

The Lord Summarized the Spread of the Nations

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why God showed great mercy to the descendants of Canaan even though they became very evil and offered many of their children as human sacrifices to their false god. In this topic, we will learn about the development of the nations through the three sons of Noah and learn key lessons about some of them.

In Genesis 10:1-5, we read, “Now this *is* the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And sons were born to them after the flood. The sons of Japheth *were* Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. The sons of Javan *were* Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. 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.” In these verses, we have the descendants of Japheth. Following the changing of the languages at the Tower of Babel, which will be described in the next chapter, we see that the descendants of Japheth gradually moved and settled in the continent of Europe and the northwest part of Asia. The word translated “coastlands” means *region, coast, or islands*. These verses show that the people divided into various regions based on the languages, families, and nations that God had given to them.

We go on to read about the descendants of Ham. We are given more details about two sons of Ham. Genesis 10:6-14 says, “The sons of Ham *were* Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. The sons of Cush *were* Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtechah; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. 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 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). Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, and Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim).” The descendants of Ham gradually settled in the Mideast and on the continent of Africa.

One of the sons of Ham was Nimrod. We read that he became a mighty one on the earth. The word translated “mighty one” is used one hundred and fifty-eight times in the Old Testament and is used to speak of a man who is known for his power as a warrior. In 1 Samuel 16:18, this word is used to describe David. Saul was looking for a man who could play the harp well and was told in that verse, “Then one of the servants answered and said, ‘Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *who is* skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the Lord is with him.’” Then, in 1 Samuel 17:51, we read, “Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.” These uses show that the word can be used about a mighty man who was either good or evil. In this verse, the word is used to speak of Goliath, the Philistine. These, and other men about whom this word is used, were often mighty warriors. We see this word was used three times about Nimrod.

Twice, we see that Nimrod is called a “mighty hunter before the Lord.” The word translated “before” appears either as “before” or by several words like “face” and similar words. It is used twice in Genesis 4:5-6, where it talks about the countenance or face of Cain being fallen. Genesis 4:5-6 says, “But He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?’” Here, we see that it talks about a very angry face. In many other places, it talks about either the face of a person, the face of the earth, or the face of God. We see that the face can describe joy, anger, or even rebellion. Here, we see that the face of Nimrod probably showed his rebellion against God. Several of the cities established by Nimrod were very evil, as these verses indicate that he was probably the leader in the decision to build the Tower of Babel. He was also involved in the beginning of Babylon and Nineveh during his lifetime. Each of these places showed great rebellion against God and Israel, as Nineveh later destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and Babylon later destroyed Judah. We see that the Philistines were descendants of Nimrod and they fought against Israel many times.

We also have more details about Canaan and his descendants. He was another of the sons of Ham. We have already seen that Canaan was cursed in the previous chapter when Ham showed disrespect for Noah, which may mean that Canaan was with Ham. Genesis 10:15-20 says, “Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and Heth; the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Gergashite; the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed. 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. These *were* the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands *and* in their nations.”

We see that, afterward, the families of the Canaanites were dispersed in verse 18. The word translated “were dispersed” is used three more times in Genesis 11. First, the people used the word to show their rebellion against the commandment of God to multiply and fill the earth. Genesis 11:4 says, “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.’” Here, we see that the people chose to rebel against God so they would not be scattered. Then, Genesis 11:8-9 says, “So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 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.” In these verses, we see that the Lord scattered the people by confusing the language.

When the families of Canaan left the area of the Tower of Babel, we see that they moved to the area which became known as the land of Canaan. The land of Canaan, where the descendants of Canaan settled, stretched from Sidon on the north as far as Gaza along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and as far south as the south end of the west side of the Dead Sea. We also see that all of the descendants of Ham were scattered according to the languages in their lands and in their nations. When God confused the language, we see that the descendants of the sons of Noah were scattered to the lands and formed the nations that God had planned for them.

We go on to read about the descendants of Shem. Genesis 10:21-32 says, “And *children* were born

also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder. 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. 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. 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. 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.” We see that the descendants of Shem spread eastward across Asia, including the islands and Australia. They also spread across what is now called the Bering Straits to the Americas.

Noah gave a blessing to Shem and then to Japheth when He pronounced judgment on the descendants of Canaan. Genesis 9:26-27 says, “Blessed *be* the LORD, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem; and may Canaan be his servant.” The descendants of Shem far outnumber the descendants Ham. In addition, the descendants of Japheth outnumber the descendants of Ham, although by a much smaller number. We see that it was during the days of Peleg that the people of the world were divided. God chose to make it very clear that the entire world is populated by the descendants of the three sons of Noah. They also experienced the changing of the language at the same time. This section about Shem ends the same as the sections about the descendants of Japheth and Ham. We see that the descendants of Shem also spread according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands, and in their nations.

Then, we are given the summary for the entire family of Noah. The word translated “generations” means *to bring forth* and is another word for their descendants in most cases. However, it is used in Genesis 2:4 to speak of the act of God in creation. That verse says, “This *is* the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.” In this verse, the word is translated “history”. Most uses are more like Genesis 5:1, where we read, “This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.” In this verse, it is translated by the word “genealogy”. One of the questions many people have is, “Where did we come from?” The world tries to deny the creation by God. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what the Bible teaches so they can help others to understand that we came from Adam, through Noah, and through one of his three sons. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.