we'll first see the line through to Abram, but second God call Abram. And what contrast that will be to Nimrod's kingdom!

Here the people declared "let us build". But in chapter 12 God will say to Abram "I will make you a great nation". Here the people said "let us make a name for ourselves". But God will say to Abram "I will bless you, and make your name great". The result of man's efforts here was that mankind was divided. But through Abram God says "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"

Conclusion

What we see here is really the contrast of 2 kingdoms. Man's kingdom, and God's. The question for you this morning, is which will you choose? "Well, I'm not going to build a tower to worship the stars in my back garden" you might think. Sure. But will you try and build your own kingdom with your own hands to make a *name for yourself*?

What is more important to you — that you have many followers on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn or TikTok — or that you glorify God in all you do?

What is more important to you — that you are promoted above your peers? That you have the biggest house? The most expensive car? The nicest garden? Or the latest phone? — or, is it that you are building God's kingdom?

I think if we're honest, we all struggle with this. And we'd do well to remind ourselves of the message God delivered through Haggai the prophet. God spoke through Haggai to the Jewish people who had returned to the land after captivity, but had become discouraged and left off building the temple, and instead focussed on building their own homes.

And what happened, is that God frustrated their efforts. They did lots, but accomplished little. They were spinning their wheels and getting nowhere. We read in chapter 1:

Haggai 1:5-11

Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! "You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes." Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD. "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."

So have we left off building the temple? Not a physical temple, but a spiritual one. That is, have we left off investing in our walk with the Lord? Have we neglected to spend time with Him — in His Word and prayer? Have we turned from serving Him, to serving ourselves?

Let me ask you; how are you going to live today, and this week? Will you spend more time obsessing over your next career move, or spending time in prayer? Will you spend more time checking tech specs on your next phone, than reading your Bible? Will you spend more time on your house and garden, than you will serving God?

Let us not follow the example of Nimrod and try and make a name for ourselves. But rather, let us be faithful men and women, following the example of Abraham, who walked with God, and was even called a friend of God.

Application questions

The following questions may help, as we seek to apply this to our own lives:

- Are you more interested in making a name for yourself, or seeing God's name praised?
- What is most important to you — this life, or eternity in heaven?
- How are your answers to those questions showing up in your life?

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