

## Bible Study for March 17, 2021

[adapted from The Serendipity Study Bible]

By Major Brian Coles

### Read Genesis 10

This is the account<sup>[a]</sup> of Noah's sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.<sup>[b]</sup> Sons<sup>[c]</sup> were born<sup>[d]</sup> to them after the flood.

<sup>2</sup>The sons of Japheth<sup>[e]</sup> were Gomer,<sup>[f]</sup> Magog,<sup>[g]</sup> Madai,<sup>[h]</sup> Javan,<sup>[i]</sup> Tubal,<sup>[j]</sup> Meshech,<sup>[k]</sup> and Tiras.<sup>[l]</sup> <sup>3</sup>The sons of Gomer were<sup>[m]</sup> Ashkenaz,<sup>[n]</sup> Riphath,<sup>[o]</sup> and Togarmah.<sup>[p]</sup> <sup>4</sup>The sons of Javan were Elishah,<sup>[q]</sup> Tarshish,<sup>[r]</sup> the Kittim,<sup>[s]</sup> and the Dodanim.<sup>[t]</sup> <sup>5</sup>From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to its language, according to their families, by their nations.

<sup>6</sup>The sons of Ham were Cush,<sup>[u]</sup> Mizraim,<sup>[v]</sup> Put,<sup>[w]</sup> and Canaan.<sup>[x]</sup> <sup>7</sup>The sons of Cush were Seba,<sup>[y]</sup> Havilah,<sup>[z]</sup> Sabtah,<sup>[aa]</sup> Raamah,<sup>[ab]</sup> and Sabteca.<sup>[ac]</sup> The sons of Raamah were Sheba<sup>[ad]</sup> and Dedan.<sup>[ae]</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Cush was the father of<sup>[af]</sup> Nimrod; he began to be a valiant warrior on the earth. <sup>9</sup>He was a mighty hunter<sup>[ag]</sup> before the LORD.<sup>[ah]</sup> (That is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD.") <sup>10</sup>The primary regions<sup>[ai]</sup> of his kingdom were Babel,<sup>[aj]</sup> Erech,<sup>[ak]</sup> Akkad,<sup>[al]</sup> and Calneh<sup>[am]</sup> in the land of Shinar.<sup>[an]</sup> <sup>11</sup>From that land he went<sup>[ao]</sup> to Assyria,<sup>[ap]</sup> where he built Nineveh,<sup>[aq]</sup> Rehoboth Ir,<sup>[ar]</sup> Calah,<sup>[as]</sup> <sup>12</sup>and Resen, which is between Nineveh and the great city Calah.<sup>[at]</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Mizraim<sup>[au]</sup> was the father of<sup>[av]</sup> the Ludites,<sup>[aw]</sup> Anamites,<sup>[ax]</sup> Lehabites,<sup>[ay]</sup> Naphtuhites,<sup>[az]</sup> <sup>14</sup>Pathrusites,<sup>[ba]</sup> Casluhites<sup>[b</sup>  
<sup>b]</sup> (from whom the Philistines came),<sup>[bc]</sup> and Caphtorites.<sup>[bd]</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Canaan was the father of<sup>[be]</sup> Sidon his firstborn,<sup>[bf]</sup> Heth,<sup>[bg]</sup> <sup>16</sup>the Jebusites,<sup>[bh]</sup> Amorites,<sup>[bi]</sup> Gargashites,<sup>[bj]</sup> <sup>17</sup>Hivites,<sup>[bk]</sup> Arkites,<sup>[bl]</sup> Sinites,<sup>[bm]</sup> <sup>18</sup>Arvadites,<sup>[bn]</sup> Zemarites,<sup>[bo]</sup> and Hamathites.<sup>[bp]</sup> Eventually the families of the Canaanites were scattered<sup>[bq]</sup> <sup>19</sup>and the borders of Canaan extended<sup>[br]</sup> from Sidon all the way to<sup>[bs]</sup> Gerar as far as Gaza, and all the way to<sup>[bt]</sup> Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and

Zeboyim, as far as Lasha. <sup>20</sup> These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, and by their nations.

<sup>21</sup> And sons were also born<sup>[bt]</sup> to Shem (the older brother of Japheth),<sup>[bu]</sup> the father of all the sons of Eber.

<sup>22</sup> The sons of Shem were Elam,<sup>[bv]</sup> Asshur,<sup>[bw]</sup> Arphaxad,<sup>[bx]</sup> Lud,<sup>[by]</sup> and Aram.<sup>[bz]</sup> <sup>23</sup> The sons of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.<sup>[ca]</sup> <sup>24</sup> Arphaxad was the father of<sup>[cb]</sup> Shelah,<sup>[cc]</sup> and Shelah was the father of Eber.<sup>[cd]</sup> <sup>25</sup> Two sons were born to Eber: One was named Peleg because in his days the earth was divided,<sup>[ce]</sup> and his brother's name was Joktan. <sup>26</sup> Joktan was the father of<sup>[cf]</sup> Almodad,<sup>[cg]</sup> Sheleph,<sup>[ch]</sup> Hazarmaveth,<sup>[ci]</sup> Jerah,<sup>[cj]</sup> <sup>27</sup> Hadoram, Uzal,<sup>[ck]</sup> Diklah,<sup>[cl]</sup> <sup>28</sup> Obal,<sup>[cm]</sup> Abimael,<sup>[cn]</sup> Sheba,<sup>[co]</sup> <sup>29</sup> Ophir,<sup>[cp]</sup> Havilah,<sup>[cq]</sup> and Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan. <sup>30</sup> Their dwelling place was from Mesha all the way to<sup>[cr]</sup> Sephar in the eastern hills. <sup>31</sup> These are the sons of Shem according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, and according to their nations.

<sup>32</sup> These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations, and from these the nations spread<sup>[cs]</sup> over the earth after the flood.

## Footnotes

- a. Genesis 10:1 **tn** The title תּוֹלְדֵי אֲלֵהּ ('*elleh tof dot*, here translated as "This is the account") here covers 10:1-11:9, which contains the so-called Table of Nations and the account of how the nations came to be dispersed.
- b. Genesis 10:1 **sn** The sons are not listed in order by age. Japheth was oldest (10:21); Ham was youngest (9:24). Shem is listed first due to importance.
- c. Genesis 10:1 **sn** *Sons were born to them*. A vertical genealogy such as this encompasses more than the names of sons. The list includes cities, tribes, and even nations. In a loose way, the names in the list have some derivation or connection to the three ancestors.
- d. Genesis 10:1 **tn** It appears that the Table of Nations is a composite of at least two ancient sources: Some sections begin with the phrase "the sons of" (בְּנֵי, *b<sup>e</sup>ne*) while other sections use "begot" (יָלַד, *yalad*). It may very well be that the "sons of" list was an old, "bare bones" list that was retained in the family records, while the "begot" sections were editorial inserts by the writer of Genesis, reflecting his special interests. See A. P. Ross, "The Table

- of Nations in Genesis 10—Its Structure,” *BSac* 137 (1980): 340-53; idem, “The Table of Nations in Genesis 10—Its Content,” *BSac* 138 (1981): 22-34.
- e. Genesis 10:2 **sn** The Greek form of the name Japheth, *Iapetos*, is used in Greek tradition for the ancestor of the Greeks.
  - f. Genesis 10:2 **sn** *Gomer* was the ancestor of the Cimmerians. For a discussion of the Cimmerians see E. M. Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontier* (SBA), 49-61.
  - g. Genesis 10:2 **sn** For a discussion of various proposals concerning the descendants of *Magog* see E. M. Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontier* (SBA), 22-24.
  - h. Genesis 10:2 **sn** *Madai* was the ancestor of the Medes, who lived east of Assyria.
  - i. Genesis 10:2 **sn** *Javan* was the father of the Hellenic race, the Ionians who lived in western Asia Minor.
  - j. Genesis 10:2 **sn** *Tubal* was the ancestor of militaristic tribes that lived north of the Black Sea. For a discussion of ancient references to Tubal see E. M. Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontier* (SBA), 24-26.
  - k. Genesis 10:2 **sn** *Meshech* was the ancestor of the people known in Assyrian records as the *Musku*. For a discussion of ancient references to them see E. M. Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontier* (SBA), 24-26.
  - l. Genesis 10:2 **sn** *Tiras* was the ancestor of the Thracians, some of whom possibly became the Pelasgian pirates of the Aegean.
  - m. Genesis 10:3 **sn** The descendants of *Gomer* were all northern tribes of the Upper Euphrates.
  - n. Genesis 10:3 **sn** *Ashkenaz* was the ancestor of a northern branch of Indo-Germanic tribes, possibly Scythians. For discussion see E. M. Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontier* (SBA), 63.
  - o. Genesis 10:3 **sn** The descendants of *Riphath* lived in a district north of the road from Haran to Carchemish.
  - p. Genesis 10:3 **sn** *Togarmah* is also mentioned in Ezek 38:6, where it refers to Til-garimmu, the capital of Kammanu, which bordered Tabal in eastern Turkey. See E. M. Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontier* (SBA), 26, n. 28.
  - q. Genesis 10:4 **sn** The descendants of *Elishah* populated Cyprus.
  - r. Genesis 10:4 **sn** The descendants of *Tarshish* settled along the southern coast of what is modern Turkey. However, some identify the site Tarshish (see Jonah 1:3) with Sardinia or Spain.

- s. Genesis 10:4 **sn** The name *Kittim* is associated with Cyprus, as well as coastlands east of Rhodes. It is used in later texts to refer to the Romans.
- t. Genesis 10:4 **tc** Most of the MT mss read “Dodanim” here, but 1 Chr 1:7 has “Rodanim,” perhaps referring to the island of Rhodes. But the *Qere* reading in 1 Chr 1:7 suggests “Dodanim.” Dodona is one of the most ancient and revered spots in ancient Greece.
- u. Genesis 10:6 **sn** The descendants of *Cush* settled in Nubia (Ethiopia).
- v. Genesis 10:6 **sn** The descendants of *Mizraim* settled in Upper and Lower Egypt.
- w. Genesis 10:6 **sn** The descendants of *Put* settled in Libya.
- x. Genesis 10:6 **sn** The descendants of *Canaan* lived in the region of Phoenicia (Palestine).
- y. Genesis 10:7 **sn** The descendants of *Seba* settled in Upper Egypt along the Nile.
- z. Genesis 10:7 **sn** The Hebrew name *Havilah* apparently means “stretch of sand” (see *HALOT* 297 s.v. הַוִּילָה). Havilah’s descendants settled in eastern Arabia.
- aa. Genesis 10:7 **sn** The descendants of *Sabtah* settled near the western shore of the Persian Gulf in ancient Hadhramaut.
- bb. Genesis 10:7 **sn** The descendants of *Raamah* settled in southwest Arabia.
- cc. Genesis 10:7 **sn** The descendants of *Sabteca* settled in Samudake, east toward the Persian Gulf.
- dd. Genesis 10:7 **sn** *Sheba* became the name of a kingdom in southwest Arabia.
- ee. Genesis 10:7 **sn** The name *Dedan* is associated with ‘*Ula* in northern Arabia.
- ff. Genesis 10:8 **tn** *Heb* “fathered.” Embedded within Cush’s genealogy is an account of Nimrod, a mighty warrior. There have been many attempts to identify him, but none are convincing.
- gg. Genesis 10:9 **tn** The Hebrew word for “hunt” is טָיַד (*tsayid*), which is used on occasion for hunting men (1 Sam 24:12; Jer 16:16; Lam 3:15).
- hh. Genesis 10:9 **tn** Another option is to take the divine name here, לִפְנֵי יְהוָה (*lifne y<sup>e</sup>hvah*, “before the LORD [YHWH]”), as a means of expressing the superlative degree. In this case one may translate “Nimrod was the greatest hunter in the world.”

- ii. Genesis 10:10 **tn** *Heb* “beginning.” E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB), 67, suggests “mainstays,” citing Jer 49:35 as another text where the Hebrew noun is so used.
- jj. Genesis 10:10 **tn** Or “Babylon.”
- kk. Genesis 10:10 **sn** *Erech* (ancient Uruk, modern Warka), one of the most ancient civilizations, was located southeast of Babylon.
- ll. Genesis 10:10 **sn** *Akkad*, or ancient Agade, was associated with Sargon and located north of Babylon.
- mm. Genesis 10:10 **tn** No such place is known in Shinar (i.e., Babylonia). Therefore some have translated the Hebrew term כְּלָנָה (*khalneh*) as “all of them,” referring to the three previous names (cf. NRSV).
- nn. Genesis 10:10 **sn** *Shinar* is another name for Babylonia.
- oo. Genesis 10:11 **tn** The subject of the verb translated “went” is probably still Nimrod. However, it has also been interpreted that “Ashur went,” referring to a derivative power.
- pp. Genesis 10:11 **tn** *Heb* “Asshur.”
- qq. Genesis 10:11 **sn** *Nineveh* was an ancient Assyrian city situated on the Tigris River.
- rr. Genesis 10:11 **sn** The name *Rehoboth Ir* means “and broad streets of a city,” perhaps referring to a suburb of Nineveh.
- ss. Genesis 10:11 **sn** *Calah* (modern Nimrud) was located 20 miles north of Nineveh.
- tt. Genesis 10:12 **tn** *Heb* “and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; it [i.e., Calah] is the great city.”
- uu. Genesis 10:13 **sn** *Mizraim* is the Hebrew name for Egypt (cf. NRSV).
- vv. Genesis 10:13 **tn** *Heb* “fathered.”
- ww. Genesis 10:13 **sn** The *Ludites* were African tribes west of the Nile Delta.
- xx. Genesis 10:13 **sn** The *Anamites* lived in North Africa, west of Egypt, near Cyrene.
- yy. Genesis 10:13 **sn** The *Lehabites* are identified with the Libyans.
- zz. Genesis 10:13 **sn** The *Naphtuhites* lived in Lower Egypt (the Nile Delta region).
- aaa. Genesis 10:14 **sn** The *Pathrusites* are known in Egyptian as *P-to-reshi*; they resided in Upper Egypt.
- bbb. Genesis 10:14 **sn** The *Casluhites* lived in Crete and eventually settled east of the Egyptian Delta, between Egypt and Canaan.

- ccc. Genesis 10:14 **tn** Several commentators prefer to reverse the order of the words to put this clause after the next word, since the Philistines came from Crete (where the Caphtorites lived). But the table may suggest migration rather than lineage, and the Philistines, like the Israelites, came through the Nile Delta region of Egypt. For further discussion of the origin and migration of the Philistines, see D. M. Howard, "Philistines," *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, 232.
- ddd. Genesis 10:14 **sn** The *Caphtorites* resided in Crete, but in Egyptian literature Caphtor refers to "the region beyond" the Mediterranean.
- eee. Genesis 10:15 **tn** *Heb* "fathered."
- fff. Genesis 10:15 **sn** Sidon was the foremost city in Phoenicia; here *Sidon* may be the name of its founder.
- ggg. Genesis 10:15 **tn** Some see a reference to "Hittites" here (cf. NIV), but this seems unlikely. See the note on the phrase "sons of Heth" in Gen 23:3.
- hhh. Genesis 10:16 **sn** The *Jebusites* were the Canaanite inhabitants of ancient Jerusalem.
- iii. Genesis 10:16 **sn** Here *Amorites* refers to smaller groups of Canaanite inhabitants of the mountainous regions of Palestine, rather than the large waves of Amurru, or western Semites, who migrated to the region.
- jjj. Genesis 10:16 **sn** The *Girgashites* are an otherwise unknown Canaanite tribe, though the name is possibly mentioned in Ugaritic texts (see G. J. Wenham, *Genesis* [WBC], 1:226).
- kkk. Genesis 10:17 **sn** The *Hivites* were Canaanite tribes of a Hurrian origin.
- lll. Genesis 10:17 **sn** The *Arkites* lived in Arka, a city in Lebanon, north of Sidon.
- mmm. Genesis 10:17 **sn** The *Sinites* lived in Sin, another town in Lebanon.
- nnn. Genesis 10:18 **sn** The *Arvadites* lived in the city Arvad, located on an island near the mainland close to the river El Kebir.
- ooo. Genesis 10:18 **sn** The *Zemarites* lived in the town Sumur, north of Arka.
- ppp. Genesis 10:18 **sn** The *Hamathites* lived in Hamath on the Orontes River.
- qqq. Genesis 10:19 **tn** *Heb* "were."
- rrr. Genesis 10:19 **tn** *Heb* "as you go."
- sss. Genesis 10:19 **tn** *Heb* "as you go."
- ttt. Genesis 10:21 **tn** *Heb* "And to Shem was born."

- uuu. Genesis 10:21 **tn** Or “whose older brother was Japheth.” Some translations render Japheth as the older brother, understanding the adjective הַגְּדוֹל (*haggadol*, “older”) as modifying Japheth. However, in Hebrew when a masculine singular definite attributive adjective follows the sequence masculine singular construct noun plus proper name, the adjective invariably modifies the noun in construct, not the proper name. Such is the case here. See Deut 11:7; Judg 1:13; 2:7; 3:9; 9:5; 2 Kgs 15:35; 2 Chr 27:3; Neh 3:30; Jer 13:9; 36:10; Ezek 10:19; 11:1.
- vvv. Genesis 10:22 **sn** The Hebrew name *Elam* (עֵילָם, ‘*elam*) means “highland.” The Elamites were a non-Semitic people who lived east of Babylon.
- www. Genesis 10:22 **sn** *Asshur* is the name for the Assyrians. Asshur was the region in which Nimrod expanded his power (see v. 11, where the name is also mentioned). When names appear in both sections of a genealogical list, it probably means that there were both Hamites and Shemites living in that region in antiquity, especially if the name is a place name.
- xxx. Genesis 10:22 **sn** The descendants of *Arphaxad* may have lived northeast of Nineveh.
- yyy. Genesis 10:22 **sn** *Lud* may have been the ancestor of the Ludbu, who lived near the Tigris River.
- zzz. Genesis 10:22 **sn** *Aram* became the collective name of the northern tribes living in the steppes of Mesopotamia and speaking Aramaic dialects.
- aaaa. Genesis 10:23 **tc** The MT reads “Mash”; the LXX and 1 Chr 1:17 read “Meshech.” **sn** *Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash*. Little is known about these descendants of Aram.
- bbbb. Genesis 10:24 **tn** *Heb* “fathered.”
- cccc. Genesis 10:24 **tc** The MT reads “Arphaxad fathered Shelah”; the LXX reads “Arphaxad fathered Cainan, and Cainan fathered Sala [= Shelah].” The LXX reading also appears to lie behind Luke 3:35-36.
- dddd. Genesis 10:24 **sn** Genesis 11 traces the line of Shem through *Eber* (עֵבֶר, ‘*ever*) to Abraham the “Hebrew” (עִבְרִי, ‘*ivri*).
- eeee. Genesis 10:25 **tn** The expression “the earth was divided” may refer to dividing the land with canals, but more likely it anticipates the division of languages at Babel (Gen 11). The verb פָּלַג (*palag*, “separate, divide”) is used in Ps 55:9 for a division of languages.
- ffff. Genesis 10:26 **tn** *Heb* “fathered.”

- gggg. Genesis 10:26 **sn** The name *Almodad* combines the Arabic article *al* with *modad* (“friend”). Almodad was the ancestor of a South Arabian people.
- hhhh. Genesis 10:26 **sn** The name *Sheleph* may be related to Shilph, a district of Yemen; Shalph is a Yemenite tribe.
- iiii. Genesis 10:26 **sn** The name *Hazarmaveth* should be equated with Hadramawt, located in Southern Arabia.
- jjjj. Genesis 10:26 **sn** The name *Jerah* means “moon.”
- kkkk. Genesis 10:27 **sn** *Uzal* was the name of the old capital of Yemen.
- llll. Genesis 10:27 **sn** The name *Diklah* means “date-palm.”
- mmmm. Genesis 10:28 **sn** *Obal* was a name used for several localities in Yemen.
- nnnn. Genesis 10:28 **sn** The name *Abimael* is a genuine Sabean form which means “my father, truly, he is God.”
- oooo. Genesis 10:28 **sn** The descendants of *Sheba* lived in South Arabia, where the Joktanites were more powerful than the Hamites.
- pppp. Genesis 10:29 **sn** *Ophir* became the name of a territory in South Arabia. Many of the references to Ophir are connected with gold (e.g., 1 Kgs 9:28; 10:11; 22:48; 1 Chr 29:4; 2 Chr 8:18; 9:10; Job 22:24; 28:16; Ps 45:9; Isa 13:12).
- qqqq. Genesis 10:29 **sn** *Havilah* is listed with Ham in v. 7.
- rrrr. Genesis 10:30 **tn** *Heb* “as you go.”
- ssss. Genesis 10:32 **tn** Or “separated.”

### Questions to Consider

1. Who is the person you are most proud to be related to?
2. What nation have you never visited but would really like to visit?
3. Ancient Near Eastern genealogies were not to be taken in a strictly literal fashion, for a couple of reasons. Which reasons do you think apply here: A] The descendants listed may indicate direct parent-child relationships? B] They may describe more distant relatives, nations, tribes, or clans?
4. Why might it be important for God’s people to understand the ties between themselves and the various groups around them? How might a genealogy, such as this one, help them do that?



5. Archeology has taught us much about these ancient places and people groups. Which ones can you find on a Bible map?
6. What do you notice about the spread of these people? About their convergence on the land of Canaan?
7. Archaeologists tell us that in Mesopotamia, these communities each developed their own cultic [worship] practices and finally united into political states with their own king, priests, and a temple-tower. What caused these nations to eventually scatter [v.5; cf. 11.1-9]?
8. If someone were to write an account of your life, following the pattern of Genesis 10, how would it read?