

Genesis 10

Written by K B Napier

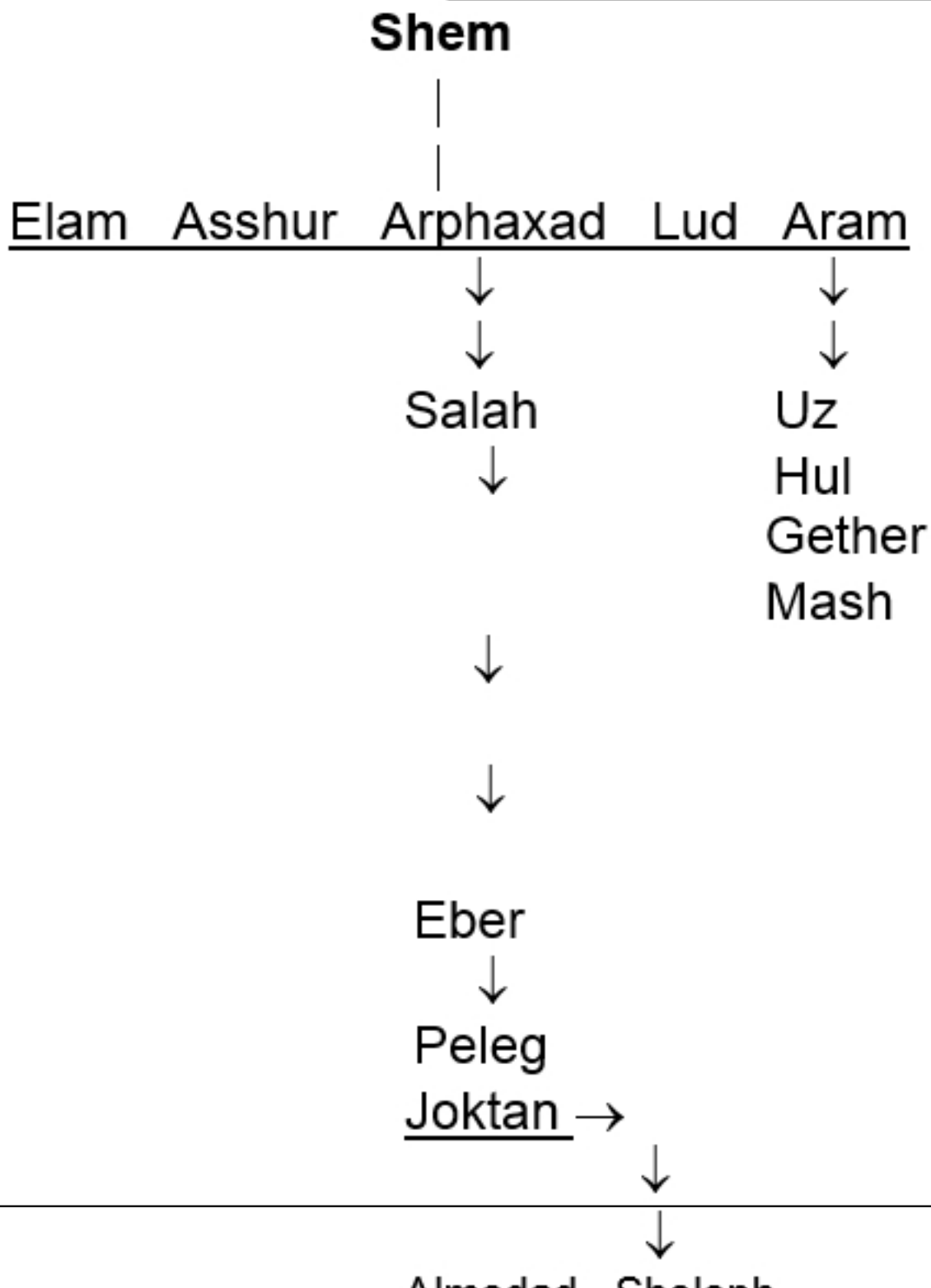
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“these are the generations...”

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Verses 1-5

1.

“Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.

2.

The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

3.

And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

4.

And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

5.

By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.”

These are the descendants of the sons of Noah, born to them after the great Flood. Japheth had Gomer and Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras (see list attached to this study). His son, Gomer, had Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah. His son Javan had Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim. Here, the lists of the other sons is not given.

The phrase “isles of the Gentiles” means ‘the lands of the govy’. That is, where the people lived. In its earliest form, ‘Gentiles’ referred not just to non-Hebrews, but also to Israel and the descendants of Abraham, as well as to locusts and other creatures. In this text it simply means ‘nations’ (possibly from *Goi im*), which all came from the three sons and their sons. (There are other derivatives).

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Gomer ('complete') was founder of the Cimmerians and Celts and became a nomadic warring nation. Magog ('land of God') began a number of tribes north of what was to become Israel. Madai ('middle land') or Maday founded a people who lived in Media, the Medes (Indo-Iranian peoples), who lived in what was to be Iran, and parts of Mesopotamia.

The sons of Gomer are: Ashkenaz (meaning not given) possibly founded Bithynia, bordering on Armenia and the upper Euphrates, and linked with the Scythians, and in Middle Ages, was even the name of Germany. Riphath ('spoken') – nothing is known. Togarmah (meaning unknown) was the possible founder of Armenia.

Javan (Yavan, 'Ionia' or 'Greece') founded the Grecians who later became merchants and slave-traders, yet they witnessed 'God's glorious deeds' (Isaiah 66:19); in Zech. 9:13 we find that Judah and Ephraim wanted to attack the Javanites, and this is alluded to in Daniel; today 'Javan' is simply the Hebrew for 'Greece'.

Tubal (meaning unknown, but not to be confused with Tubal-Cain) probably founded peoples who inhabited Asia Minor. Meshech (Meshek, 'drawing out') also founded peoples who lived north of the later Israel; they were also slave-traders, and traders in copperware. Tiras' (Tiyrac, 'desire') descendants are not mentioned in this text.

The sons of Javan are: Elishah (meaning not known) was possibly founder of the Aeolians, with some small reference to a part of Cyprus. Tarshish ('yellow jasper') might have links with Cyprus or even Tharsis in Spain, but we have no definite information. Kittim (Chittim, Kittiy, has the intriguing meaning of 'bruisers' and is another name for Cyprus) appears to have begun the race of Cypriots and peoples of other islands in the Mediterranean. Dodanim ('leaders'; another name being the 'Rodanim') – no information given here, but historical sources suggest he was founder of the people of Rhodes.

Verses 6-10

1.

"And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.

2.

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And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

3.

And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

4.

He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

5.

And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.”

We now come to the sons of Ham: Cush (Kuush, 'black') founded African races living at the southern part of the Nile, Ethiopia. Mizraim ('land of the Copts', meaning Egypt) founded the Egyptians. Phut or Puwt ('a bow') founded peoples of north Africa, probably the Libyans. Canaan (Kanaan: 'lowland') founded the Phoenicians and a variety of nations on the coast of Palestine. These people were to be later subdued by the Jews.

The sons of Cush were: Seba (Caba: meaning of name not known but possible links with Ethiopia or other nation south of Palestine). Havilah or Chaviylah ('circle') fathered the tribes of northwestern Yemen, probably Kulan, the land of Ishmaelites. Sabtah ('striking'); nothing known. Raamah ('horse's mane'); nothing known. Sabtecha (also means 'striking'); nothing known.

We are also given Raamah's sons' names: Sheba ('seven' or 'an oath'), possibly linked with a region of southern Arabia. Dedan ('low country'), again with possible links to southern Arabia.

Of course, the inclusion of the names in this chapter does not mean that there were no other

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sons. Nor does non-inclusion of female names mean there were no daughters. In verse 8, one of Cush' sons is mentioned separately – Nimrod ('rebellion' or 'the valiant'). He is listed as a 'mighty hunter' and a 'mighty one in the earth'. The word 'mighty', gibbowr, means 'strong man', or 'brave man' or 'mighty man', which could be an allusion not just to hunting, but also to a warrior or champion. This seems to be the case, as it is rooted in gabar, meaning to prevail, be powerful, or great. This appears to tell us that Nimrod was famed throughout the known world as a mighty king. 'Before the Lord' may, or may not, mean that he was favoured by God. It might just mean that he was known by God to be powerful.

Nimrod's kingdom included Babel/Babylon (meaning not known, but from the root, balal, meaning to confuse or confound) sited on the Euphrates, and capital of Babylonia, now modern Hillah; Erech (meaning not known, but from arak, meaning to prolong/grow long), was a city 40 miles northwest of Ur, on the left bank of the river; Accad (meaning unknown, from an unused root possibly meaning 'to strengthen'), which was a city and district in northern Babylonia; and 'Calneh in the land of Shinar' – Calneh ('fortress of Anu') in Shinar ('country of two rivers') was the previous name for Babylonia or Chaldea. Hebrew scholars tell us that Nimrod was the first to build a mighty kingdom after the Flood, ruling also over Mesopotamia and Assyria.

The places named in this text, then, are simply references to some of the main areas of what became Babylonia. This was the 'beginning' of his kingdom, or the reshiyth – choice part.

Verses 11&12

1.

"Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah,

2.

And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city."

Out of this large land "went forth Asshur". The words 'went forth', yatsa, have the meaning of going out with a purpose in mind. Asshur was a great city (Ashshuwr, Assyria, meaning not known) in the region of Iraq now known as Mosul, and was named after the second son of Shem, who left the land ruled by Nimrod to build four great cities. That is, he started their construction as ruler: Ninevah, famed for millennia, ('abode of Ninus') was the capital of Assyria (the country named after Asshur), on the east bank of the Tigris river, 250 miles north of

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Babel/Babylon and close to the city of Mosul, its ruined citadel on top of a hill called 'Little Lamb' near the western part of the city.

Another city was Rehoboth or R@chobowth ('wide places/streets'), built very near Ninevah. It must have had many spacious public areas or plazas, for it is the plural of r@chob, suggesting a place of green beauty and splendour...from the root rachab – roomy pasture.

There was also Calah or Kelach ('vigour'), built, we think, on the joining of the Tigris and the Zab rivers, from kelach: rugged strength. Then there was the city called Resen ('bridle'), sited between Ninevah and Calah, from recen: to restrain, or even the opposite – to throw off all restraint, but the name probably refers to the former. It is thought that this city was the greatest within the 'Assyrian triangle'.

Verses 13&14

1.

"And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,

2.

And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim."

Mizraim was the son of Ham. Mizraim had his own sons: Ludim (meaning not known) is also possibly translated as 'Lydians'. Anamim (meaning not known), another son, led a tribe of Egyptians and his name is probably of Egyptian origin. Lehabim ('flames') also headed an Egyptian tribe and his name derives from the root lahab, meaning the flashing point of a spear or sword. Of Naphtuhim (meaning not known) nothing is known, but there may be an unclear reference to lower Egypt.

There were also other sons: Pathrusim (meaning not known), who led a tribe living in Pathros ('region of the south'), upper Egypt. Casluhim ('fortified') was a tribe from whom came the Philistines ('immigrants', referred to as the Philistim, who probably immigrated from Crete to Canaan), and the Caphtorim, their home tribe. The name 'Philistines' is first found in Egyptian form, prst, meaning 'sea peoples', when they invaded Egypt in the 8th year of Ramses 3rd.

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Verses 15-19

1.

“And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth,

2.

And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite,

3.

And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,

4.

And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.

5.

And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.”

The first son of Canaan was Sidon (meaning not known), after whom the Phoenician fish port north of Tyre was named. Another son was Heth ('terror'), founder of the Hittites. From Canaan and another son, Jebus ('threshing place'), came the Jebusites (early name for inhabitants of Jerusalem). Other tribes and nations also found their ancestry in Canaan...the Amorites (meaning not known), who lived in east Canaan beyond the Jordan river and forced out of their land by the Hebrews when they came out of Egypt.

The Girgasites ('dwelling on a clayey soil') lived east of the sea of Galilee when the Hebrews came. The Hivites ('villagers'), six generations from Canaan, were in northern Canaan when the Hebrews came. The Arkites (meaning unknown) lived in Arki or Arka. The Sinite (meaning unknown, but named after a man) lived in the northern part of Lebanon.

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The Arvadites (meaning unknown) descended from Arvad, one of Canaan's sons, and they lived near Sidon. The Zemarite (meaning unknown) were an Hamite tribe; their region is not known today, but it was in Palestine. The Hamathite (meaning unknown) were also descended from Canaan and their main city was Hamath in upper Syria.

All the tribes/nations shown above were part of Canaan's descendants. They were 'spread abroad', 'afterward'...referring to the inrush of the Hebrews when they escaped from Egypt, when they took Canaan as their own land, which was bounded by Gerar to Gaza, Sodom to Gomorrah, Admah to Zeboim and 'even unto Lasha'.

Gerar ('a lodging place') was a Philistine town south of Gaza (now known as Umm). Gazar or Azzah ('the strong') was southwest of Palestine near the Mediterranean. Sodom ('burning') was in the Dead Sea region near the Jordan river. Gomorrah ('submersion') was near Sodom. Admah ('red earth') was in the Siddim valley. Zeboim ('gazelles') was one of five cities along with Sodom and Gomorrah, on the same plain. Lasha ('fissure') was also near this region. The whole country of Canaan, then, was made up of many smaller tribes and their towns.

Verses 20-24

1.

"These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

2.

Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born.

3.

The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.

4.

And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.

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5.

And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber.”

Thus we are given the immediate descendants of the three sons of Noah, and the countries they inhabited, which were contained at that time in a huge band around the Mediterranean, in the Middle East, and over toward India and possibly Spain. Shem is referred to as the ‘father of all the children of Eber’, (‘the region beyond’) – Eber being his great grandson. Reference to their ‘tongues’ is to the position after the dispersion of the people at Babel.

We have already come across Shem’s son, Asshur. Others are now mentioned: Elam (‘eternity’), Arphaxad (meaning unknown), third son; Lud (or Lydia – see above) founder of tribes settled in north Africa; Aram (‘highland’?) fifth son and founder of the Arameans/Syrians. His children included Uz (‘wooded’); Hul (‘circle’); Gether (‘fear’); Mash (‘drawn out’). Arphaxad had Salah (‘sprout’), father of Eber.

Verses 25-32

1.

“And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother’s name was Joktan.

2.

And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazar-maveth, and Jerah,

3.

And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah,

4.

And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba,

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5.

And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan.

6.

And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar a mount of the east.

7.

These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.

8.

These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.”

Two sons of Eber are mentioned: Peleg and Joktan. Peleg's name means 'division' and was given to him because the land was divided at that time. Joktan ('smallness') was patriarch to a number of Arabian tribes. Joktan's sons included: Almodad (meaning unknown); Sheleph ('a drawing forth'); Hazarmaveth ('village of death'), linked to ancient Arabian tribes; Jerah ('new moon'), also founder of an Arabian tribe.

Joktan had many more sons: Hadoram ('noble honour'); Uzal (meaning unknown) may be linked with an early capital city of Yemen; Diklah ('palm grove'); Obal ('stripped bare'), who founded yet another Arab tribe); Abimael ('my father is El [God]'); Sheba ('seven' or 'an oath'); Ophir (meaning unknown); Havilah ('circle'); Jobab ('a desert').

They all lived between Mesha ('freedom') and Sephar ('a numbering') 'a mount of the east'. This region was in southern Arabia. All of them were the descendants of Shem. The chapter ends with another summation of what has already been written – the people mentioned are all descendants of Noah, through his three sons. Between them they 'divided up the earth' into nations and tribes.

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