



Genesis 10:1-11:9

THE NATIONS ACCORDING TO GOD

The segmented genealogies of the Table [Gen 10] present the interconnectedness of all people. They are all descendants of Adam and Noah and have dignity as bearers of God’s image... On the other hand, the Tower of Babel narrative [Gen 11] shows the need for division. Depraved humanity are united in their spiritual endeavor to find, through technology, existential meaning apart from God... Unless God intervenes and divides them by confounding their speech, nothing can stop human beings in their overweening pride and their desire for autonomy. They will drive over the boundaries the Creator has established... They want to penetrate the strictly divine and become divine themselves. What drives them is hubris... Thus, society apart from God is totally unstable. On the one hand, people earnestly seek existential meaning and security in their collective unity. On the other hand, they have an insatiable appetite to consume what others possess. Because of this tension, the United Nations is doomed to frustration and failure in its quest for peace without the Prince of Peace.

—Bruce K. Waltke

The world longs for peace. We long for peace. Peace in our world. Peace in our relationships. Peace in our hearts. But, unfortunately, we often seek this peace apart from God. Genesis 10-11 remind us that the unity of the nations (and satisfaction in our own soul) will only be achieved under the authority of God and His divine blessing.

THE TABLE OF NATIONS (Genesis 10:1-32)

Genesis 10 is unique in all of ancient literature. It is a “horizontal genealogy” showing the origin of all the nations of the earth from the three sons of Noah—Japheth, Ham, and Shem.

- **We are all connected together in one _____.**
- **We are all separated into various lands, languages, families, and _____ (cf. Deut. 32:8-9; Acts 17:26-27).**
 - The sons of Japheth disperse into the distant coastlands.
 - The sons of Ham disperse into the Middle East and Africa.
 - The sons of Shem disperse into the Middle East and Arabia.
 - The total number of nations listed in Genesis 10 is _____ (cf. 46:27; Exod. 1:5; Num. 11:16; Deut. 10:22; Luke 10:1).

THE TYRANT OF THE PAST (Genesis 10:8-12)

In the midst of the Table of Nations, there is a brief interruption to focus on one particular individual. His name is _____.

It may very well be questioned whether a man should ever preach on a chapter such as this.

—H. C. Leupold

Nations. Heb., *goyim*, “Gentiles, people groups, non-Hebrews.”

Genesis 10 stands absolutely alone in ancient literature, without a remote parallel, even among the Greeks... The Table of Nations remains an astonishingly accurate document. —William F. Albright

Japheth’s descendants spread out toward Europe, Armenia, Russia, India, & Greece. Interestingly, the Indo-European language family is spoken by close to 50% of the world population. Though widespread, linguists note that the Indo-European languages share a common descent.

The Table indicates that God is the Creator of all peoples. Supportive of this is the numerical structure of the map’s nations, totally seventy members in all. [Japheth, 14; Ham, 30; Shem, 26].

—Kenneth A. Mathews

- **His Name:** Nimrod = _____
- **His Power:** He began to be a “mighty one” on the earth.
- **His Fame:** “Like Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord.”
- **His Kingdom:** He started the kingdoms of Babylon and Assyria.

THE TOWER OF BABEL (Genesis 11:1-9)

- **A** The whole earth had one language
 - B** They settled there
 - C** They said to one another
 - D** *Come now, let us make bricks (Heb., nilbenah)*
 - E** To build a city and a tower
 - F** **But the Lord came down...**
 - E** To see the city and the tower
 - D** *Come now, let us confuse (Heb., nabelah)*
 - C** They did not understand one another
 - B** The Lord scattered them from there
 - A** The Lord confused the language of the whole earth
- **The great danger of humanistic pride.**
 - One _____
 - One _____
 - One _____

- **The gracious dispersion of God’s judgment.**
 - God sees the danger of their arrogant, anti-God alliance.
 - God confuses their language.
 - God scatters them into nations around the world.

THE TRUTH FOR OUR TIME

- God has a heart for all the nations of the earth (cf. Rev. 5:9-10)!
- All the things that we deeply long for in life—security, significance, love, joy, peace, unity—will only be found in Jesus Christ.

The name itself, Nimrod, “we will rebel,” points to some violent resistance to God. It is so characteristic that it can only have been given by his contemporaries, and thus have become a proper name.
—Keil & Delitzsch

He was powerful in hunting and in wickedness before the Lord, for he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them, “Depart from the judgment of the Lord, and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod!”
—Jerusalem Targum (AD 150)

The Tower of Babel was religiously oriented and a prototype for the ziggurats. ...One such ziggurat in Babylon was a marvel of colored, glazed tiles, standing over 297 ft. high. Its name, Etemenanki, means “the building of the foundation platform of heaven and earth.” It was associated with the temple of Marduk, Esagila, “the building whose top is (in heaven).”
—John J. Davis

This action of God is both punishment and prevention. It prevents men from going too far in their pride.
—Helmer Ringgren

The tower becomes a symbol of man’s independence from God. It is humanism in its full flower.
—Ray Pritchard

The Babylonians understood Babel to mean “the gate of god.” The Hebrews liked to suppose it to mean “mixed up and confused.”
—Gordon J. Wenham

Babel is a fitting name for our post-modern world of pluralism and deconstructionism which declares the autonomy of text and reader and sets meaning afloat in a sea of uncertainty.
—Jacques Ellul