ADULT CHURCH BIBLE STUDY

Whose Name Will Stand?

Human Power and God’s Redemptive Plan in Genesis 10–11

“…let us make us a name… ”
Genesis 11:4 (KJV)



The Central Question: Whose Name Will Stand?

GENESIS 11:4 (KJV)

“…let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad…”

- Humanity seeks collective strength, security, and renown.
- The stated purpose—not building itself—is central to the passage.
- God’s authority and redemptive purpose remain decisive.

Key contrast: a name humanity makes vs. a name God promises.



Genesis 1–12: The Big Picture



CREATION

Gen 1–2

→



THE FALL

Gen 3

→



CIVILIZATION

Gen 4–6

→



THE FLOOD

Gen 6–9

→



THE NATIONS

Gen 10–11

THE LINE OF PROMISE → SHEM (GEN 11:10–26) → ABRAM (GEN 11:27–12:3) → CHRIST (MATT 1:1)

As rebellion widens in scale, the biblical narrative continues the line of promise.

Cain and the Early Civilizations

GENESIS 4:17–24

- Cain builds a city (4:17).
- Jabal: Livestock and tents; Jubal': music; Tubal-cain: metalworking (4:20–22).
- Lamech speaks of violence and vengeance (4:23–24).
- Culture and sin appear side by side.

Important: creativity and city-building are not inherently sinful.



The Flood, the Noahic Covenant, and Human Government

GENESIS 6–9

- The Flood answers a world filled with wickedness and violence (6:5, 11–13).
- God commands Noah's family to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (9:1).
- God establishes accountability concerning bloodshed because humanity is made in His image (9:4–6).

NOAHIC COVENANT • GENESIS 9:1–17

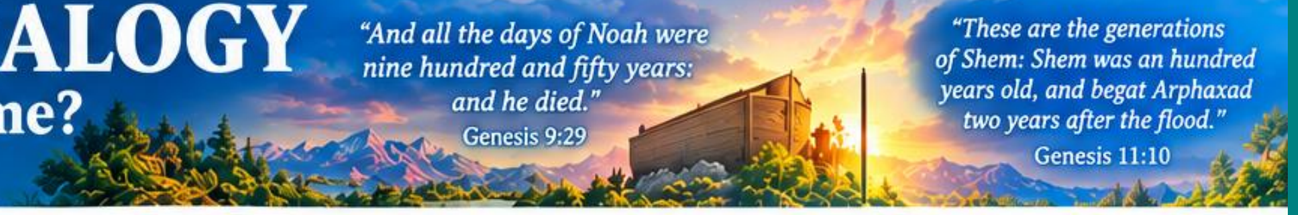
- Promise: no more worldwide destruction by flood (9:11).
- Sign: the rainbow (9:12–17). Blood commands (9:4–6) remain distinct.
- Genesis 9:29- Noah lived 950 years then died.



NOAH & SHEM'S GENEALOGY

Who Was Alive During Noah's Lifetime?

A Scripture-based timeline from Genesis 5, 7, 9 and 11 (KJV)



"And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died."
Genesis 9:29

"These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood."
Genesis 11:10

THE LINE OF SHEM – FROM SHEM TO ABRAHAM

A generation-by-generation breakdown using the ages recorded in Genesis.

Noah (0–950) Alive during all of the generations listed below (602–950) ✓

Shem's Line (sons and grandsons) All born while Noah was alive. ✓

Terah and Abraham Born after Noah was 602. Noah lived for 58 years after Abraham's birth. (950 – 892 = 58) ✓

Generation (son of)	Scripture Reference (when son was born / lifespan)	Age of Noah at birth of this son (approximate)	Years after Flood (when son was born)	Total's Age at this point	Years after this son's birth (when next son born)	
Noah (father of Shem, Ham, Japheth)	Genesis 9:28–29 (950 years)	—	—	600 (Flood)	950	—
The Flood came when Noah was 600 years old. (Genesis 7:6)						
Shem (son of Noah)	Genesis 11:10–11 Born 2 years after the Flood Lifespan: 600	602	2	602	600	100
Arphaxad (son of Shem)	Genesis 11:12–13 Born at 35	637	37	637	438	35
Salah (son of Arphaxad)	Genesis 11:14–15 Born at 30	667	67	667	433	30
Eber (son of Salah)	Genesis 11:16–17 Born at 34	701	101	701	464	34
Peleg (son of Eber)	Genesis 11:18–19 Born at 30	731	131	731	239	30
Reu (son of Peleg)	Genesis 11:20–21 Born at 32	763	163	763	239	32
Serug (son of Reu)	Genesis 11:22–23 Born at 30	793	193	793	230	30
Nahor (son of Serug)	Genesis 11:24–25 Born at 29	822	222	822	148	29
Terah (son of Nahor)	Genesis 11:26 Born at 70 (to Abraham)	892	292	892	205	70
Abraham (son of Terah)	Genesis 11:26 Born at 70 (to Terah) (lifetime not fully stated)	892 (at birth)	292 (lifespan)	892 (at birth)	175 (approx.)	—

All of the descendants of Shem — including Terah and Abraham — were alive during Noah's lifetime. Noah lived 58 years after Abraham was born, and he died at age 950. (Genesis 9:29)

KEY INFORMATION & LIFETIMES

Person	Relationship	Total Lifespan (KJV)	Age at Birth (of next son)	Year(s) After Flood (approx.)	Alive During Noah's Lifetime?
Noah	Father of Shem, Ham, Japheth	950	—	0	Yes (0–950)
Shem	Son of Noah	600	100	2	Yes (602–950)
Arphaxad	Son of Shem	438	35	37	Yes (637–950)
Salah	Son of Arphaxad	433	30	67	Yes (667–950)
Eber	Son of Salah	464	34	101	Yes (701–950)
Peleg	Son of Eber	239	30	131	Yes (731–950)
Reu	Son of Peleg	239	32	163	Yes (763–950)
Serug	Son of Reu	230	30	193	Yes (793–950)
Nahor	Son of Serug	148	29	222	Yes (822–950)
Terah	Son of Nahor	205	70	292	Yes (892–950)
Abraham	Son of Terah	175	70 (at birth)	292	Yes (892–950)

WHAT THIS SHOWS

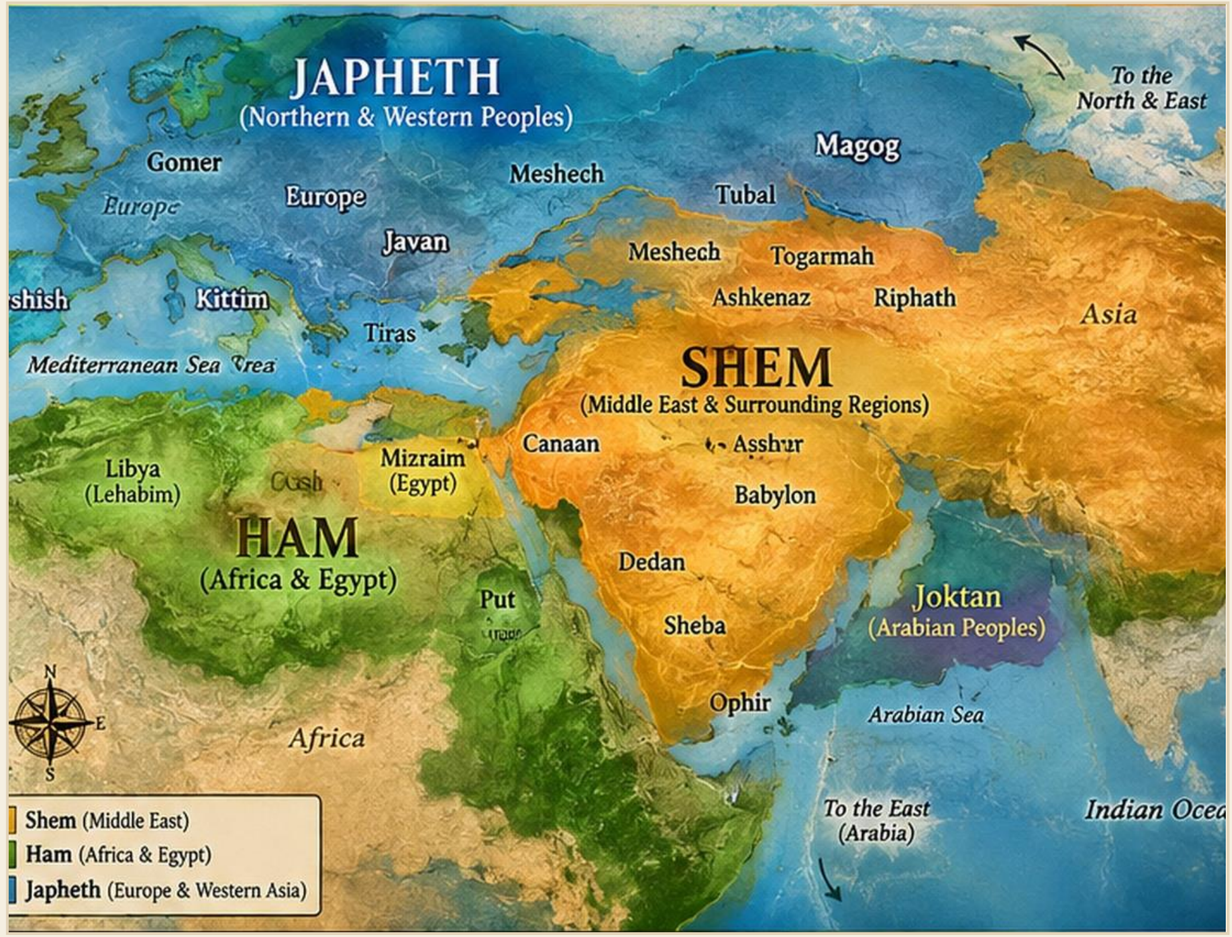
- Noah lived 950 years (Genesis 9:29).
- The Flood came when Noah was 600 (Genesis 7:6).
- Shem was 100 two years after the Flood (Genesis 11:10).
- Using the ages in Genesis 11, we can calculate the birth years of each descendant in Shem's line.
- Noah was 892 years old when Abraham was born (Terah's age 70) (Genesis 11:26).
- Noah lived 58 more years after Abraham's birth (950 – 892 = 58/59).

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Every person in Shem's line — including Terah and Abraham — was alive during Noah's lifetime. The Bible does not say that Abraham was the first son born to Terah, but using Terah's age of 70 in Genesis 11:26, we see that Noah was 892 when Abraham was born, followed by 58 more years of life.

"The line of Shem reminds us that God's plan reaches across generations, tribes, and nations — through faith, not just family."

Genesis 10: The Table of Nations



Schematic illustration of the biblical Table of Nations; not a precise ethnographic map.

GENESIS 10:5, 20, 31

- Japheth, Ham, and Shem frame the genealogy.
- The chapter describes families, tongues, lands, and nations.
- The divisions are described as “after his tongue.”

Word Study: Gibbor — “Mighty”



LEXICAL / THEMATIC LINK

- Genesis 6:4 uses gibborim: “mighty men.”
- Genesis 10:8 uses gibbor for Nimrod: “mighty one.”

Nimrod: A Mighty One in the Earth



Schematic illustration of the biblical Table of Nations; not a precise ethnographic map.

GENESIS 10:8–9

"He began to be a mighty one in the earth."

- Nimrod is named as a descendant in Ham's line.
- He is associated with power and hunting.
- Mighty and before the Lord...

The Beginning of a Kingdom in Shinar



Schematic illustration of the biblical Table of Nations; not a precise ethnographic map.

GENESIS 10:10–12

- The beginning of Nimrod's kingdom is linked to Babel in Shinar.
- Erech, Accad, and Calneh are also named.
- The passage describes political and urban power; it does not condemn cities as such.

Artistic reconstruction: cityscape is illustrative, not a verified portrait of a specific site.

One Language, One Speech



GENESIS 11:1

“And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.”

- Shared language enables coordinated action.
- Unity is not inherently sinful.
- The narrative’s concern emerges through the purpose stated in verse 4.

The City and the Tower



GENESIS 11:3–4

- “Go to, let us make brick…” (11:3)
- “Let us build us a CITY and a TOWER…” (11:4)

Artistic reconstruction. A ziggurat is a possible historical parallel, not an identification stated in Scripture.

“Let Us Make Us a Name”



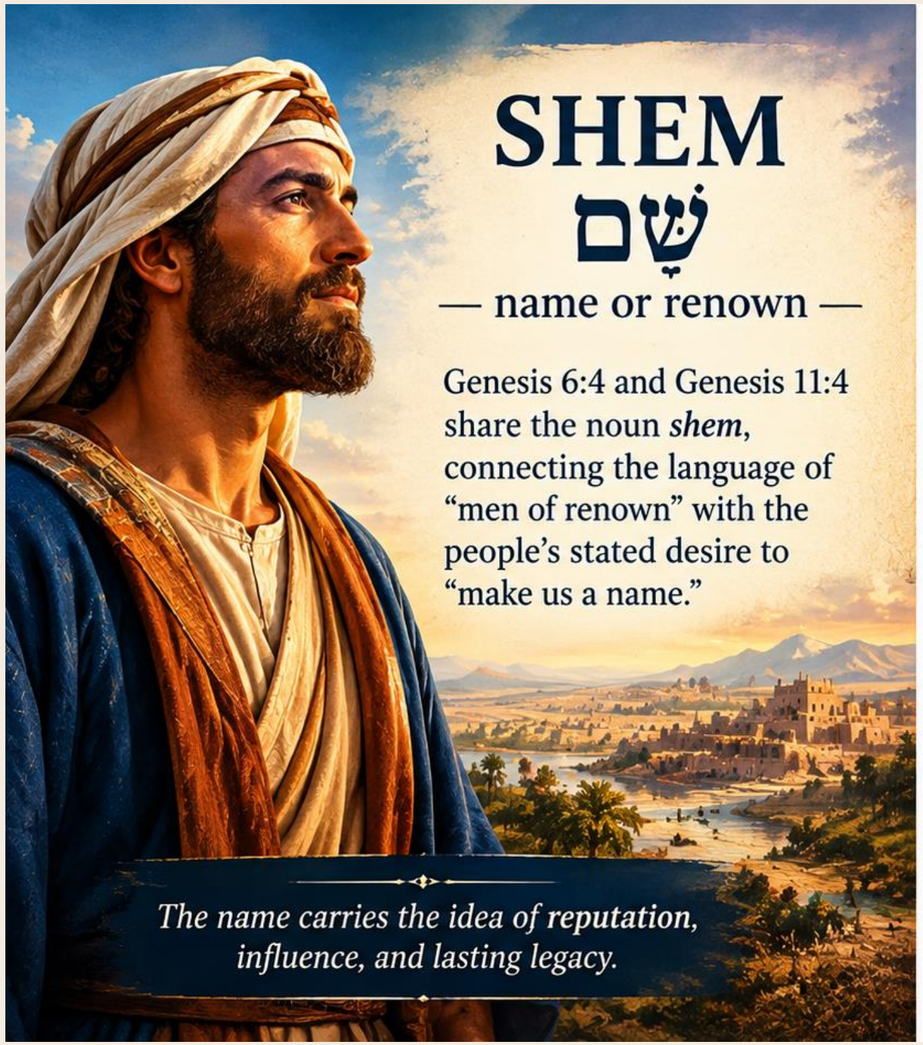
Artistic reconstruction; not archaeological evidence.

GENESIS 11:4 (KJV)

“…let us make us a name…”

- The stated aim is self-made renown.
- The issue is the purpose expressed in the text—not ambition in every form.
- Human reputation cannot displace God’s authority.

Word Study: Shem — “Name”



LEXICAL / THEMATIC LINK

- Genesis 6:4 — “men of renown” (KJV).
- Genesis 11:4 — “let us make us a name.”
- Genesis 12:2 — “make thy name great.”
- The Hebrew noun shem (שֵׁם) appears across these themes.

A shared word supports comparison; it does not prove shared identity or motive.

“Lest We Be Scattered Abroad”



Schematic illustration of the biblical Table of Nations; not a precise ethnographic map.

GENESIS 11:4 (KJV)

“…lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”

- Their stated goal is to remain together.
- Genesis 9:1 commanded humanity to fill the earth.

God Sees and Comes Down



Artistic reconstruction; not archaeological evidence.

GENESIS 11:5-7

- The LORD sees the city and tower (11:5).
- God describes the people's shared language and coordinated project (11:6).
- God confunds their language (11:7).

The language of God “coming down” is presented in the narrative; avoid speculative hidden meanings.

Judgment and Restraint: Babel Ends



GENESIS 11:8-9

- The LORD scatters them abroad (11:8).
- The city is called Babel because language is confounded (11:9).
- Judgment interrupts the project and restrains its continuation.

Context: Read Babel in the Story Around It

Genesis 10–11 is not an isolated story; it sits inside the wider account of human rebellion and God's purpose.

GENESIS 3

Human rebellion and exile

The rupture with God shapes the story of humanity.

GENESIS 4

Cain's city and culture

City-building and skill are described; the text does not call the city itself sinful.

GENESIS 6–9

Violence, Flood, and covenant

Judgment is followed by preservation and commands for renewed human life.

GENESIS 10

Nations and peoples

A broad table of peoples and territories frames the Babel account.

GENESIS 11–12

Babel, then Abram

Human self-exaltation is followed by God's call and promise.

Interpretive guardrail: Genesis 10 and 11 are arranged thematically as well as genealogically—not as a simple, uninterrupted timeline.

Genesis 10:5, 20, 31; 10:25; 11:1–9; 12:1–3



First-Mention & Comparative Mention

Repeated words and parallel scenes can sharpen interpretation—but a word link is not proof of a complete theological equation.

FIRST-MENTION LENS

Ask: where does a theme first appear, and what does that setting contribute?

Genesis 3:15 introduces conflict and the hope of an eventual victory over the serpent.

COMPARATIVE LENS

Place passages side by side and compare what is alike—and what is different.

Genesis 9:1 commands humanity to multiply and fill the earth; Genesis 11:4 describes a plan to avoid being scattered.

READ CAREFULLY

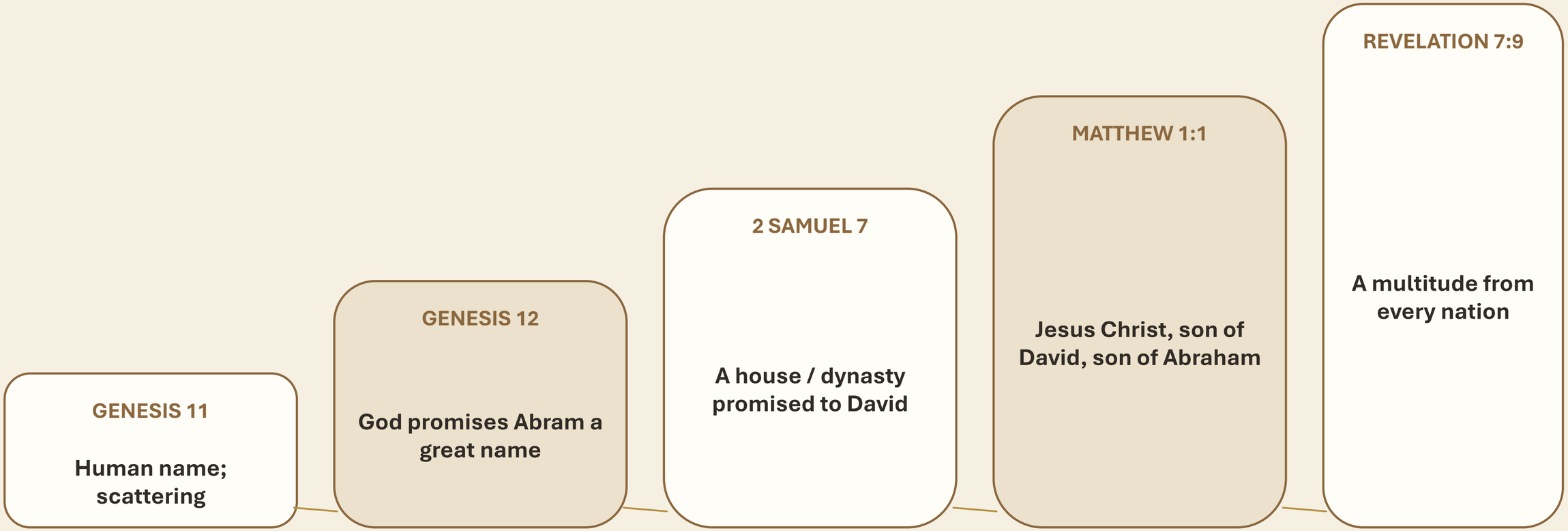
A contextual tension is clear; conscious defiance is not explicitly stated.

The builders' stated motives are making a name and preventing scattering—not a recorded quotation rejecting Genesis 9.

Strong contextual inference ≠ direct statement of the builders' private intentions.

Progressive Mention: From Scattering to Promise

The theme develops across the biblical story; Genesis 11 does not contain the whole story by itself.



The Bible’s later texts develop the promise; do not read every later detail back into Genesis 11 as though it were already explicit there.

Dispensations: A Teaching Framework

INNOCENCE

Genesis 1–3

CONSCIENCE

Genesis 3–8

HUMAN GOVERNMENT

Genesis 9

PROMISE

Genesis 12 onward

LAW

Exodus onward

GRACE

New Testament era

KINGDOM

Future reign in traditional schemes

For Genesis 10–11: the Human Government framework is associated with Genesis 9; the Promise stage becomes prominent with Abram in Genesis 12.

Moral responsibility existed before Genesis 9; labels summarize a theological system rather than replace the text.

From Babel to Abram: The Narrative Turns

Genesis 11:10–32 moves from the nations to one family through whom God announces blessing for all families.

SHEM

Genesis 11:10

ARPHAXAD

11:12

TERAH

11:24–26

ABRAM

11:26–32

GENESIS 12:1–3

God calls Abram and promises blessing—not a name seized by human effort, but a name and purpose granted by God.

Genesis 11’s genealogy is a bridge: from the scattering of peoples to the promise that will bless all families of the earth.



From Abram to Christ: The Promise Widens

Genesis 12 begins a redemptive-historical line that the New Testament identifies with Jesus Christ.

PROMISE

Genesis 12:2–3
God promises Abram a great name and blessing for all families of the earth.

ROYAL LINE

2 Samuel 7:12–16
God promises David a house and enduring royal line.

FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST

Matthew 1:1
Jesus is presented as the son of David and son of Abraham.

Genesis 10–11 → Genesis 12 → David → Jesus Christ



Types & Shadows: Use the Category Carefully

TEST FOR A TYPE

1. Is there evidence of divine design?
2. Is the correspondence grounded in Scripture?
3. Does later revelation show a greater fulfillment?

Hebrews 8:5; 10:1

WHAT WE CAN SAY

Babel's human-built city contrasts with the city whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10).

Daniel 2:34, 44 contrasts human kingdoms with God's enduring kingdom.

QUALIFY THE LINK

Babel and Pentecost (Acts 2:6–11)

Whose Name Will Stand?

The final question is not whether people can build—but what authority and purpose govern what they build.

HUMAN SELF-EXALTATION

“Let us make us a name”
Genesis 11:4

Security and reputation pursued on human terms

GOD’S PROMISE

“I will make thy name great”
Genesis 12:2 (KJV)

A name and calling received within God’s redemptive purpose

Will humanity’s name and kingdom stand by its own power, or will we recognize the authority of the God who gives the promise and brings His redemptive purpose to fulfillment?

Genesis 12:2 • Matthew 1:1

Scripture References for Review

Read the passages in context; references below support the main interpretive moves in the lesson.

GENESIS: THE NARRATIVE

Genesis 1:26–28 — image of God; fill the earth
Genesis 3:15, 23–24 — conflict and exile
Genesis 4:17–22 — Cain’s city and cultural skills
Genesis 6:4–8 — mighty men; human violence
Genesis 9:1–17 — renewed command, covenant, rainbow
Genesis 10:5, 20, 31; 10:25 — peoples and division
Genesis 11:1–9 — Babel, name, scattering
Genesis 11:10–32; 12:1–3 — Shem to Abram; promise

CANONICAL CONNECTIONS

2 Samuel 7:12–16 — promise to David
Daniel 2:34, 44 — God’s enduring kingdom
Matthew 1:1 — Jesus, son of David and Abraham
Acts 2:6–11 — people hear in their own languages
Galatians 3:8, 16 — promise and Abraham’s seed
Hebrews 8:5; 10:1 — pattern and shadow
Hebrews 11:10 — city whose builder is God
Revelation 7:9–10 — multitude from every nation