
Table of Nations to Abraham (Genesis 10–12)

I. Purpose and Scope of Genesis 10–11

- “Table of Nations” (Gen 10)
 - Introduces the main ethnic/national groups descending from Noah’s sons.
 - Not a complete world genealogy; it selectively tracks lines that matter for redemptive history.
 - Why focus on Shem?
 - From **Shem** → **Abraham** → **nation Israel** → **Christ**.
 - Once the line reaches *Jesus Christ*, the genealogical necessity is fulfilled (Son of David, Son of Abraham, Son of Adam).
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II. Descendants of Japheth – The Indo-European Branch (Gen 10:2–5)

- Japheth’s sons: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, Tiras.
 - Traditional identifications:
 - Gomer – early Sumerians / Germanic roots.
 - Magog – Scythians / Russian regions.
 - Madai – Medes.
 - Javan – Greeks.
 - Meshech – identified with Muscovy / Moscow.
 - Tubal – linked with Tobolsk.
 - Tiras – Thracians.
 - Gomer’s descendants (e.g., Ashkenaz)
 - Ashkenaz often linked to Germanic peoples.
 - “Islands of the Gentiles”
 - Europe, Mediterranean islands, Scandinavia, eventually Britain.
 - Generally the Caucasian / Indo-European peoples.
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III. Descendants of Ham – Africa, Canaan, and beyond (Gen 10:6–20)

- Ham’s sons: Cush, Mizraim, Put, Canaan.

- **General directions:**
 - Many went **south**, populating **Africa** (e.g., Mizraim = Egypt).
 - **Canaan's descendants:**
 - **Sidon** – Phoenicians (Sidon & Tyre on the Mediterranean coast).
 - **Jebusites** – area of **Jerusalem**.
 - **The “Sinite” connection:**
 - Mentioned among Canaan's descendants.
 - Some suggest **Sinim/Sinai** → **Sino-**, linked to **Chinese** peoples.
 - Note the modern term **“Sino-”** (Sino-Japanese War, etc.) and S-I-N beginnings in some Chinese contexts.
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IV. Nimrod and the Birth of Babylonian Paganism (Gen 10:8–12)

- **Nimrod, son of Cush**
 - Often mistranslated “mighty hunter before the Lord”; better understood as:
 - **“mighty tyrant in the face of the Lord”**.
 - “Hunting” seen as **hunting for the souls of men** – spiritual domination.
 - **Founder of a religious/political system**
 - Begins the **Babylonian mystery religion**.
 - His mother **Semiramis** later called **“Queen of Heaven”**, worshiped as a goddess.
 - **Myths attached to Nimrod (not all biblical, but part of traditional Babylonian lore):**
 - Claimed **virgin birth** (Semiramis bearing him without a father).
 - Renowned **hunter**, protector from wild animals.
 - Supposedly **killed by a boar**, dead three days, then “restored” → celebrated by:
 - **Spring festivals**,
 - **Decorated eggs**,
 - **Feasts and debauchery**.
 - Birth celebrated on **December 25**, marked by:
 - Gift-giving, drunkenness,
 - Cutting and decorating trees with silver and gold.
 - **Satanic counterfeit:**
 - A false “virgin-born savior,” false resurrection, false holy days.
 - Many elements later absorbed into **historic church practice**, parallel to Christmas/Easter customs, etc. (as argued by the teacher).
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V. From Babel to Astrology – The Tower in Shinar (Gen 11:1–9)

A. One Language, One People

- **Whole earth of one language and one speech**
 - Possibly **Hebrew**, since early names in Genesis have Hebrew meanings.
- Migration:
 - They journey from the east and settle in the **plain of Shinar** (Babylonian area).

B. Early Technology and City-Building

- Development of **brick kilns**:
 - “Let us make brick and burn them thoroughly.”
 - Moved from simple stone/adobe to **fired brick with mortar**.
- Rise of cities like **Nineveh** and **Babylon**, associated with **Nimrod**.

C. The Tower’s Purpose

- “Let us build us a city and a tower... and make us a name, lest we be scattered.”
 - Direct **rebellion against God’s command to fill the earth**.
- The tower not merely to “physically reach heaven” but:
 - Likely a **temple/observatory** for:
 - **Star worship**
 - **Birth of astrology** and constellational religion.

D. Gospel in the Stars – Then Perversion

- God originally set the **stars for signs and seasons** (Gen 1).
- Teacher’s suggestion:
 - Possibly a **true gospel pattern** in the heavens (virgin, lion, etc.).
 - Over time **perverted** by Satan into **astrology**:
 - Reading stars to **govern lives** instead of reading them as signs pointing to God.
 - **Magi** may represent a **right use** of the heavens, recognizing Christ’s birth.

E. Divine Judgment: Confusion and Scattering

- God “comes down,” sees their unity toward evil:
 - “Now nothing will be restrained from them which they imagine to do.”
 - **Action:**
 - **Confounds their language** – instant language diversification.
 - People regroup by mutual intelligibility and scatter:
 - Fulfills God’s original intent that man **fill the earth**.
 - **Name “Babel/Babel”**
 - Onomatopoeic, like “**barbar**” (Greek root for “barbarian” – foreign-sounding speech).
 - Comes to mean **confusion**.
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VI. Origin and Complexity of Languages

- **Instant creation of multiple languages** at Babel.
 - Observation: so-called “**primitive**” **peoples** often have **very complex** languages:
 - Many distinct words for “man” depending on:
 - Relationship, affection, respect, etc.
 - Verbs distinguished by **frequency, habit, one-time action**, etc.
 - Translation challenges:
 - Example of missionary trying to translate “**spit**” in the Gospels:
 - Multiple distinct words for different ways of spitting.
 - Key point:
 - Even in the simplest cultures, human **language is rich and complex**.
 - This sets man apart from animals—nothing comparable in the animal kingdom.
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VII. From Shem to Abraham – Narrowing the Line (Gen 10:21–31; 11:10–26)

- **Shem’s descendants** highlighted because they lead to **Eber** and **Abraham**.
- **Eber:**
 - From his name comes “**Hebrew**”.
 - Hebrews predate Abraham as a term.
- **Peleg:**

- “In his days was the earth divided.”
 - Two main interpretations:
 - **Continental drift** (one landmass dividing).
 - More likely: **division of peoples** into nations at **Babel**.
 - Genealogy focuses down:
 - Shem → Arphaxad → Salah → Eber → Peleg → ... → Terah → Abram.
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VIII. Terah, Abraham, and Lot (Gen 11:26–32)

- **Terah’s sons:** Abram, Nahor, Haran (order may be by importance, not age).
 - **Haran** dies early in Ur; leaves son **Lot**, whom Abram effectively **adopts**.
 - **Marriage structure:**
 - Abram’s wife: **Sarai**.
 - Nahor’s wife: **Milcah**, daughter of Haran (Nahor marries his niece).
 - **Ur of the Chaldees:**
 - Center of developing **idolatry and false religious systems**.
 - Terah, Abram, Lot, Sarai leave **Ur** intending to go to **Canaan**:
 - Stop and settle at **Haran**.
 - Terah dies there at **205**.
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IX. Chronology Puzzle: When Did Abraham Leave? (Acts 7 vs. Genesis 11)

- Apparent conflict:
 - Stephen (Acts 7) speaks as though Abraham leaves **after Terah’s death**.
 - Genealogy math suggests otherwise, if Abram is born when Terah is 70.
 - Possible resolutions:
 - **Abram not the firstborn**
 - Terah could have had another son at 70; Abram born later.
 - Ages may still allow Terah to be dead when Abram departs.
 - **Spiritual death sense**
 - “Let the dead bury their dead” (Jesus’ use of “dead”).
 - Terah **dies spiritually** when he turns to idolatry in Haran.
 - Abraham then realizes he must move on alone with Lot and Sarai.
 - Takeaway:
 - No need to lose faith over a “math issue”; reasonable harmonizations exist.
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X. Abraham's Call and Partial Obedience (Gen 12:1–3; tied to 11:31–32)

- **The call:** “Get out of your country, from your family, and from your father’s house...”
 - Abram’s **partial obedience**:
 - Takes his **father Terah** with him; they stop in Haran.
 - Only after Terah (physically or spiritually) “dies” does Abram continue.
 - Encouragement:
 - Abraham is the **New Testament model of faith**, yet:
 - His obedience is **imperfect**.
 - He hesitates, compromises, stops halfway.
 - God still **honors and uses** him.
 - Application: God is not waiting for *perfect* faith to work in us.
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XI. The Abrahamic Covenant – Promises from God (Gen 12:1–3, 7)

- **Commands**:
 - Leave country, kindred, and father’s house.
 - **Promises**:
 - a. “I will make of thee a **great nation**.”
 - b. “I will **bless** thee.”
 - c. “I will make thy **name great**.”
 - d. “Thou shalt be a **blessing**.”
 - e. “I will **bless them that bless thee**, and **curse** him that curseth thee.”
 - f. “In thee shall **all families of the earth be blessed**” – Messianic promise fulfilled in **Jesus Christ**.
 - **Land promise**:
 - At **Shechem** and later between **Bethel and Ai**, God says:
 - “Unto **thy seed** will I give this land.”
 - Initially “seed” includes **all descendants of Abraham** (Jews *and* Arabs through Ishmael).
 - Later reaffirmations (e.g., to **Jacob**) *narrow* the promise down specifically to Israel.
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XII. Abraham in Canaan – Altars and Worship (Gen 12:4–9)

- Abram departs Haran at **age 75** with:
 - Sarai, Lot, servants, and possessions.
 - Journeys:
 - From Haran ~400 miles to Canaan.
 - Passes through to **Shechem**, then to the high ridge between **Bethel and Ai**.
 - **Altars:**
 - Builds an altar at Shechem when God appears and promises the land.
 - Builds another between Bethel and Ai, calls on the name of the Lord.
 - This becomes a **favorite worship site** for Abram.
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XIII. Abraham in Egypt – Fear, Failure, and God’s Protection (Gen 12:10–20)

- **Famine in the land** leads Abram to **go down to Egypt**.
 - Fear-driven plan:
 - Recognizes Sarai’s beauty (even at ~65, given long life spans).
 - Fears Egyptians will kill him and take her.
 - Asks Sarai to say she is his **sister**.
 - **Consequences:**
 - Pharaoh’s princes praise Sarai; she’s taken into Pharaoh’s house.
 - Pharaoh treats Abram well for her sake (livestock, servants, wealth).
 - **God’s intervention:**
 - The Lord **plagues Pharaoh** and his household.
 - Pharaoh confronts Abram:
 - “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife?”
 - Returns Sarai and sends Abram out under special protection.
 - Application:
 - Abraham’s **fear and dishonesty** show **his flaws**.
 - Yet God **protects** his promise and his servant despite failure.
 - Encouragement:
 - God doesn’t require **flawless performance** to use us.
 - Our lapses don’t cancel his **covenant or calling**.
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XIV. Final Pastoral Exhortation

- As we move from primeval history (Gen 1–11) into the **patriarchal narratives (Gen 12ff.)**:

- The focus sharpens on **relationship with God**, not just events.
 - Key “so what” questions:
 - How does this deepen my **confidence in God’s Word**?
 - How does it shape my **personal walk with Jesus Christ**?
 - Blessing:
 - Prayer for increased **faith, understanding, and strength** to move on from our own “Harans”
into full obedience to God’s call.
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If you’d like, I can also turn this into:

- A **one-page teaching handout** (very condensed bullets), or
- A **multi-slide outline** ready to drop into PowerPoint/Keynote.