

Genesis 045

The Problem with the Nations

Genesis 10:21-32

August 1, 2021

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Well, good morning, everybody. Happy August to you. Hope you are enjoying the cool weather.

Let's take our Bibles this morning and open them to Genesis 10, looking this morning at Genesis 10:21-31, Lord willing. The title of our message this morning is 'The Problem with the Nations.'

We are continuing on in our verse-by-verse study through the Book of Genesis. We are still in Genesis 1-11, but we are making progress. Amen?

We have seen Creation in Genesis 1-2: what the world was like before sin entered the picture, God's original design. Then from there, we have seen the Fall, what went wrong. In Genesis 3-5, there is a description of the Fall.

Yet in the midst of the Fall, there is hope. There is hope of a coming Savior. That Savior is announced for the first time in Genesis 3:15. Keep that verse in mind because we are going to allude back to it today.

But then God intervened in judgment in His creation in the days of the Flood. That is event number three in Genesis 6-9.

Then in the post-Flood world, there is the fourth and final event: national dispersion.

Genesis 10 is a description of the nations. Genesis 11 is a description of the Tower of Babel. We will be getting to that, Lord willing, next week.

Then when you get beyond the Tower of Babel, there is a genealogy. This is a very important genealogy. It goes from Shem to Terah, who was Abraham's father. So that is why in the table of nations, Shem, although he is the firstborn, is mentioned last.

He is mentioned last because he forms a very nice link into Genesis 11 where that genealogy from Shem to Terah is given. Shem is a very, very big deal because it is through Shem that the Messiah that we read about in Genesis 3:15 is going to be born.

What we have going on here in Genesis 11 is the sinful origin of the nations. Right now we just have nations. But what is wrong with these nations? Why can't God use any of these nations to mediate His redemptive purposes to the earth? Why does He have to start a special nation called the nation of Israel?

Well, when you understand the link between Genesis 11, the cause, and the nations that came forth, the result, you start to see an explanation for this, because the nations

themselves are contaminated, because the nations themselves owe their existence and beginning to what happened at Babel. Whatever happened at Babel was exported into all these nations.

This is why God, in Genesis 12, has to start a new nation. How do you reach this conclusion? You reach this conclusion by understanding that Genesis 11, which caused Genesis 10, happened before Genesis 12.

That is heavy stuff right there, isn't it? Genesis 11 comes before Genesis 12. Do you guys all agree with me on that?

You cannot understand the calling of Abraham, who then was named Abram and the linkage between Shem's line and Terah, Abraham's father, unless you understand the contamination of the nations that took place at the Tower of Babel.

That is the big picture. We believe that Genesis 11 is the cause of the problem. Genesis 10 is the result. See, right now we are just given this list of nations. We do not know what is wrong with these nations, but we are going to see an explanation of that, Lord willing, beginning next week.

Genesis 10 thus far is just an example or a teaching on the nations emanating from Noah's three sons. The birth order is Shem, Ham, and Japheth, but Shem is going to be mentioned last in this table, even though Shem is the firstborn, because he is the one the Holy Spirit wants us to keep our eyes on.

We have to keep our eyes on him because the Messianic promise is not coming through Ham's line, it is not coming through Japheth's line; but it is coming through Shem's line.

So Shem is mentioned last, and that, in our mind, is supposed to link us to the genealogy at the end of Genesis 11 that links Shem to Terah, Abraham's father.

In Genesis 10 we have seen an introduction to the table of Nations in Genesis 10:1. Then we saw Japheth's line in Genesis 10:2-5. (You see there on the map where Japheth's descendants settled: Europe and, from Europe, ultimately North America.) We went through Japheth's various sons that are mentioned there in Genesis 10:2.

Then we had a switch, and we began to examine the lineage of the second of Noah's sons, a man named Ham, in Genesis 10:6-20. There are Ham's four sons. We looked at those and their children and their grandchildren.

One of them was named Nimrod, and he caused a lot of trouble. He was actually a prefigurement of the coming Antichrist. Some of Ham's descendants settled up there in the land of Canaan, and we talked about that.

Essentially that is where Ham's descendants went: Africa. One of those sons settled in the land of Canaan, and we talked through the intricacies of that.

Now we are switching subjects, and we are moving to Shem's line, which is described in Genesis 10:21-31, which we are going to look at, Lord willing, this morning.

If you look there on the map, you see where Shem's descendants went essentially into that Middle Eastern territory, that grayish area there, according to the map that sometimes we call the Middle East.

Here's another map basically showing you where Shem's descendants settled in comparison to Ham's descendants and Japheth's descendants. Now from the name Shem, we get the word 'Semite.' So from Shem came the Semitic people groups of the earth.

Who would those be? The Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Arabs, and ultimately the Hebrews. It is through Shem's line that the nation of Israel is going to be born. In fact, when you look very carefully at Genesis 10:21, which is the beginning of Shem's line, you see the origin of the word 'Hebrews.' Where did that name, 'Hebrews' come from? It came from 'Eber,' which is mentioned there in Genesis 10:21.

Notice what Genesis 10:21 says,

"Also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber,..." (Genesis 10:21).

Arnold Fruchtenbaum says this in his very good commentary on the Book of Genesis.

He says,

"The line of Shem begins in verse 2: And unto Shem, the father of all the children of Eber. Eber in Hebrew is 'Ever' and is the source of the Hebrew word for 'Hebrew,'... To be the father of the Hebrews is the main significance of the line of Shem."

So, from Shem are going to come the Hebrews. Now that would make sense because God said that the Messianic line is going to continue through the line of Shem. So we know that it has to be one of those nations through Shem's line that the Messiah is going to come from.

Who is God going to use? The Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians? No, He cannot and He will not, because all of those other nations owe their tainted origin to the Tower of Babel. God has to get His purposes across and bring His Messiah to the earth. He has to start a new nation, independent of what happened at the Tower of Babel.

That becomes the significance of the nation of Israel. This is why the nation of Israel in the Bible, started through the patriarch Abraham, is such a big deal. It is the only nation in the history of the world that owes its origins not to the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 because it was started after the Tower of Babel, in Genesis 12.

God formed that very special nation to reach the other nations through the birth of His Messiah. That is why you start to see the origin of 'Hebrew' there in Genesis 10:21, through Shem's line.

If you have been following us through the Book of Genesis, you start to see a tension building here. We know there is a Messiah coming. We know that as early as the Fall of man, because the Messiah's coming is mentioned in Genesis 3:15, where God said,

"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman,..." (Genesis 3:15).

He is speaking to Satan.

*"...And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel." (Genesis 3:15).*

Aha! There is One coming into the world who will take Satan's head and crush it. The issue is, "Well, through which nation is the Messiah going to come? Maybe He is going to come through the Egyptians. Maybe He is going to come through the Persians. Maybe He is going to come through the Assyrians. Maybe, later in biblical history, He is going to come through the Romans."

The answer to those questions is no, no, no, no, no. Why? Because all of those other nations have been contaminated by their origin, which goes back to the Tower of Babel. God consequently has and must start a new nation.

The nation of Israel is the only nation that was started independently of the effects of the Tower of Babel. This is why God is so upset with Israel when her desire is to be just like everyone else. Remember, Israel wanted a king in 1 Samuel 8.

"Well, why do you want a king?"

"Everybody else has a king."

God says, "Well, who cares what everybody else thinks? Who cares what the neighbors are doing? Who cares what the Joneses are doing? I have created you as a nation to be separate and distinct from the other nations."

This is why God, later on in biblical history, when Israel became idolatrous just like all the other nations around her, had to send her into a time of seventy-year discipline to rid her of that sin of idolatry.

You see, Israel only had the ability through God to reach everyone else when she was different from everyone else. When she became just like everyone else, she lost her distinctiveness.

Now I understand that we as the church are not the nation of Israel, but we are a work of God and the same principle holds true with us. We only have the ability to reach a lost and dying world when we look different than the lost and dying world we are trying to reach.

The moment the church adopts the same values as the world and starts to look exactly like the world is the moment the church loses its influence to reach the world it is supposed to be reaching.

This is why James 4:4 calls the New Testament church adulterous, because she had become just like the surrounding world. Your ability and effectiveness as a Christian is not from saying weird things and dressing funny and doing obnoxious things. Your effectiveness as a Christian comes from the fact that your family members and your

coworkers see in your lifestyle a different value system. You are obviously marching to the beat of a different drummer.

Somebody tells a dirty joke in the office around the water cooler, and you do not laugh. "Gosh, there is something different about her," or, "Something different about him. I wonder what it is."

That is the platform or the pulpit that the Lord is now giving you to reach all of these lost people in the office. If your value system is exactly like theirs, there is really no incentive for them to listen to anything you have to say. Worldliness causes the church to lose its effectiveness.

It is the same principle with the nation of Israel. She had this Messianic mission to mediate God's blessings to the entire world coming from the line of Shem. And yet, when she became just like everybody else, she lost her ability to mediate these blessings.

If you have been tracking with us through the Book of Genesis, we know that a Messiah is coming. We know that Messiah came through the line of Seth according to Genesis 4:25, through Noah according to Genesis 5:29—but Noah has three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Through which of those three sons is the Messiah going to come?

The answer is right there in Genesis 9:26. The Messianic lineage is narrowed at that point because it says,

"...Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem;..." (Genesis 9:26).

Aha! The Messiah is going to come from the line of Shem. He is going to come from those Semitic people groups of the earth.

Now, as you continue on through the Book of Genesis, we will eventually come to Genesis 12:3, where we learn the Messiah is going to come from Abraham, then Isaac, and then Jacob.

Aha! He is going to be Jewish. He is going to be Hebrew.

By the time you get to the end of the Book of Genesis, Genesis 49:10 tells us—within Israel there are twelve tribes—exactly what tribe the Messiah is going to come from, the tribe of Judah.

Then when you factor in prophecies in Micah 5:2, you are actually going to know what city within the tribe of Judah He is going to be born in. All of this history is narrated for the benefit of the Hebrew race, who had been in slavery for four hundred years and had their history wiped out. They had their history revised by the Egyptians.

Now that they are out of Egypt, this book, as penned through Moses, is going to be given to that group in its totality, reminding them of who they are in God. "Don't be just like everyone else because you have a different calling on your life. Your job is not to be just like the Egyptians or the Persians or the Assyrians."

The same principle holds true for the church. Your job as a church, your job as a Christian is not to be just like everyone else. In fact, God wants to make you different from anyone else so that you can have a platform or a pulpit to reach everyone else.

If I just become like everybody else in terms of my value system, then I lose my effectiveness and authority as a disciple of Jesus Christ. You cannot reach the world by becoming like the world. It is your separateness from the world that gives you the authority to speak to the world.

This is why Satan is always trying to push the Christian into worldliness and worldly values, because he knows it will neutralize—it will destroy—the effectiveness of your evangelistic efforts as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

It disturbs me greatly to see church after church after church adopting the philosophy of the world. How should we govern the church? The church growth consultants and gurus say, "Well, let's figure out how they govern in management, the secular world. Let's read a bunch of books by Stephen Covey and Abraham Maslow, and let's bring the world's philosophies into the church so the church can be managed right."

Well, how do you get the church to grow?

"Well, let's see how they make the organizations grow in the world."

They come up with a business plan. They come up with a marketing mix. They come up with something that everyone wants to hear.

Well, how should we counsel people in the church?

"Well, how do they counsel people in the secular world?"

They buy into Freud, Skinner, and Jung. "Let's counsel people based on humanistic psychological principles, because that is what works in the world."

Eventually you become so worldly that there is almost no distinction between your value system and the world's. Your average unbeliever out there says, "Well, why should I give any credence to Christianity? It is just like what I hear in a secular classroom or at a management consultant business seminar."

So there is something to be said for being separate from the world—that was the nation of Israel. She had a special calling to bring Jesus the Messiah through the line of Shem into the world.

Look, if you could, again at Genesis 10:21.

"Also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber,..." (Genesis 10:21).

That is the origin of the word 'Hebrew,' as we have explained.

"...and the older brother of Japheth,..." (Genesis 10:21).

So if Shem is the oldest, why is he being mentioned last? Because he is the link in the chain genealogically that hooks us into the next chapter. That is why he is mentioned last, even though he is the firstborn.

Then it says there in Genesis 10:21,

"...children were born" (Genesis 10:21).

To him were born Shem's line, and we know that the Messiah is going to come through Shem's line, and thus the nation of Israel is going to come through Shem's line. As you look at Genesis 10:22, you actually see who Shem's immediate sons were.

Look at Genesis 10:22.

"The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram" (Genesis 10:22).

Five sons of Shem. Now, here is someone very interesting and the one to keep your eye on as you go through the Bible. It is Elam.

Who is Elam? From Elam come the Persians. How do we know that? Because Daniel had a vision and what he saw was the province of Elam—the same name is here—and he says that within Elam there was a capital city named Susa. Susa was the capital city of Persia.

From Elam came forth the Persians.

Daniel 8:2 says,

"I looked in the vision, and while I was looking I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam;..." (Daniel 8:2).

That is our guy, the descendant of Shem.

"...and I looked in the vision and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal" (Daniel 8:2).

So, from Elam comes Susa, the capital of Persia. Persia is a big deal in the Bible. Persia was the empire that followed Babylon, the second Empire that came to power during the future seventy years of Babylonian captivity.

Persia would be the chest and arms of silver, according to the dream and the statue that we learn about in Daniel 2. Daniel 7 tells us that Persia is the bear, the second empire that God would raise up during this difficult time of the Babylonian captivity.

Persia is huge because God put a calling on the Persian Empire to be the good guy and to help Israel get out of the captivity. In fact, there is an archeological record of what is called the Cyrus Cylinder. That is Cyrus' boasts as he, the leader of Persia around 539 BC, overthrew the Babylonians.

You say, "Well, why is Cyrus the Persian such a big deal?" Because God called out his name two hundred years before it happened. In fact, liberals are so upset about this—they think that these prophecies in the Book of Isaiah couldn't have been written by Isaiah, because how could Isaiah, two hundred years in advance, know that this Persian leader was going to be a man named Cyrus? But in your Bible, what you will discover is Cyrus' name was called out two hundred years before it happened. Just to show you the mind boggling nature of this, it would be like God calling out Ronald Reagan two hundred years before he showed up and saying he is going to be the president of the United States—and, boom, it happens two hundred years later.

That is the equivalent of what is happening here with this man, Cyrus the Persian. If you look at Isaiah 44:28, you will see Cyrus's name mentioned.

It says,

"It is I who says of Cyrus,..." (Isaiah 44:28).

This is two hundred years before the man ever existed.

"...He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire." And he declares of Jerusalem, "She will be built," and of the temple, "Your foundation will be laid."" (Isaiah 44:28).

Isaiah 45:1, the next chapter, continues on with the same prophecies.

"Thus says the Lord to Cyrus His anointed, Whom I have taken by the right hand, To subdue nations before him And to loose the loins of kings; To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:" (Isaiah 45:1).

"Persians, you are the good guys. You are going to lead Israel out of the seventy-year captivity after you conquer Babylon—after the head of gold moves into the chest and arms of silver. And not only am I revealing all of this ahead of time, I am going to tell you exactly who it is that is going to lead the parade, so to speak."

Thus we have the Cyrus Cylinder, a fulfillment of that prophecy, where Cyrus boasted of how easy it was for him to conquer Babylon. "Yeah, Cyrus, the reason it was easy is because God put you in that position two hundred years before you ever existed."

As a Christian, you do not have to spend time with sweaty palms, nervous about the direction of the world. God knows exactly what is going on. And the truth of the matter is, God has put certain people into places of authority for certain seasons. These are people you may not have even voted for.

Dare I even say it—maybe I shouldn't even say it here in Texas—God can use a Democrat. (Oh, did I say that?) He could use someone who is totally hostile to your value system as a Christian.

How do you know that? Because Cyrus did not know God. How do I know Cyrus did not know God? Because the Bible says so. Isaiah 45:4 says of Cyrus,

"...Though you have not known Me." (Isaiah 45:4).

Yet what does the Bible teach? It teaches that the king's heart is like water in a watercourse. Proverbs 21:1 says that just as a watercourse directs water, God directs the heart of a king and can steer it any direction He wants.

Rather than being upset and fearful over the condition of the United States government, maybe we ought to go to prayer and say to ourselves, "Well, God, You allowed all of these things and You are in control, and I pray that Your perfect will would be executed, whatever it is, in the current administration."

Doesn't the Bible tell us frequently to intercede for those in positions of power? Doesn't 1 Timothy 2:1-4 tell us to make entreaties and petitions for those that are in authority?

"Why should I do it?"

Because God's in control.

God was totally and completely in control of the Persian Empire. In fact, in Biblical history, the three returns from the seventy-captivity—return one in Ezra 1-6, return two in Ezra 7-10, return three in the Book of Nehemiah—were prophesied and came to pass.

If you are really wanting to fill out your biblical timeline, right at the end of Ezra 6 but before Ezra 7 starts is the whole story of the Book of Esther. This is a fascinating time in Israeli history where the Jews went back into the land and they began to rebuild their temple, and it was under the Persian Empire, Cyrus being the first king in this parade, if I can use that expression, that God used.

Why did the Jews come back into the land under the Persians? Why was it so easy for the Persians to overthrow the Babylonians? Because God is in control of history.

I will tell you something else that is very interesting. Persia, coming from Elam, continued on as an empire right on down to modern times. In 1935, something very interesting happened: Persia's name was changed to Iran.

Persia, or Iran, still an ally of that which would later be the newborn state of Israel would continue on as an ally of the United States and the reborn state of Israel in 1948.

But, my goodness, Ezekiel saw something in the sixth century. He saw Persia—that is mentioned in the Bible; you will find it in Ezekiel 38:5—turning against the nation of Israel. That probably was a prophecy that made no sense to Ezekiel because Persia was one of the good guys.

Yet Ezekiel says, "No, what I saw in the vision"—Ezekiel 38:5—"in this end time invasion is that Persia"—and we have looked at all of these other names, believe it or not, in our study in Genesis 10, because these names are all found in Genesis 10; the only one we haven't looked at is Elam, leading to Persia—"Persia would turn against Israel."

Pastor Chuck Smith, a pastor I appreciate very much, would do tours over to Israel during 1978, 1977, 1976, and he would tell the Israeli tour guides while he was there, "You had better keep your eye on Iran because it is going to turn against you."

"Of course—ridiculous."

Who would think such a thing could happen?

Ezekiel's prophecy of Persia, a good guy who led Israel out of the captivity, turning against Israel would seem crazy. Yet that is what Ezekiel saw. The interesting thing about Bible prophecy is that if you give enough time history catches up to what God said.

In 1979, in our own lifetime, there was a revolution in Iran. You might remember the long gas lines in the days of Jimmy Carter and the days of the Shah, when the Shah was deposed and replaced by the Ayatollah.

In 1979, Persia turned. She became a Shiite Islamic theocracy that now has a theology in place to blot out the nation of Israel. 1979 would be the key year when everything shifted. Now Ezekiel's prophecies do not look so crazy, do they?

Pastor Chuck started getting phone calls from Israelis post-1979 asking him, "Well, what is going to happen next?" Because now he had credibility to speak.

This is how your Bible reveals things before they happen. We are privileged because we are basically living in the time period when many of the Biblical predictions are reaching their fulfillment. Do elections matter? Does change in government matter? It sure does.

At the top of the screen, you see what Iran was like prior to the deposing of the Shah. It was a fairly progressive country. Women could wear dresses and shorts and drive cars and get education. And look at what it is today. Look at the burqas. Look at the masks. Look at the mind numbing slavishness to an Islamic theocracy that is mandated or you are killed. Things change very quickly. Things change very, very fast.

1979 is when this change happened. You do not have to look far to see it—see what they teach Iranian children in the textbooks. Abraham Lincoln put it this way. He said,

"The philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next."¹

Yoram Ettinger, a Jewish individual trying to convince Congress of the hostility of Iran, simply said, "Look at what they are teaching the kids."

"Iranian school textbooks such as 'The Qur'an and Life' (Grade 12, p. 125) prepare Iranian children for the Ayatollahs' sublime goal: the apocalyptic,

¹ Beliles, Mark A. and McDowell, Stephen K. *America's Providential History*, 95.

horrifying, millenarian, military battle against the USA and other 'arrogant oppressors of the world,' which are ostensibly led by 'idolatrous devils.'"²

Boy, the days of Janet and Mark—which is what I read to learn how to read and spell—those days are long gone and Iranian kids are being radicalized at the earliest age possible.

"While the 'savior'—the infallible, immortal, divinely ordained and eventual global leader, the Mahdi—has not surfaced yet, Iranian children are taught that the battle is already raging throughout the world, awaiting their sacrifice. School textbooks of Western democracies are the most authentic reflection of peoples' values and worldview."³

You show me any nation in the history of the world, and I will show you what their values are based on what they teach their children. We wonder why the United States of America is running off the rails. Why is the country becoming humanistic? It is just a matter of looking at the textbooks and seeing what values are transmitted.

Yoram Ettinger says,

"School textbooks of tyrannies are the most authentic reflection of the nature and mission of the regimes. Iranian school textbooks reflect the strategy and tactics of the Ayatollahs, much more authentically than speeches, interviews, diplomatic statements and conversations conducted by President Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif."⁴

Forget what the politician says, Yoram Ettinger says, that is not how you figure out where a country is headed—you look at what they are teaching the kids.

Here at Sugar Land Bible Church, I am very proud of the fact that we have a vibrant children's ministry. In fact, my wife—literally all day; it is not an exaggeration—yesterday was preparing for her class what she is teaching right now, covering things that these kids will never hear in a public school classroom.

I said, "What are you studying over there?"

She said, "Well, I am studying why there is no missing link in the chain of mammals called bats."

Is that what you were studying yesterday?

Gee, I was looking at all of that vertebrae, and a lot of it is over my head.

² Ettinger, Yoram. "Iran's School Textbooks—Can Congress Afford to Ignore It?," online: <http://theettingerreport.com/Iran-and-MidEast/Iran-s-School-Textbooks-%E2%80%93-can-Congress-afford-to-i.aspx>, May 29, 2015, accessed 30 May 2015.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

"I am trying to communicate to these kids that there is no missing link." She spends all day going over that, as do our other teachers here, because they know that this is information that these kids are never going to get in any kind of setting, especially the public schools.

This is what Yoram Ettinger is saying. This is an outworking of what Ezekiel said would happen. This is going to change, and you are seeing it today right down to what they teach in the classroom.

In fact, you are seeing Persia allied with Turkey and Russia—exactly what Ezekiel said—to invade the land of Israel.

Ron Rhodes says,

"The unique alignment of nations described in Ezekiel 38 and 39 has never occurred in the past, but it is occurring now."⁵

It is not just watching these nations change that is the interesting thing, it is watching how they all get along with each other and are in cahoots with each other—because the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

The signs of Christmas are not quite present since it's August, but give it a few months and you will hear about Santa Claus and Christmas tree lights and department stores and Christmas gifts and Christmas songs on the radio. Then you are going to say to yourself, "Thanksgiving is coming," because Thanksgiving occurs earlier on the calendar than Christmas, right?

That is the season that we are living in. The signs of the Tribulation, which are rapidly coming, are signs that the Rapture of the church is coming even faster. You had better know Jesus personally, given the time period that we are entering, and you had better be in a position to communicate these things to the lost and dying, because God has ordained your very birth and your existence for this season.

We say to God, "Boy, the world is just getting too tough, Lord. Why couldn't I have been born in another era?"

My mom used to tell me that. She said, "You were born old, the way you complain about everything. You talk like you are"—she told me this when I was a teenager—"a seventy or eighty-year old man."

I have always wanted to be born, to be frank with you, in a different generation. But the truth of the matter is, God needs you in this generation. He needs you right now. It is like Esther 4:14: for such a time as this.

Hey, help may come from someone else, but you were raised up for this very hour. This is how we need to look at this time period in which we find ourselves.

⁵ Rhodes, Ron. *Northern Storm Rising: Russia, Iran, and the Emerging End-Times Military Coalitions against Israel*, 90.

Another son of Shem is Asshur. Asshur was the ancestor of the Assyrians.

Jonathan Sarfati tells us,

"Indeed, when the English word 'Assyria' is used, it is the Hebrew Asshur ('ashshûr). These Semitic Assyrians replace the Hamitic Assyrians of 10:11. Assyria later became a powerful empire noted for its cruelty."⁶

Why were the Assyrians so cruel? Did you know that it was the Assyrians that invented the crucifixion? Rome popularized it, but it was invented by the Assyrians.

When you understand this, you understand why when God commissioned Jonah to preach to Nineveh, the key city of Assyria, Jonah went the exact opposite direction and why Jonah is angry at God at the end of his book. "I knew, God, that You were going to do this. I know that You are a God of grace and love and mercy. And I just knew that You were going to pour out Your grace on undeserving people—how could you reach those people!"

He was not understanding that all of us, Jonah included, would have nothing from God if He hadn't first extended His grace to us. It is interesting that being in grace so long we forget that we were saved by grace, and that the people out there that we detest need the exact same grace.

It was Nimrod, you remember from our prior studies, who, following the confounding of the language, was pushed up into Assyria, building his empire not just in Babel but in Assyria as well. This is the biblical background for why the Assyrians were so wicked. Why did God use the Assyrians to disperse the ten kingdoms in the North in 722 BC? Because they were wicked to the bone. And yet God loved them and wanted a relationship with them.

You come to Genesis 10:23 and you come to this man, Aram. Aram is interesting because Aram is going to have four sons. Don't panic. I am not going to talk through every single son. But notice, if you will, Genesis 10:23.

I am just bringing the ones to your attention that are highly significant in terms of interpreting the rest of the Bible.

It says,

"The sons of Aram were Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash" (Genesis 10:23).

Do you recognize this one here at the top, Uz? Isn't there a book of the Bible that takes place in the land of Uz? The Book of Job.

Job 1:1 says,

⁶ Sarfati, Jonathan D. *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1-11*, 651.

"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil" (Job 1:1).

Did you know that the Book of Job is the oldest book of the Bible in terms of the date when it was written? It does not record the oldest events—the Book of Genesis does that—but the Book of Job will predate the Book of Genesis by at least six centuries.

Five to six centuries before Moses penned the Book of Genesis, the Book of Job was already on the books. It was the very first book that God inspired. What does the Book of Job deal with? It deals with something that bugs every single one of us: suffering.

"God, if You are a God of righteousness, and, God, if You are a God of love, what sense can we make of this suffering that I am experiencing and that those around me are experiencing?" That is a question that plagues people from cradle to grave.

That one really bothers us. "So-and-so loves Jesus—and look at how badly they are being treated; look at how badly they are being persecuted."

"Lord, I am trying to live for You and I have everybody coming against me. What is the deal, Lord?"

And the Lord says, "Well, that is why the Book of Job is the first book I wrote. I knew you would struggle with this. I knew this theodicy of human suffering would be on your minds perpetually."

So, six centuries before the Book of Genesis was penned, there it is in the Book of Job—you want to know about suffering and the sovereignty of God and why the righteous suffer in this life, read the Book of Job.

The Book of Job takes place in Uz. Uz was one of the four sons of Aram.

Then there is this son here of Shem, a man named Arpachshad. Look, if you will, at Genesis 10:24.

"Arpachshad became the father of Shelah; and Shelah became the father of Eber" (Genesis 10:24).

So we have Arpachshad, then Sheila, and then Eber. From Eber is going to come the Hebrews.

Then you go to Genesis 10:25 and you learn that Eber, who is a generation removed from Arpachshad, has two sons. Well, who are they? I am glad you asked. Look at Genesis 10:25.

"Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan" (Genesis 10:25).

First son is Peleg. Peleg's very name in Scripture means 'division,' because something took place in his generation where the earth itself was divided. Now there is a lot of very

interesting discussion about continental drift, which is the fact that you can put the continents together like a jigsaw puzzle.

It kind of looks like they all fit in one landmass at one point, and then there was a division. We have the different continents today, and a lot of people spill a lot of ink trying to link continental drift to Genesis 10:25.

To be honest with you, I think it is a very fascinating conversation. I would love to know what divided the continents if in fact they were divided. It just has nothing to do with the passage, because the three rules of real estate are location, location, location; and the three rules of Bible study are context, context, context.

The interesting scientific question about continental drift is foreign to the context here. What is at stake here is the division of the language that is going to happen in the next chapter. If you look at Genesis 10:5, you will see the phrase each "according to his language."

If you look at Genesis 10:20, you see "according to their languages." If you look at Genesis 10:31, "according to their languages." That is the division that is being spoken of here, not the division of the continents.

In Peleg's day, the earth was divided. I think what it means is that the language was divided; God divided the language into multiple languages, preventing the builders at the Tower of Babel from cooperating with each other, because God is against world government.

Listen to the politicians today. They can hardly get through a speech without saying 'government,' 'global government,' 'new world order.' In fact, my friends in Australia tell me that in a section of Australia—they sent me the news article—the government official there put them again under a severe lockdown and basically said, "Get used to it. It is the new World order."

Man in his lostness has always thought if he could put together a new world order that would fix the world's problems, and you see in Genesis 11 that God was against it. That should shape your view of globalism, one worldism. You do not want one worldism unless the right ruler is ruling, and that will not happen until Jesus rules Planet Earth from Jerusalem on David's throne. Until that happens, I am not interested in being part of a new world order.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum says,

"...the name of the one was Peleg. For in his days was the earth divided. The name Peleg means 'to divide.' Some identify this event with the continental divide or the continental drift. However, contextually, it more likely refers to the language division of the Tower of Babel judgment. This means that the confusion of tongues occurred during Peleg's lifetime."⁷

⁷ Fruchtenbaum, Arnold. *The Book of Genesis*, 219.

Henry Morris, in a lengthy quote, says the same thing.⁸ Leupold, in his commentary on Genesis, says the same thing.⁹ Even my friend John Calvin got this one right. See, Calvin was living in the 16th century, and he wasn't really concerned with all of these scientific kind of issues that we think about today.

And he says this,

"For after he [Moses] has mentioned Arphaxad as the third of the sons of Shem, he then names Peleg, his great grandson, in whose day the languages were divided."¹⁰

The second son of Eber was a man named Joktan, and Joktan has 13 sons according to Genesis 10:26-29, which I am not even going to make an attempt to read. That is your outside reading. You go down to Genesis 10:30 and it gives you the territory of the sons of Joktan.

It says in Genesis 10:30,

"Now their settlement extended from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the hill country of the east" (Genesis 10:30).

Boy, so much intricate geography mentioned here. You get the feeling that this actually happened. If Google Maps were available in this time period, you get the feeling you could get out the Google Maps and see exactly where these places are. That is the mind-numbing detail in your Bible.

You look at Genesis 10:31 and it says,

"These are the sons of Shem, according to the families, according to the languages, by their lands, according to their nations" (Genesis 10:31).

Something happened that divided the earth tribally by family, divided the earth linguistically by language, divided the earth territorially by lands, and created the modern nations. What was that event? You get the answer in Genesis 11. Genesis 11 is the cause; Genesis 10 is the result.

You come to the very end of the chapter, the conclusion, and you have a chapter summary.

It says,

"These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood" (Genesis 10:32).

⁸ Morris, Henry. *The Genesis Record*, 260-61

⁹ Leupold, H.C. *Exposition of Genesis*, 1:378

¹⁰ Calvin, John. *Genesis*, 324.

What we have seen here—believe it or not—is seventy nations, nations that are key to Israel's past as she interacts with them in Israel's future. You would have no knowledge of where these people groups came from without Genesis 10.

In a book about beginnings, there is the beginning of the universe, beginning of life, beginning of man, beginning of marriage, beginning of evil, beginning of clothing. Why did you guys wear clothes today? It is hot. You could have come in here without clothes on. Why do you do that? Genesis tells you why.

Where did religion come from? Where did salvation come from? Why are there languages? Where did government come from? Where did Israel come from? You would expect, in a book of beginnings, to have some explanation of these nations. And you get that in Genesis 10.

Do you see how clueless the unsaved world is to all of these subjects because they do not start with God's Word? They come up with a bunch of silly philosophies to explain where all these things came from.

Yet you, as a Bible reader, understand the answers to life's most perplexing questions because you gave your heart and mind and thoughts to a book that you believe God wrote. Do you see how far ahead of the game you are in the secular society in which you live?

Genesis 10:32 is very clear that this lineage came from Noah after the flood.

So, from Adam came Noah. From Noah came Noah's three sons eventually: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Keep your eyes on Shem, because it is through Shem that the Messianic lineage is going to be extended. The common ancestor is Noah, linking back to the common ancestor Adam.

"Yeah, but, man, where are we going to put our pre-Adamic race?"

Well, you are not going to put the pre-Adamic race anywhere because there is no such thing. You are going to follow what God says.

Acts 17:26 says,

"and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation," (Acts 17:26).

Through all of this, the earth was repopulated through Noah's three sons after the Flood. In this section of the Book of Genesis, National Division, we have just finished the first major part of it, the Table of Nations.

Yet, why didn't God use the Persians or the Egyptians or the Assyrians or the Babylonians to bring His Son into the world? There was something going on at the Tower of Babel called the mother-child cult—or religious system—something that Nimrod and his wife, Semiramis, and their son Tammuz were practicing. That became a religion.

When God confounded the language, all of the builders at Babel took part of that system into their respective people groups, ethnicities, nations, and languages. They just changed the names around a little bit.

"We are not going to worship the mother and the son Semiramis and Tammuz over here in Rome. We'll just call them Venus and Cupid."

"Over here in Egypt, we will just call them Osiris and Horus."

There are examples all over the world today of the remains of this religious system that goes back to the Tower of Babel. That religious system, the worship of the mother and the son, is a satanic counterfeit of the true gospel. Every single nation was contaminated by it.

So, God says, "You know what? I am going to start anew." You know, God is really good at starting fresh things. "I am going to start with a brand new nation that is uncontaminated by this idolatry, and I will pick the least likely guy I can find, Abraham, and I will tell him to walk by faith and separate himself from what he knew. And I will tell him to walk by faith, because he is going to walk into a land that he does not know anything about, and I am going to start from scratch. That is how My Messiah is going to come to the earth."

God is starting over. After the flood, God started over. After the Tower of Babel, God started over. Do you know who else God wants to start over with? He wants to start over with you. That is why when a person trusts in Christ for salvation, the Bible says they become a new creature. New creature, new creation. For the old things have passed, the new things have come (2 Corinthians 5:17).

There is such an emphasis on newness in Christianity because that is God's character. In fact, what He wants to do is communicate the gospel of His Son—God the Son, Jesus Christ. He wants people to understand that Jesus died on a cross 2,000 years ago, not because He had a generic perspective in mind for humanity, but He died on the cross because He was thinking about you as a person.

Think about that. As Jesus was dying on the cross, He was thinking about you as an individual. He was thinking about me. Christianity is individual. Christianity is personal.

God has no grandchildren. I cannot live off the faith of my parents and their parents. I have to have my own faith in Christ. I have to become His new work, His new child.

And you become God's child by understanding this through a ministry that the Spirit does in the world called conviction. Then, as a lost human being comes under that conviction, they exercise their own faith in what Jesus has done.

If you are looking to do good works, quite frankly, that is the only work God is going to accept. He will not accept our good works. What He will accept is the good work His Son did for us 2,000 years ago. You become a Christian that way.

It is not some kind of multi-tiered, multi-layered process—the world of religion says that. The world of Gnosticism—boy, you look at the Gnostics in the first century, and you look at all of the layers and levels people had to go through to attain spirituality.

Christianity is so simple. So, our exhortation for people that are here in the building or listening online or listening via archive after the fact is, God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His convicting ministry, until the day of judgment, continues to go out to the whole world. Our exhortation, because it has eternal consequences, is to follow through with that conviction that people are under and trust in the Savior.

That is the gospel. That is the best news that God ever gave man. And it is the only news which can save a lost soul. Wouldn't it be great in a book of new beginnings to receive the ultimate new beginning from God, which is salvation itself?

If anyone has questions about it, I am available after the service to talk. But it is not a matter of walking an aisle, praying a prayer, joining a church, filling out a card, giving money, joining a denomination, or trying harder. It is a matter of trusting in what Jesus did for us. He did something for us—as we have celebrated this morning at the Lord's Table—that we could not do for ourselves.

We trust in that, and we receive what He has done as a free gift.