

Subject: *God of the Nations – Part 1*

Scripture: *Genesis 10:1-5*

The Near East is often called the Cradle of Civilization. It is also called the Birthplace of the Nations. From the three sons of Noah (Shem, Ham, and Japheth) the whole world was repopulated after the flood. Genesis 10 describes the descendants and nations that came from Noah's three sons.

In the early chapters of Genesis we see the growth of the human race, the preservation and near elimination of the human race, and the division of the human race into nations of the world. To put it another way, we see the people of the world added, subtracted, multiplied, and divided into nations.

Genesis 10 and 11 fit together like this. Genesis 10 gives us the record of the nations divided, and Genesis 11 tells us the reason why the nations were divided (the tower of Babel and confusion on languages).

In Genesis we see God revealed Himself as the God of creation (Gen. 1-2), the God of Adam and Eve (Gen. 2-3), the God of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4), the God of life and death (Gen. 5), the God of Noah and the flood, (Gen. 6-9), and now the God of the nations. To understand the importance of Genesis 10-11 we need to see the greater context of what God says about the nations and how they fit into His overall plan.

1. God's Division of the Nations (Gen. 10-11)

Here are some things to notice in Genesis 10.

A. Vs. 1, Noah's sons (Shem, Ham, and Japheth)

B. Vs. 2-5, sons (descendants) of Japheth – settled in Europe and Turkey

Gomer (Germany); Magog, Tubal, and Meshech (Russia); Madai (Medes, Persia); Javan (Greece); Tiras (Italy); Togarmah (Armenia, Turkey); Tarshish (Spain); Kittim (Cyprus)

C. Vs. 6-20, sons (descendants) of Ham – settled in Canaan, Egypt, and Africa

Cush (Ethiopia); Mizraim (Egypt); Phut (Africa); Canaan (Palestine); Babel (Babylon and Assyria); Sidon (Phoenicia); Heth (Hittites, Turkey); Jebusite (Jerusalem); Amorite (Palestine); Philistim (Philistines); Sinite (possibly China, Japan, and India)

D. Vs. 21-31, sons (descendants) of Shem – settled in the Middle East

Some notable names in this family line are: Eber (where we get the word "Hebrews"); Arphaxad (mentioned by name in the family line of Jesus, Lk. 3:36); Uz, who settled the land where Job lived; Ophir and Havilah, settled in locations known for their gold

The name Shem is where we get the word "Semitic." The descendants of Shem were listed last because they were prominent and most important as Genesis unfolds. The Jewish people came from the family line of Shem, and even Christ came from the line of Shem.

Through the line of Shem came Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel.
Through Abraham, Ishmael, and Esau came the Arab nations.

Many of the descendants listed in this chapter became bitter enemies of Israel, and all of these nations came to worship idols (false gods) except the nation of Israel.

2. God's Control of the Nations

God has made all nations from one race, the human race (one blood). God has determined the times of their existence and the limits of their territory. The changing boundaries and lines on maps of continents and countries are all under God's control. God had a special place and purpose for His chosen people of Israel to be a witness to the surrounding nations.

Acts 17:24-28

He is sovereign over the nations, and He has made Himself known to all nations, so they would seek Him and come to know Him (Acts 17:27).

In spite of the fact that the nations did not seek God, He sought them through the ministry of the apostles and the church. That's what the Great Commission of Christ is all about—taking the good news of salvation to the nations of the world.

That is exactly what Paul and many others did.

Acts 17:30-31

Luke 24:46-49