

## Gen 4–Chapter 11: The Table of Nations (Genesis 9:28–10:32)

### Introduction

After a considerable time had elapsed since the flood,<sup>3649</sup> Noah planted a vineyard (Gen 9:20). Rain came in the right amounts for growing crops which were luxuries,<sup>3650</sup> such as grapes.<sup>3651</sup> No longer did it obliterate life (Gen 7:17–24; Gen 8:11).<sup>3652</sup> While the wine which Noah produced brought comfort from his toil, it became a mixed blessing.<sup>3653</sup> He became drunk, stripped himself naked, and slept uncovered in his tent (Gen 9:21).<sup>3654</sup>

Ham—the father of Canaan—took a good look at his father before informing his two brothers (Gen 9:22). By telling others of Noah’s disgraceful state, Ham humiliated his father.<sup>3655</sup> In contrast, Shem and Japheth expended great effort expended to avoid seeing their father’s nudity. Imagine them plotting how to manage to clothe Noah without catching a glimpse of him. Perhaps they walked backwards until Noah’s toes came into view and then dropped the cloak over their father (Gen 9:23).<sup>3656</sup>

After coming out of his stupor, Noah learned what his youngest son had done to him (Gen 9:24). For the first time in the entire flood account, he spoke.<sup>3657</sup> He said, “Canaan be cursed. A slave of slaves he will be to his brothers” (Gen 9:25). Noah may have singled out Canaan because he was Ham’s youngest son or,<sup>3658</sup> perhaps, because Canaan adopted the behavior of his father, meriting Noah’s wrath.<sup>3659</sup>

In contrast, Noah blessed the God of Shem,<sup>3660</sup> implying that a godly lineage would issue from that son (Gen 9:26).<sup>3661</sup> Noah also requested that Japheth’s offspring would populate extensive territory,<sup>3662</sup> and that Shem and Japheth would form an alliance.<sup>3663</sup> The patriarch’s last recorded words emphatically reiterated his desire that Shem and Japheth subjugate Canaan (Gen 9:27).<sup>3664</sup>

### The Death of Noah

**1) Gen 9:28–29:** Moses at last concluded the genealogy of Noah, which he interrupted at the end of Gen 5:32.<sup>3665</sup> The entire flood account amplifies biographical material concerning a descendant of Seth (Gen 5:3–4).<sup>3666</sup> Taken together with Gen 5:32, these verses parallel the genealogy structure of Gen 5,<sup>3667</sup> with one important deviation. The account of Noah’s descendants forms a segmented genealogy tracing all three of his sons,<sup>3668</sup> rather than a linear genealogy which mentions only the most prominent son by name.<sup>3669</sup>

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<sup>3649</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 147.

<sup>3650</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 321.

<sup>3651</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 198.

<sup>3652</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 321.

<sup>3653</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 198.

<sup>3654</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 149.

<sup>3655</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 149.

<sup>3656</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 200.

<sup>3657</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 149.

<sup>3658</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 324.

<sup>3659</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 9:27.

<sup>3660</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 325.

<sup>3661</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 151.

<sup>3662</sup>Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “*ḥṭḥ*” (*pathah*) *BDB*, 834,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/834/mode/2up>.

<sup>3663</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 326.

<sup>3664</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 151.

<sup>3665</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 151.

<sup>3666</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 327.

<sup>3667</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 151.

<sup>3668</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 248–9.

<sup>3669</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 5:1–32.

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The typical format of Gen 5 appears as follows: Person A lived x years and fathered Person B; Person A lived y years after that and had other sons and daughters; Person A lived x plus y years and then he died.<sup>3670</sup> Moses recorded, “And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.” This period likely began at the onset of the year-long flood (Gen 7:6). Moses omitted the stock phrase “and he had other sons and daughters” because he traced the lineage of all humanity in his known world, which descended from Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen 9:18–27; Gen 10).<sup>3671</sup>

Noah’s fate contrasts with that of Utnapishtim, who recounted this post-flood event in the Epic of Gilgamesh:

“Thereupon Enlil went aboard the ship. Holding me by the hand, he took me aboard. He took my wife aboard and made (her) kneel by my side. Standing between us, he touched our foreheads to bless us, ‘Hitherto Utnapishtim has been but human. Henceforth Utnapishtim and his wife shall be like unto us gods. Utnapishtim shall reside far away, at the mouth of the rivers!’ Thus, they took me and made me reside far away, at the mouth of the rivers.”<sup>3672</sup>

Unlike Utnapishtim—who achieved immortality—Noah suffered the fate of virtually all his ancestors. Only Enoch escaped death (Gen 5:21–24).<sup>3673</sup>

**a) Read Gen 9:28–29.** Why did Moses deviate from the typical genealogy format of Gen 5? How would you characterize Noah’s life? Which aspects would you like to emulate? How do you seek to be different from him?

### The Descendants of Noah

**b) Gen 10:1:** Genesis 10, which some scholars call the Table of Nations, expands upon Gen 9:19.<sup>3674</sup> It represents God’s concern for all people-groups.<sup>3675</sup> Moses introduced the descendants of each of Noah’s sons with a standard formula: “The sons of X were.” He ended each section by writing, “These are the sons of X according to their clans and languages in their countries by their nations.”<sup>3676</sup>

The Table of Nations did not comprise a comprehensive list (Gen 10:5).<sup>3677</sup> Instead, it functioned as a carefully crafted theological statement.<sup>3678</sup> In the Bible, the number seven signifies completion or fullness.<sup>3679</sup> Japheth had seven sons and seven grandsons.<sup>3680</sup> Among the offspring of Ham are seven sons of Cush and seven sons of Mizraim (Egypt). Shem’s line down to Eber names fourteen descendants.<sup>3681</sup> Overall, the Table of Nations contains seventy names, equivalent to ten multiples of seven.<sup>3682</sup>

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<sup>3670</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 121.

<sup>3671</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 203–4.

<sup>3672</sup>Speiser, trans., “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” in *ANET*, 11:189–96, 95.

<sup>3673</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 204.

<sup>3674</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 367.

<sup>3675</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 161.

<sup>3676</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 213.

<sup>3677</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 367.

<sup>3678</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 162.

<sup>3679</sup>Ryken, Wilhoit, and Reid, “Seven,” *DBI*, 775.

<sup>3680</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 213.

<sup>3681</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 164–5.

<sup>3682</sup>Ryken, et. al., “Seventy” in *DBI*, 775.

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Several significant differences exist between this genealogy and the ones in Gen 5 and in Gen 11:10–27.<sup>3683</sup> In Gen 10, some of the names represent specific men while others signify people-groups or even locations.<sup>3684</sup> Other ancient genealogies, such as that of Hammurabi (reigned 1792–1750 BC), also feature the names of tribes and geographic regions.<sup>3685</sup> Thus, no one’s age appears in the list,<sup>3686</sup> as it presents the relationships between various groups rather than focusing upon individuals.<sup>3687</sup>

A “son” (*ben*) typically refers to a direct descendant. However, the Hebrew language also allows the term to indicate a grandson or the distant offspring of a founding father (Gen 31:17–18, 26–28).<sup>3688</sup> For example, the “sons of Levi” answered Moses’s summons. However, many generations had been born and died since the lifetime of that patriarch (Gen 15:13; Exod 1:1–8; Exod 32:26).

Furthermore, in the Ancient Near East (ANE), the term “son” did not necessarily imply kinship. Participants in treaties employed similar language.<sup>3689</sup> A stela (ca. 1575 BC) discovered at Karnak Temple in Egypt says,<sup>3690</sup> “I captured a message of his...upon a letter of papyrus. I found on it, in written words from the ruler of Avaris, ‘the Son of Re: Apophis, sending greetings to my son, the ruler of Cush.’”<sup>3691</sup> In Ugaritic, a language related to Hebrew, the same word (*bn*) could also refer to a person who lived in a particular city or country.<sup>3692</sup>

The peoples in Gen 10 represented the major groups known to Israel (Gen 11:1).<sup>3693</sup> By citing their common ancestry through Noah, this genealogy emphasizes the fundamental unity of those dwelling in the ANE.<sup>3694</sup> Yet, it also distinguishes between them in terms of their geographic locations, ethnicities, and political affiliations.<sup>3695</sup> Similarities of speech occurred across ancestral lines. For example, some of the sons of Ham spoke languages related to those of the sons of Shem.<sup>3696</sup> No hint of people living outside of the ANE occurs here.<sup>3697</sup> Moses achieved a two-fold purpose. First, he expressed unity through a common ancestor.<sup>3698</sup> Then, he described the outcome of the settlement of North Africa, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and coastal areas of the Mediterranean.<sup>3699</sup>

Many commentators concur that the names listed here point to an editor from the first millennium BC, as no extra-biblical record of some of these names appears until that time.<sup>3700</sup> However, it also appears that the author of the Table of Nations used preexisting material. A change in the customary format occurred by the sixth century BC (Cf. 1 Chron 1:5–23).<sup>3701</sup>

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<sup>3683</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 215.

<sup>3684</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 165.

<sup>3685</sup>J. J. Finklestein, “The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty,” *JCS* 20 (1966): 99, 101, [http://www.caeno.org/pdf/Finkelstein\\_Bala%20era\\_Hammurabi.pdf](http://www.caeno.org/pdf/Finkelstein_Bala%20era_Hammurabi.pdf).

<sup>3686</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 215.

<sup>3687</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 368.

<sup>3688</sup>H. Haag, “בן” (*ben*) *TDOT*, 2:145–59, 150, 152.

<sup>3689</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 215.

<sup>3690</sup>Pritchard, *ANET*, 554.

<sup>3691</sup>Ka-Mose, “The War Against the Hyksos (Continued),” in *ANET* (trans. John A. Wilson), 555.

<sup>3692</sup>J. Bergman, H. Ringgren, and H. Haag, “בן” (*ben*), *TDOT* 2:145–59, 148.

<sup>3693</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 214.

<sup>3694</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 163.

<sup>3695</sup>B. Oded, “The Table of Nations (Genesis 10) – A Socio-Cultural Approach,” *ZAW* 98 (1986): 14, <http://www.elamit.net/depot/resources/oded1986.pdf>.

<sup>3696</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 243.

<sup>3697</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 368–9.

<sup>3698</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 215.

<sup>3699</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 10:1.

<sup>3700</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 214.

<sup>3701</sup>Oded, “The Table of Nations (Genesis 10) – A Socio-Cultural Approach,” 30, <http://www.elamit.net/depot/resources/oded1986.pdf>.

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Overall, the list consists of a three-part arrangement in accord with Noah's pronouncement in Gen 9:24–27.<sup>3702</sup> Although some exceptions exist, the Shemites were nomadic, Hamites dwelt in cities, and the sons of Japheth were seafarers.<sup>3703</sup> As often occurs in Genesis, the editor began with the lines which God did not choose before discussing Israel's ancestor (Gen 4:17–5:32; Gen 25:12–19; Gen 36:9–37:2).<sup>3704</sup>

This genealogy begins with, “And this [is] the account of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And sons were born to them after the flood.” As we have seen elsewhere in Genesis, “This is the account of” opens a major new section of the text (Gen 2:4; Gen 5:1; Gen 6:9).<sup>3705</sup> By utilizing the passive voice to convey that “sons were born” to Noah's progeny, this verse depicts the fulfillment of God's blessing in Gen 9:1.<sup>3706</sup>

**a) Read Gen 10.1.** What hints do we have that this list is not a typical biblical genealogy? Why do you think the editor used groups of sevens for a total of seventy names? What is the purpose of the Table of Nations?

### The Descendants of Japheth

**c) Gen 10:2–5.** To preserve our sanity, we'll examine only the nations which had a significant effect upon biblical history or the Ancient Near East (ANE). Since the descendants of Japheth included people-groups who had little contact with Israel, Moses gave them the briefest treatment.<sup>3707</sup> They lived to the north of Israel, spreading from Asia Minor to the Greek islands.<sup>3708</sup> None of them bordered upon Israel.<sup>3709</sup>

The prophet Ezekiel cited Magog as a future enemy of Israel (Ezek 38:2; Ezek 39:6).<sup>3710</sup> However, that nation remains one of the few groups in Gen 10 which we cannot precisely identify. Extant cuneiform texts never mention the name.<sup>3711</sup>

On the other hand, the Madai (Medes) played an enormous role in Israel's history. They occupied Northwest Iran,<sup>3712</sup> beginning around 1000 BC. The Medes repeatedly battled with the Assyrians until they formed an overwhelming army with the addition of the Persians late in the sixth century BC.<sup>3713</sup> This enabled the Medo-Persian Empire to defeat the Babylonians, eventually leading to Judah's return to the promised land (Isa 13:17–22; Jer 51:10–12, 27–28; Dan 5:25–31).<sup>3714</sup> Judah's deliverer, Cyrus the Great (reigned 550–530

<sup>3702</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 162.

<sup>3703</sup>Oded, “The Table of Nations (Genesis 10) – A Socio-Cultural Approach,” 22, 30, <http://www.elamit.net/depot/resources/oded1986.pdf>.

<sup>3704</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 214.

<sup>3705</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 83.

<sup>3706</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 330.

<sup>3707</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 214.

<sup>3708</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 334–5.

<sup>3709</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 219.

<sup>3710</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 332.

<sup>3711</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 216.

<sup>3712</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 167.

<sup>3713</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 332.

<sup>3714</sup>British Museum, “The Cyrus Cylinder,”

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=327188&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=327188&partId=1).

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BC), eventually ruled over Persia, Medea, Syria, Israel, and parts of modern Turkey (2 Chron 36:20–23).<sup>3715</sup>

Despite appearing frequently in the Old Testament, the location of Tarshish remains uncertain.<sup>3716</sup> It could be anywhere in the Mediterranean or Indian Oceans,<sup>3717</sup> ranging from Carthage in North Africa to Tartessus in southwest Spain.<sup>3718</sup> However, the latter option would isolate it from the region of the other peoples named as descendants of Japheth.<sup>3719</sup> Solomon developed extensive trading ties with Tarshish, importing a variety of luxury items (1 Ki 10:21–22).<sup>3720</sup> Jonah intended to flee there when he sought to flee from obeying the Lord’s command to preach to the people of Nineveh (Jon 1:1–3).

Moses’s closing statement for this section implies that the Table of Nations does not include every descendant of Japheth.<sup>3721</sup> He wrote, “From these were separated the nations of the coastlands in their lands, by their languages, by their clans, among their nations.” This verse implies that the events of Gen 11:1–9 had already occurred.<sup>3722</sup> Ancient people distinguished themselves from others by geographic regions, languages, and ethnic groups, not by racial divisions.<sup>3723</sup>

Japheth’s offspring were associated with the seas.<sup>3724</sup> “These” refers to all his descendants, not only to the sons of Javan (Gen 10:4–5).<sup>3725</sup> Clans (*mishpakhah*) in Israel were larger than a household and smaller than a tribe, akin to an extended family (Josh 7:16–17; 1 Sam 10:20–21).<sup>3726</sup> A clay map dating to 7th-8th century BC Babylon names many descendants of Japheth.<sup>3727</sup> It confirms that people in the ANE perceived these groups as living on the far reaches of civilization.<sup>3728</sup>

**Read Gen 10:2–5.** How would you classify the descendants of Japheth?

### The Descendants of Ham

**d) Gen 10:6–14:** The names listed here include Israel’s nearest neighbors.<sup>3729</sup> Not only did these nations surround Israel,<sup>3730</sup> conflict often erupted between them.<sup>3731</sup> Typically, the peoples named here dwelt in cities, representing the apex of social and political civilization in

<sup>3715</sup>T. Cuyler Young, Jr., “Cyrus (Person),” *ABD* 1:1231–2, 1231.

<sup>3716</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 218.

<sup>3717</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 333.

<sup>3718</sup>Waltke, and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 167.

<sup>3719</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 10:29.

<sup>3720</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 333.

<sup>3721</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 168.

<sup>3722</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 219.

<sup>3723</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 10:1–29.

<sup>3724</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 10:29.

<sup>3725</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 219.

<sup>3726</sup>H.-J. Zobel, “מִשְׁפַּחַת” (*mishpat*), *TDOT* 9:79–86, 80.

<sup>3727</sup>The British Museum, “The Map of the World,”

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=404485001&objectid=362000](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=404485001&objectid=362000).

<sup>3728</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*. Gen 10:29.

<sup>3729</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 219.

<sup>3730</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 10:29.

<sup>3731</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 168.

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the Ancient Near East (ANE).<sup>3732</sup> We'll examine only the people-groups who had a significant effect upon biblical history or that region.

Consistent with Noah's curse (Gen 9:20–27), the genealogy of Canaan does not feature seven people-groups,<sup>3733</sup> the number of fullness or completion.<sup>3734</sup> In his introduction, the editor listed Ham's descendants geographically, from south to north.<sup>3735</sup> He wrote, "And the sons of Ham [were] Cush, and Mizraim, and Put, and Canaan."

Cush lies south of Egypt, in the modern-day territories of Ethiopia and North Sudan. Its rich gold mines led to frequent conflict with Egypt, its neighbor to the north. By the time of Moses, Egypt deployed renowned soldiers from Cush into Canaan.<sup>3736</sup> Moses married a woman of Cushite origin (Num 12:1).

Mizraim (*Mitsraim*) is the Hebrew name for Egypt. Since that nation consisted of Upper and Lower Egypt, this proper noun occurs in plural form.<sup>3737</sup> Initially, Egypt served as a gracious host to Israel before subjecting Moses's original audience to cruel slavery (Gen 47:1–6; Exod 1:8–14).<sup>3738</sup>

Most verses in the Greek Old Testament (OT) translate "Put" as "Libya." This is the only one of Ham's sons without any children mentioned in this genealogy. The OT speaks of the men of Put as warriors (Jer 46:9; Ezek 30:5; Nah 3:9).<sup>3739</sup>

The descendants of Cush settled in or near to Arabia. "Havilah" is related to the word "sandy." Therefore, whether it represents the location mentioned elsewhere in the OT remains uncertain (Gen 2:11; Gen 25:16–18; 1 Sam 15:7).<sup>3740</sup>

Moses cited Sheba among the descendants of Abraham and his second wife (Gen 25:1–3; 1 Chron 1:32).<sup>3741</sup> During Solomon's reign, Sheba's queen traveled to Jerusalem bearing costly gifts of gold and spices (1 Ki 10:1–2).<sup>3742</sup> According to Ethiopian legend, she gave birth to Solomon's son after returning to her home. Years later, Menelik visited his father and stole the ark of the covenant before returning to his mother.<sup>3743</sup>

After mentioning five sons and two grandsons of Cush, the editor of the Table of Nations penned an extended section on Cush's sixth son (Gen 10:8–12).<sup>3744</sup> Most likely, this was a later insertion, as it concerns the origin of the two empires which exiled Israel and Judah: Assyria and Babylonia.<sup>3745</sup>

He wrote, "And Cush fathered Nimrod. And he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord, and so it is said, 'like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord.'" Many commentators claim that Nimrod means "We shall rebel,"<sup>3746</sup> foreshadowing the events in Babel (Gen 11:1–9).<sup>3747</sup> This view indicts him as the supreme

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<sup>3732</sup>B. Oded, "The Table of Nations (Genesis 10)—A Socio-Cultural Approach," *ZAW* 98 (1986): 28, <http://www.elamit.net/depot/resources/oded1986.pdf>.

<sup>3733</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 165.

<sup>3734</sup>Ryken, Wilhoit, and Reid, "Seven," *DBI*, 775.

<sup>3735</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 221.

<sup>3736</sup>Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race*, 88.

<sup>3737</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 336. In Hebrew, one pluralizes a masculine noun by adding "im" at its end.

<sup>3738</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 168.

<sup>3739</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 336.

<sup>3740</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 221.

<sup>3741</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 337.

<sup>3742</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 222.

<sup>3743</sup>E. A. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Kebra Nagast* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1932), xliii–xliv, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/kn/kn000-5.htm>.

<sup>3744</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 222.

<sup>3745</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 168.

<sup>3746</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 338.

<sup>3747</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 222.

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example of insurrection against God.<sup>3748</sup> Yet, nothing in these verses explicitly links Nimrod to the Tower of Babel.<sup>3749</sup>

Some scholars associate him with Babylon’s patron deity Marduk or with Ninurta, the god of war and hunting.<sup>3750</sup> However, this genealogy affirms Nimrod’s humanity. Therefore, several other options are worth exploring.

For example, Sargon the Great ruled over Akkad, the first known ANE empire, close to 2300 BC. However, he did not descend from Cush.<sup>3751</sup> A powerful pharaoh named Amenhotep (Amenophis) III (1386–1353 BC) was also known as Nimmureya in the Amarna Letters. During his reign, he undertook major building programs.<sup>3752</sup> He issued several commemorative scarabs, with one depicting him capturing 102 lions.<sup>3753</sup>

On the other hand, one messianic OT text equates Assyria with the land of Nimrod (Mic 5:5–6).<sup>3754</sup> The Assyrian ruler Tukulti-Ninurta I (ca. 1246–1206 BC) defeated Babylon and took the statue of Marduk from its temple into captivity.<sup>3755</sup> By doing this, he asserted the superiority of his gods over those of Babylon.<sup>3756</sup> In order to finance his enormous building projects, he imposed high taxes upon his subjects.<sup>3757</sup>

Since none of these options fits perfectly, “Nimrod” may represent the ANE standard for a nation’s ruler.<sup>3758</sup> He achieved his power by military invasions, not merely by spreading peacefully into new regions.<sup>3759</sup> The term used to describe him refers to someone of surpassing might (*gibor*) who accomplishes great deeds (Gen 6:4; Judg 11:1; Prov 30:30).<sup>3760</sup>

Within the ANE, kings boasted of their skill in hunting large game.<sup>3761</sup> In fact, the royal hunt as a symbol of military might took on an aspect of propaganda, especially in Assyria and Egypt.<sup>3762</sup> The British Museum contains seventh century BC reliefs from Nineveh depicting a lion hunt which cover an entire room’s walls.<sup>3763</sup>

A stela about the exploits of Thutmose III (1490–1436 BC) says: “I speak...of what he did, without *lying* and without equivocation...without a phrase of boasting therein. If he spent a moment of recreation by hunting in any foreign country, the number of that which he carried off is greater than the bag of the entire army. He killed seven lions by shooting in the completion of a moment. He carried off a herd of twelve wild cattle within an hour...He carried off a rhinoceros by shooting, in the southern country of Nubia, after he proceeded to Miu (Sudan) to seek him who had been rebellious to him in that country.”<sup>3764</sup>

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<sup>3748</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 338.

<sup>3749</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 10:29.

<sup>3750</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 222.

<sup>3751</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 10:29.

<sup>3752</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 338.

<sup>3753</sup>The British Museum, “Collection Online: Commemorative Scarab,”

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=141170&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=141170&partId=1).

<sup>3754</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 338.

<sup>3755</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 337.

<sup>3756</sup>Niehaus, *Ancient Near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology*, 124.

<sup>3757</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 337.

<sup>3758</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 222.

<sup>3759</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 169.

<sup>3760</sup>H. Kosmala, “גָּבַר” (*gabar*), *TDOT* 2:373–82, 373.

<sup>3761</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 169.

<sup>3762</sup>Edwin Firmage, “Zoology (Fauna): Background Issues and Methods,” *ABD* 6:1109–1119, 1112.

<sup>3763</sup>Osama S. M. Amin, “Assyrian Lion-Hunting at the British Museum,” <http://etc.ancient.eu/photos/assyrian-lion-hunting-british-museum/>.

<sup>3764</sup>M. S. Drower (trans.), “Pharaoh as Sportsman,” in *ANET*, 243–4.

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The phrase “before the Lord” does not suggest that God approved of Nimrod’s exploits. Indeed, he may have functioned as a despot, for an Arabic word related to “mighty” connotes tyranny and audacity.<sup>3765</sup> Most likely, the phrase functions as a superlative, asserting that he exhibited overweening power to evoke great fear.<sup>3766</sup> As a result, even God acknowledged his abilities.<sup>3767</sup> This resulted in a proverb citing his prowess (Gen 10:9).<sup>3768</sup>

The editor continued, “The beginning of his kingdom [was] Babel, and Erech, and Akkad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar. From that land, he went out to Assyria. And he built Nineveh, and Rehoboth-Ir, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah. It [is] the great city.” “Beginning” (*reshith*) has several nuances, all of which inform our understanding of this verse. It means “chief,” “best,” “first fruits,” and “first in time.”<sup>3769</sup> In addition to the early dates of the founding of the cities named here, most of them achieved political prominence in the ANE.<sup>3770</sup>

Babylonians understood “*Babel*” to mean “the gate of God.”<sup>3771</sup> Dating to the third millennium BC,<sup>3772</sup> this city became a major world power by the first millennium BC. Eventually it symbolized all Mediterranean civilization,<sup>3773</sup> much like Rome did in the Middle Ages.<sup>3774</sup>

Unlike Greek writers, who praised the great city, biblical authors condemned Babylon for its wickedness (Isa 14:3–6, 16–21; Isa 47; Jer 50:13–15). Babylon began the first wave of deportations from Judah in 597 BC, and Nebuchadnezzar II installed Zedekiah as his vassal (2 Ki 24:1–4; 2 Ki 24:10–17). His army left only some of the poorest people in the land (Jer 52:12–16). After Zedekiah rebelled, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BC (2 Ki 24:18–20; 2 Ki 25:8–12). The people of Judah remained outside of the promised land until 538 BC, seventy years after Babylon exiled Israel’s aristocracy.

Erech (Uruk) served as a Sumerian cultural hub.<sup>3775</sup> One of the early centers of civilization,<sup>3776</sup> it reached its height in the fourth and third millennia BC.<sup>3777</sup> Since Gilgamesh reigned from Erech,<sup>3778</sup> a few commentators equate Nimrod with him.<sup>3779</sup> After deporting the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, the Assyrians relocated people from Erech into their land (Ezra 4:8–9).<sup>3780</sup>

Sargon the Great founded Akkad on the Euphrates River (ca. 2350 BC).<sup>3781</sup> However, its precise location remains undiscovered.<sup>3782</sup> Like Hebrew, Akkadian falls within the Semitic language group.<sup>3783</sup> Whether “Ashur” represents all of Assyria or only the capital bearing that name remains unknown.<sup>3784</sup> Assyria overthrew and exiled the Northern Kingdom of Israel,

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<sup>3765</sup>Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “גִּבּוֹר” (*gibor*), *BDB*, 150.

<sup>3766</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 223.

<sup>3767</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 169.

<sup>3768</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 339.

<sup>3769</sup>S. Rattray and J. Milgrom, “רֵאשִׁית” (*reshith*), *TDOT* 13:269–72, 269.

<sup>3770</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 169.

<sup>3771</sup>Helmer Ringgren, “בָּבֶל” (*babel*), *TDOT* 1:466–6, 466–7.

<sup>3772</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 223.

<sup>3773</sup>Jean-Claude Margueron, trans. Paul Sager, “Babylon (Place),” *ABD* 1:563–5, 563.

<sup>3774</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 169.

<sup>3775</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 10:29–31.

<sup>3776</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 169.

<sup>3777</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 339.

<sup>3778</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 10:29–31.

<sup>3779</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 222.

<sup>3780</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 169.

<sup>3781</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 339.

<sup>3782</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 169.

<sup>3783</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 243.

<sup>3784</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 339–40.

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replacing the population with refugees whom they called Samaritans (2 Ki 17:1–6, 24, 41). At that time, Israel ceased to exist as a nation.<sup>3785</sup> Assyrians practiced exceptional cruelty, even by ancient standards (2 Chron 33:11; Isa 37:21–29).<sup>3786</sup>

Ashurbanipal (668–627 BC) reported:

“Tanis and of all the other towns which had associated with them to plot, they did not spare anybody among (them). They hung their corpses from stakes, flayed their skins and covered (with them) the wall of the town(s). Those kings who had repeatedly schemed, they brought alive to me to Nineveh. From all of them, I had only mercy upon Necho) and granted him life.”<sup>3787</sup>

Aside from the capital, Nineveh was the most prominent of Assyrian cities. Founded in approximately 4500 BC,<sup>3788</sup> its ruins lie along the Tigris River in Mosul, Iraq.<sup>3789</sup> Fear that God would forgive Assyrian violence led Jonah to flee in the opposite direction from Nineveh (Jon 3:1–4:2).

Grammatically, “the great city” seems to refer to Calah.<sup>3790</sup> However, that site remained insignificant until it became Assyria’s capital in the ninth century BC.<sup>3791</sup> Therefore, this phrase likely describes Nineveh (Jon 1:1–2; Jon 4:11).<sup>3792</sup>

Overall, Nimrod’s empire encompassed all of Mesopotamia, from Babylon to Assyria.<sup>3793</sup> He descended from Ham. Yet his territory was surrounded by kingdoms ruled by men who claimed Shem as their ancestor (Gen 10:21–31).<sup>3794</sup> They repeatedly experienced conflict.

The Casluhim remain unidentified.<sup>3795</sup> Their significance arises from the editor’s note which says, “...and Casluhim (from which came out the Philistines).” Philistines entered Canaan over land from modern day Turkey and by ships which sailed from Crete and Cyprus.<sup>3796</sup> Since Amos 9:7 asserts that the Philistines came from Crete (Caphtor) even as Israel came from Egypt, they may not have originated there (Jer 47:4).<sup>3797</sup>

The presence of Philistines in Canaan during the lifetimes of Abraham and Isaac may indicate that a small group of Philistines settled there before 1200 BC (Gen 21:32–34; Gen 26:1). After the Sea Peoples ended Egyptian control over Palestine, many Philistines entered the region.<sup>3798</sup> Beginning with the years when judges ruled over Israel until early in David’s reign, warfare against the Philistines occurred often (Judg 13:1–5; 1 Sam 4:10–11; 1 Sam 17:50–54; 2 Sam 5:17–25).

In 589 BC, a coalition of Egyptian and Philistine soldiers drew Nebuchadnezzar’s forces from Jerusalem. At that time, Assyria deported the Philistines from their cities (Jer 37:5–10; Jer 47:1–7).<sup>3799</sup> Three years later Jerusalem also fell (2 Ki 25:1–12).

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<sup>3785</sup>Paul R. House, *I, 2 Kings* (ed. E. Ray Clendenen, Kenneth A. Mathews, and David S. Dockery; NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 340.

<sup>3786</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 169.

<sup>3787</sup>Assurbanipal II, “Campaigns Against Egypt, Syria, and Palestine,” in *ANET* (trans. Daniel David Luckenbill), 295.

<sup>3788</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 224.

<sup>3789</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 340.

<sup>3790</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 224.

<sup>3791</sup>A. Kirk Grayson, “Calah (Place),” *ABD* 1:807–8, 808.

<sup>3792</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 340.

<sup>3793</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 169.

<sup>3794</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 369.

<sup>3795</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 225.

<sup>3796</sup>H. J. Katzenstein, “Philistines: History,” *ABD* 5:326–8, 326.

<sup>3797</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 170.

<sup>3798</sup>Mathews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 26:6.

<sup>3799</sup>H. J. Katzenstein, “Philistines: History” in *ABD*, 5:326–328, 328.

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**Read Gen 10:6–14.** How would you characterize the descendants of Ham? What does the omission of sets of seven tell us about these people-groups? Why did the editor focus upon Nimrod? What impact did these nations have upon Israel and Judah?

### The Descendants of Canaan

**e) Gen 10:15–20:** Although Noah cursed Canaan (Gen 9:20–27), his fertility remained unaffected. This list names eleven of his descendants, second in number only to Joktan.<sup>3800</sup> We'll examine only the people-groups which significantly affected biblical or Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) history. The amount of detail in this genealogy corresponds with the importance of these nations in relationship to Israel (Gen 15:17–21; Exod 3:7–8).<sup>3801</sup> Canaanites inhabited portions of the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>3802</sup> Today this area lies within Israel, part of Syria, and Lebanon.<sup>3803</sup>

“Heth” refers to the Hittites.<sup>3804</sup> Two different groups of people bore this name, creating much confusion.<sup>3805</sup> Kings who settled in Syria and Turkey ruled over the Hittite Empire.<sup>3806</sup> It reached its apex during ca. 1650–1200 BC.<sup>3807</sup> However, the Semitic names of the Hittites mentioned in the Old Testament point to a different origin, consistent with Canaan.<sup>3808</sup> Heth's descendants lived in what became Judah (Gen 23:1–6).<sup>3809</sup> Esau grieved his parents by marrying a Hittite woman (Gen 26:34–35; Gen 27:46).<sup>3810</sup>

Jebusites lived in the area which includes Jerusalem (Judg 19:10–12; Josh 15:63).<sup>3811</sup> Eventually, David captured the city and made it his capital (2 Sam 5:4–9).<sup>3812</sup> Most likely, Jebusites appear in this list of Canaan's progeny because they resided in his territory.<sup>3813</sup> They did not descend from him.<sup>3814</sup>

Amorites (“of the West”) entered Northwest Mesopotamia in the mid-third millennium BC.<sup>3815</sup> They invaded Mari and made it one of their capitals.<sup>3816</sup> In approximately 1960 BC, an alliance of Amorites and Elamites destroyed Ur, the city of Abraham's birth (Gen 11:27–31). Thus, Hammurabi (reigned 1792–1750 BC), the most famous Amorite king,<sup>3817</sup> ruled over the Babylonian Empire.<sup>3818</sup>

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<sup>3800</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 330–1.

<sup>3801</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 225.

<sup>3802</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 368.

<sup>3803</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 221.

<sup>3804</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 341.

<sup>3805</sup>Gregory McMahon, “Hittites in the OT,” *ABD* 3:231–3, 232.

<sup>3806</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 225.

<sup>3807</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 341.

<sup>3808</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 225.

<sup>3809</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 171.

<sup>3810</sup>McMahon, “Hittites in the OT,” 231.

<sup>3811</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 225.

<sup>3812</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 341.

<sup>3813</sup>Stephen A. Reed, “Jebus (Place),” *ABD* 3:652–3, 652.

<sup>3814</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 225.

<sup>3815</sup>George E. Mendenhall, “Amorites,” *ABD* 1:199–202, 199.

<sup>3816</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 341.

<sup>3817</sup>Mendenhall, “Amorites,” 201.

<sup>3818</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 370.

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Amorites had a huge influence on the language, religion, and laws of Canaan. Among extant ANE law codes, the 18th century BC Code of Hammurabi first established the law of retribution (e.g. “An eye for an eye”). However—unlike in Israel (Cf. Exod 21:18–26)—social class determined the penalty:<sup>3819</sup>

“If a seignior (free man) held (a debt of) grain or money against a(nother) seignior and distrained (someone as) his pledge and the pledge has then died a natural death in the house of his distrainer, that case is not subject to claim. If the pledge has died from beating or abuse in the house of his distrainer, the owner of the pledge shall prove it against his merchant, and if it was the seignior’s son, they shall put his son to death; if it was the seignior’s slave, he shall pay one-third mina [eighteen shekels] of silver and also forfeit everything else that he lent.

“If a seignior struck a(nother) seignior’s daughter and has caused her to have a miscarriage, he shall pay ten shekels of silver for her fetus. If that woman has died, they shall put his daughter to death. If by a blow he has caused a commoner’s daughter to have a miscarriage, he shall pay five shekels of silver. If that woman has died, he shall pay one-half mina [twenty-five shekels] of silver. If he struck a seignior’s female slave and has caused her to have a miscarriage, he shall pay two shekels of silver. If that female slave has died, he shall pay one-third mina [eighteen shekels] of silver.”<sup>3820</sup>

Another Amorite settlement began in Palestine in the second millennium BC. Abraham and Jacob lived near there.<sup>3821</sup> These Amorites scattered throughout the region of the Jordan River and Judah (Gen 14:13; Gen 48:21–22).<sup>3822</sup> Moses defeated some of them on Israel’s way to the promised land (Deut 3:8; Num 21:25–26). The prophet Ezekiel accused Jerusalem’s inhabitants of acting like the progeny of Amorites and Hittites (Ezek 16:1–3).<sup>3823</sup>

Canaanites (Phoenicians) lived along the highway which connected Egypt to Mesopotamia.<sup>3824</sup> They spread from Gerar (Gen 20:1), north of Sidon,<sup>3825</sup> down to Gaza.<sup>3826</sup> Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim comprised four municipalities in southeast Canaan, near the Dead Sea.<sup>3827</sup> The Lord destroyed those cities during Abraham’s lifetime (Gen 19:24–25; Deut 29:23).<sup>3828</sup>

**Read Gen 10:15–20.** Why do you think Canaan’s genealogy included such detailed information? How would you characterize these nations?

### The Descendants of Shem

**f) Gen 10:21–31:** As often occurs in the genealogies of Genesis, the final line of descent in Gen 10 includes the people whom God chose as his own (Cf. Gen 25:12, 19–26; Gen 36:1;

<sup>3819</sup>Huffman, “Lex Talionis,” *ABD* 4:321.

<sup>3820</sup>Hammurabi, “Code of Hammurabi,” in *ANET*, 209–14, 175. A mina was worth 50 shekels.

<sup>3821</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 341.

<sup>3822</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 171.

<sup>3823</sup>Mendenhall, “Amorites,” 201–2.

<sup>3824</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 171.

<sup>3825</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 227.

<sup>3826</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 171.

<sup>3827</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 227.

<sup>3828</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 172.

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Gen 37:1–2).<sup>3829</sup> We will address only those nations which impacted biblical or Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) history.

Elam, a non-Semitic nation east of the Tigris River in modern-day Iran,<sup>3830</sup> dates to the third millennium BC.<sup>3831</sup> Its inclusion here appears to relate to geography, rather than to ethnicity.<sup>3832</sup> At its height, this confederation of peoples stretched from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf.<sup>3833</sup> In 722 BC, Assyria exiled Israelites to Elam (Isa 11:11) and transferred Elamites to Israel (Ezra 4:9).<sup>3834</sup>

Arameans reached the height of their power near the end of the second millennium BC, dominating Mesopotamia.<sup>3835</sup> They enjoyed a close relationship with Israel’s patriarchs. Isaac married a descendant of Aram, and Jacob lived among his in-laws after fleeing from Esau (Gen 25:20; Gen 31:20; Deut 26:1–5).<sup>3836</sup>

One ancestral line receives considerable attention here and in Gen 11:10–26.<sup>3837</sup> Although Eber lived at least three generations after Shem, his name occurs in this introduction.<sup>3838</sup> His prominence likely derives from the link with the name “Hebrew” (Gen 14:13).<sup>3839</sup> Moses wrote, “And to Eber were born two sons. The name of the one [was] Peleg because in his days the earth was divided, and the name of the other [was] Joktan.”

“Peleg” as both a noun and a verb occurs in at least fifteen ANE languages. Twelve of them connote similar meanings: “half” or “divide.”<sup>3840</sup> As with many names in the Bible, this moniker portended the future. However, the exact nature of this division has several contenders.<sup>3841</sup>

In Akkadian and in Hebrew, the noun can mean “channel” or “ditch” (Ps 1:3; Isa 30:25; Isa 32:2).<sup>3842</sup> Therefore, “in his days” could refer to when people dug irrigation canals,<sup>3843</sup> enabling sedentary agriculture as a way of life differing from a pastoral existence.<sup>3844</sup> Genesis 11:2 describes a mass migration of people to the southeast which may have resulted from agricultural advancements.<sup>3845</sup> However, most commentators link this event with the scattering of the nations at Babel (Gen 11:1–9).<sup>3846</sup> The verb form of *peleg* can depict the confounding of speech (Ps 55:9).<sup>3847</sup>

Moses’s original audience likely knew exactly what the word *palag* represented, although time has obscured it for us. We cannot even determine whether this division portrays a positive or a negative event.<sup>3848</sup> Nevertheless, the division separated the blessed progeny of Peleg from the line of Joktan.<sup>3849</sup> Peleg’s genealogy continues in Gen 11:18–

<sup>3829</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 343.

<sup>3830</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 10:31.

<sup>3831</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 228.

<sup>3832</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 344.

<sup>3833</sup>François Vallat, “Elam (Place),” *ABD* 2:424–9, 424.

<sup>3834</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 228.

<sup>3835</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 10:31.

<sup>3836</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 230.

<sup>3837</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 227.

<sup>3838</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 343.

<sup>3839</sup>Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, “עֵבֶר” (*ēber*), *BDB*, 720, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/720>.

<sup>3840</sup>K.-D. Schunck, “פֶּלֶג” (*palag*), *TDOT* 11:54–8, 546–7.

<sup>3841</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 230–1.

<sup>3842</sup>Schunck, “פֶּלֶג” (*palag*), *TDOT*, 11:547.

<sup>3843</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 345.

<sup>3844</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 230–1.

<sup>3845</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 10:31.

<sup>3846</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 231.

<sup>3847</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 173.

<sup>3848</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 371.

<sup>3849</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 172.

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26.<sup>3850</sup> His descendants include Abraham, the one through whom God would bring salvation to the world (Gen 3:14–15; Gen 12:1–3; Matt 1:1–2).<sup>3851</sup>

The next few verses focus upon the thirteen sons of Joktan. Although we cannot determine the precise range of the settlements of the sons of Joktan,<sup>3852</sup> their names testify to their Arabian origin.<sup>3853</sup> Some commentators emphasize the polytheistic nature of these nations. For example, Hazarmaveth means “oasis of Mot,” the god of death.<sup>3854</sup> This association may have developed because people harvested frankincense—a resin used for embalming corpses and covering the odor of death—from tree sap in this region of Oman.<sup>3855</sup>

Moses closed this section of the genealogy of Shem by writing, “These [are] the sons of Shem according to their clans, and their languages, in their lands, by their people-groups.”

**Read Gen 10:21–31.** Why would Moses mention Eber in the introduction of this genealogy when he had to be at least Shem’s great-grandson? How would you characterize the sons of Joktan? What do you think caused the division of the world during Peleg’s lifetime? Do you consider yourself to be more like Peleg’s or Joktan’s descendants? Why?

### Seventy Nations

**g) Gen 10:32:** The Table of Nations in Gen 10 concludes by saying, “These are the clans of the sons of Noah according to their genealogies, by their nations. And from these were divided the nations in the land after the flood.” This verse forms a Hebrew literary device called an *inclusio* by repeating the information from Gen 10:1.<sup>3856</sup> Together they form a frame around the genealogy enclosed within them.<sup>3857</sup> However, Gen 10:32 replaces “sons were born” with “the nations were divided.”<sup>3858</sup>

The number of descendants attributed to the progeny of Noah points to a larger theological reality.<sup>3859</sup> Ranging from Iran to Ethiopia and from Turkey to Libya,<sup>3860</sup> this list mentions seventy people, places, and nations.<sup>3861</sup> Seventy consists of ten sevens, the number of perfection. Throughout the Old Testament, some fascinating usages of this number occur.<sup>3862</sup>

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<sup>3850</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 231.

<sup>3851</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 163.

<sup>3852</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 231–2.

<sup>3853</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 345.

<sup>3854</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 231.

<sup>3855</sup>W. W. Müller, “Hazarmaveth (Person),” *ABD* 3:85–6, 85.

<sup>3856</sup>Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral, 2nd Ed.*, 54.

<sup>3857</sup>Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation, 2nd Ed.*, 303.

<sup>3858</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 174.

<sup>3859</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 367.

<sup>3860</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 346.

<sup>3861</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 10:29.

<sup>3862</sup>Ryken, et. al., “Seventy,” *DBI*, 775–6, 775.

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First, seventy represents a great number of descendants (Gen 46:27; Judg 8:30; 2 Ki 10:1).<sup>3863</sup> For example, the Canaanite fertility goddess Asherah reportedly bore seventy children.<sup>3864</sup> Within Israel, seventy elders represented the nation as they ate in God’s presence on Mount Sinai, assisted Moses, and participated in idolatry within the temple (Exod 24:9–11; Num 11:16; Ezek 8:10–12).<sup>3865</sup> Whether positive or negative, the number “seventy” indicates fullness or completion.<sup>3866</sup>

God chose Israel as one nation among seventy to represent all humanity (Deut 32:8).<sup>3867</sup> The Lord ordered Jacob’s descendants to share their knowledge of him throughout the earth (Deut 4:5–8; Ps 102:12–22; Isa 66:18–21).<sup>3868</sup> Moses commanded Israel to inscribe the words of God’s law onto an altar covered with plaster (Deut 27:1–8). According to the *Mishnah*, they wrote all the words of the law “in seventy languages” (*m. Sotah* 7.5).<sup>3869</sup>

This implies that God holds all people-groups accountable, whether they view him as their Lord or not (Amos 9:7).<sup>3870</sup> All humans share a common origin, lending inherent dignity and value to everyone. We all bear God’s image, even after the fall (Gen 1:26–28; Gen 5:1–4).<sup>3871</sup>

**Read Gen 10:32.** Why is the number seventy so important in understanding the genealogy in Gen 10? How does this reminder of our common origin and accountability impact the way you view and treat other people?

### Jesus Sends Seventy

**2) Luke 10:1–2:** These verses follow the missionary journey of the twelve disciples and Christ’s call to assist him by ushering in the kingdom of God (Luke 9:1–6, 57–62).<sup>3872</sup> Luke 10:1–20 continues the theme of outreach,<sup>3873</sup> with an interesting twist. Although Luke provided no location for this enterprise, he included some intriguing hints regarding the identity of those who would hear the gospel.<sup>3874</sup>

Luke wrote, “After these things, the Lord commissioned seventy[-two] others, and he sent them two by two before him into every city and place where he himself was about to come.” Manuscript evidence between “seventy” and “seventy-two” is evenly divided.<sup>3875</sup> However, one document attesting to “seventy” (*P<sup>75</sup>*) dates to the third century. Those citing “seventy-two” begin in the fourth century.<sup>3876</sup>

While the standard Hebrew (Masoretic) text of the Table of Nations lists seventy nations (Gen 10), the Greek translation of that chapter names seventy-two.<sup>3877</sup> This may have

<sup>3863</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 213–4.

<sup>3864</sup>Ginsberg, trans., “Poems About Baal and Anath,” in *ANET*, II AB 6:46, 134.

<sup>3865</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 10:29.

<sup>3866</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 164.

<sup>3867</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 214.

<sup>3868</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 346.

<sup>3869</sup>Ryken, et. al., “Seventy,” *DBI*, 775.

<sup>3870</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 174.

<sup>3871</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 346.

<sup>3872</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 410, 412.

<sup>3873</sup>John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1993), 549.

<sup>3874</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 410–11.

<sup>3875</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 348.

<sup>3876</sup>Nestle and Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, Luke 10:1, 224.

<sup>3877</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 425.

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occurred because Jewish scholars regarded those two numbers as interchangeable.<sup>3878</sup> In Num 11:24–26, the Holy Spirit fell upon seventy elders around the tabernacle and two who remained in the camp. Whether to include the two in the camp among the seventy leaders might account for this uncertainty.<sup>3879</sup>

The disciples' mission foreshadows the Spirit falling upon gentiles (Acts 2:1–5, 17–21; Acts 10:44–48).<sup>3880</sup> By sending out seventy (or seventy-two) missionaries, Jesus expressed his concern for every people-group in the world.<sup>3881</sup>

Third Enoch, a fifth–sixth century AD Jewish apocryphal book, asserts, “[There] are seventy-two princes of kingdoms on high corresponding to the 72 tongues of the world.”<sup>3882</sup>

We also have the *Letter of Aristeas*, a second century BC legend surrounding the Greek Old Testament (OT). It claims that seventy-two scholars traveled to Alexandria. They translated the Hebrew Scriptures into a language which people of many nations could understand.<sup>3883</sup>

Regarding the number seventy, Moses commanded Israel to inscribe the words of God's onto an altar covered with plaster (Deut 27:1–8). According to the *Mishnah*, they wrote all the words of the law “in seventy languages” (*m. Sotah* 7.5).<sup>3884</sup> This implies that God holds all people-groups accountable, whether they view him as their Lord or not (Amos 9:7).<sup>3885</sup>

Jesus sent (*apostellō*) these apostles out in pairs. This enabled them to give credible witness concerning the reception they received (Deut 19:15; Luke 10:3–17).<sup>3886</sup> It also provided camaraderie, accountability, and increased security (Ecc 4:9–12; 2 Cor 8:18–22). Dispatching people on a mission to proclaim the kingdom of God was unparalleled at that point in Jewish history.<sup>3887</sup>

As Christ prepared to send them, he said, “The harvest is great, but the ones working are few. Pray, then, of the Lord of the harvest that he might send out workers into his harvest.” In the agrarian milieu of the Bible, the imagery of a harvest connoted God's blessing, abundance, and reward for hard work (Exod 23:16; Deut 28:1–6; Prov 20:4).<sup>3888</sup> Usually when the metaphor of the Lord reaping appears in the OT, the focus falls upon impending judgment (Isa 17:10–12; Jer 51:33; Joel 3:13).<sup>3889</sup> Yet, it does occasionally connote salvation (Jer 2:3; Hos 6:11).<sup>3890</sup>

As Christ's parable of the vineyard workers implies, vintners could easily find day laborers for harvests (Matt 20:1–7). Locating people to do the strenuous work of missions for little earthly reward proves more difficult.<sup>3891</sup> Therefore, Christ implored his followers to pray for God to direct people to engage in evangelism and discipleship in order to expand his

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<sup>3878</sup>Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 549.

<sup>3879</sup>Pao and Schnabel, “Luke,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 316–7.

<sup>3880</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 425.

<sup>3881</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 411.

<sup>3882</sup>R. Ishmael Ben Elisha, *Hebrew Book of Enoch (Enoch 3)* (trans. Hugo Odeburg; London: Cambridge University Press, 1928), 17:8,

[https://archive.org/stream/HebrewBookOfEnoch3/BookOfEnoch3\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/HebrewBookOfEnoch3/BookOfEnoch3_djvu.txt).

<sup>3883</sup>H. St. J. Thackeray, trans., *The Letter of Aristeas, Translated with an Appendix of Ancient Evidence on the Origin of the Septuagint* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917), 33–4,

[https://archive.org/stream/theletterofarist00unknuoft/theletterofarist00unknuoft\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/theletterofarist00unknuoft/theletterofarist00unknuoft_djvu.txt).

<sup>3884</sup>Ryken, et. al., “Seventy,” 775.

<sup>3885</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 174.

<sup>3886</sup>Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 550.

<sup>3887</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 425.

<sup>3888</sup>Ryken, et. al., “Harvest,” *DBI* 365–7, 365.

<sup>3889</sup>Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 550.

<sup>3890</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 291.

<sup>3891</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 425–6.

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kingdom (Luke 24:46–49; Matt 28:16–20).<sup>3892</sup> In reality, the harvest comes from and belongs to the Lord.<sup>3893</sup> We have the privilege of participating in God’s great plan for humanity.

For those working in agriculture, the concept of a harvest of grain or produce promotes an impression of urgency.<sup>3894</sup> Peak reaping conditions often remain quite short.<sup>3895</sup> This may result in seasonal workers employed to assist those who labor year-round.<sup>3896</sup> Notably, Jesus expanded ministry responsibilities beyond the twelve disciples and even beyond the seventy (two) (Luke 24:46–49; Acts 1:7–8; Acts 8:1–12).<sup>3897</sup>

Although Christ had resolutely begun traveling toward his death in Jerusalem, he remained concerned for people of every nation (Luke 9:51–56).<sup>3898</sup> Choosing seventy (two) missionaries to go ahead of him symbolized sharing the gospel with the whole known world.<sup>3899</sup> This task grew exponentially (Acts 17:6; Acts 24:5; Rom 1:8; Rom 15:20–26).<sup>3900</sup>

God continues to use his people to reach the nations, often in ways we don’t expect. We sow the seed of God’s Word, but the Lord makes it grow (1 Cor 3:5–9). When the end of this age arrives, those who do evil shall be destroyed, while God’s people shall enjoy his presence forever (Matt 13:36–43).<sup>3901</sup> Participating in the advance of the gospel remains a difficult task. Yet, it brings tremendous joy (Phil 1:3–18).<sup>3902</sup>

**Read Luke 10:1–2.** Why is the number of apostles Jesus sent on this mission significant? How do you help with the task of reaping God’s harvest? Discuss some creative ways to reach those in our generation.

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<sup>3892</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 291.

<sup>3893</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 426.

<sup>3894</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 413.

<sup>3895</sup>Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 551.

<sup>3896</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 413.

<sup>3897</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 297.

<sup>3898</sup>Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 549.

<sup>3899</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 348.

<sup>3900</sup>Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race*, 168.

<sup>3901</sup>Ryken, et. al., “Harvest,” 367.

<sup>3902</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 296.