**July 15, 2020 | A Study on Chapter 10 of the Book of Genesis**

**The Table of the Nations**

Chapter 10 is exclusively about the offspring of Noah’s 3 sons and there is also an abbreviated account in 1st Chronicles (1:5-25).  While the NIV entitles the chapter “The Table of Nations” the families of Shem, Ham and Japheth initially split into distinct tribes that sought their own geographic center.  It seems to me that the natural inclination of families is to remain together often occupying a small area for generations.  In my notes on chapter 5, I wrote that my family descended from a man who came to the colonies from Germany in 1752.  There are several families of Harmons who have remained in the Lexington area for generations.  In the modern era, circumstances often occur which cause individuals to move, sometimes great distances.  Marriage, careers and education are often the reasons.  God had commanded Noah and his sons to replenish the earth so perhaps He instilled in man a wanderlust to encourage families to seek new lands.  It could also be that there was a need to split into separate groups to avoid using up the natural resources of a small area.  Whatever the reason, chapter 10 marks the beginning of nations that would come from the generations that followed Noah’s sons.

While it was previously noted that Shem is always listed first, in chapter 10 he is listed last.  Vernon McGee wrote that throughout the Bible, a rejected line is mentioned first and only briefly before the accepted line that leads to Jesus.  We will see an example of that in chapter 25 of Genesis where Ishmael’s sons are listed before a more complete account of Isaac’s family is recounted.  In the very short account of the 7 sons of Japheth, only the sons of Gomer and Javan are listed along with the notation that the sons on Javan were seafaring people who spread out.
A more lengthy description of the descendants of Ham through his 4 sons is provided with particular emphasis on Nimrod.  He is described as a warrior, a mighty hunter and a king, the first named king in The Bible.  Nimrod was an ambitious man who built cities in the lands of Shinar (modern Iraq) and Assyria (modern Syria).  While the phrase “a mighty hunter before the Lord” might seem to be a flattering description, Nimrod was apparently a ruthless hunter of *men*, conquering lands as he expanded his empire. According to the historian Josephus, Nimrod “said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to reach. And that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers”.  While the Tower of Babel was ostensibly a means of escaping a future flood, it was actually a monument to the ego of Nimrod.  Many consider Nimrod to be an Old Testament appearance of the Antichrist.  Isaiah wrote that Satan vowed to raise his throne above the stars of God so the Tower of Babel could be an earthly version of that.  We have often talked about how Satan tries to imitate God by having The Antichrist and False Witness as alter egos mimicking the Trinity.  Nimrod could be Satan’s counterfeit Melchizedek (preincarnate Christ, see Gen. 14:18-20).  Note that the cities Nimrod founded include Babylon and Nineveh, centers of great sin and rejection of God.  The descendants of Mizraim and Canaan are noted for the tribes that came out of those families.  The tribes of Mizraim are not mentioned any further in the Bible except for the Philistines who arose from the Casluhites.  Canaanite clans included Hittites, Jebusites, Amortites, and Hivites all of whom opposed the Israelites when they entered Canaan.  The borders of the Canaanite clans stretched from Sidon to Gaza and over to Lasha encompassing what would be the future holy land.  Matthew Henry wrote the land occupied by the Canaanites was very desirable they became prolific and rich, however they remained under a curse.  It sometimes appears that the wicked prosper, however God’s judgment is reserved for a time of His choosing.  God would give the land over to the Israelites many generations later.

The last section of the chapter is devoted to the descendants of Shem and notice that Eber, the great grandson of Shem is singled out because he is in the lineage of Christ.  Since the term Hebrew is derived from the name Eber, this may be an indication that he was a devout man.  Verse 25 contains a curious statement about the earth being divided.  Some suppose this pertains to a physical separation of land masses from one larger land mass that emerged after the flood.  Others believe this refers to cutting canals into the land between the Tigris and Euphrates.  Another theory is that is describes a division of ownership of the land among heirs.  The territory of Shem ranged from Mesha to Saphar which is in modern Saudi Arabia along the coast of the Red Sea.

H.S. Miller studied the genealogy of Noah’s children and determined that 70 nations could be traced to Shem, Ham or Japheth as detailed in the following chart:

In my notes on chapter 7 I asked you to consider how people in the Old Testament were saved.  Jesus gives us a certain answer to that question in John 14:6 when he said that “I am the Way, the Truth and the life.  No one comes to the Father except through Me”.  While some would say that this could not apply to people in the Old Testament because Jesus had not yet come, there is ample evidence that the promise of a Savior to come was prophesied beginning with God’s statement to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:15).  In Genesis 12:3 God promises that all families of the earth will be blessed by his offspring.  God told the Israelites that he would raise up a prophet from among them (Deut. 18:15).   The book of Isaiah contains many references to the coming Messiah beginning in chapter 7.  Job said “My Redeemer lives” (19:25).  The prophets Jerimiah, Daniel and Zechariah also spoke of the Messiah who would come.  Jesus himself said that the Old Testament prophets told of his coming (Luke 24:27).  The Billy Graham Evangelical Association explains it simply that Old Testament believers looked forward to the sacrifice of Christ while we look back on the same sacrifice.