

# Genesis 10:1–32

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[ 0 : 00 ] Our scripture reading this morning is from Genesis chapter 10, the entirety of the chapter. So I'd invite you to turn there now. Once again, the scripture reading is Genesis chapter 10.

Please stand for the reading of God's word. These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Sons were born to them after the flood. The sons of Japheth, Gomer, Magog, Madi, Javan, Tubal, Meshach, and Tyrus.

The sons of Gomer, Ashkenaz, Rephath, and Togarmah. The sons of Javan, Elisha, Tarshish, Ketim, and Dodanim. From these, the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans in their nations.

The sons of Ham, Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. The sons of Cush, Sabah, Avila, Sabta, Rahamah, and Sabteca.

[ 1 : 13 ] The sons of Rahamah, Sheba, and Dedan. Cush fathered Nimrod. He was the first on earth to be a mighty man. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord.

Therefore, it is said, like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord. The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Paneh in the land of Shinar.

From that land, he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth, Eir, Kalah, and Resen between Nineveh and Kalah. That is the great city. Egypt fathered Ludin, Anamin, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Patrusim, Kasluhim, from whom the Philistines came, and Kaphtarim.

Canaan fathered Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth, and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvidites, the Zemurites, and the Hamathites.

Afterward, the clans of the Canaanites dispersed, and the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Adma, and Zeboim as far as Washa.

[ 2 : 23 ] These are the sons of Ham by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations. To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born.

The sons of Shem, Elam, Ashur, Arpakshad, Lud, and Aram. The sons of Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mosh. Arpakshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber.

To Eber were born two sons. The name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. Joktan fathered Almadad, Shalef, Hazarmaveth, Jera, Hadaram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havalah, and Jobab.

All these were the sons of Joktan. The territory in which they lived extended from Misha in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the east. These are the sons of Shem by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

These are the clans of the sons of Noah. According to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

[ 3 : 37 ] This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Well, good morning.

I know there are a couple of thoughts running through your mind. One, you're quite sure that Bondan had a more difficult task in front of him than I do. But secondly, you might be curiously wondering what good can come from giving 30 minutes of my time to this genealogy.

I've come to think this week that the content in this record provides a calling for our church.

You could say that my vision for this passage is nothing less than what I think Christ's vision is for us as his people.

So you should know from the outset that my own anticipation of our time in the genealogy is important.

[ 4 : 56 ] So what am I going to try to persuade you of from here? Simply this. From one man, all the nations came.

To one man, all the nations must come. To all the nations, Christ Church Chicago intends to go. And so the hidden glories of the genealogy are now placed, hopefully in your mind, as worthy of consideration.

Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. hosts the PBS series Finding Your Roots. The show's success points to the importance of genealogies.

You don't know where you're going until you know where you're from. You don't know who you are if you don't know where you've come from.

[ 6 : 07 ] And this genealogy is intent to show you and me where we all come from. From one man, all the nations came.

Indeed, that's the very kind of language that the writer bracketed all those names in. Take a look again at your Bible to the opening verse and the closing verse.

That which stands at either end. That which holds the whole. These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood.

This whole dispersion of humanity after the flood. The final verse. These are the sons of Shem by their clans, their languages, their lands and nations.

These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these nations, spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

[ 7 : 16 ] You could say that the entire chapter wants the reader to know that from one man, all the nations came. Genesis 10, then, provides you and me the ancestral history of humanity.

And you thought this was somebody else's story. So what does this record reveal about the idea that from one man, all the nations come?

There are a number of interesting facts, and I just want to throw them out by way of quick-hitting highlights. We are so fortunate to have learned from historical writings outside the scripture, archaeological inscriptions and monuments that have come through disciplined exploration, and even the study of ethnologists.

We have learned from them quite a bit about this chapter. Let me give you just a few of the things they have come to tell us. Concerning the line of Japheth, take a look at verses 2 through 5.

The line of Japheth spread north and east. It actually moved from that Mount Ararat ark to as far north as the Black Sea, stretching all the way to India, even through inscriptions we know that they end in Italy.

[ 8 : 58 ] Both Herodotus and Plutarch placed Gomer in that list in Crimea. Askenes is identified with Germany. Armenia itself claims the name in that list of Japheth Togarmah.

Meshach came to be Muscovy, which was the former name for Russia. Media equals the Medes who settled in Persia and then spread throughout across India.

And Javan, the original form of which is Ionia, or that which we know to be Greece. Greece. When you look at verses 2 through 5 in the line of Japheth, you're looking at one sense roughly at modern day Europe.

An apt description is right there in the text. They were the Coastland peoples. What about the line of Ham? Take a look at your Bible again.

Ham seems to run from verses 6 all the way through verse 20. And from records, we now know that Ham and his descendants spread both south and west.

[ 10 : 11 ] Let me give you some of the names of his sons. Cush is modern-day Ethiopia. Mitzarim are the Egyptians. Put is Libya. There are two striking things of note in Ham's line that the writer also indicates.

First, the figure of Nimrod. And second, the addition of an entire line of Canaan. Keep your eyes there and you'll see it. Nimrod, verses 8 to 11, is obviously highlighted on humanity's genealogical record as the first person of most significant note.

He was the first true world leader. He was a city builder. Notice the names that are associated with him.

He founds Babel, which we will see a bit about later in our series. He founds Nineveh. He's connected to both Babylon and Nineveh, these two great centers of civilization, both over Babylon and Assyria, to whom God's people will later have significant interplay during the exile.

There's some difficulty when you look at verse 9 in regard to trying to interpret its meaning. What do they mean, like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord?

[11:30] Before him in the sense of that which is positive or before him in the sense of that which is negative? Well, the consonants themselves, the N, the M, the R, share the etymology of the Hebrew word rebel or rebel.

The Jerusalem Targum interpreted the line on Nimrod in a negative light. Quote, he was powerful in hunting and in wickedness before the Lord.

For he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them, depart from the judgment of the Lord and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod. In other words, one who would build his own city outside the city of God.

The interesting second feature of note in Ham's line is that appearance of Canaan. Doesn't that seem so out of place? Verses 15 through 19.

After all, are we not looking at the sons of Noah, namely Shem, Ham, and Japheth? How is it that the fourth son of Canaan, or Ham, gets his own space?

[12:44] Well, again, it's because of the significance he has for Israel. He's the only son of the sons, which gets an entire line, because these are the nations that Israel herself will displace when they enter the promised land.

Canaan, you have the Canaanites. Heth, you have the Hittites. And notice that when he speaks about Canaan, he goes so far as to record for you the boundaries of the land.

Now, if God's people were given the Torah at the time of their entrance into the land that was promised, then they are aware that they have arrived at a moment after four centuries where the displacement of those tribes is now in play and in their hands.

No wonder it would come with significance as they begin to think about entering into land that has boundaries that they consider to be promised to them from their ancient father Abraham.

What about the line of Shem? Shem is the closing son in the record, really, from verses 21 to 31.

[14:00] Shem, or a descendant of Shem, it has to be, was probably the one who actually records this family record. Do you have someone in your family, do you not, who's on Ancestry.com, someone who's interested to trace your own line back, your history, so that you will know who you're from?

Someone in your extended family who, by telling you where you're from, helps you know where you're going or who you are, what you believe, and what you ought to be about?

Well, the descendants of Shem are obviously the keepers and the writers of this record. They remind me of my Aunt Mary, who performs that function for our family.

Three observations are worthy of note on the line of Shem. Take a look at verse 21. It starts in a very interesting way. To Shem also, comma, the father of all the children of Eber, comma, the elder brother of Jacob, children were born.

Two phrases already foregrounded in Shem. The first is the foregrounding of the name Eber.

[15:24] Now, notice, Eber isn't actually born until you see him in verse 24. But Eber makes his way to the front of Shem's record because this is the very name through which we will get the Hebrews.

From Eber, we have the Hebrews. You have the Israelites, and these are the readers of Genesis as it would have been given to them when the Torah was complete.

So, what significance to be reading the record as a descendant of Eber and to realize I have found myself here.

No wonder it's elevated to first in line. The second observation worthy of note is that it indicates that Shem was the elder brother of Japheth.

You might remember, if you were here last week, Noah's curse goes out upon Canaan, a descendant of Ham. But it also situates Shem as the blessed one within the family as a whole.

[16:34] You might remember verse 26. Noah said, blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem. And then even verse 27. May God enlarge Japheth, but look, but let him dwell in the tents of Shem.

And so you're reading the genealogical record of the human history. But within that, you're seeing the particular family story of the Hebrews. And within them, the promise given to Abraham as the story will continue to bring rest and rescue to all the nations of the earth.

The third thing worth thinking about on the line of Shem is that line in verse 25. The word divided. To Eber were born two sons.

The name of the one Pelag, for in his days the earth was divided. What is that supposed to mean? Well, there are a couple of options and you shouldn't spend much time in your community group discussing them.

There's so many other wonderful things here. In all likelihood, by divided, it meant divided by speech during the time of Babel.

[ 17 : 46 ] That this was the moment in Pelag's life, in Eber's day, when the next chapter occurs. And all the dispersion of the nations began.

It's probably something in reference to language and speech. Rather than the splitting of some continental activity that brought drift. Either way, it's just noted there by way of family significance. What's interesting about this last line of Shem is the things that would have mattered to the first reader. I've already mentioned it. For Israel then, Genesis 10 possesses the added significance of God's purpose for their family in the world where God is intending to restore blessing to all families. Moses provides this. Why did the record matter?

Simply this. You cannot be confident about your future until you know your past. You cannot know who you really are until you know where you've come from.

[ 19 : 01 ] And now, from the content of the record to what I consider to be the calling for our church, how does this record provide a biblical vision for Christ Church Chicago?

Let me put it as humorously as I can. Might there be a day, some 5, 10, or 15 years from now, that you tell someone about the activity and the maturity and the maturation of what was Christ Church Chicago when it sat in its infancy on a vacant field?

Would you be able to tell someone, well, it all came out of Genesis 10 when we captured our calling. Three things.

After all, there's not an imperative in the text for us. Three things. Although there's nothing here commanded of us.

Three things. Although I cannot refer to the text itself in regard to telling you what is required before us. But first, from one man, all the nations came.

[ 20 : 24 ] It is essential for Christ Church Chicago in our moments of infancy, before we even gather in our building to understand that humanity has a shared family history.

One world. One world. One humanity. One history.

There's every indication in the text that the human race is but one race. race. .

Jamar Tisby has written the term race from the Greek word *genos*, where we're going to get genealogy, does not refer to a person's skin color or other physical features.

It refers to all human beings without exemption, no matter their ethnicity or their skin color. This is our common history.

[ 21 : 32 ] Let me put it to you. Our united origins. This record is humanity's family tree. It is our collective story.

This is our universal ancestry. And it's something that you need to know, understand, and believe. From one man, all the nations came.

Second, to one man, all the nations come. It is critical for this small gathering on the field, this corner, to see the refrain that this genealogical record wants to sing.

The refrain is there. Verse 5 and 20 and 31. Hear the chorus of the ancestral record.

Spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations. Verse 5. And then in verse 20.

[ 22 : 46 ] By their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations. And then verse 31. This is the song the record sings.

It's about clans, languages, geographic regions, and nations.

That is a far cry, and it stands in stark contrast to the song that our country and the world now sings. Indeed, it's a far cry from the emphasis that the church now brings.

This melody, the repeated refrain after each sun is the verse sung on nations, languages, not races. As our city, our country, our entire civilization has come to experience it. These are the notes that find their way into the melody of the entire Bible.

[ 24 : 09 ] The Bible is concerned with the rest and relief God's son will bring to the nations, to the languages, to the clans, to the ethnicities that all are of the human race.

To one man, all nations must now come. Do you understand that Abraham will receive this record by chapter 12 as the one person?

If from one man all the nations came, through one man Abraham, relief to all the nations and all the families of the earth will come. And Jesus is a descendant from the line of Abraham and David who fulfills in his life, his death, his resurrection, both payment for humanity's horrific record against God. And as the indication of securing the promises that are put forward all the way to Abraham. That when you begin to think and read about Jesus, it doesn't surprise you that after his resurrection, he says to his disciples, you are to go into all the nations.

Preaching forgiveness for all of our misrepresentation toward God and one another through the perfect sacrifice of his substitutionary atoning death.

[ 25 : 48 ] It shouldn't surprise you then that the ministry of Jesus gets handed to the disciples in ways where they bring the gospel to the nations. And John records in Revelation 7 that the day will be there when before the throne and the lamb, all nations, all languages will be present.

That he will have recaptured for himself people from every end of human history's ancestral line. That in Philippians 2, we will see the fruition of the day when every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

This is the beautiful story of the scriptures. Let me say something then about our mission. There's an opportunity for Christ Church Chicago in her infancy as we see her now.

To give ourselves to the going to all the nations. With the name of the one man to whom all allegiance is due.

More than that. There's an opportunity for us. Not a mandate that's to be thrown on every local church. But certainly an opportunity for those who are in contextual settings where the nations have already come.

[ 27 : 24 ] To be comprised. To be made up as a local church of men and women from the nations of the earth.

That we are not only going to the nations with the gospel of Jesus Christ. But you and I have the opportunity to become part of a family that is comprised of the nations.

Not everyone gets that. Not everyone's called to that. But how could we in our context not be devoted to that? From one man in Genesis 10 comes 70 nations.

Presently there are 194 or 195 nations in the earth. Probably 225 to 224 or 34 if you think about countries.

But imagine within four blocks of where we sit. In October of this year I wonder how many nations will be represented.

[ 28 : 29 ] It is my aspiration. It is my hope. It is my belief.

Whether it happens while I'm alive or long gone. That Christ Church Chicago will be comprised of members and weekly attendees.

Who are greater in number than the 70 nations represented in this record. While the Lord would give me breath.

This will inform aspects of our vision. Unfortunately the church today is in such a confused state. That it has no ability to critique the message of the culture. Let alone articulate one as clearly as Genesis 1 or 10 would do it.

[ 29 : 43 ] But we must give ourselves. Well let me put it differently. You have an opportunity today to give yourself to the early days of a church.

That would more closely approximate in our local body this redemptive refrain. Oh that it would be so.

Oh that there might be a day when we stand in our building and simply say. From wherever you're seated on the main floor in the balcony. Rise.

And say. The nation or the ethnicity. Of your own lineage. And standing. And speaking.

People begin to rise. And the names of nations. Begin to emerge. And the telling of the story.

[ 30 : 47 ] Has a fullness beyond measure. And you and I. Recollect. In wonder. What has transpired.

Through the promises of God. Given to us in Christ. Set down in scripture. Through a people. Who are bonded. Around one man.

For all else. Will fail us. I mentioned Henry. Lewis Gates Jr. In the introduction.

It might be good to bring him. In at the end. For more often than not. It is the ethnic. Ancestral mix. In bloodline.

At least the bloodlines of his guests. That viewers like me. Find fascinating. And make his documentary series.

[ 31 : 47 ] A success. It's the surprise. Of his guests. To learn. The fullness. Of their past. Interestingly. By disposition. By temperament. Gates. Is not a separatist. When it comes to the way. We are being taught.

To think about race. In fact. He has argued. That a separatist. Understanding. Even of. Afrocentric. Education. Only ends up. Perpetuating. Racist. Stereotypes. It's gotten him. In trouble. With his African-American. Brothers. And sisters. He's. In trouble. With Anglos.

As well. Some would like him. To rally. More. Around. Being black. Than he has. Some. Would like him. To disassociate. Himself.

[ 32 : 43 ] With engagement. With whites. And Asians. Who are often. Members of his. Documentary series. But I have read. That he maintains. That it is ridiculous.

To think that only blacks. Should be scholars. Of African. And African-American. Literature. He argues. It can't be. Real. As a subject. If you have to look. Like the subject. To be an expert. In the subject. He adds. It's ridiculous. As if someone said. I couldn't appreciate. Shakespeare. Because I'm not. Anglo-Saxon. Here he is. I think. He says. It's vulgar. And racist. Whether it comes out. Of a black mouth. Or a white mouth.

End quote. And Gates. Gets it. And in this respect. He's unliked. From many. Corners.

[ 33 : 42 ] From one man. All. The nations came. To one man.

All. The nations must come. From one man. Will you join. With Christ Church Chicago. Going. To all the nations. In the name of Christ. And will you learn to celebrate. Very live differences. Of becoming a church. Where all. The nations. Are represented. Genesis 10. The record. That defines our calling.

[ 34 : 48 ] Our Heavenly Father. We are. We are. Who we are. We've come from. Where we've come from. We want to rally. Around the cross of Christ. We are who we are. We've come from where we've come from. We want to. We want to emulate. We want to emulate. The gospel of Christ. We are who we are. We've come from. Where we've come from. But we want to unite. With one another. Around the name of Christ.

And in so doing. Bring you glory. In our own city. Good. In Jesus name.

[ 35 : 47 ] We pray. Amen.