

God of Creation | Genesis Ch. 1-11

Session Ten: Genesis 10-11 | Dispersion and Descent

Session 10: Dispersion and Descent (41:20)

“The Table of nations”

- The only way to start gaining familiarity of names and places of Scripture that the original audience would have had is for us to just start doing the work of mapping some of this out.

Order of operation:

- Table of nations
- End of last session with prophetic curse of Canaan's son, spoken by Noah
- Tower of Babel
 - The tower of babel explains how the table of nations came to be
 - The table of nations describes a dispersal of people into different regions... So they aren't told in order in sense of a timeline

JAPHETH (10:2-5)

- Indo-European region
- Linguistic scholars can identify that all Indo-European languages have a common ancestor dating to the stone age, which would fit with the biblical account
- (10:2) The sons of Japheth
 - Gomer
 - Magog
 - Madai- traces to the Medes/ region of the Medo-Persian empire
 - Javan- traces to the Ionians or the Greeks
 - Tubal & Meshech- correspond to the two rivers in Russia- the Tobol (the city of Tobolsk) and the Moskva (The city of Moscow)
 - Tiras- traces back to the Etruscans
- (10:3) Sons of Gomer- relates to the area of Germany
 - Ashkenaz
 - Riphath
 - Togarmah- the Armenians and Turkey
- (10:4) Sons of Javan- traces to the Ionians or the Greeks
 - Tarshish- where Jonah flees- modern day Spain- there is a city in Spain still known as Tartuses
 - Kittim- the island of Cypress
 - Dodanim- also can be translated “Randanim” and believed to be tied to Rhones and the Rhone River

HAM (10:6-20)

- (10:6) The sons of Ham:
 - Cush

- Egypt
 - Put
 - Canaan (youngest- just like Ham was the youngest of Noah's boys)
- (10:7) The Sons of Cush:
 - Seba
 - Havilah
 - Sabtah
 - Raamah
 - Sabteca
- (10:7) The sons of Raamah:
 - Sheba
 - Dedan
- (10:8) Cush fathered Nimrod
 - ... he was the first on earth to be a mighty man...
 - Genesis 6:4
 - The point was that there were righteous who married unrighteous and there was an unholy offspring, so Nimrod was one of the first of these unholy offspring
 - "Mighty man" can be translated as giant or tyrant
 - The beginning of his kingdom was Babel,
 - Babel will become Babylon in the plain of Shinar
 - Babylonia being the Kingdom-
 - 1450 the exodus from Egypt
 - 1400 the conquest of Canaan after the 40 years of wondering in the wilderness
 - 930 BC, the northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms split
 - 721 BC the northern kingdom falls to the kingdom of Assyria
 - Vs. 11 "From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh...."
 - 587 BC Judah falls to Babylon
 - Babylon throughout the bible is an archetype of disobedience, pride, and rebellion
 - These are the major enemies of Israel
- (10:13) Egypt fathered:
 - Ludim
 - Anamim
 - Lehabim
 - Naphtuhim
 - Pathrusim
 - Casluhim: from whom the Philistines came
 - Capthorim
 - (we are reading a list of the major enemies of the nation of Israel)- he is signaling to his original audience: "Hey, you are about to go somewhere with lots of scary people, and this is why they are scary- they are descended from Ham's line.)
- (10:15) Canaan fathered: this is the line cursed by Noah and his prophecy. This list occurs 19 other times throughout the OT. It is the most familiar list of the enemies of Israel as they go in to take over the land of Canaan. Canaan's descendants are the top, most wanted list against the nation of Israel.
 - Sidon
 - Heth

- Jebusites- their city is Jerusalem all the way up until 2 Samuel 5 where the city is at last captured by David. So, for a very long period of time, the most sacred city is inhabited by the most wicked tribe, and it's finally taken by David later in the history of Israel.
- Amorites
- Gergashites
- Hivites
- Arkites
- Sinites
- Arvadites
- Zemarites
- Hamathites
- (10:19) ...the territory of the Canaanites extended from:
 - Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.
- (10:20)
 - These are the descendants of Ham that settled predominantly in the Africa-Canaan region of the world
- Leviticus 18
 - a list of things that God is forbidding his people to do as they enter into the promised land, and it's a pretty shocking list.
 - But it's because it's exactly what's going on in the land they are about to inhabit.
 - *notice many of the last syllables of these tribes are "ites"
 - There is a linguistic connection between the name "Shem" and "Semites"
 - This is the line of promise- the Jews

SHEM (10:21-31)

- (10:21) To Shem also, the father of all the children of:
 - Eber, (-where the term "Hebrew" came from)
 - Japheth
- (10:22) The sons of Shem:
 - Elam
 - Asshur
 - Arpachshad
 - Lud
 - Aram
- (10:23) The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.
- (10:24) Arpachshad fathered Shelah
 - Shelah fathered Eber
- (10:25) To Eber were born two sons: (break in the rhythm)
 - Peleg- "for in his days the earth was divided"- referring to the division of the world at the tower of babel
 - Joktan

(10:32) "These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood."

- You can hear in this verse an echo of the be fruitful and multiply language
- This is a list made up of 70 names total of people, regions, or clans
 - Likewise, we have already seen a genealogy of the unrighteous line who had 7 names in it going back to Adam, and now we saw a genealogy of Seth that had

10 names going back to Adam, and now we see 70- a multiplication of the 7 and the 10 that signify completeness

- Q) Should we take from this that it is an exhaustive list telling who lived where exactly?
 - A) No- he is making a point; he wants you to understand what is going on when Noah speaks his prophetic word over his sons.
 - (9:26) “He also said, Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.”
 - this is affectively fulfilled when Joshua leads Israel into the promised land. Canaan becomes essentially a servant to the people of Israel.
 - (9:27) “May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.”
 - Q) What about Japheth? Canaans are pagans- they are the wicked. But who are Japheth’s descendants if they aren’t Hebrews?
 - A) May it be as if Japheth were an honored guest, enjoying all the wealth of Shem. Japheth is to be invited into the tents of Shem and treated as though he is family.
 - Japheth’s descendants all settled in that Indo-European region.
 - If you were to assemble a map at the time of the writing of the gospel of acts, you would see that when the gospel, preached first to the Jew is then preached to the gentile, it is preached to the descendants of Japheth.
- This is our story. This is the chosen line of righteousness going down century after century, generation after generation and becoming expensive to include those who were once far off now brought near.

TOWER OF BABEL (11:1-9)

- Chronologically, the tower of babel precedes the table of nations- which is reporting how these people were distributed after this story happens.
- (11:3) “Come, let us make....”
 - This is the same language God uses back in the creation story.
 - And then they continue to use that language.... They are taking counsel with one another in the manner that God takes counsel with himself in the original creation account.
 - They were willing to go to the trouble to make bricks- they are determined upon a course and willing to spend a great deal of energy to bring it about.
- (11:4)
 - They want to build a tower and a city.
 - Wordplay- the Hebrew word for “name” is “Shem”
 - Whereas God is jealous for his name and his glory, here we see humans wanting to make their name great
 - This is exactly a description of a ziggurat rather than a tower
 - It looks kind of like a pyramid with stairsteps up the side, so it was less of a tower and more like a stairway to heaven- and that was literally what it was supposed to be- an ascending staircase to reach the heavens
 - Isaiah 14:13-16: It is a description of the words of Lucifer prior to the fall. He wants to ascend to the heavens above the place of God.

- That is what we see here- humans deciding that they are going to self-elevate
 - The city is a representation of self-sufficiency
 - Remember- when Cain is cursed and is told he is going to be a wanderer, he says he will be a city- which is an act of self-sufficiency. It is as if he is saying, “Oh no, I can put down roots if I want.”
 - It’s not that the city building is a bad thing, because as we’ve already talked about, so much of the art and architecture and work we do is human beings doing what they were commanded to do- it’s the cultural mandate of bringing order out of chaos.
 - Q) So why wouldn’t God look with favor upon this particular project?
 - A) Because it’s not about building a building. It’s not about bringing order out of chaos. It’s not about bringing glory to God. It’s about bringing glory to the name of the men involved.
 - The motive is wrong.
- (11:5) Directionally speaking, God comes down to see the tower which of the children of man have built- and it is so small to him.
- (11:6) They are way too able to get together and collaborate.
 - In the first generation, sin was an individual act that was kind of clumsy
 - Now we see the growing sophistication of sin; they are able to unite and figure out ways to sin together
 - The dispersion was a gracious act of God; together they might never come to him, but dispersed in isolation, they might return to God
 - “Babel”- in Babylonian, this means “gate of God,” in Hebrew it means “confusion”
 - God ensures by dispersing them, that they will do what they were told to do; be fruitful and multiply and spread over the earth.
 - His plans will not be thwarted.
 - Just as in Eden we see attempted plans to become like God, but his time it is a corporate plan
 - At this point in human history, all human language had become the language of disobedience.
- Q) What redeeming, partner story do we see to this in the new testament?
 - A) Pentecost
 - You have the people of many different languages who need to hear one message- the gospel.
 - God sends his Spirit down upon the sons and daughters and they emerge speaking in the tongues of the known world, able to communicate the gospel to all who need to hear it
 - It is a reverse action- language intended to unite everyone under a common message because the time has come
- Application
 - Each of us knows what it is to build ourselves into a city of our own self-sufficiency and self-elevation and self-worship
 - Just like them, we are able to do this at great cost- brick by brick
 - We commit to it time and time again.

- You will give all of your time, resources, and devotion to the thing in which you place your identity, so you can bring glory to your name - even your job, family, etc.
- We love to build cities.
- As the people of God, we are called not to build our own habitations; but we are meant to be living stones built together for a habitation of the Lord (1 Peter 2:5)

Overview of Genesis Ch.1-11

- Q) Where did everything come from?
 - A) God is behind all creation.
- Q) Why did God create?
 - A) He created for his glory, which means we now know our purpose.
- Q) What is my purpose?
 - A) Announce the glory of God at every turn.
- Q) How does God deal with sin?
- Q) How does God enter into covenant with his people?
- Q) Can he be trusted?
- Q) Do his covenants depend on our faithfulness?
- God is jealous for his glory to the extent that he will frustrate the efforts of those who would place themselves above him.
- Think how many different decisions you would make if you lived every day in light of the fact that God made all of it so none of it belongs to you, you're just taking care of it for a little while.
 - Think about how differently you would live your life if you acknowledged that you are obligated to God simply because he is your origin and therefore he is your joy to work in all things as unto the lord.
- We talked about how that first creation account, when God says, "let there be light," is actually pointing towards a second creative act- 2 Corinthians 5:17- that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
 - As a new creation in Christ, working to earn God's favor is finished- because Christ grants us rest in the finished work of the cross.
 - So, we have God speaking "it is finished" over the first creative act and we have Jesus Christ speaking "it is finished" over the second creative act, but that's not the last creative act we see in Scripture.
- Revelation 21:1-7
 - "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. **5** And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also, he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." **6** And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. **7** The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."
 - God's final word is to make all things new and pronounce it finished.
 - The God of creation in Genesis 1 is the same God who we find in revelation 21.

