

SESSION 60: DIASPORA, PART TWO

Genesis 10:6-20

February 16, 2025

PREFACE

As with Japheth, we are now presented with the immediate sons of Ham, Noah's grandsons through Ham, with Cush (presumably the oldest) listed first.

v6

The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan.

In Session 58 we discussed Canaan, the most immediate threat to Shem's descendants, for Canaanites were the ones who settled in the land Yahweh will promise to Israel, and will have to be dislodged from that land before Israel under Joshua can inhabit it. But the most insidious and persistent threat the Canaanites will pose to Israel will be as a result of Israel's disobedience in not wiping them out totally. Because of this, the remnants of the Canaanites will continue as a corrupting and eroding influence to Israel's faith, and obedience to Yahweh.

v7: SONS OF CUSH

The sons of Cush were Seba [seh-BAH] and Havilah [khav-ee-LAH] and Sabtah [sab-TAH] and Raamah and Sabteca [sab-teh-KAW];

Five sons are listed for Cush; these five would be great-grandsons of Noah. Now the author Moses breaks out—in an almost perfunctory manner—two sons of just one of these five: Raamah.

and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

Let's back up to these five great-grandsons and take just a quick look at where this family settled. The sons of Cush are, for the most part, Ethiopian tribes. 📍

Seba: associated with the ancient city of Meroe, in upper Egypt on the Nile. 📍

Havilah: located just S of Seba; the name means "sandland." We will see this name again in v29, so this first is of Hamitic extraction, while the second is Semitic.

See the green, mostly Southern area of the map included in the handout.

References to upper and lower Egypt can be confusing, since lower Egypt lies to the N, while upper Egypt lies to the S. This is because the Nile flows from S to N, toward the delta that spills into the Mediterranean Sea.

Sabtah: is another Ethiopic group that is identified with the city of Sabbathath across the Red Sea in the SW corner of Arabia.

Raamah: is also located in that region of Arabia, present-day Yemen.

Sabteca: unless my eyes deceive me, is not located on our map; this is because this is a branch of the Ethiopians that settled east of the Persian gulf.

As for the sons of Raamah,

Sheba: is probably the most well-known name; perhaps Moses selects it out because, like his uncle Nimrod, will become famous—or infamous—in the annals (e.g., “queen of Sheba”). This name is found in a number of places—twice even in this chapter: here a descendant of Ham, and in v28 a descendant of Shem. Some of these “Shebas” scholars want to associate, along with Raamah, with the Sabbeans in SW Arabia. It is thought that it was from here the queen of Sheba came bearing spices, gold and precious stones (1 Kings 10).

Dedan: we know next to nothing about, but chances are good he is associated with the region, trade, and descendants of his brother Sheba.

Moses reserves the most space for one more son of Cush: Nimrod (Nim-RODE).

vv8-9: NIMROD

Now Cush was the father of Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before Yahweh; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Yahweh.”

Nimrod was not a nice guy. As we know from our study of Chapter Six and the Nephilim, Nimrod was not the *first* “mighty one on the earth.” But he was probably the first to really run with it, and thus the first to build an empire. He was an evil strong-man.

Nimrod was not necessarily a “mighty hunter” of meat for the evening meal. He may have been that too, but the reference here is of someone who hunts down *men*.

We also are not to read “before Yahweh” as meaning someone doing Yahweh’s bidding, or acting in obedience to Yahweh; it is better to read this “in the face of Yahweh.” ➡

In the modern sense of “getting in someone’s face.”

K&D: Nimrod was mighty in hunting, and that in *opposition* to Jehovah; not before Jehovah in the sense of, according to the purpose and will of Jehovah... The name itself, Nimrod from “we will revolt,” points to some violent resistance to God. It is so characteristic that it can only have been given by his contemporaries, and thus have become a proper name.

David Guzik: The context shows that this is not a compliment of Nimrod. The idea is that Nimrod was an *offense before the face of God*. (emphasis added)

James Montgomery Boice: This is not talking about Nimrod’s ability to hunt wild game. He was not a hunter of animals. He was a hunter of men—a warrior. It was through his ability to fight and kill and rule ruthlessly that his kingdom of the Euphrates valley city states was consolidated.

vv10-12

The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went out to Assyria and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.

Some of these place names cannot be located, but we see on our map the regional name of Shinar, and around it Erech, Babylon, Akkad (Accad/Accadians); then traveling up the Tigris we see Calah and Ninevah. 📍

Here is the first empire, and it begins with Babel/Babylon. We may deduce from the text that since v11 says that Nimrod *built* Nineveh, he may not have literally *built* Babel, but just conquered an existing city and made it his own. 📍

In the Revelation we have a graphic, even repulsive picture of what the Lord God and His Christ think of Babylon.

Read Revelation 17:1-6.

Babylon is portrayed here and elsewhere in Scripture as not just a place of sin and evil, but the *generator* of sin and evil on earth.

Read Revelation 18:1-5.

Interestingly, we also see in the same region the city name of Arpachshad, which was the name of one of Shem’s sons—not Ham’s. We might wonder what a Shemite is doing in the middle of Hamites, but it would be more accurate to ask what is Nimrod’s kingdom (Hamite) doing in the middle of territory settled by the Shemites?

K&D offers a logical explanation for the last phrase of v12, “that is the great city.” Grammatically, it follows that the four places formed a large composite city, a large range of towns, to which the name of the (well-known) great city of Nineveh was applied, in distinction from Nineveh in the more restricted sense, with which Nimrod probably connected the other three places so as to form one great capital.

vv13-14

Moses now moves onto the next son of Ham: Mizraim.

Mizraim was the father of Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim and Pathrusim and Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines) and Caphtorim.

As stated earlier, the name “Mizraim” is synonymous with Egypt. Except for Anamim (which is not located on our map) all the other names (which are all plural) are scattered about in and around the N and W coastlines of Africa, with Mizraim (which is *not* plural) noted along the Nile. Except for Egypt itself, little credence can be given to their various locations on this map; no one really knows, but it makes sense that they would be in the general vicinity of Egypt.

On our map, Caphtorim is located on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean. This may or may not be its location.

vv15-18

Now we return to Canaan and his descendants, and as we see not just in the text, but in the inset of our map, Canaan was the father of a whole lot of “ites.” 📌

Canaan was the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanite were scattered.

In Session 58 we focused on the *nature* of the Canaanites, and how his people played into prophecy fulfilled down the road. Here we will pay closer attention to their dispersal with the other tribes. And as we see on the map, for the sons of Canaan there was little dispersal at all. Compared especially to the other tribes, they all clustered into a rather tight area hugging the eastern shore of the Mediterranean: today’s Syria to the N, Lebanon, and Israel; then across the Jordan to the kingdom of Jordan. 📌

Except for the Hamathites and the Hethites in the N, all of Canaan’s descendants are clustered in the land promised to Israel by Yahweh.

I need to correct something I

said (and wrote) back in Session 58. In my discussion of Canaan, I said that it was the Canaanites that settled the vast swath of green we see on our map. What I should have said was the *Hamites* settled this area—only part of which (especially the eastern shore of the Mediterranean) was settled by the Canaanites.

And one more correction:

Last week Linda asked where on this map would we find Ararat, and I mistakenly pointed to the spot where the three tribes meet, below the name Japheth. The region of Ararat is actually located inside the three lakes to the east, below the name Ashkenaz. Still in today’s Turkey, but further east.

Of course it is easy to forget that what God actually promised to Abram was far beyond just Canaan. In Genesis 15:18 we read,

**On that day Yahweh cut a covenant with Abram, saying,
“To your seed I have given this land,
From the river of Egypt as far as the great river,
the river Euphrates...”**

vv19-20

The border of the Canaanite extended from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; as you go toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their tongues, by their lands, by their nations. 📄

Look at the second map in the handout.

These two verses conclude the line coming out of Ham, and offer a general look at the parcel of land settled by this Canaanite family. Although the original purpose of the map included in the handout is to show where the twelve tribes settled, I chose it because it includes most of the place names in the text.

Following the text, it begins with **Sidon** up at the very top; many associate the Sidonians with the mysterious Phoenicians. Then down to “**Gerar, as far as Gaza.**” We see Gerar just under the J in Judah; the city of Gaza would be roughly where we see on this map Raphia, near the bottom of the Judean coastline. **Sodom and Gomorrah** are usually placed around the bottom of the Dead Sea, in the vicinity of Edom and Moab. Somewhere in this region would be also the unlocated **Admah, Zeboiim** and **Lasha**, this last identified by some with Calirrhoe, a place with sulphur baths, on the eastern side of the Dead Sea.

In our next session we will look at the last of the three sons, from whom will come Israel—Shem.

SESSION 60

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The Hamite Line: vv6-20

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What About Put?

Other than listing his name in v6, Moses in Genesis completely ignores any information about Put and his sons. H. C. Leupold offers the following:

"Put" is commonly identified with the country known to the ancients as Punt, lying in East Africa [below Egyptian Kush, and wrapping down into the Horn of Africa] and extending over into southern Arabia. It was famous for its incense. Another land is chosen by some commentators (Keil, Skinner), who think of Libya on the northern coast of Africa, west of Egypt (which is where he is located on our map).

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