**Just another list of names?** April 10, 16

**Genesis 10**

**Read the chapter**

How many of you began to zone out as I read through this chapter?

You wouldn’t be alone if you wondered why God chose to include this chapter in the Bible.

Dr. Leupold wrote this about Genesis 10: *It may very well be questioned whether a man should ever preach on a chapter such as this.* \*Stephen Cole, The Roots of the Nations.

But on the other hand, Dr. James Boice wrote: *[This] chapter is surely one of the most interesting and important in the entire Word of God.* \*Genesis, p.337.

Question:

**As you go to get a cup of coffee, talk with another person as to which one of the two you agree with.**

Feedback:

How many you are with Dr. Leupold? How many with Dr. Boice?

As you might have guessed, I’m with Dr. Boice!

Otherwise I’d be calling the worship team up to lead us in the singing of our closing songs! :)

Genesis 10 is the most ancient record we have regarding the origin of the nations.

William Albright said that Genesis 10, *stands absolutely alone in ancient literature, without a remote parallel…[and is] an astonishingly accurate document.*

\*Analytical Concordance to the Bible, p.30

Genesis 10 is not a genealogy like Genesis 4-5, which traces lineage from father to son. I hope you saw this as I read – look again at verse 2-4.

If you add up the number of names in this chapter you get to the number 70.

In the Bible the number **70** often represents completeness.

There were 70 elders selected by Moses.

The Sanhedrin had 70 members.

Jesus chose 70 disciples to preach the gospel - Luke 10:1.

These are the 70 original founders of the nations of the world.

The point of listing their names is that God wanted to impress upon us that he built the nations of the world from one man and his family.

Whenever you read the Bible the first question to ask is not, “How does this passage apply to me?” The first question must always be, "How does this passage apply to its original audience?"

Once you have answered that question, then you are in a place to better understand how the text connects to your life.

So… how did Genesis 10 apply to its original audience?

Moses was the human author.

He lived about 1500 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Moses was used by God to fulfill the promise that God had made to Abraham - that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan.

For 430 years Abraham’s family had lived in Egypt.

They had originally come as invited guests only later to be enslaved in order to build the great cities of Egypt.

But when the time was right God found Moses in the back corner of a desert and used him to liberate Abraham’s family from Egypt.

Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament in order to teach Abraham’s family, (1) who God was; (2) who they were, and (3) what it meant for them to live in relationship with God.

In that period of time people believed that humanity was descended from the gods. It is interesting, isn’t it, that when you fast forward 3500 years, Western culture has flipped the opposite way and now believes human beings, have not descended from the gods, but from a primordial soup.

Regardless of the generation in which they live, God wants his people to know who they are, and where they’ve come from. We are created by God in his image and we are descendants of Adam and Noah.

I had a close friend who was adopted. Even though he had a loving family there was something in him that just had to know – where had he come from; and what was his ancestry. I think such a longing is shared by all humans – we want to know; we need to know where we’ve come from.

God answers that question for us in Genesis 10.

We all have a common ancestor- Noah.

We are all cousins, because our lineage comes from one of Noah’s three sons.

Do you know what this means?

Humanity really is one extended family.

This theme is incredibly central to the story of the Bible.

If a person doesn’t know who they are, then they won’t know how to live.

Part of God’s great story of rescue includes letting us know who he had made us to be and to whom we belong.

Now let’s begin to connect this chapter to our lives.

We’ve already considered this truth in earlier teachings, but let me remind you of it again. God has and he continues to be... active on this earth in order to bring about his will. That’s why, **when** he taught his disciples to pray, Jesus taught them to say, *“your will be done…on earth as it is in heaven.”*

So what has been the will of God for human history?

To redeem, not just the family of Abraham, but all the nations of the earth.

In the Old Testament era, God was particularly present with and guided the individuals of the family line through whom his Messiah, Jesus, would be born; the One who would save mankind and destroy the work of Satan.

In the New Testament era the Lord’s will has been to announce the gospel of Jesus to all the nations of the world.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:14: *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations…*

Just before he ascended into heaven, Jesus one last time reminded his followers to take his gospel into all the world.

God has always cared for the nations of the world.

He wants everyone to have the opportunity to come to repentance.

And his will to save will ultimately be realized in a way that will leave all in awe.

The apostle John was enabled by God to see far into the future, to the moment when this present age ends and the time of the new heaven and the new earth begins. This is what John saw: *And there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb...* *And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’ Revelation 7:9-10*

This is why Jesus would have his followers think and act globally.

The mission of God is global.

There was a significant clue given by Jesus as to when this age would end and the new one would begin. It’s revealed at the end of Matthew 24:14:

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then...the end will come.*

The end will come - Jesus assured us of that.

Our God and Savior will physically and visibly return to earth, for his coronation... but only when his gospel has been preached in the whole world.

Here’s a second thing.

There is another truth in Genesis 10 that I’ve mentioned to you before.

But since we are confronted with it again, we need to speak to it again.

Genesis 10 reminds us that the book of Genesis is an historical, not an allegorical, nor a mythical book. “once upon a time.”

The 70 names in this chapter are the names of real people.

Some of these names we’ve heard.

But many of them are unknown to us.

That was not the case with Moses’ original audience did.

All of these names were real people who lived real lives.

Let me remind you one more time why this is so important.

Jesus, the Savior of the world, was not parachuted into human history.

He had a genealogy.

Look at Luke 3:23-38.

Now look at verses 35-46.

Jesus’ ancestry in the gospel of Luke was traced back through… Shem to Noah and all the way back to Adam.

Did you notice that the genealogy of Jesus recorded in Luke 3 matches the names recorded in Genesis 10?

Luke 3:35

Noah> Shem> Arphaxad> Cainan> Shelah> Eber> Peleg>

Genesis 10:1, 22-25

Noah> Shem> Arphaxad> Cainan> Shelah> Eber> Peleg>

If the book of Genesis is allegorical; then so is the New Testament which asserts that Jesus is a descendant of Noah. But it goes even further.

\* If Jesus’ family line is a hoax, then anything else he claimed to be (Second Adam, Son of Man, Savior of the world); as well as any other claims made about him by others, is now seriously in doubt.

Let’s push a little harder on this.

\* If Adam was not a real person; then the New Testament claim that Jesus was the second Adam means nothing. (1 Corinthians 15:45; Romans 5:12-21)

\* How can we trust anything God says, if what he claims to be historical, isn’t?

But the fact is – the book of Genesis is an historical book, which tells the amazing story of who the Creator is, who we are, and what God has done in history to undo the disaster caused by our rebellion.

The story of the Bible is one story and we’re meant to connect the various parts.

Let me show you what I mean

When the apostle Paul visited Athens and was given the opportunity to speak with the philosophers of that city, what he spoke of on that particular day was built upon the foundation of the book of Genesis, including Genesis 10.

Look at Acts 17:25-26.

***From one man God made the nations...***

Who was that one man Paul referred to?

It was Noah.

And through Noah’s three sons, God made the nations.

That is what Genesis 10 details - the beginning of the nations…

It is true that a lot has happened since that day; but Genesis 10 details how it started.

***...that they should inhabit the whole earth..***

In Genesis 1:28, God told Adam and Eve to “fill the earth.”

Genesis 10:32 confirms that after the flood this happened: *“From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood.”*

God’s intent for humankind has always been that we would fill the earth and steward it and its creatures on his behalf.

***...and he marked out their appointed times in history...***

Psalm 139:16 says regarding a person’s life - *“all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”*

God determines when each person is born, where they will be born, who their parents will be and when they will die.

Each of us is given an appointed time in history - an allotted number of days; which is a gift from God; an opportunity to make a difference in this world, wherever we live.

But with that opportunity comes accountability. Each of us will answer to God for what we have done with our lives during the time we had.

What is true for us individually; is true for us collectively.

Individuals belong to families, and it is families that make up nations.

According to the Bible there is an appointed time given by God to every nation. Every nation has its moment (those years given by God) to make a mark on this world; whether for good or for bad.

There is something else God determines.

***...and the boundaries of their lands.***

Genesis 10 mentions different regions - see v.5, 10-11, 18b-19, 30.

Every nation of the world speaks of certain geographical territory as its own.

But the Bible teaches in Psalm 24:1 that *“the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”*

What a nation has, has been given to it from God, as a trust.

Why does God do this? Paul explained to the Athenian philosophers:

*“God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being.” Acts 17:27-28*

God’s desire always is… that a person and a people would seek after him; and discover that he is the Creator who sustains their life; the Savior who is active to bring them into relationship with him, and who wants to involve them in spending their life on what really matters – not the building of their own kingdoms, but the advance of his.

This is the true history of the world.

This explains where history is headed and who is directing it.

Our God and Savior is the Sovereign One.

Let’s acknowledge and celebrate this in song.

**Song: Sovereign**

What is true for a person and a nation is also true for local churches.

Do you realize that churches also have their appointed times in a particular place?

That is the emphasis of Revelation 2-3.

This is why I often speak to you of being “all in.”

I don’t want to play church.

I don’t want to stagnate.

I’m don’t want to put in time.

I don’t want to plateau or drift.

And I’m confident neither do you.

We have been given a trust.

Jesus told a parable in Matthew 25 which includes an incredible blessing.

To a servant who was found faithful the master said: ***Well done. You have been faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share in your master’s happiness.*** Verse 23

Let’s allow our God’s greatness to be seen in us and through us.

Prayer

**Song: How Great is our God**

And with their time; there is also accountability.

Humans are all from the same family.

Any emphasis on racial and cultural differences that divides distracts from this truth and undermines God’s will.

Keith Krell says, “Every human has the same nature, breathes the same air, lives on the same earth and owes their life to the same God.”

Doesn’t this bring a different perspective on the current tension that exists between Muslim and Christian nations - we are all of the same family.

This also speaks to those who are entering Canada as refugees - of whom many are different than us. But these refugees, according to Genesis 10 are extended family members.

2. Genesis 10 reminds us that God has a heart for the world and for its diverse peoples. Which means God would have us cultivate a heart for the world.

How do we do that?

God deliberately created humanity with the capacity for diversity.

This truth makes the long history of racial prejudice all the more disheartening.

And the answer to correct such fallacy is found at the cross of Jesus where every person stands on equal ground - no Jew nor Gentile; nor rich nor poor; no man nor woman.

2. Chapter 10 reminds us that it was God’s plan to bless the human race by dividing the family of man by languages, locations and leaders.

Something else we are to appreciate about Genesis 10 is its age. This chapter records the names of the sons, grandsons, and great-grandson of Noah - names that would have otherwise been unknown, but which are part of your family tree.

3. these stories are of real people and of how God interacted with them. If the bible is a book of myths, then why would we expect that god would deal with us in the same way.

[**http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/why-genesis-10-is-in-bible-part-1.html**](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/why-genesis-10-is-in-bible-part-1.html)

## Tuesday, February 14, 2012

### [An Overview Of The Names In Genesis 10 - Genesis 10 Bible Commentary](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/overview-of-names-in-genesis-10-genesis.html)



If you read Genesis 10 without doing some research, you will be bored. The treasures in the chapter are buried deep and you must do a little work to uncover them.

You probably don't recognize many of the names listed in Genesis 10, and it's not really your fault either. As time has progressed, more and more of the names in Genesis 10 have fallen into obscurity. Numerous linguistic barriers now exist, including Hebrew and Greek— and even if you were familiar with both of those languages, you would still run into problems. Why? Because there are also historical barriers that get in the way of understanding Genesis 10.

Josephus, a Jewish historian from around the time of Christ, explains this historical barrier:

After this [the destruction of the Tower of Babel] they [the descendants of Noah] were dispersed abroad, on account of their languages, and went out by colonies every where; and each colony took possession of that land which they light upon, and unto which God led them; so that the whole continent was filled with them, both the inland and the maritime countries. There were some also who passed over the sea in ships, and inhabited the islands: and some of those nations do still retain the denominations which were given them by their first founders; but some have lost them also, and some have only admitted certain changes in them, that they might be the more intelligible to the inhabitants. And they were the Greeks who became the authors of such mutations. For when in after-ages they grew potent, they claimed to themselves the glory of antiquity; giving names to the nations that sounded well (in Greek) that they might be better understood among themselves; and setting agreeable forms of government over them, as if they were a people derived from themselves.[1](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/overview-of-names-in-genesis-10-genesis.html#fong1)

Josephus tells us who we can "blame" for putting up a historical barrier and making Genesis 10 hard to understand: the Greeks. When they spread their culture throughout the world, they renamed many of the places they came across, thus erasing their original names (which appear in Genesis 10) from today's history books.

Josephus goes on to discuss many of the people in Genesis 10. In general, we can conclude that the descendants of Japheth spread northward and westward, taking possession of Europe. The descendants of Ham spread westward and southward, taking Africa. Finally, the descendants of Shem spread eastward, taking possession of Asia.

Since this post is only an overview of the names in Genesis 10, I don't intend to discuss *all* the names in the chapter. I do, however, want to mention a few them: Javan, Cush, Nimrod, Egypt, Canaan, and Peleg.

Javan was the father of the Greeks,[2](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/overview-of-names-in-genesis-10-genesis.html#fong2) a people who have had an incredible amount of influence on Western culture.

Cush was the father of the Ethiopians. From him descended Nimrod and Egypt. Nimrod founded many familiar ancient cities, including Nineveh and Babylon (Genesis 10:8-12). Egypt, of course, founded (you guessed it) Egypt. Egypt also had a son named Casluhim who was the father of the Philistines, a people who show up many times in Israel’s history.

Canaan was the father of many of the nations that Israel rooted out of the Promise Land. He was also the father of Sidon, from whom came the name of the ancient city of Sidon (you may recognize this name from Jesus' rebuke in Matthew 11:21-22).

Peleg is also an important name in Genesis 10. His importance, however, does not come from the nations that he founded, but from Moses' comment about him which suggests that the Tower of Babel was destroyed in his lifetime (Genesis 10:25).

There are many more names in Genesis 10. If you’re interested in pursuing this subject farther, a good place to start would be to read everything that Josephus says on this subject in Book 1, Chapter 6 of his *Antiquities Of The Jews* (which you can read [here](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Antiquities_of_the_Jews/Book_I#Chapter_6)).

I've also written posts on two of the key people in Genesis 10: [Nimrod](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/nimrod-mighty-hunter-before-lord.html) and [Peleg](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/peleg-in-his-days-earth-was-divided.html).

### [Nimrod: A Mighty Hunter Before the Lord - Genesis 10:8-12 Bible Commentary](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/nimrod-mighty-hunter-before-lord.html)



Think of all the famous cities which fill this planet. There are the Londons and Romes of this world, known for the wealth and influence they've had throughout history. The founders of such cities tend to become mythical figures. They go down in history as legends, fearless people never took "no" for an answer.

In some cases, the founders of such cities were even deified. For instance, Romulus, the founder of Rome, was later recognized as a god by the Romans.

It's tempting to think that founding an ancient city like Rome is about as good as it gets. There is, however, something better. What if a single person founded not only one Rome-like city, but two?

Such a person exists. His name is Nimrod.

*Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. 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, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. (Genesis 10:8-12)*

Nimrod founded two of the greatest cities in all of history: Babel and Nineveh. If Romulus received such reverence for founding one city, what sort of praise must Nimrod have received?

## Nimrod's Character

There is an old proverb about Nimrod that goes like this: *Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord.* We know of this proverb through the writings of Moses (Genesis 10:9). It seems from this proverb that the ancient pagans must have looked upon Nimrod with admiration, perhaps even fear. The phrase *mighty hunter* seems to indicate that Nimrod was skilled in slaying beasts (perhaps dinosaurs, which, in all likelihood, existed in his time).

Nimrod was not only skilled in hunting beasts, but also people. Moses writes of Nimrod that "he was the first on earth to be a mighty man" (Genesis 10:8). From this it can be gathered that Nimrod was the first person in the post-flood world to subdue people, forming nations and governments. Doubtless, Nimrod, in his days, must have perfectly fit the image of a maniacal dictator.

From the beginning of his days, Nimrod strove against the Almighty. So great was his hatred of God that he is known for founding the city which was home to the Tower of Babel!

## Nimrod's Cities: Nineveh and Babylon

Nineveh was one of the most prominent cities in the ancient world. It was the capital of the Assyrian empire. Though the city was known for its wickedness and brutality, it also experienced revival for a short time under the preaching of Jonah.

The city of Nineveh, which was built shortly after the flood, came to a sudden end in 612 BC when the Babylonians literally wiped it off the map. The ironic twist is that though power changed hands from one empire to another, Nimrod was the founder of both empires!

When Nineveh fell, the ancient city of Babel (also called Babylon) became the dominant power in the region. The kingdom of Babylon's most famous leader was King Nebuchadnezzar, of whom we learn of in the book of Daniel.

Babylon's power did not last forever. It was soon taken over by Medeo-Persia, which was taken over by Alexander the Great, which was eventually taken over by Rome. Down throughout history, control over the Middle East has changed hands many times. A time is soon coming, however, when the city of Babylon will once again be the center of the world's attention.

The book of Revelation explains that Babylon will once again become the key city on the world stage. It will become a place that fully represents man in all of his drunken, unrestrained, fallen perversion. Indeed, Revelation goes so far as to call the city the "mother of prostitutes" (Revelation 17:5). Nimrod's influence over current history may not be apparent, but a day is soon coming when his influence will again be felt.

## Don't Follow Nimrod's Example

Nineveh and Babylon in Nimrod's days would have seemed like villages in comparison to what they eventually became. Let this serve as an example of the long-lasting nature of your actions. You might sometimes be tempted to think that what you do only affects the here and now. But be assured by Nimrod's example that the villages you build on earth could one day turn into bustling cities.

Make sure, then, that the villages you build in this life are God-fearing. What a shame it would be if the structures you built in this lifetime became a stumbling block to future generations! Let us always watch over our behavior with diligence so that it might be said of us that we were mighty in hunting down and slaying sin. Let it be said of us that we battled on the Lord's side.

[**Peleg: In His Days The Earth Was Divided - Genesis 10:25 Bible Commentary**](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/peleg-in-his-days-earth-was-divided.html)



It's easy to read the names in Genesis 10 and forget you're reading about real people. The people in Genesis 10 all had their own worries, troubles, joys, sorrows, and sins. They all walked on the same planet that you walk on today. Just because they lived thousands of years ago does not mean they were any less human.

The people in Genesis 10 had longer lifespans than people do today. Most of them probably lived over 100 years (and some of them lived much longer). Peleg was certainly no exception. He was born 1757 years after creation (2247 BC[1](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/peleg-in-his-days-earth-was-divided.html#dpi1)). He died 209 years later (Genesis 11:19).

Scripture tells us very little about the lives of the people in Genesis 10. In a few cases, Scripture gives the names of the cities or nations they founded (such as Nimrod in [Genesis 10:8-12](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/nimrod-mighty-hunter-before-lord.html)). Peleg is unique in that Scripture attaches a major historical event to his name.

In Peleg's days, God destroyed the Tower of Babel, dispersed people throughout the globe, and confused their language.[2](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/peleg-in-his-days-earth-was-divided.html#dpi2) Scripture says:

*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. (Genesis 10:25)*

Just as Noah's name was prophetic of what happened in his day, so too was Peleg's name prophetic of what happened in his days. The meanings of their names, though, are quite different. "Noah" means comfort and rest ([Genesis 5:29](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2010/11/noahs-name-its-meaning-and-significance.html)), but "Peleg" means division.

As strange as it might seem, Noah outlived Peleg. Noah died 2006 years after Creation. Peleg died a decade before, just 1996 years after Creation.

Although we know little about Peleg, we do know that he had a privilege that few men in history have had: he was part of Jesus Christ's lineage! Although in Peleg's lifetime the world was divided into different nations and tongues, from him came Jesus Christ, who brought people of all nations together into one, universal church!

**Related Posts**

* [The Tower Of Babel: Setting The Scene - Genesis 11:1-2](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/03/tower-of-babel-setting-scene-genesis.html)
* [An Overview Of The Names In Genesis 10](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/overview-of-names-in-genesis-10-genesis.html)
* [Why Genesis 10 Is In The Bible](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/why-genesis-10-is-in-bible-part-1.html)
* [Nimrod: A Mighty Hunter Before the Lord - Genesis 10:8-12](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/nimrod-mighty-hunter-before-lord.html)
* [The Genealogy: Adam to Noah - Genesis 5](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2010/11/genealogy-adam-to-noah-genesis-5.html)
1. [^](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/peleg-in-his-days-earth-was-divided.html#upi1) This is according to James Ussher's dating system in "The Annals of the World".
2. [^](http://blog.pricelesseternity.com/2012/02/peleg-in-his-days-earth-was-divided.html#upi2) This agrees in part with what Josephus says in The Antiquities of the Jews in [Book I, Chapter 6, Paragraph 4](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Antiquities_of_the_Jews/Book_I#Chapter_6), "he was called Phaleg, because he was born at the dispersion of the nations to their several countries". That the nations were dispersed at the birth of Peleg is not clearly stated in Scripture, but we can safely conclude that God destroyed the tower of Babel sometime between Peleg's birth 1757 years after creation and his death 1996 years after creation (or, according to Ussher's dating system, between 2247 to 2008 BC). Ussher, however supports a different view, stating that Noah himself divided up the world into different parts and assigned them to his descendants when Peleg was born; the support he gives for this is apocryphal; on close examination this view falls short since some of the people in Genesis 10 were born after Peleg, and Noah would not have assigned parts of the world to nations not yet born; furthermore, Scripture makes clear that God was the one who dispersed the nations into their different lands, not Noah. I've also run into the view that the "division of the earth" is more literal in its meaning and is speaking of the breaking up of the earth's crust and the formation of the continents; while this may have, perhaps, happened during or after the flood, such an interpretation seems forced and is also foreign to the surrounding context of Genesis 10.