

Genesis Chapter 10 - Commentary By Mike Wells

Chapter 10 Overview:

Genesis 10 is organized around the descendants of the three sons of Noah: (1) the sons of Japheth in verses 1-5; (2) the sons of Ham in verses 6-14 including record of Nimrod and the descendants of Canaan in verses 15-20; (3) finally, the sons of Shem in verses 21-32.

Genesis 10 : 1 - *Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.*

- The word translated as “generations” (*toledaw*) means ‘descendants.’
- Thus the chapter sets forth the immediate descendants of the sons of Noah—those *born after the flood*.

Genesis 10 : 2 - *The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.*

- Though usually noted as the last son of Noah, Japheth’s descendants are noted first.
- *Gomer* is thought to be the father of the Celtic races and later the Germanic peoples.
- *Magog* became the father of the Tartars (Scythians) and would be related to the Russian peoples today.
- *Madai* was the father of the Medes which today would be the southern republics of the former Soviet Union.
- *Javan* was the father of those who peopled the Greek peninsula.
- *Tubal* became the father of people who settled around the Black Sea who later migrated north whose chief city came to be known as Tobolsk.
- Portions of this line also migrated to Spain.
- *Meshech* would also be the father of Slavic and Russian peoples.
- *Tiras* became the father of the Thracians, a Mediterranean people.

Genesis 10 : 3 - *And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.*

- The descendants of Japheth became the Indo-European, or Caucasian race.
- The sons of *Gomer* were *Ashkenaz* which to this day is the Yiddish word for German.
- Little if anything is known concerning *Riphath*.
- However, *Togarmah* is thought to be the people later known as the Turks.

Genesis 10 : 4 - *And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.*

- The descendants of **Javan** were largely those who settled the areas which later came to be known as Greek.
- *Dodanim* probably refers to the people of Rhodes.

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.*

- It is further noteworthy that the first use of the word translated as “gentiles” (*goyim*) in the Bible is found here.

- Of interest is that the descendants of Japheth are noted as *gentiles* (i.e., heathen) in distinction to the descendants of the Ham or Shem.

Genesis 10 : 6 - *And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.*

- The sons of *Ham* were **Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.**
- These each became of people who lived to the south of the cradle of civilization and largely are the people who settled the African continent.
- *Cush* is largely the same as Ethiopia, though the original Ethiopians populated the Arabian peninsula before migrating to northwest Africa.
- *Mizraim* is overwhelmingly translated as Egypt.
- *Phut* became the people of other portions of north Africa and is thought to otherwise be Libya.
- *Canaan*, the fourth son of Ham remained in the region of Palestine, populating the area which later would be known as the promised land or biblical Israel.

Genesis 10 : 7 - *And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.*

- *Seba* is generally thought to be a sub- division of Ethiopia.
- *Havilah* is thought to be a part of the Arabian peninsula, perhaps Yemen today.
- Little is known of *Sabhah* or *Raamah*.
- *Sheba* was the beginning of the people who lived in southern Arabia.
- *Dedan* likewise was a region of southern Arabia.

Genesis 10 : 8-9 - *8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.*

- The most notable son of Cush was Nimrod who is noted as becoming a mighty hunter in the earth and before the Lord.

Genesis 10 : 10 - *And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.*

- He settled and founded the area which became Babel, and later called Babylon.
- Erech, Accad, and Calneh were cities in the region of Babylon (modern day Iraq).
- In modern geography, it is the region along the Euphrates and Tigris rivers from Kuwait to Iraq.

Genesis 10 : 11 - *Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah.*

- The reference to **Asshur** here may not refer to a person, but rather to a place.
- Evidently, people who descended from Nimrod went into what came to be known as Assyria and built *Nineveh* as well as *Rehoboth* and *Calah*.

Genesis 10 : 12 - *And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.*

- Nothing else is known of Resen other than the geographical coordinates found here.

- It is also noteworthy how all false, counterfeit religion in the world to this day was channeled through Babel and Nineveh.
- The notorious Babylonian mystery religion began at the time of Nimrod and continues to this day largely through the Roman Catholic Church.

Genesis 10 : 13-14 – 13 And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, 14 And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim.

- The second son of Ham was Mizraim who begat the nations noted here.
- The Anamims are thought to be another strain of Egyptians along with Lehabim and Naphtuhim.
- Notably, the *Philistim* (i.e., Philistines) descended from Ham through Mizraim.
- The Caphtorim were the early inhabitants of Crete.

Genesis 10 : 15-18 – 15 And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, 16 And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, 17 And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, 18 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.

- The descendants of *Canaan* (the fourth son of Ham) are names more familiar in later Bible geography and history.
- The Sidonians of Lebanon descended from Canaan along with the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and other lesser known peoples such as the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites.

Genesis 10 : 19 - And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.

- Recall that the curse Noah placed was upon the Canaanites.
- These were the godless people who inhabited the land when Israel later conquered it.
- Their region was the land which historically has been known generally as Palestine ranging from Lebanon on the north (Sidon) to Gaza on the south, to Sodom and Gomorrah on the east (the Dead Sea) and thence northward.

Genesis 10 : 20 - These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

- A summary of the people and lands of Ham are those noted.
- They formed the people of the southern portion of the Middle East southward and including Africa.

Genesis 10 : 21 - Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born.

- The descendants of Shem are noted.
- Reference is made to him being the brother of Japheth

- This is possibly to note the spiritual similarity between the two in distinction to Ham and his behavior toward his father.
- The note of the elder refers to Shem who was the oldest son of Noah.
- The Shemites migrated for the most part to east after the matter of the tower of Babel and would form the root of the eastern, oriental, and Asian people of the world.
- It is also of note that the term ‘Semitic’ derives from Shem.
- Technically, all eastern people are Semitic and not just the Jews as is the common application today.

Genesis 10 : 22 - *The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.*

- The children of Shem are Elam who is essentially the origins of the Persian people known as Iran today.
- *Asshur* refers to the peoples of Assyria, modern Syria

Genesis 10 : 23-29 - *And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. 24 And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber. 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. 26 And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, 27 And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, 28 And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, 29 And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan.*

- *Aram* is the father of the Syrian people and is the base of the Aramaic language.
- Other names of some note are **Uz** of the book of Job.
- *Uz* likely were the people who populated a region perhaps south and east of Palestine.
- *Peleg* evidently was the time of the division of languages at the tower of Babel.
- *Joktan* became the father of some of the Arabian peoples.
- *Ophir*, noted later in Scripture, along with *Havilah* were regions of the Arabian peninsula.

Genesis 10 : 30 - *And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar a mount of the east.*

- The word **Sephar** refers to a place in Arabia
- The Jews today use it to refer to the orient, noting ‘Sephardic’ Jews as oriental in distinction to western (European) Jews.

Genesis 10 : 31 - *These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.*

- It is again noted of the descendants of Shem which to this day form the base of the oriental, eastern, and Asiatic peoples.
- American Indians are presumably descended from them.

Genesis 10 : 32 - *These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.*

- As noted here, the entire earth was populated and divided after the flood by these three sons of Noah and their descendants.
- The time line from chapter 10 into the early portion of chapter 11 is approximately 100 years.
- According to the genealogy in 11:10-16, three generations, totaling 101 years were from the time of Shem after the flood to the time of Peleg at the time of the division.