

## Genesis, Tablets 5—6

TABLET 5: GENESIS 10:2 — 11:10 a

TABLET 6: GENESIS 11:10 b — 11:27 a

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### Introduction:

1. These two chapters carry the story of mankind down to Abram and Sarai. Chapter 10 is the Table of the Nations.
2. Noah's son Shem is the one that leads down to Abram, so his record is placed last in the table which moves from general history to salvation history.
3. Tablet six itself was probably written in the time of Abram since it ends with him.
4. The last sentence of the previous tablet reads:

**(1) This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood.**

- Note that the sons of Noah did not have children before or during the Flood. Perhaps this was controlled by the Lord as in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 1:6:

**Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her.**

## Tablet 5

**(2) The sons of Japheth:**

**Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshek and Tiras.**

- **Japheth** was introduced in verse 1.
- The **Japhetic** peoples—the Medes, Greeks, Cypriots, etc. Probably the Caucasian people of Europe and of northern Asia. Many scholars also include the Orientals here.

- **Gomer** may be linguistically related to Gauls (French) and Cymru (Welsh).
- **Magog** was probably the father of the Scythian peoples.
- **Madai** was the father of the Medes, prominent in the book of Daniel.
- **Javan**: Father of the Greeks. In Daniel 8: 21, the name Javan is rendered “Greece” in modern translations. The Greeks were also known as Ionians— a name that is derived directly from **Javan**.

### **(3) The sons of Gomer:**

#### **Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah.**

- **Gomer** was introduced in verse 2.
- **Togarmah** was the ancestor of the Armenians.

### **(4) The sons of Javan:**

#### **Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittites and the Rodanites. (5) (From these the maritime peoples spread out into their territories by their clans within their nations, each with its own language.)**

- **Javan** was introduced in verse 2.
- Note the edit in verse 5, probably by Moses. This explanation was added later than the original tablet.
- This spreading out with new **languages** occurred in the next chapter.

### **(6) The sons of Ham:**

#### **Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan.**

- **Ham** was introduced in verse 1.

- The **Hamitic** peoples—Ethiopians, Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, possibly the African and Oriental peoples, though many scholars view the Orientals as Japhetic.
- Note the names of some countries were drawn from their founding fathers, such as the country of **Egypt**. The word has a history that originated in this table of nations that some critics claim is myth.

### **(7) The sons of Cush:**

#### **Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteka.**

- **Cush** was introduced in verse 6.  
**The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan.**
- **Raamah** was introduced in verse 7.

### **(8) Cush was the father of Nimrod,**

**who became a mighty warrior on the earth. (9) He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, “Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD.”**

- **Cush** was introduced in verse 6.
- **Nimrod** was a natural leader of men and city builder. His name means “Let us revolt.” He was probably opposed to existing law and order. He may have been a **hunter** who kept wild animals from encroaching on civilization.

**(10) The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Uruk, Akkad and Kalneh, in Shinar. (11) From that land he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah (12) and Resen, which is between Nineveh and Calah — which is the great city.**

- Nimrod stepped into opportunities left untouched by his contemporaries.

**(13) Egypt was the father of**

**the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, (14) Pathrusites, Kasluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and Caphtorites.**

- **Egypt** was introduced back in verse 6.
- This editorial comment shows that the editor lived in the days of **the Philistines**.

**(15) Canaan was the father of Sidon his firstborn, and of the Hittites, (16) Jebusites, Amorites, Gargashites, (17) Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, (18) Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites.**

- **Canaan** was introduced in verse 6.

**Later the Canaanite clans scattered (19) and the borders of Canaan reached from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboyim, as far as Lasha. (20) These are the sons of Ham by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.**

- This tablet was written before towns of vs. 19 were destroyed. The destruction was on a later tablet.
- Verse 20 summarizes verses 6 - 19.

**21) Sons were also born to Shem,**

**whose older brother was Japheth; Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber.**

**(22) The sons of Shem:**

**Elam, Ashur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram.**

- **Shem** was introduced in verse 1.

- The Spirit of God directed the tablet writer to develop the line of **Shem** last, because the rest of Genesis develops from the **Shemites**.
- The Semitic peoples included —Jews, Arabs, Babylonians, Assyrians, Arameans, Phoenicians.

### **(23) The sons of Aram:**

**Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshek. (24) Arphaxad was the father of Shelah, and Shelah the father of Eber.**

- **Aram** was introduced in verse 22.

### **(25) Two sons were born to Eber:**

**One was named Peleg, because in his time the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan. (26) Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, (27) Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, (28) Obal, Abimael, Sheba, (29) Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan. (30) The region where they lived stretched from Mesha toward Sephar, in the eastern hill country.**

- **Eber** was introduced in verse 23.
- One view has it that the **earth** being **divided** refers to the divisions of continents. However, we favor the explanation that the **earth** refers to the people on the **earth** and the division was at the Tower of Babel that will be unfolded in chapter 11.
- The **Jobab** of verse 29 may be the Job of the Book of Job. There is a lengthy discussion about this at:  
[http://www.setterfield.org/Jobab's\\_identity.html](http://www.setterfield.org/Jobab's_identity.html)

**(31) These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.**

- The closing formula for the sons of Shem records.

**(32) These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood.**

- The closing formula for the sons of Noah records.

## **GENESIS 11 NIV**

Now we see the specifics of what caused the dispersion that God had asked them to do voluntarily.

**(1) Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. (2) As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.**

- It was God's will that mankind spread out over the earth, but **people** chose **not** to obey. Genesis 9:1

**Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth."**

- Shinar is Babylonia.

It isn't practical to show all of the *Table of the Nations* in our lesson, so we have modified the line of Shem because the story of our redemption flows through his family line. The other two family lines are Ham and Japheth.

# Shem

*"Blessed be the LORD God of Shem,  
And Canaan shall be his servant."*

Elam (Genesis 10:22)

Asshur (Assyria)

Arphaxad

Salah

Eber (the Hebrews)

Peleg

Reu

Serug

Nahor

Terah

**Abram** (2300 BC)

(Genesis 11:26)

**Messiah** (33 AD)

(3) They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. (4) Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”

- One writer suggests they made **bricks** because the fine clay and sand were readily available, while **stone** would have to be imported from a distance.



- **Reaching to the heavens** was not intended to mean reaching to the place where God dwells. It simply meant a high **tower**.
- **Francis Schaeffer** considers this the first public declaration of Humanism. It was opposed to God’s commandment to diversify.
- It is clear the intention in building this **tower** was to avoid **scattering** as God had commanded.

(5) But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. (6) The LORD said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. (7) Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”

- The writer had to have been directly inspired to write these verses. He could not have known them.
- **The LORD came down** indicates that He was not dwelling among men.



- The triune nature of God is seen in the expression **“let us go down.”** This is a reference to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit -- to use the language of the New Covenant.
- The confusion was **language**, not color of skin nor any other distinction.
- Multiple **languages** are a direct result of the sin of this generation in refusing to disperse.
- The **language** barrier remained firmly in place until in Acts 2 where the Apostles of Christ were able to speak in languages they had not learned.

**When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?"**  
(Acts 2:6-8 NIV)

- **John MacArthur** writes:

Filling the earth would have required that men separate and strike out on their own—a prospect that involved risk. It was far easier to band together and build cities, enabling men to rely on themselves and one another rather than stepping out with faith in God.

**(8) So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. (9) That is why it was called Babel — because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.**

- **Babel** means confusion. Their dispersion put men at odds with other men.

- This ends the portion of history that deals with the entire human race. The focus of the story is narrowing to Shem.

### **(10) This is the account of Shem's family line.**

- We have seen the *genealogical table*, now for the *time table* for the line of **Shem**.

## **Tablet 6**

**(10b) Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of Arphaxad. (11) And after he became the father of Arphaxad, Shem lived 500 years and had other sons and daughters. When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Shelah. (13) And after he became the father of Shelah, Arphaxad lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.**

**(14) When Shelah had lived 30 years, he became the father of Eber. (15) And after he became the father of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.**

**(16) When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg. (17) And after he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters.**

**(18) When Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu. (19) And after he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters.**

**(20) When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug. (21) And after he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters.**

**(22) When Serug had lived 30 years, he became the father of Nahor. (23) And after he became the father of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters.**

- **Shem** (verse 11) is placed last in the table so the story could flow from the descendants of **Shem** and focus on Abram.

- The story is narrowing to **Nahor**, grandfather of Abram.

**(24) When Nahor had lived 29 years, he became the father of Terah. (25) And after he became the father of Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters. (26) After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.**

- The story has now introduced **Abram** and, by implication, Sarai. Their names were later changed to Abraham and Sarah.
- The Divine history has been moving towards these two and now comes to focus on them. The rest of Genesis develops their story of trials and errors and how God blessed them in spite of many wrong moves on their part.

**(27) This is the account of Terah's family line.**

**Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. (28) While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth. (29) Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milkah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milkah and Iskah.**

- Now the family clan moves away from **Ur of the Chaldeans** and moves toward Canaan, settling in **Haran**.
- **Abram** married his ½ sister and **Nahor** married his niece. Later the Law of Moses would forbid such close marriage. (Moses' own father had married his aunt.)

**(30) Now Sarai was childless because she was not able to conceive. (31) Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Harran, they settled there. (32) Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Harran.**

- The goal of the migration was **Canaan**, but **Terah** died before reaching it.
- Stephen’s inspired comments about this event are in Acts 7:2-5.
- The precise destination was unknown to Abram when they left **Ur**. Abraham was exercising his faith in God’s promises:

**(8) By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.**

**(9) By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.**

**(10) For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.** Hebrews 11:8-10 NIV



- **Abram** was *one of the most important men in history*. Three world religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—venerate him. His name means “exalted father” and was changed to Abraham -- “father of a multitude.” From this point onward, Genesis is about Abraham and God's dealings with him and his descendants.