

## Meet Your Ancestors

HBC 8/9/20

Genesis 10:1-32

**Genesis 10** is never the source of favorite memory verses. There are **no commands** in the chapter. Nevertheless, its role in the Bible is profound for current events. Several important questions are answered here, along with the companion chapter 11. *Where did the “races” of people come from? How was the earth repopulated after the flood? Where did the variety of languages come from?* It was all set in motion between the flood and the time of Abraham.

### I. Overview (1)

Genesis 10:1: *Now these are the records of the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah; and sons were born to them after the flood.*

The three sons of Noah are listed in the order **Shem, Ham, and Japheth**, their birth order. But when the actual genealogies are listed in 10-11, they are switched to a different order: **Japheth, Ham and Shem**. Shem is placed last because his is the line that becomes the focal point. His is the line of Messiah, and his is the line of the Jews and of Christ.

Only **sons** are mentioned in the genealogy. It's not sexist, it's because of the culture which passes the family name and birthright through the firstborn son in most cases.

All this was the outworking of the sovereignty of God. Paul described it in the broadest terms in his evangelistic message on Mars Hill in Athens. God was not only aware of all this; He **superintended the outcome**.

Acts 17:24-26: *“The **God who made the world and all things in it**, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since **He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things**; [CLICK] 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, . . .”*

Intermingled with the explanation of where people were scattered, God explains **why**. 11:1-9 is an interlude that explains how this scattering was accomplished through the confusion of languages.

There are **about 250 nations** in the world. There are something like **7000 languages** spoken in the world today. There are **no** different **colors** of people. The only thing that determines “color” of skin is how much of a pigment called **melanin** a person has. We are all shades of the same color. The amount of melanin your body makes depends on your genes.

## II. The Japheth Branch (2-5)

*Genesis 10:2-5: The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras. The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah. The sons of Javan were Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim. From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.*

Tracing the names of the people mentioned here and the histories of peoples around the world, we can say that generally speaking these people went into **Europe and Asia**. This is most of our ancestors.

Notice how **specific** this is. Notice how **precise** it is. Notice also that this assumes you have also read the following chapter, because it also refers to **everyone according to his language**. Notice also that the Bible distinguishes people by **land, languages, families** and **nations**. Skin color is not a biblical basis for distinction between people groups. And **race** is not a word or concept you will find in the Bible.

## III. The Ham Branch (6-20)

*Genesis 10:6-20: The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan. The sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD." The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. Mizraim became the father of Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim and Pathrusim and Casluhim (from which came the Philistines) and Caph-torim. Canaan became the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanite were spread abroad. The territory of the Canaanite extended from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; as you go toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, by their nations.*

Again, from history and connecting the names of these people to things we know around the world, we can generalize that these people moved into **Egypt, Africa and Canaan**. Most interpreters believe **Cush** was the progenitor of the **Ethiopians**, **Mizraim** was the progenitor of the **Egyptians** and **Put** was the progenitor of the **Libyans** and the peoples of **Africa**. **Canaan**, of course, was the father of the **Canaanites**. Most believe that **Nimrod**, the son of Cush, was the powerful leader behind the building of **Babel and its tower**.

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#### IV. The Shem Branch (21-31)

Genesis 10:21-31: *Also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, and the older brother of Japheth, children were born. The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram. The sons of Aram were Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash. Arpachshad became the father of Shelah; and Shelah became the father of Eber. 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. Joktan became the father of Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah and Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah and Obal and Abimael and Sheba and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan. Now their settlement extended from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the hill country of the east. These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, according to their nations.*

This group centers in **Asia** and the Middle East, and becomes the focal point for tracing the line of the Messiah. The term **Semite** refers to descendants of Shem. The Jews are one of the Semitic peoples. Shem's genealogy is mentioned **again in 11:10-26** in the portion of it which leads to Abraham, who becomes the main character as of chapter 12.

Genesis 10:25: *And 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.*

I believe that **in his days the earth was divided** refers to the division of people at the Tower of Babel. There's another theory, though, which is worth telling you about. Some believe this refers to the physical division of the continents.

#### V. Summary (32)

Genesis 10:32: *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.*

Where did the "races" of people come from? The answer to that question is that it is an **invalid question**. There is **no such thing as races** of people. There is one race. The idea of various distinct **races** came along many centuries after Christ. It's a man-made **and FALSE** distinction.

At the end of the flood, there were only 8 people alive in the whole world. Every person alive today descends from those eight people. The Bible tells us where the generations after Noah and his family went to live. The important lessons for us to learn from this chapter are 1) There is really only one race of people, not many different races, and 2) God knows each person individually and He is in control of nations and their boundaries.

Do you believe that? It's part of having a Christian worldview. The Bible celebrates that in heaven there will be people from every line of descent from Adam and Noah.

Revelation 7:9: *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from **every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;*

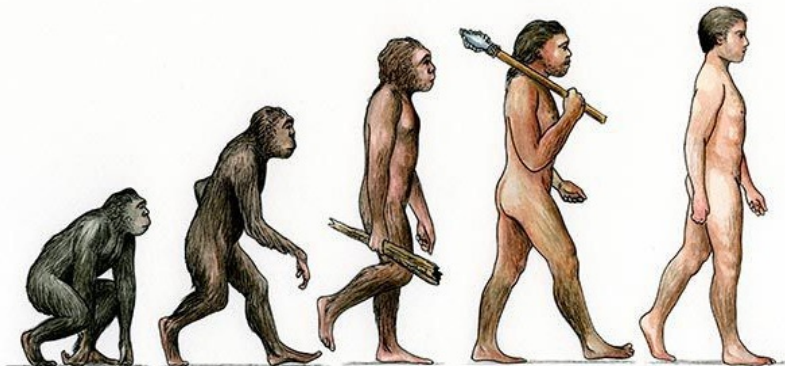
Are you going to be part of that group standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb? The only way is to be **clothed in white robes**, which represent the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

We are one people, created by God. We are one people, redeemed by Christ. The solution to racism begins with properly understanding the design of God in creation, and in the gospel. We shoot ourselves in the foot for effectively leading people toward gospel solutions when we allow ourselves to be sucked in to using **non-Christian** and, often, **anti-Christian** terminology such as "races of people."

Here is food for thought, which we will build upon next time. The title of Charles Darwin's famous book is *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. But do you know the **full** title?

*On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection  
or*

Did you ever look carefully at the classic drawing of the myth of human evolution? Did you notice that as the images move from crouching to standing erect, that they also move **from black to white**? Do you think that's merely a coincidence? Food for thought.



Acts 17:26: *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.*