

PREFACE

We now find ourselves at the beginning of the end of our study. For I suggest that we consider Chapter Ten and the first half of Chapter Eleven as of a piece. Both together comprise the history of human civilization from the Flood—from Noah through his three sons—until the dispersal of mankind into a multilingual world of separate tribes and nations.

K&D: ...two events [“the confusion of tongues and the dispersion of men over the face of the earth”] that were closely related to one another, and of the greatest importance to the history of the human race and of the kingdom of God. The *genealogy* traces the origin of the tribes which were scattered over the earth; the *confusion of tongues* shows the cause of the division of the one human race into many different tribes with peculiar languages. (emphasis added)

This chapter is cued up in Genesis 9:19, where Moses writes, after listing the three sons, “These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was scattered abroad.” And on this rare occasion the author of holy Scripture has organized his topic as I would have if I here him. In v2 he begins with the son whom—in the eyes of the Hebrew Moses—was of the *least* importance: Japheth. His descendants will be itemized from v2 to v5. From v6 to v20 Moses itemizes the line that will be, for the most part, the *enemy* of Israel: the line descending from Ham.

Finally the author Moses charts what to him and the focus of the remainder of the Pentateuch will be the most important family line: that of Shem, from v21 to v31. These three chronicles are followed by v32, to close the three family trees and prepare the reader for the first nine verses of Chapter Eleven:

These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood.

And before we launch into this concluding section with all its unpronounceable names, and the impression it gives that Noah and his three sons are the root of all mankind, we need to remind ourselves that Noah was not the root, but was the human bridge that spanned the Flood for the line of men out of Adam.

Out of Adam came his third son, Seth, to whom Enosh was born (5:6); and the line continued on to Methuselah, then Lamech, whose son was Noah. Noah was the “bridge over troubled waters” (!) that safely carried Adam’s blood into the reconfigured, post-Flood world.

Finally, though we might imagine that even as Noah’s line is dispersed across the earth, Cain’s line is already there. But no, any surviving descendants of this one who was banished into “the land of Wandering, east of Eden,” have long since been drowned by the Flood.

v1

The first verse contains two important clues regarding these men. First, it makes clear that these three are the only sons of Noah.

Now these are the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah;

Second, it also makes clear that the sons born to these three out of Noah were born only after the Flood.

and sons were born to them after the flood. (emphasis added)

There will be plenty of omissions in the lists of descendants in Chapter Ten; not every individual or tribe or nation will be mentioned. But Scripture specifies that there are no omissions at the beginning. One man, Noah, had only three sons, and *their* sons were born only after the Flood. There were only eight human beings in the ark (7:13).

JAPHETH: VV2-5

The line from Japheth may have been of least importance to Moses, but it is of particular interest to us—most of whom descend from European stock. It is interesting, however, that in only the second generation from Japheth is found a distinctive *Jewish* reference.

See the reddish Northern area of the map included in the handout.

The [immediate] sons of Japheth were

Gomer	(GO-mer)
and Magog	(maw-GOGUE)
and Madai	(maw-DEYE)
and Javan	(yaw-VAWN)
and Tubal	(too-BAWL)
and Meshech	(MEH-shek)
and Tiras.	(tee-RAWCE)

Keep in mind that placing these names upon a map is not unlike trying to assign specific dates to ancient people or events. After any references are found in Scripture, much of the mapping out of these descendants is based not on historical accounts—for save for the occasional reference in Scripture, there is precious little—but is based instead on linguistics and, especially, etymological similarities. Compounding the confusion is the fact that over time, and as a people move from one place to another—or are chronicled by one group or another—the spelling of the names will inevitably change.

Gomer: identified with the Cimmerians (Greeks), settling S of the Black Sea.

Magog: From Josephus we learn (and it is generally accepted) that Magog settled what would become the land of the Scythians, a mountainous region around the Black and Caspian seas. This name is mentioned in Ezekiel 38:2, which, along with Ezekiel 39:17-20 prophesies something the fulfillment of which many believe is recorded in Revelation 19:17-21.

Read Ezekiel 38:1-3.

Read Ezekiel 39:4-6.

The fulfillment of these prophecies—the awful “supper of God”—is recorded in Revelation 19.

Read Revelation 19:17-21.

Gog and Magog are mentioned one last time, almost as an afterthought, at the defeat of Satan after the Millennium.

Read Revelation 20:7-10.

Most consider the name Gog to refer to a man, a leader, while Magog refers to a place, a kingdom. But let's not miss that line in Ezekiel 38 and 39, "...O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." These two names are almost always linked in Scripture and extra-biblical texts—and, of course, we recognize these names as sons of Japheth.

Tubal: associated with the E portion of Asia Minor.

Meshech: Herodotus called these people the *hooci*. They dwelt across the Anatolian Plateau from Tubal, at the SW corner of the Black Sea.

Madai: The Madai will become the Medes, far SE of Magog and Tubal, and SW of the Caspian Sea. The name "Medes" (as in "the Medes and Persians") appears frequently in Scripture.

Javan: The name "Javan," is distinctly related to the Greek 'iwuan—the Ionians—the name, after Alexander the Great, that was applied to all Greeks. It is found repeatedly in the OT. Javan settled in Western Asia Minor, near the Aegean Sea.

Tiras: seems to refer to Pelasgians of the Aegean Sea, a pirate nation known as *torohnoi*, who terrorized the whole neighborhood. They may be identified with the later Etruscans of Italy.

Now the next two verses list the sons of just two from this generation: Gomer and Javan.

v3

The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz and Riphath [ree-FATH] and Togarmah [toe-gar-MAH].

The eldest son of Gomer, **Ashkenaz**, does not have a Jewish name, but his is a name that will be associated with a particular group of Jews much later. Now, I am going to do you the gracious courtesy of not itemizing the uncertain and confusing history of this place name; it would quickly put you to sleep and, besides, would gain us nothing.

This name is found in just two other places in Scripture: in First Chronicles 1:6, in a second listing of Adam's descendants, and in the prophecy of Jeremiah against Babylon.

Read Jeremiah 51:26-27.

Our map places the land of Ashkenaz E of his father Gomer, in the mountain range off the western shore of the Caspian Sea. Cutting through all the confusion of source, we land in the mid-twentieth century, when "Iranian-speaking Jews in the Caucasus (the so-called Juhuris) and Turkic-speaking Jews in the Crimea prior to World War II called themselves 'Ashkenazim'." From the *Encyclopedia Britannica*,

In time, all Jews who had adopted the "German rite" synagogue ritual were referred to as Ashkenazim to distinguish them from Sephardic (Spanish rite) Jews. Ashkenazim differ from Sephardim in their pronunciation of Hebrew, in cultural traditions, in synagogue cantillation (chanting), in their widespread use of Yiddish (until the 20th century), and especially in synagogue liturgy.

Today Ashkenazim constitute more than 80 percent of all the Jews in the world, vastly outnumbering Sephardic Jews. In the early 21st century, Ashkenazic Jews numbered about 11 million. In Israel the numbers of Ashkenazim and Sephardim are roughly equal, and the chief rabbinate has both an Ashkenazic and a Sephardic chief rabbi on equal footing. All Reform and Conservative Jewish congregations belong to the Ashkenazic tradition.

Riphath and **Togarmah** are clustered closer around their father: Riphath around the river Rhebas, and Togarmah associated with Cappadocia in today's Turkey.

v4

We now close the Japheth line with the sons of Javan.

The sons of Javan were Elishah [el-ee-SHAW] and Tarshish [tar-SHEESH], Kittim [kit-TEEM] and Dodanim [doe-dah-NEEM].

Note that those last two names are plural, thus denoting not the individual, but the people called by that name.

Since Javan became the Ionians, these names and tribes were all kin to the Greeks. On our map **Elishah** is located on the isle of Cyprus, in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, and there is a large percentage of scholars that consider the powerful Bronze Age kingdom of Alashiya (or Alasiya), cited in multiple texts, including Josephus and the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, as centered on Cyprus, which was known in antiquity for its rich copper resources. In fact, most scholars recently identify the entire island of Cyprus with the kingdom of Alashiya, which, etymologically, is very close to the name of Noah's grandson, Elishah.

Our map places **Tarshish** alongside the SW coastline of Italy, but Leupold associates it with Tartessus in southern Spain. Frankly, no one knows where it was located, but wherever it was in antiquity it seemed to be an important location of sea-going trade, mentioned over twenty times in the OT.

Kittim is a plural noun referring to those who dwelt on the east coast of Cyprus [and so located on our map]. This name, too, is found rather frequently in the Scriptures"—e.g., Numbers 24:24; Jeremiah 2:10; Ezekiel 27:6 (Leupold).

Dodanim, (or **Rodanim** in the 1 Chronicles name list) is another plural noun, referring not to an individual but to a people. And it is not a stretch, etymologically, to associate this, as our map does, with the Greek island of Rhodes, just off the SW coast of Asia Minor.

From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his tongue, according to their families, into their nations.

The statement in v5 summarizes vv2-4, in the language of the KJV, “By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands...”—not literally what we would term an island (land surrounded by water), but literally, as our other versions have it, “the coastlands of the nations,” that is, these were all settled, the various families, tribes, and nations in an approximate line along the coastline of the Mediterranean.

The word translated “tongue” (only in the LSB) or “language” is *lashon*, referring to the physical tongue as the instrument of speech. By contrast, “language” in 11:1 translates *sapa* (saw-FAW), which refers to the lips. The various versions that make *lashon* in 10:5 “language” are not doing their readers any favor—in fact it injects confusion, for 11:1 says flat out that “...the whole earth had the same language and the same words.” So the reader sees a contradiction between the two passages.

“Tongue” in 10:5 means *idiom* or *dialect*, not literally a different language as French is different from English. Thus in Chapter Eleven it states that though people may be making different sounds with their tongues and lips, different *flavors* of speech—as a New Yorker speaks in one flavor of English and someone from Alabama another—they each can understand the words of the other (usually).

So by Genesis 11:1, the families from Japheth can understand the words of the families of Ham and Shem, but they all might be *shaping* those words differently.

In our next session we will examine the descendants of Ham, the enemies of Israel.

SESSION 59

Diaspora, part one

Genesis 10:1-5

The Beginning of the End

We now find ourselves at the beginning of the end of our study. For I suggest that we consider Chapter Ten and the first half of Chapter Eleven as of a piece. Both together comprise the history of human civilization from the Flood—from Noah through his three sons—until the dispersal of mankind into a multilingual world of separate tribes and nations.

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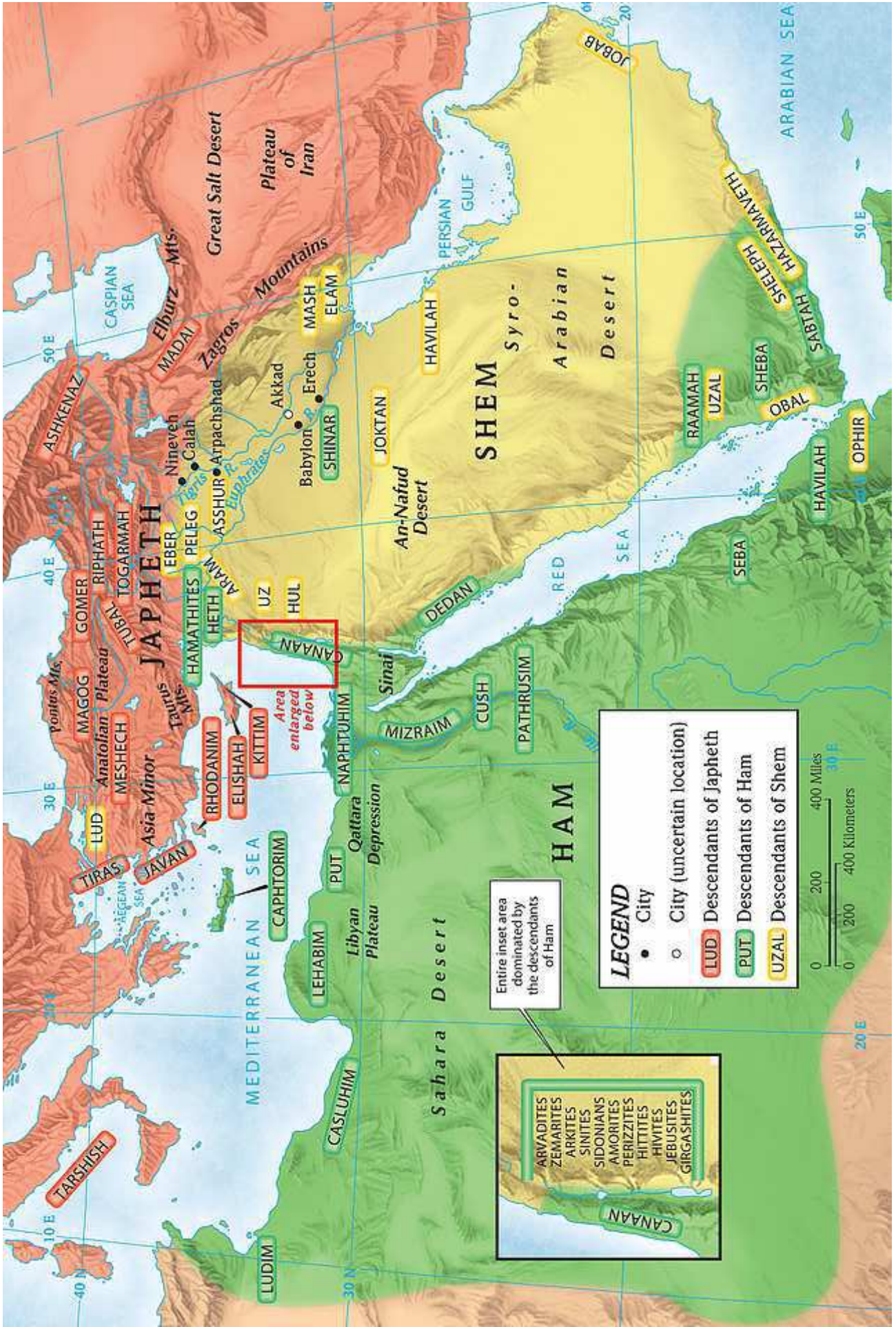
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For complete notes and audios for each session, go to DLAMPEL.COM/BIBLE-STUDIES/





LEGEND

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- LUD Descendants of Japheth
- PUT Descendants of Ham
- UZAL Descendants of Shem

Entire inset area dominated by the descendants of Ham

CANAAN

- ARVADITES
- ZEMARITES
- ARKITES
- SINITES
- SIDONIANS
- AMORITES
- PERIZZITES
- HITTITES
- HIVITES
- JEBUSITES
- GIRGASHITES