

## **Genesis 10:1-32 and 11:1-9**

Our last lesson in Genesis 9 was all about Noah and his three sons.

As we pass on to Genesis 10, the very first verse makes it clear that this chapter is a record of the descendents of these sons.

V 1 **"Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood."**

I'm going to skip a lot of this chapter, not just because my attempt to pronounce many of these names would probably send you into gales of laughter, but also because I don't think we would

sufficiently profit from a detailed study of this long list of names.

However, I don't wish to give the impression that this chapter is of little value, for, indeed, it is very important to those who make a study of world history.

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So to give you an idea of the significance of this information, which has been called *The Table of Nations* by those who value this chapter, I would like to quote Henry Morris from his book, "The Genesis Record."

*"Even higher critics have often admitted that the tenth chapter of Genesis is a remarkably accurate historical document.*

*There is no comparable catalog of ancient nations available from any other source.*

*It is unparalleled in its antiquity and comprehensiveness.*

*Dr. William F. Albright, universally acknowledged as the world's leading authority on the archaeology of the Near East, though himself not a believer in the infallibility of the Scripture, said concerning this Table of Nations: 'It stands absolutely alone in ancient literature, without a remote parallel, even among the Greeks, where we find the closest approach to a distribution of people's in genealogical framework.... The Table of Nations remains an astonishingly accurate document.'* End of Dr.

Albright's quote, and continuing on with Henry Morris:

*"Here is the one link between the historic nations of antiquity and the prehistoric times of Noah and the antediluvians.*

*The grandsons and great grandsons of Noah are listed, each of whom is identified with the city or country established by his descendents.*

*There is nothing in any other ancient writing discovered by archaeologists which is at all comparable in scope and accuracy."* End of Mr. Morris's quote.

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Although chapter 10 is definitely inspired, and therefore is God's message to us, it seems probable that the human writer would have been Shem.

He lived for 502 years after the flood, so that his lifetime encompasses the entire time of the *Table of Nations*.

And this genealogy seems to include those that he would be personally acquainted with before the dispersal of the nations at the Tower of Babel.

His authorship also seems to be borne out by the fact that the sons of Ham and Japheth are only given to the third generation after the flood, whereas Shem's own descendents, whom he would have more contact with, extend to the sixth generation.

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And although there are many gaps and suppositions involved, archaeologists have seemingly been able to connect

many of the peoples recorded in this chapter with our present-day nations. Hence Genesis 10 provides the link between recorded history and "prehistoric" times.

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Even though I will not be covering this chapter in detail, I think we still need to pay special attention to two men named in this chapter, the first of which is Nimrod.

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V 8-9 **"And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.**

**<sup>9</sup> He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD."**

The term "**a mighty hunter before the LORD**" might lead us to believe that Nimrod was a godly man.

In fact, it appears that the very opposite is true.

No doubt his father, Cush, a descendent of Ham, was in rebellion against the authority of God, for he named his son Nimrod, which means 'Let us rebel.'

So Nimrod, raised in the tradition of his father, would no doubt be a rebellious person also.

And not only would he be rebellious, but he would be a leader in his rebellious ways, for the scripture calls him "**a mighty one in the earth.**"

So, although he certainly might have gained considerable prowess as a mighty hunter of animals, he was no doubt a hunter of

the souls of men, and had soon gained a great following, and had built a mighty kingdom.

V 10 **"And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."**

Babel, or Babylon, was the capital of his kingdom, and Erech (also called Uruk), which has now been excavated, was located some 100 miles southeast of Babylon.

V 11-12 **"Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah,  
12 And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city."**

A better rendering of verse 11 seems to be "went forth into Asshur," and so these verses indicate that actually it was



Nimrod, not Asshur, that was responsible for building these cities. As we have just noted, Erech was 100 miles to the southeast of Babylon, and Nineveh was roughly 200 miles north of it, so this complex of cities represented a vast kingdom for that day.

Indeed, this ungodly man was **"a mighty one in the earth,"** and no doubt was the leader and nucleus of a large rebellious nation.

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Before passing on to Chapter 11, I would also like to take note of another man as we read about him in Genesis 10:25.

**"And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was**

**the earth divided; and his brother's name was Joktan."**

The name Peleg means "division," so apparently his father, in naming him, commemorated a most unusual event that happened around the time of his birth. And this event is described in the same verse--"**for in his days was the earth divided.**"

The question is, what exactly was this *division* of the earth?

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Some people have put forth a theory called *continental drift*, which, if true, would explain how man and animals were able to migrate to all parts of the earth from the Ararat region.

It is believed, by those who hold this theory, that at one time, the earth's

entire surface was one single land mass, which, around the time of Peleg's birth, split up into segments, gradually drifting apart to form our present-day continents.

They point to V 25 as an indication that these events took place, and also point out that the eastern shoreline of the North American continent fits quite nicely into the Western Shoreline of Europe.

Although this theory cannot be entirely dismissed, and could possibly be true, the question of continental drift is still an open question among scientists, and also creationist scientists have pointed to a number of unresolved physical difficulties with the whole idea.

Also it is not necessary to hold to this theory in order to explain global population.

Migration could have easily taken place across the former land bridges at the Bering Strait and the Malaysian Strait when the sea level was much lower due to the entrapment of a great quantity of water in ice during the time of the ice age.

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So a more probable interpretation of this unusual division that so greatly impressed Eber was the division of the peoples of the earth by the confusion of their language, rather than the division of the earth itself.

And Genesis 10:5 seems to agree with this interpretation by its use of the same

term *divided* in reference to the subject of language.

Genesis 10:5 **"By these were the isles of the Gentiles *divided* in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations."**

So this brief study of Nimrod and Eber gives us some background for Chapter 11.

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Let's go on then to Chapter 11.

V 1-4 **"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.**

<sup>2</sup> **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.**

<sup>3</sup> **And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for**

stone, and slime had they for mortar.

<sup>4</sup> And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

There is no mention here of a leader.

However, it seems most likely, given the information that we have in Chapter 10, that Nimrod would be chief in the plan to build this monument to man's glory.

In fact, God's plan to spread the population over the whole earth would be in direct opposition to Nimrod's plan to gather the people around him and so create a grand kingdom for himself.

Certainly this ambitious project of building a tower to man's glory would be a

suitable distraction to unite the people behind him rather than obey God's command to Noah and his sons.

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As you will remember, God had revealed His plan for repopulating the earth shortly after Noah and his son's disembarked from the ark.

Genesis 9:1 **"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth".**

To assist man in this endeavour, God had provided some very beneficial conditions.

For instance, the animals were put into subjection under him, and so would be of great assistance both as beasts of burden and to supplement his food source, now that he could eat meat.

God had also promised that He would never again destroy the earth by a universal flood.

So the whole world had been set before him to explore, and enjoy, and possess, without the fear of another catastrophe.

But it was not long before man set up his *own plan* in direct opposition to God's command--"**lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.**"

V 3 says "**And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.**"

For stone, they substituted the inferior product of brick.

For mortar, they substituted the inferior product of slime. And for God's plan, they substituted the inferior product of their own ambitions for self glory.



**"Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered  
abroad upon the face of the whole  
earth."**

In the scene before us, there is no  
acknowledgement of God.

And there was no thought, in the erection of  
this tower, to build a place for God to  
dwell among them.

No, God's name was never mentioned. But  
instead, the sole purpose of this grand  
tower was to **"make us a name."**

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And, for the most part, man's attitude and  
ambitions have not changed down through  
the ages.

Psalm 2:1-4 says--**"Why do the heathen rage,  
and the people imagine a vain thing?**

**<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set  
themselves, and the rulers take counsel**

together, against the LORD, and against  
his anointed, saying,

<sup>3</sup> Let us break their bands asunder,  
and cast away their cords from us.

<sup>4</sup> He that sitteth in the heavens  
shall laugh: the LORD shall have them  
in derision."

And even in our day, it is the same.

Man is exalted, and God is left in the  
background, or forgotten altogether.

Do you remember Expos 67?

It was a grand international exhibition  
built partly on a man-made island in  
the St. Lawrence River beside Montreal.  
There were exhibits from 67 countries, all  
showing man's cultural and technical  
achievements.

I'm sure it was quite a spectacular  
exhibition, for, indeed, God has given  
man great ability.

But do you remember the theme of Expos 67?  
It seemed so typical.

It was "Man and His World," when it should  
have been "Man in *God's* world."

So there is a melancholy consistency in all  
of man's purposes, his principles, and  
his ways.

He ever seeks to shut God out and exalt  
himself.

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Also, in these verses before us, we see the  
earliest stages of man's tendency to  
band together in a confederacy or  
association.

It seems to be an essential requirement to  
accomplish any of his purposes.

Whether it is in the field of religion or politics or labour, nothing can be done without an association of men regularly organized.

And it is a good thing to be organized.

However, in most of these organizations, there is one grand defect: God is shut out.

That is why the United Nations do not prosper, why our own government in Canada does not prosper, and why so many religious organizations, although naming the name of Christ, at least spiritually, do not prosper.

However, for Christians, there is only one real association, and that is the Church of Jesus Christ.

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Returning to Chapter 11, we see man's first organization, which was dedicated to his own glory.

V 5-9 "And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

9 Therefore is the name of it called

**Babel; because the LORD did there  
confound the language of all the earth:  
and from thence did the LORD scatter  
them abroad upon the face of all the  
earth."**

It had been a coalition of the great leaders of men, the best that earth could offer, and yet God easily defeated it by simply disrupting their ability to converse.

Even today, in modern warfare, it is a well-known fact that the most effective way to defeat the enemy is to disrupt their communications.

How foolish it was to rebel against God!  
They lost a most valuable gift that could have been used so effectively for good, and they had dedicated it to evil.

And the confusion of languages is still with us, a lasting monument to the pride and folly of man.

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However, God did lift this barrier to understanding on one special day, and for one special purpose.

On the Day of Pentecost, although He did not give man back his universal language, He did empower His servants to proclaim to **"every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born" the wonderful works of God.**"

It began an age of good news, and down through the ages, God's message of grace has been proclaimed to every tribe and nation, and has brought new life to multitudes.

And some day these multitudes will be assembled, not in a city with a tower whose top reaches to heaven, but in a city whose foundation is laid in heaven.

So in Genesis 11, God gave various tongues as an expression of His judgment; while in Acts 2, He gave various tongues as an expression of His grace. And in Revelation 7, by His grace, all of those tongues will be gathered 'round the Lamb in glory.

Revelation 7:9 **"--all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;**

<sup>10</sup> **And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which**



**sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."**

How much better to be assembled in God's association that ends in glory, than to be linked with man's associations that end in confusion.

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V 8-9 " **So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.**

**<sup>9</sup> Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."**

But that was not the end of Babylon, or Babel, as it is also called.

No, Babylon is actually a well-known name and a well-known influence throughout scripture.

From Genesis to Revelation, Babylon appears again and again, and is always something decidedly hostile to those who have a testimony for God.

However, the Babylon of the Old Testament scripture is not the same as the Babylon that we read about in Revelation.

The former was an actual city, while the latter is a religious system. However, both the city and the system are designed to exert a powerful influence against God's people.

For instance, hardly had the children of Israel entered into the Promised Land and were victorious over Jericho, when

**"a Babylonish garment"** brought defilement and sorrow, defeat and confusion, into the host.

So throughout scripture, Babylon, be it the city or the system, is always seen as an enemy to God's chosen people Israel or the Church of Jesus Christ.

It is an instrument, fashioned by Satan, with the sole purpose of confounding God's work in His people.

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In the Old Testament, Israel and Babylon are seen as the opposite ends of a scale. When Israel was up, Babylon was down; and when Babylon was up, Israel was down. When Israel fell under God's judgment because of her continual disobedience, they were carried away into Babylon.

We see their plight in Jeremiah 50:17--

**"Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones."**

And the vessels of the House of God, which should have remained in the city of Jerusalem, were carried away to the city of Babylon.

Yes, when Babylon was up, Israel was down.

But Israel's time will come, as it is

foretold by the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 14:3-8 **"And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,**

**4 That thou shalt take up this**

proverb against the king of Babylon,  
and say, How hath the oppressor ceased!  
the golden city ceased!

<sup>5</sup> The LORD hath broken the staff of  
the wicked, and the sceptre of the  
rulers.

<sup>6</sup> He who smote the people in wrath  
with a continual stroke, he that ruled  
the nations in anger, is persecuted,  
and none hindereth.

<sup>7</sup> The whole earth is at rest, and is  
quiet: they break forth into singing.

<sup>8</sup> Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee,  
and the cedars of Lebanon, saying,  
Since thou art laid down, no feller is  
come up against us."

So then, in the Old Testament scriptures, we  
have the city of Babylon that is the  
enemy of Israel, but in the New

Testament scriptures, we have another Babylon, the false religious system set up by Satan, that is the enemy of the Church of Jesus Christ.

In fact, it is apostate Christendom, the great organization that exerts such tremendous force in the world system, and is ever the enemy and persecutor of the saints.

We will not make a full study of Babylon here because, for the most part, we need to confine ourselves to the Book of Genesis, but you can read many details concerning this religious system in Revelation Chapters 17 and 18.

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However, in closing, I will look at a few verses from these two chapters for our mutual instruction.

Revelation 17:1-6 **"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:**

**2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.**

**3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.**

**4 And the woman was arrayed in purple**

and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

<sup>5</sup> And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

<sup>6</sup> And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

And concerning her end, we read in Revelation 18:20-21, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.



21     **And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."**

And so we see the end of Satan's Babylon, his worldwide creation that first reared its ugly head on "**a plain in the land of Shinar.**"

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Next week, as we continue in Genesis, we will find that God begins to deal *differently* with Adam's race.

As He had narrowed down the human race to just one man, that is Noah and his family, He now, for the most part, narrows down His dealings with all mankind to one man.

That man was Abraham, the son of an idol  
worshipper.