



17 | GENESIS 10-11

JESUS AND THE TOWER OF BABEL

God's plan of redemption includes people from every people group and every part of the world. The confusion of this world can only be cured through salvation in Jesus.

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Call to Worship

Psalm 28:6-7 | I Blessed be the Lord! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. 7 The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

Songs

10,000 Reasons

People Need the Lord

Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken

Shout to the North

Across the Lands

Announcements

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

Introduction

Has God forgotten his promise to send a Savior? Genesis 10 is often referred to as the “**Table of Nations**” because it lists the first ancestors of all the **families and tribes** of the earth. We see in this text that God chooses one man, from the family of **Eber**. The man’s name is Abraham. Since he is from the tribe of Eber, his family name, which is the family of Jesus, becomes known as the “**Hebrews**.” The entire history of the world flows from Genesis 10-11. This is “world history 101.” In all the historical documents, nothing comes close to this record of the genealogy of the world.

FAMILY GENEALOGY

I have a keen interest in **genealogies**. My brother Scott has done much research in our family. On my mom’s side, we are related to the illegitimate grandson of **King James**. My **mother’s family are from Northumberland, England**, who were likely converted under the preaching of John Wesley. We have letters from the 1800s that tell of this time and how they loved the Lord.

My dad’s side is a little more colorful. We are related to the horse thief, **Belle Starr**. And my grandfather, **Charles Cunningham Black** emigrated to the US from Scotland after fighting in World War I. He had the opportunity to box for **Al Capone for \$50 a night**.

All our families are different! So many different people in so many different places ... and they all date back to the families and tribes recorded in the table of nations from Genesis 10–11.

Key thought: God’s plan of redemption includes people from every people group and every part of the world. The confusion of this world can only be cured through salvation in Jesus.

1. THE RISE OF A NEW HUMANITY (10:1-32)

After the flood, humanity all spoke one language, and in their fallen state, they decided to build a kind of paradise and utopia on earth.

Genesis 10:1 | These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
Sons were born to them after the flood.

Where does this new humanity come from? They come from Noah’s three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Here we have a list theologians call the “table of nations”— the **seventy sovereign nations** in the **then-known world**.¹ This incredible account of the nations is unsurpassed in ancient literature, so says one scholar, William Albright.

The tenth chapter of Genesis ... stands absolutely alone in ancient literature, without a remote parallel, even among the Greeks, where we find the closest approach to a distribution of peoples in genealogical framework.... The table of nations remains an astonishingly accurate document.²

JAPHETH, PEOPLES OF THE COASTLANDS

The families of **Japheth** are peoples (seven are identified) **most remote from Palestine**, and most of the nations/places mentioned here are in the Mediterranean islands and Asia Minor.

¹ Victor P. Hamilton, “Genesis,” in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 18.

² William F. Albright, “Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands,” an appended article in Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, reprint, 1946), 30.

These families became the founders of the **Greek** and Scythian (Russian Siberian—**Eastern European**) tribes.³

Genesis 10:2-5 | The sons of Japheth: **Gomer** [Turkey], **Magog** [Ukraine], **Madai** [Iran, i.e. Medes], **Javan** [Greece], **Tubal** [Iberians from Spain], **Meshech** [Georgian Caucasians from Eastern Europe], and **Tiras** [Bulgarians].³ The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.⁴ The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim [Cyprus], and Dodanim.⁵ From these the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations.

Japheth, Noah's youngest son, and his descendants were largely responsible for the **seven people groups** that make up what is now **Eastern Europe** listed below.⁴

- (1) **Gomer** [Turkey and Central Europeans]
 - a. Ashkenaz [Gaul – Germanic tribes, Saxons/British, Scandinavia, as well as France, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, and the Czechs]
 - b. Riphath [Slovakia, Poland, Romania]
 - c. Togarmah [Amenians]
- (2) **Magog** [Ukraine / Southern Russia]
- (3) **Madai** [India & Iran, i.e. Medes]
- (4) **Javan** [Greece and Western Europe]
 - a. Elishah [Greeks, Hellas]
 - b. Tarshish [eastern and southern Spain]
 - c. Kittim [Cyprus]
 - d. Dodanim [Rhodes]
- (5) **Tubal** [Iberians, Portuguese and northern & western Spain]
- (6) **Meshech** [Georgian Caucasians from Eastern Europe], and
- (7) **Tiras** [Bulgarians].

These people groups started out on the coastlands and settled southern Russia.

HAM, PEOPLES OF ADVANCEMENT

Ham has four sons, the most surprising of them being Canaan of Canaanite fame. The Canaanites were the notorious enemies of Israel. They had the great technology of the ancient world. The fourth generation is traced only through Cush in sub-Saharan Africa.

Genesis 10:6-14 | The sons of Ham: **Cush**, **Egypt**, **Put**, and **Canaan**.⁷ The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan.⁸ Cush fathered **Nimrod**; he was the first on earth to be **a mighty man**.⁹ He was a **mighty hunter before the LORD**. Therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD."¹⁰ The beginning of **his kingdom was Babel**, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.¹¹ From that land **he went into Assyria and built Nineveh**, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and¹² Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.¹³ Egypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim,¹⁴ Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom the Philistines came), and Caphtorim.

³ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), Ge 10.

⁴ Kurt Strassner, *Opening up Genesis*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2009), 51.

Advancement in technology. What we see among the peoples and families in this list are areas of great advancement. Here we read of **Egypt**, which at this time was **technological advancement** perhaps **more than any other civilization in ancient history**.⁵ These people invented written communication and the most advanced standards of architecture. We have no idea how some of these peoples engineered their buildings.

- (1) Cush [*Babylonians, Ninevites, Nubians, Arabians, Ethiopians, Sheba*]
- (2) Egypt [*Egyptians, Philistines*]
- (3) Put [*Libya*]
- (4) Canaan [*Phoenicians, Sidonians, Jebusites, Amorites, Hivites*] from Canaan came the *ancient Chinese peoples*. Also, according to modern DNA tests, most modern Israeli people have about half of their DNA from Canaanite descent.

Nimrod, the Ruler of Babylon

Advancement in government. Interesting here is **Nimrod** (10:8–12). So well-known is he that he has established a reputation as a mighty hunter. This refers probably to his military prowess. The cities he founds in Babylonia—**Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh**—are all cities of **unsurpassed advancement** of their day.⁶ He then went into Assyria and **built Nineveh**.

Genesis 10:15-20 | Canaan fathered **Sidon** his firstborn and Heth,¹⁶ and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites,¹⁷ the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites,¹⁸ the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the **clans of the Canaanites** dispersed.¹⁹ And 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.²⁰ These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

Advancement in war. Most of the peoples in this section (10:15–20) are the notorious Canaanite clans with whom Israel **had hostile relationships**. Also here is **Sidon**, another sometimes enemy of Israel.

SHEM, THE PEOPLES OF PROMISE

Shem fathers four sons. This section (10:21–32) is last in this list because it is the **most crucial of the three**. In this section we discover the name *Eber*, the connection of which with “Hebrew” should be obvious. From Eber comes Abraham.⁷

Genesis 10:21-31 | To Shem also, the father of all the children of **Eber**, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born.²² The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur [Assyrians], Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram.²³ The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.²⁴ Arpachshad fathered Shelah; and Shelah fathered Eber.²⁵ To **Eber** were born two sons: the name of the one was **Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided**, and his brother's name was Joktan.²⁶ **Joktan** fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,²⁷ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,²⁸ Obal, Abimael, Sheba,²⁹ Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan.³⁰ The territory in which they lived extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the

⁵ Hamilton, “Genesis,” 18.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

east.⁸ These are the sons of Shem, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

Who are all these people groups? Since Abraham was descended from Shem, Israel felt a special affinity for these peoples. However, **few can be clearly identified**, except to note that many seem to be Aramean or Arabian tribes.⁹ Let's consider the five children of Shem.

- (1) Elam [*Persians*]
- (2) Asshur [*Assyrians*]
- (3) Arpachshad [*Chaldeans* and those of modern *Iraq*; *Joktanites*; this is also the line of Eber, the ancestor of *Abraham and Jesus*, see *Lk 3:36*]
- (4) Lud [*some Arabians*]
- (5) Aram [*Aramean or nations of Syrian and Lebanon*]

"The earth was divided in Peleg's time" (10:25). This is a **clear hint of the tower of Babel story** in which people were divided from each other. The verb *pālaḡ* is used in the Old Testament to describe division into languages. So the Babel event occurred five generations after the Flood.⁹ The nations of the world would be divided by languages. God would work directly through the **descendants of Eber**, namely **Abraham**. It is clear that Shem fathers the people of promise.

Finally, the table then turns to trace the tribes from Peleg's brother **Joktan** (10:26–29), most of whom lived in the Arabian Peninsula. Israel would find ancient blood ties with these 13 tribes of Joktanites in the desert.¹⁰

All Descended from Noah

Genesis 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.

The Bible is clear: **all mankind is descended from Adam through Noah and his three sons**. The teaching that humanity evolved from animals is both scientifically unprovable and **contradicted by God's word**. All humanity is one in origin, descended from Noah and his three sons.¹¹

2. THE REBELLION OF HUMANITY (11:1-9)

Shinar is the land of Babylonia. The tower the people want to build is probably a ziggurat, a seven-staged tower. In addition, they want to build a city. In itself this is not sinful. Nor is it sinful to wish to build a tower that reaches to the heavens. It is their motive and purpose for their own vainglory that makes this sinful and depraved.

THE MOTIVATION FOR REBELLION

We are introduced to the ancient land of Shinar or Babylonia, the mother harlot city of human history. It is here that national human rebellion takes place.

⁸ Gordon J. Wenham, "Genesis," in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 68.

⁹ Allen P. Ross, "Genesis," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 44.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Rousas John Rushdoony, *Commentaries on the Pentateuch: Genesis* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2002), 101.

Genesis 11:1-4 | Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ² And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar [Babylonia] and settled there. ³ And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

The sin comes in the purpose: “so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered.” The concept of making a **“name” means expanding their reputation**. They want to erect an edifice that will memorialize them.¹²

Chapter 11 takes place in the plains of Shinar. We were introduced to this place in chapter 10 as the **location of Babylon** and the domain of **Nimrod**, the mighty hunter (*cf* 10:8-10). The name Nimrod actually means **“we shall rebel.”**¹³ This is exactly what happened. What happened in the plains of Shinar is yet another story illustrating **the depravity of man.**

THE SIN OF BABEL

The motive: **their own glory.** The sin of Babel was not in coming together and building a city. That was what they were supposed to be doing. The sin surrounds their **motive for building the tower of Babel.**¹⁴ The root cause for the dispersal of the nations was the building of the tower of Babel **for their own glory.**

The man: **Nimrod.** This is a project which, seemingly, was **under the sponsorship of Nimrod**, the great rebel. This is Nimrod’s temple. Some have even suggested that it is here that Nimrod would receive worship **as a god.**¹⁵

The model: **godless, self-sufficient.** We can see how Babylon in Scripture is the **model** for the rebellious world system. This **idolatrous city of Babel** was to lead the “one world” so that no one would have to depend on God. This is the city of **self-sufficiency**. It represents self-promotion on the societal level. The elements of the story are timelessly characteristic of the spirit of the world. The project is typically grandiose; men describe it excitedly to one another as if it were the ultimate achievement—very much as modern man glories in his space projects.¹⁶

The masses: **government control takes the place of God.** Babel was the world’s **first federation of “united nations,”** and it epitomized the last federation of nations at the end of time, for **the human history of worldwide rebellion begins and ends at Babel** (Rev 17–18).¹⁷ The world even now is pushing toward that **one world control** of the individual where the state takes the place of God.

THE INVESTIGATION OF REBELLION

Genesis 11:5-6 | And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶ And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and

¹² Hamilton, “Genesis,” 19.

¹³ Stelman Smith and Judson Cornwall, *The Exhaustive Dictionary of Bible Names* (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos, 1998), 185.

¹⁴ Nathan Carter, “New Humanity”, *Genesis* (Chicago: Immanuel Baptist Church, December 9, 2007), sermon manuscript.

¹⁵ John Phillips, *Exploring Genesis: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Ge 11:1–9.

¹⁶ Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 118.

¹⁷ Phillips, *Exploring Genesis*, Ge 11:1–9.

they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.

God's transcendence. God's investigation into this little "temple" is almost humorous. Here the satire peaks. The tower's top was in the sky where God ostensibly dwelt. But this was Yahweh, the infinitely transcendent and incomparably transcendent God of the whole Old Testament, of whom Isaiah declared that he is transcendent.¹⁸

Isaiah 40:22 | It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in.

Man's insignificance. Can puny man build anything to contend with the infinite transcendent God of the universe? This "Yahweh must draw near, not because he is near-sighted, but because he dwells at such tremendous height and **their work is so tiny.**"¹⁹ The narrative captures the **simultaneous absurdity and gravity** of it.²⁰

Matthew 16:26 | What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

Nothing can compare to knowing Christ. **Everything else is refuse and garbage compared to knowing Christ** (Phil 3:8). There is no comparison, since God has placed eternity in man's heart, and **only God can satisfy** the eternal cravings of the human heart (Ecc 3:11).

THE LIMITATION OF REBELLION

In mercy God restrains humanity's depravity by confusing their languages.

Genesis 11:7-9 | Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

The **city is called Babel or "gate of God."** With a play of words Scripture superimposes the truer label *bālal* ('he confused').²¹ Babel is *ballaled*, or confused.

What happens here is God protecting the people from apostasy. **Pentecost began the reversal of this protection**, but Zephaniah speaks of that final day when God reverses Babel.

Zephaniah 3:9 | Then I will purify the speech of all people, so that everyone can worship the LORD together.

Babel was not a "gate of God" at all but a gate to godlessness. In the Bible this city increasingly came to symbolize the godless society, with its pretensions (Gen 11), persecutions (Dan 3), pleasures, sins and superstitions (Isa 47:8–13), its riches and eventual doom (Rev 17, 18).²²

The stairway to heaven worked in a sense. "Come, let us go down" (11:7). But he was not impressed. Again, we see God's judgment towards sin. He confuses their languages and causes them to not be able to understand each other so that they scattered from there. How exactly it

¹⁸ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 172.

¹⁹ Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 149.

²⁰ Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 118.

²¹ Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 119.

²² Ibid.

happened we do not know.²³ “It may be,” as one person has suggested, “that they simply awakened to the world as a foreign movie – without subtitles.”²⁴

THE TERMINATION OF REBELLION

God would lift the confusion beginning at Pentecost, described in Acts 2. The inauguration of the church opened a new chapter of the story, in the articulating of one gospel in many tongues.²⁵

Acts 2:1-8 | When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?

Now, the motive of the new humanity in Christ would be to glorify God with one language—praise! With one spirit—the Holy Spirit! In one family—the family of God! The walls of hostility within the nations are all brought down (Eph 2:14).

3. REDEMPTION FOR HUMANITY (11:10-32)

Humanity’s ability to delve into rebellion as one corporate unit is limited now that God has divided the languages and nations. But there is hope. We see in **Babylon the city of man**. But God is sending someone into the world who will build **the city of God**.

Man is constantly trying to **put his hope on this earth**, in the cities of man, but the city that represents the rebellion of seeking a utopia on earth is **Babylon**. Nimrod founds Babylon and Nineveh among other great ancient cities, but it is Babylon that becomes the most iconic. Indeed, in the book of revelation, we see Babylon used as a symbol of all the rebellious cities of this world.

AN IMPORTANT PERSON

Jesus was a Hebrew. His ancestor that gives us the name Hebrew is Eber. Moses now goes back through the genealogy of Shem because he wants to demonstrate Abraham’s line, which Matthew 2 and Luke 3 tell us point to the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Genesis 11:10-26 | These are the generations of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood.¹¹ And Shem lived after he fathered Arpachshad 500 years and had other sons and daughters.¹² When Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Shelah.¹³ And Arpachshad lived after he fathered Shelah 403 years and had other sons and daughters.¹⁴ When Shelah had lived 30 years, he fathered **Eber**.¹⁵ And Shelah lived after he fathered Eber 403 years and had other sons and daughters.¹⁶ When Eber had lived 34 years, he

²³ Nathan Carter, “New Humanity”, *Genesis* (Chicago: Immanuel Baptist Church, December 9, 2007), sermon manuscript.

²⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 173.

²⁵ Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 119.

fathered Peleg.¹⁷ And Eber lived after he fathered Peleg 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸ When Peleg had lived 30 years, he fathered Reu.¹⁹ And Peleg lived after he fathered Reu 209 years and had other sons and daughters.²⁰ When Reu had lived 32 years, he fathered Serug.²¹ And Reu lived after he fathered Serug 207 years and had other sons and daughters.²² When Serug had lived 30 years, he fathered Nahor.²³ And Serug lived after he fathered Nahor 200 years and had other sons and daughters.²⁴ When Nahor had lived 29 years, he fathered Terah.²⁵ And Nahor lived after he fathered Terah 119 years and had other sons and daughters.²⁶ When Terah had lived 70 years, **he fathered Abram**, Nahor, and Haran.

The chosen line is now mapped out taking us from the ancient world before the flood to the time of the patriarchs. Here we start seeing the **seed by which the Promised Messiah** would be born.

From the line of Eber, and later Abraham would come the King of kings and the Lord of lords triumphantly rides into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey as people laid down branches and cloaks before him shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” **The Lord Jesus Christ had come to begin the end of the city of man** and the reign of the prince of the power of the air. Jesus’ victory would not come in military power, but a sacrificial death in the stead of his people.

Jesus in fact did this. We call this the “already, but not yet” time of history. Jesus has come, and he said his kingdom is here, but it is not yet in its fullness. That will come when our Lord returns!

AN IDOLATROUS PRACTICE

Remember, Abram is not a believer when he’s called. He has to be presented with God’s claims and his covenant. It is only then that “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” **Before this, Abram is a pagan.** So we see that the genealogy is further examined. Abram is from Ur of the Chaldeans in modern day Iraq.

Genesis 11:27-29 | Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot.²⁸ Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans.²⁹ And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram’s wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor’s wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah.

We see that following the confusion of languages at the tower of Babel, **wave after wave of warriors, shepherds, and builders left the plain of Mesopotamia for the rims of the world.** As they spread out, they pushed one another further west and east through their commerce, adventure, conquest, and appetites. And as they went, **they took their Babylonian hearts with them.** Later on Joshua, the general of Israel, said this of Abraham.

Joshua 24:2 | Joshua said to all the people, ...Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.

As Joshua and history records, the scattering was by and large a **scattering of idolatrous pagans**, regardless of whether they were descendants of Shem or Ham or Japheth.²⁶

²⁶ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 175.

Out of this group, God calls Abram who took as a wife Sarai. It is through the family of Abraham that the promised Seed of Genesis 3 will be born.

AN UNSPOKEN PROMISE

The passage ends with the **sad silence of childlessness**. The whole Abraham cycle is an eloquent witness to the desperate desire for children in primitive society (*cf Psa 127, 128*). Without children the man had no one to **perpetuate his name** and the wife enjoyed little prestige and much frustration, for she had no alternative career to motherhood. Further, **in old age**, childless couples had no children to **care for them**, and after death, none to carry out the **funeral rites** to demonstrate their honor in death.²⁷

Genesis 11:30-32 | Now **Sarai was barren; she had no child.**³¹ Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and **they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan**, but when they came to Haran, they settled there.³² The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.

Here we see the **most impossible obstacle** existed in the genealogical sources of the promised seed; fulfillment of the promise would demand the Lord's supernatural intervention.²⁸ It leaves us yearning for a Savior. God will promise Abram and Sarai a child that will be the progenic ancestor of the Messiah. In the Old Testament we are left waiting, hoping, and almost pleading for God to send Jesus. But first he must demonstrate his faithfulness to Abraham first. Here is an old man already when God calls him in Genesis 12. He's 75. Now if someone who was 75 were to father a child it would be a miracle. God waits a while before he answer this promise of his so that Abraham is almost a hundred and Sarai 90 when they are told they are expecting.

Conclusion

When we look at the table of nations and the confusion God brought to the human race, let's remember our differences are accentuated. Men are different than women, and even our children are so different from one another. Isn't it true?

In my family each child is so different. My son William in high school loved his traveling football team. We loved traveling with him. My son Evan is into theater, and we enjoy seeing the acting from Willy Wonka to Music Man. My girls are so different. One's a nurse. The other a police officer. My youngest daughter loves the color pink and long walks with dad! The stories they all tell!

And we in this church are a family of so many different families on the earth. In our small church we not only have different countries, but different continents. We have people in our church from North and South America, from Europe, from Asia, Africa and India. We have people from coastlands and islands, from the mountains and the plains. We are an extremely diverse group. But what brings us together is the one gospel. The Spirit has sealed our hearts. The confusion of Babel has been removed. The chaos of our sin has been forgiven. And the salvation of Jesus Christ has been gifted to everyone who believes.

Benediction

Revelation 1:5-6 - To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

²⁷ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1987), 273.

²⁸ Meredith G. Kline, *Genesis: A New Commentary*, ed. Jonathan G. Kline (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2016), 54.