

ORIGIN OF NATIONS – GENESIS 10:1-32

Life started over after the Flood with Noah and his three sons. There were only eight souls on the earth: these four men and their wives. The Ark Voyage had been a honeymoon for Japheth, Ham, and Shem, all of which had no children before the Flood, but began to have them soon afterward.

Did you ever wonder why everyone does not speak the same language? Or why there are so many nations, each proud of its own customs, heritage and nationalistic spirit? And what the basic languages were from which all others are derived?

These questions are answered authoritatively and thoroughly in Genesis 10, the most ancient and accurate history of the origin of the nations and languages known to man. This is God's testimony of the fountainhead of ethnology (science of the races) and philology (science of linguistics).

It will be discussed chronologically (Genesis 11 before Genesis 10).

❖ God divides and apportions the nations (before confusing tongues). Compare:

Genesis 9:1, 7 – ¹ So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. ⁷ And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it.”

Acts 17:26 – And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

Deuteronomy 32:8 – When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

God's plan was diffusion.

❖ Man in direct disobedience centralizes, Genesis 11:4:

And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

Summarize Genesis 11:1-9; 10:8-12.

One language – one settlement – one religion – one leader.

❖ God's previously ordained plan of diffusion now enforced.

- Means of enforcement
 - By confusion of tongues, Genesis 11:7-9 (Linguistic Relationship)
 - By families, Genesis 10:5, 20, 31, 32 (Ethnic Relationship)
 - When? In the days of Peleg, Genesis 11:25??? (But compare 1:9)
- Purpose of diffusion

- Secular: reproduction, to fill earth and subdue it. Genesis 1: 28; 9:1
- Religious: that men everywhere might seek and find God.
- Acts 17:26-27. Remember, Noah's 3 sons had knowledge of the one true God and they were to be missionaries.

❖ The nations and languages are established (1 Chronicles 1:5-24).

From Japheth, the oldest (10:21), Genesis 10:2-5

- To move north and be missionary – Europe and greater part of Asia.
- What are now called Indo-European races – Greeks, Romans, Celts, Germans, Scandinavians, Russians, Scythians, Finns.
- Aryan languages – Latin, Greek, German, English. All are inflectual: nouns and pronouns have case, verbs have conjugation.

From Ham, Genesis 10:6-20

- To move south and be missionary – Africa, Psalm 105:23. Commencing with Nimrod (“Rebel”), this group occupies Semitic territory.
- Disobedient sons of Canaan occupy land of Palestine until their iniquity was full.
Note: Noah's prophecy (9:25) fulfilled, 1 Kings 9:20-21 (Tie in with Genesis 10:15-18).
- Turanic languages – all isolating (pictures to tell stories).

From Shem, Genesis 10:21-31

- To occupy middle territory and be missionary – area from Mediterranean Sea to India (Palestine, Arabia, Iraq, Iran).
Note: Eber, Father of Hebrew nation, 10:21.
- Semitic languages – Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Assyrian. All agglutinative: nouns have no case, read from right to left, back to front.

These nations all had the knowledge of the One, true God Whom they were to seek after, rather than a human-head, an anti-christ. Due to willful disobedience as is manifested in their anti-missionary attitude as well as their refusal to stay within their boundaries, God begins to deal with the world through one nation whose ancestry is outlined in the last part of Chapter 11.

This study of Genesis 9, 10, & 11 is to catch somewhat of an historical viewpoint. From Genesis 12 on, it is possible to assign fairly accurate dates; but dating in Genesis 1-11 is extremely difficult. To highlight this fact as well as to garner some of the historic and spiritual truths of these early chapters, our study of Genesis 1-11 will help us share with others the historical aspects of this record. Our study will equip us to give a reason for the hope that is within us.