



Leaves From the Tree

Studies from God's Word

In 2005, Pastor Tim Bourgeois began a daily bible reading to encourage Tree of Life Christian Church and the larger body of Christ to read the entire Bible cover to cover.

The following series of articles are transcripts of Pastor Tim's original emails.

Please use these articles for meditation, personal devotion, Bible study, or your own daily Bible reading.



GENESIS 7 - 10

Genesis 7

7:1-3 - "Then the LORD said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time. You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female; also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth."

One of the details of the ark story that is commonly overlooked in the distinction made by the Lord between clean and unclean animals, and the different numbers gathered of each category. This is the first mention in the Bible of "clean" animals. The Law of Moses later expands upon this concept by naming which animals are considered clean, and which are considered unclean. The reasons why they clean and unclean are also given in the Law. At this point all that we are given is that the Lord makes such a distinction. The concepts of clean and unclean here do not refer to physical cleanliness, but spiritual cleanliness. Since animals are incapable of sin, we are meant to understand these categories as symbolic categories for purpose of spiritual instruction. There is a reason there are only two spiritual categories of animals. They represent the two kinds of people there are in the world. The two kinds of people are those in covenant with God and are therefore clean, and the people outside of covenant with God and are therefore unclean.

God instructs Noah to take two of each of the unclean animals, but seven of the clean animals. The greater number of clean animals enables Noah to offer sacrifices to God after the flood without endangering the survival of their offspring. Of course, the Lord could have had Noah take only three of the clean animals and that would have left a third for sacrifice, but by taking seven He provides a corresponding symbol for the seven people Noah saved on the ark beside himself. This number seven in the Biblical number of completion. God made the world in a complete seven day week. Here it corresponds to the perfect number of the redeemed that will be saved.

7:16 - "Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed it behind him."

I love this detail we are given here. Once all of the food had been loaded into the ark, and all of the animals had been brought on board, and Noah's family went into the ark, the Lord Himself closed the door behind Noah. This is a perfect picture of salvation from the Lord's perspective.

On the final day of history when it is time for the Lord Jesus to return in His Second Coming, there will be a last person on earth that the Lord has chosen to believe the gospel and be saved. When that last person believes, the Lord will return and the door of salvation that right now is wide open, will then be closed. It will be the Lord Himself that closes the door on any one else being saved. Once Jesus returns there will be no further opportunity for salvation for anyone left alive. Only those already saved will be saved when He returns.

In the days of the flood, once the Lord closed the door of the ark it sealed the people inside the ark into the security of salvation from the coming flood. It also at the same time sealed every other person outside the ark into the judgment of the flood. There were no last minute changes. This emphasizes for us that it is God Who is in charge of salvation from beginning to end.

7:19-20 - "The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered."

I believe that there was in Noah's time a literal flood that covered the surface of the entire world. I know most of the world scoffs at this. Even among believers there are many that struggle to believe this and have come up with a more "reasonable" explanation of this event. They offer the plausible explanation of a "local flood" theory. The local flood theory suggests that only the region surrounding where Noah lived was actually flooded. They suggest that since the population of the world had not spread far on the earth that the flood of a region bordered by mountains accomplished the purpose of the flood. They believe it is a ridiculous fantasy to imagine that the entire planet was covered with water.

I believe the entire planet was covered with water because the text describes it exactly that way. There is no other way to interpret this phrase, "so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered" without mangling the clear meaning of the passage. The Bible is consistent on this if you remember the opening verses of Genesis 1:2. "The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." The earth was originally completely covered with water in the first phase of God's work of creation. For God to cover it again is no problem for Him. Keep in mind that this is the God Who created the entire universe with a Word. Flooding the entire earth is no impossibility for Him. I have read accounts of sea fossils being discovered on high mountain peaks by mountain climbers without any other logical explanation available for how those fossils got there. Those who struggle to believe that the flood covered all the mountains usually are thinking of Mount Everest. This phrase from verse 11 explains that there was more than just rain falling in the flood. "...on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open..." The flood also involved tremendous geological upheaval. The surface of the planet today is not identical to the surface of the planet prior to the flood.

Questions from Genesis 6

Question: Genesis 6:6-7 - "The LORD was sorry that He had made man..." - did the Lord not know this was going to happen?

Answer: Yes, the Lord knew in advance that man was going to sin in the garden. He knew that after Adam fell that the entire human race was going to spiritually spiral down to such wickedness that He would have to respond with the world wide judgment of the flood. This description of the Lord's response is difficult for us because we tend to think about it first from the perspective of if we were the one responding. Some theologians identify this verse as an example of anthropomorphism. In this case it would mean to ascribe human qualities to God even though He is above those qualities in order to add a dramatic element to the story. I don't agree with that interpretation. Instead I see this as an example of the transcendence and immanence of God. Allow me to simplify those terms. The transcendence of God refers to Him being above all things (even time and history). His immanence refers to God being fully engaged and involved in every moment of time and history. I believe the Bible teaches us that God is both above history and fully engaged in history at the same time. You and I would not be capable of doing both at the same time, but God is. He knew in advance man would become so wicked

(transcendence), and He was fully affected by man's wickedness when it actually happened (immanence). This passage shows us that just because God knows the end of history from the beginning, he is not detached and unaffected by what occurs in history.

Question: I was curious about the "sons of God" being angels. If angels are only spiritual, not spiritual/physical as we are, how were they able to create offspring? Wondering what your thoughts were on this.

Answer: Your question captures the main objection some have to the interpretation that the sons of God in Genesis 6 are fallen angels. The concept followed is that angels are spiritual beings that are incapable of taking physical form and interacting with human women in the way that would produce offspring. This objection is usually based on an interpretation of Matthew 22:29-30, "But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." The thought is that Jesus was telling us that angels are incapable of this. However, this is not a statement of the capability of angels, rather a description of the boundaries that the angels in heaven follow and that the redeemed will also follow in heaven.

We have a number of passages throughout the Bible that show that angels are fully capable of taking physical form. They have the power to do so, but were only supposed to use that power to carry out their missions from God. This passage is just one example of angels taking on physical human form. "When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city." But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the LORD was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city." (Genesis 19:15-16) The two angels that rescued Lot are also identified as "men". They seized the hand of Lot, his wife, and daughters. Earlier, these same two men visited Abraham with the Lord in the form of men and were served a meal by Abraham.

Question: You wrote that, "Here Noah is a type of Christ." I always thought that the ark was a type of Christ. Are they both or was I mistaken in my understanding? If they are both, how can that be?

Answer: No, you are not mistaken. The ark is a type of Christ since it provided the means of salvation for humanity. It points forward to the work of Christ on the cross. Yes, Noah is also a type of Christ. He functions as a

type more for the person of Christ while the ark is a type of the work of Christ. We have many examples throughout the Old Testament of what we might call layered types. The reason for this is that it is difficult for any person or thing to picture the fullness of Christ and His work. Therefore, the Lord assigned specific symbolic aspects of Christ and His work to different people and things. One type does not contradict or intrude on the symbolic territory of the other. An example of this layering is found in the tabernacle and temple. Christ is typified by the entire structure of the tabernacle, by the various items of furniture within it, by the high priest who serves in it, and by the sacrifices that are offered there. All of these types are overlapping each other at the same time. It is the responsibility of the teachers in the New Covenant to be able to identify these types and distinguish the boundaries for each type and how they spiritually relate to Christ properly.

Question: Genesis 6:3 "Then the Lord said, "My spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he is also flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." Whose days are numbered 120 years? It seems that the Lord is no longer allowing men to live beyond 120 years, but further in Genesis, we read that Noah's descendants lived 300-400 years and more. Who or what is being referred to as being numbered 120 years?

Answer: Your confusion on the 120 years is shared by a lot of people. The way it reads in our translation it is easy to interpret it as a new limit the Lord is imposing on human lifespan. Actually, the 120 years is aimed in a different direction completely. It identifies the number of years left before the flood. From the time that the Lord made this declaration there were 120 years until the rains of the flood began. This 120-year time period served two purposes. It gave Noah sufficient time to build the ark with the tools and technology he had available to him, and it provided a generous amount of time for Noah to preach the Lord's message of impending judgment. "and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;" (II Peter 2:5)

Genesis 8

8:1 - "But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided."

There are two important principles in this verse; one is a clarification and one is hidden in the translation. The clarification is regarding what is meant that "God remembered Noah." When we remember something important it is in relationship to having previously forgotten it. Because our minds and memories are finite and fallible, we are capable of forgetting even important appointments and events. Ask any man who has ever forgotten his anniversary how important it is for us to remember things that matter. Here, God remembers Noah as well as all the animals with him in the ark, but it is not implying God had forgotten them only to have the inhabitants of the ark suddenly pop back into His mind. God's mind is not like ours. He never inadvertently forgets anything. There are over 70 times in the Old Testament where God is described as remembering His people or His covenant. In each case it describes God's faithful commitment to give to His people the special attention or provision that they need and that only He can provide. It is the way God describes that He is now going to focus on this person or event and give them priority attention over anything else going on the earth at that time. We could think of it as God's covenant commitment.

The principle hidden in the translation of verse one introduces a theme that is developed throughout this chapter and the next. The key translated word is "wind". When God decided to end the flood and restore the world to "normal" He did so by causing a wind to pass over the earth. This description is an intentional connection all the way back to Genesis 1:1-2. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." The word translated wind is the same Hebrew word translated as "Spirit" in 1:2. The connection is this; now at the end of the flood, God is begins to recreate the world. He does not create it out of nothing like in Genesis 1:1, but the world after the flood is nevertheless a new creation. God has cleansed the old world of its corruption and now He is going to make a new world. Throughout this chapter there are intentional parallels to the original creation story. God causes His wind to move over the surface of the waters in both creations as the beginning point, then the land emerges.

8:17 - "Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth."

This passage continues the intended parallel with Genesis chapter one as a new creation story. It points back to Genesis one symbolically, and

forward into the eternal future to Christ and the new heavens and new earth that He will create at the end of all things. Here Noah is taking on a new role with a great responsibility. Noah is the new Adam responsible for repopulating the world from his line of descendants. The animals leaving the ark with him, like the original pairs of animals God had made in Genesis one are to multiply and fill the earth exactly as they did then. We are meant to hear the echoes of this Word from chapter one. "God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth..." (Genesis 1:28)

The lesson here is powerful. God originally made the human race from Adam and Eve and they had filled the earth. However, they also filled the earth with their sin and corruption. The significance of their existence as humans made in the image and likeness of God originally did not outweigh their responsibility to live and walk in the way God had intended and commanded. We might be tempted to look at the situation before the flood and see it as bad, but decide that the value of the people outweighed their evil and corrupt behavior. God looked upon the same circumstance and decided that the value of His holy and righteous purpose outweighed the value of the people themselves. In that spiritual priority, God chose to cleanse the world and start over through one faithful man. He again has done exactly that through Christ. "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (II Corinthians 5:17)

8:20-21 - "Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done."

The very first act of Noah as he exits the ark and steps foot on the new world that God has recreated is significant. "Then Noah built an altar to the LORD". This is the first time in the Bible that an altar is built. Noah begins his new life and the new creation with worship. It is a special kind of worship, distinct from any of the pagan worship and pagan altars of history that will later attempt to mimic what Noah does here. This worship as God had commanded. We saw earlier that God had instructed Noah to take seven of all the clean animals into the ark in anticipation of this moment. Building this altar was not Noah's idea any more than building the ark had been. True worship begins with God's call and command and ends back at His throne. It is also distinct from all false worship because it is sacrificial in

nature. Human based worship is based on our merit and honors God along with ourselves. True worship recognizes that there is nothing in ourselves that earns our place in His presence. Only the sacrifice He has ordained opens the door for us to stand before His throne. This blood sacrifice of course points forward in time to the one ultimate sacrifice that opens the door for us into heaven itself. This altar of Noah is a type of the cross of Christ.

Questions from Genesis 7:

Question: 7:2, 7, 9, 16 - "entered as God had commanded him..." - any thoughts as to how all the animals got rounded up and in there?! Looks like Noah was already in the ark when the animals came inside. Perhaps the Lord just spoke and the animals went to the ark.

Answer: There are only two possibilities for the gathering of the animals and birds. One possibility is that Noah and his family went out throughout the earth and gathered two and seven of each kind. The other is that the Lord brought the animals to the ark. I believe the second option. It would have been logistic nightmare to track down and capture two and seven of every kind of animal and bird. The Lord may have simply commanded the animals and birds to come to the ark, or He may have had the angels gather them, but I'm convinced that they came because of the Lord, not because of Noah.

Genesis 9

9:3-4 - "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."

This section continues the theme from the previous chapter. When Noah leaves the ark he steps foot into a new world that has just been recreated out of the flood. Noah is now spiritually in the role of the new Adam as the covenantal head of a new human race. In the original garden, when the Lord first created Adam and placed him in the new world, the Lord ordained food to eat for Adam. Adam was free to eat whatever he chose, but within the food boundaries that the Lord ordained for him. "Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you;" (Genesis 1:29). Adam's diet was what we would describe as strict vegetarian. The Lord gave him plants, fruits and seeds to eat. By

implication, he was not allowed to kill and eat the flesh of animals, birds or fish. He did not even eat milk or eggs which were produced from the animals because that would have been outside the boundaries of God's food provision for him. We can be certain that the diet God provided for him was sufficient for both his nutritional needs and his desires.

Now, in this section, Noah as the new Adam is also given specific diet boundaries by the Lord. What is important to notice is the difference in the diet God gave to Noah, from Adam's previous boundaries. The Lord expands Noah's diet to include the flesh of animals, birds and fish. Why does the Lord change the diet of humanity? I see a spiritual purpose and a practical purpose in the Lord's decision. The spiritual purpose is that each time that man eats flesh there is an inherent reminder of death and the fall. The practical purpose is that the flood has permanently changed the physical environment of the world. Before the flood there was a greenhouse like environment with consistently warm temperatures. Now, that the vapor canopy covering the earth is gone, humanity will be exposed to extremes in climate that will require a different diet to meet their nutritional needs. It is critical to recognize that this change was not Noah's decision to try a new diet. This was something ordained by the Lord. Every so often in the Christian community there is some well meaning book published urging believers to follow the "Eden diet" as though it were wise to do so. It was God Who changed the Eden diet. A person can choose to follow a strict vegetarian diet for health or weight loss, but they will experience being more cold than normal as well as a loss of strength as a result. The people that choose to be strict vegetarians for religious purposes such as some Hindus, do so without the true knowledge that God no longer requires us or intends for us to be strict vegetarians.

9:5-6 - "Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man."

One of the great concerns of the Lord just prior to the flood was the extent of violence between people. "Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth." (Genesis 6:13). Now, after the flood, God institutes a new law for humanity that is designed by God, not to eliminate violence, but to limit it. The new law will not and cannot eliminate violence, because the violence is not circumstantial, but arises from the hearts of fallen, wicked people. As long as there are fallen people in the world, there will be violence. However, what is indicated by

this new law is that even fallen, wicked people will be motivated to restrain themselves from their own violent inclinations if the consequences to themselves is greater than the satisfaction of indulging their impulses to do violence. God knows the wisdom of this principle far better than our societies. The principle is called deterrence. The deterrent that God chose is the death penalty. The person (or animal) that takes a human life will have its own life taken from them. The society is responsible to carry out the penalty required. This is not political; it is not cultural; it is spiritual! The death penalty begins here, and continues throughout the Old Covenant as it is re-established in the Law of Moses with more details.

What some well-intentioned Christians misunderstand is that it also continues throughout the New Covenant. The death penalty should be part of every society's justice system until the Second Coming of Christ when the ultimate and final spiritual death penalty is carried out by the Lord Himself on those who deserve it.

It is necessary for every society as long as there are fallen wicked people in the earth who would do violence against others if left unrestrained. Some societies have abandoned this standards based upon the false concept that the death penalty is an ancient, barbaric, cruel and unusual punishment that an "evolved", enlightened society should reject. This is a classic example of foolish humans convincing themselves that they are wiser than God. The long-term fruit of that foolishness will eventually corrupt any society that rejects God's standard. Some believers have mistakenly believed that Jesus changed the death penalty in the New Testament because of the way He handled the woman caught in adultery. They claim that the New Testament is a covenant of love replacing the more viscous Old Testament of justice. A close reading in John 8 reveals that Jesus did not set aside the death penalty in the case of the woman caught in adultery, but rather exposed the wicked religious leaders that were attempting to manipulate the Law to trap Jesus. The love of God is never to be set in opposition to the justice of God as they do. God is love in the Old Testament as well as the New. God is just in the Old Testament as well as the New.

9:21-27 - "He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. So he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant."

This situation that happened with Noah, Ham, Shem and Japheth has stimulated its share of debate and confusion over the generations. It seems initially confusing to us. Some of the more difficult elements are the sudden change in Noah's behavior, what exactly Ham did to his father, and why Noah reacted so strongly to what was done to him. The change in Noah's behavior serves as a sober lesson for us. Remember Noah is identified by the Lord as a blameless and righteous man. This event is a shocking inconsistency in his long life pattern of behavior. The lesson is that even an entire life of doing right does not make us impervious to the danger of a weak moment's lapse in judgment. The warning is to remain always vigilant to the temptation to let our guard down. Noah sinned in this moment of his life. His sin was two-fold. It was not a sin to drink some of the wine from his vineyard, but to drink to the point of becoming drunk.

Once he was drunk, he uncovered himself and lay naked in his tent. His nakedness in itself was not sinful because he did so in the privacy of his own home. What was foolish was that he did so at a time when someone might enter his tent and see him in his nakedness. Ham entered the tent without any hint in the story that he should not have been there. It would be normal during certain hours for Noah's sons to have access to their father and permission to enter his tent to see him. Sadly, Noah's foolishness led to the exposure of not only his own nakedness, but also Ham's bad character.

There is a lot of speculation based purely on imagination of what Ham did to his father when he found Noah naked in his tent. The extreme suggestions all come from trying to find a particularly bad crime to fit the severe reaction of Noah once he wakes up. The text is clear and straightforward and we should not indulge in adding to the story what is not

there. Ham's violation is not that he saw his father's nakedness (this was not his fault, but Noah's), but in how he responded to what he saw.

Ham should have honored his father even in his moment of weakness, covered him, said nothing to anyone about what he saw, except to respectfully mention the situation to Noah himself the next day. Instead, Ham chose to leave his father uncovered, and then telling it to his brothers outside. He magnified his father's dishonor by effectively exposing him to the other sons. Their response led by Shem is a powerful contrast to Ham's in the extreme care they take to honor their father in his moment of weakness.

The spiritual principles at stake here are the significance of nakedness as public dishonor because of its association as the immediate consequence for Adam's sin (Genesis 3:7), and one of the first Biblical examples of the violation of the "honor your father" standard of God's Law (Exodus 20:12). Noah's response the next day should be interpreted, not as an outburst of personal anger, but as God's representative. The curse pronounced upon Ham's descendants is a prophetic anticipation of them following in the rebellious dishonor of God that Ham demonstrated here. The specific descendants cursed later become the Canaanites that fill the promised land with wickedness before the arrival of Israel under Moses.

Genesis 10

10:5-11 - "From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations. The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan. The sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD." The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah,"

Chapter 10 serves a very important purpose in the narrative history of the world. It traces for us the early transition and development of the post-flood society from a single family to a world of nations as it continues even today. The first thing that we are meant to catch from this history is that the

dividing of the population into nations was not accidental, or a bright idea of any one person. The concept of a world filled with nations organized according to common language and family connection is the idea and work of the Lord in influencing the development of human history.

Contrary to the social idealists that periodically call for a one world society and government, the Lord in His greater wisdom chose to divide the world into nations. One of the primary reasons the Lord divided the world in this way was to build into all human society a way to limit and slow down the development of evil. If we compare evil to a deadly disease then having one unified society allows for the rapid spread of infection to the entire world's population without hindrance. In the way nations function, the natural boundaries of geographic borders, unique cultures, and differing languages all serve to stop the spread of evil (or at least slow it down) as it reaches the boundary of one nation before it infects its neighbors. An example of this principle in modern history is the spread of Nazism in Germany. That social infection of evil spread until it filled the nation of Germany, but the above mentioned boundaries and differences kept England free from that infection and able to oppose it. Had the entire world been united at that time, the infection would have quickly spread to the entire world. This is where the wisdom of man which would lead to a unified world without national boundaries is far inferior to the wisdom of God in influencing the distinctions among the nations.

10:15-19 - "Canaan became 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 spread abroad. The territory 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."

Chapter 10 is divided into three sections; each detailing the lines of descent from Noah's three sons, Japheth, Ham and Shem. This passage gives us the account of one of the sons of Ham, Canaan. His history is worth noting because of Noah's pronouncement of a curse of Canaan in 9:25-27. We saw from that event that Canaan was destined to follow in the footsteps of his father Ham. It would be a case of "like father, like son", but with a bad father and even more wicked son. We will encounter Canaan's descendants again in Exodus when the children of Israel are commanded by God to bring His judgment upon the Canaanites because of their generations long rebellion and perversity. Before then, we will also encounter the children of Canaan who build the twin cities of wickedness,

Sodom and Gomorrah. Anticipating the severe judgment that will be poured out by the Lord upon Sodom and Gomorrah in the form of fire from heaven that destroys their cities completely, it becomes shocking when we recognize from the mention of these cities here, that they had not learned even the most basic lesson of the Flood. God destroyed the entire world with a flood, yet they filled their cities with the same kinds of wickedness.

It is also interesting to recognize the development of evil here. One of the main themes of the Bible is that God blesses the entire world by choosing one individual; entering into covenant relationship with that individual; pouring out His blessing upon them; and from that person establishing His purpose in the world. God followed this basic plan with minor variations with Adam, Noah, Moses, and ultimately Jesus. In a similar but opposite way, one wicked man has the capacity to eventually influence entire nations and all of history for evil. In this case, one bad apple (Ham -> Canaan) becomes a spoiling influence for the whole barrel of nations.

10:25 - "Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan."

The key phrase "in his days the earth was divided" in this verse has confused some believers. It is a reference to the events of Chapter 11 to come in what we call the Tower of Babel. When God judged the population's rebellion by confusing their language, He also scattered the newly formed nations abroad throughout the earth. "So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth..." (Genesis 11:8). The scattering of chapter 11 is identical to the dividing here in chapter 10. Some have wondered why it is mentioned here in chapter 10 and whether it preceded the Tower of Babel. The dividing was the result of the Tower of Babel event detailed in the next chapter and does not precede it. Chapter 10 actually covers an overview of several generations of history from before the Tower of Babel, during it, and after it. In chapter 11 the Lord will focus our attention on the Tower event in more detail, while here it is a historical reference to help us see at what point in the overall history the Tower of Babel occurred.

10:32 - "These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood."

All of the nations of the world once shared a common history and background. As different as Russia is from Mexico, and France is from

Mongolia, they all can trace their history all the way back to Noah and his sons. Paul confirms this truth of history in his speech before the philosophers of Athens. "and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation," (Acts 17:26). This establishes that all nations not only have a shared root and history, they all share something even more important. All nations exist under God's greater authority and continue only by His plan and discretion. God first caused the nations to be formed and He still rules over all the nations without exception. While it is true that many of the nations disregard Him and strive to go their own way according to their own plans, He alone has determined in advance the geographic boundaries and time boundaries of every nation. He has chosen how big each nation will become and how long they will continue to exist. History testifies of the Lord's authority over the nations. No matter how great and magnificent, no nation can extend one mile beyond what the Lord has ordained or continue for one year longer than He chooses. Babylon, Assyria, Rome and innumerable others have come and gone off of the face of the earth. They came into existence by the influence of God and they no longer exist by the authority and power of God. The true principle of history is not social evolution, but divine sovereignty.

As an interesting side note on this chapter, the total number of nations mentioned here is seventy. Throughout the Old Testament seventy was the accepted number identified as representing all the Gentile nations of the world. When Jesus chose his extended group of disciples to begin the expansion of the gospel beyond the 12 apostles, He selected seventy disciples and sent them out with the message of salvation. "Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come." (Luke 10:1). This is probably not a coincidental similarity in numbers. The seventy messengers sent out by Christ anticipates the world-wide mission of the gospel eventually reaching all of the nations.

