

PART TWENTY-THREE:

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE NATIONS

(Gen. 10:1-32)

1. *The Families of Noah* (10:1).

"Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, namely, of Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood."

It seems that Noah gave to Shem and Japheth, by prophetic insight of course, the names that would be descriptive of their respective destinies: Shem ("name," "renown," because Yahweh would be his God in a special sense), Japheth "wide-spreading," "enlargement," with widespread occupancy of the earth and accompanying civil power, and by sharing ultimately the spiritual blessings of the Line of Shem. As for Ham, his name is usually rendered "dark-colored"; however, the etymology is said to be uncertain. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to identify the various ethnic groups that were, or are, associated with this progenitor and his name. Anthropological classifications in our day do not recognize a specific Hamitic Line. It is noteworthy, however, that a surprising number of the names listed in Chapter x. have been reliably identified, as we shall see below.

2. *The Table of Nations*

This is the name usually given to the content of this chapter. The word "nation" is best defined as a specific ethnic group or *people*. Hence, we are correct in speaking of the United States as the "melting-pot of nations."

Note well (JB, 25): "In the form of a genealogical tree this chapter draws up a Table of Peoples; the principle behind the classification is not so much racial affinity as historical and geographical relationship. The sons of Japheth inhabit Asia Minor and the Mediterranean islands, the sons of Ham people the lands of the south, Egypt, Ethiopia, Arabia, to which is added Canaan in memory of the time when she was Egypt's satellite. In the regions

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between these two groups live the sons of Shem: Elamites, Assyrians, Aramaeans, and the ancestors of the Hebrews. . . . This table sums up such knowledge of the inhabited world as Israel would possess in Solomon's time and asserts the unity of the human race which, from a common stock, has split up into various groups." Pfeiffer (BBA, 37): "The Table is arranged in climactic form. The first reference is to the Japhetic peoples who occupied Europe and parts of Asia. These were the people most remote from Biblical Israel. The Hamitic peoples of Asia and Africa were given second place. Many of these had close contacts with the Israelites. Semitic history, of which the family of Abraham is a conspicuous part, is presented last."

3. *The Trend of the Narrative*

It is evident that the writer of Genesis (Moses), in setting forth the account of man's original temptation and fall, and his degeneracy into universal wickedness as a result of the intermingling of the pious Sethites with the irreligious Cainites, was not only leading up to the narrative of the Flood, but also was pointing the finger of inspiration to another pivotal event in the unfolding of the Scheme of Redemption, namely, the giving of the Law. This purpose becomes more apparent in the ninth and tenth chapters of the book. The ninth chapter gives us the story of the beginning of the new world-order, and specific mention of the laws against the eating of blood, and against murder. The tenth deals with the dispersion and settlement of the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth, which followed of course the confusion of tongues at Babel the account of which appears in the eleventh chapter. Then every event, from the call of Abram to the Exodus, *points forward clearly to Sinai*. The Apostle Paul states the case tersely in these lines: "What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made" (Gal. 3:19). In the same chapter (Gal. 3:16) the Apostle

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writes: "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Thus the true Seed. Messiah, became the fulfillment of the Genesis oracle (Gen. 3:15) and of the Abrahamic Promise (Gen. 12:3, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14; Acts 3:25; Luke 1:44; Rom. 4:13-16, 9:1-5). Thus the internal unity of the Biblical revelation *as a whole* is again demonstrated beyond all possibility of reasonable doubt.

4. *Problems of the Table of Nations*

This Table presents some difficulties for which no solution has been found, up to the present time at least. Note the following facts, in this connection: (1) The account is that of the peopling of the earth after the Flood (10:32), and the area in which this began to take place must have been relatively small; therefore we must depend on subsequent history to trace the continued diffusion. (2) Some of the names which might be known to us in their native forms may seem unfamiliar because of having been vocalized incorrectly in the Hebrew tradition, by which the purely consonantal text has been supplied with vowel signs. Kraeling (BA, 47): "Thus Gomer should have been Gemer, Meshech should have been Moshech, and Togarma should have been Tegarma according to the evidence of the Assyrian inscriptions." (3) Apparently, the same, or very similar, names occur in separate Lines of descent. (Of course this may be accounted for on the ground that a particular people may have occupied—by conquest or by infiltration—an area already held by another and taken over the established *geographical* name of the prior ethnic group (as, for example, the English became known as Britons, and the Germanic peoples as Teutons, etc.). (4) The greatest difficulty, however, is that of the intermingling of individual with national (tribal) names. Smith and Fields et al (ITH, 46): "Now this is really of little

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consequence, since, with a few exceptions, as that of Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-9), the purpose is clearly to exhibit the affinities of *nations*. The record is *ethnographical* rather than *genealogical*. This is clear from the plural forms of some of the names (for example, all the descendants of *Mizraim*), and from the ethnic form of others, as those of the children of *Canaan*, nearly all of which are simply *geographical*. The genealogical form is preserved in the first generation after the sons of Noah, and is then virtually abandoned for a mere list of the nations descended from each of these progenitors. But in the line of the patriarchs from Shem to Abraham the genealogical form is strictly preserved, since the object is to trace a *personal* descent." Here it becomes Messianically oriented.

On the positive side of this problem, the following facts should be kept in mind: (1) As to the area from which the dispersion began to take place certainly the highlands of Armenia ("the mountains of Ararat") were especially adapted to be the center from which peoples (after Babel) began to move in all directions. Thence diffusion continued at first by way of the great river systems—the Tigris-Euphrates, the Nile, the Indus, the Hwang-ho and Wei—the invention of the sail-boat having made these the arteries of transportation. Just before the beginning of the historic period the peoples began to move in several directions at once: some into India, China, and across the Bering Strait into the Americas; others toward the Mediterranean and into the Lower Nile; still other groups such as the Megalithic traversed the Mediterranean into the Atlantic and up the coast as far as the Tin Islands (Great Britain), and as the Beaker peoples who brought bronze into Europe made their way up the Danube to the Baltic areas. That Southwest Asia was the cradle of the human race seems evident from the testimony of anthropology and early history. The unity of the race is a scientific

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fact; as one anthropologist, Goldenweiser, puts it (*Anthropology*, 32): "All the fundamental traits of the psychic make-up of man anywhere are present everywhere." Philology, the study of the origin of language, insofar as science has been able to penetrate this mystery, corroborates this view. (2) The geographical explanations which appear in the Table itself greatly facilitate the identification of the peoples who are named. (3) Through the help afforded by classical sources and by the ancient inscriptions which tell us so much about the world in which ancient Israel lived, "a surprising number of the names in this Table of Nations have been reliably identified" (Kraeling, BA, 47). (4) Note the following summary by Mitchell (NBD, 867): "The names in the Table were probably originally the names of individuals, which came to be applied to the people descended from them, and in some cases to the territory inhabited by these people. It is important to note that such names could have different meanings at different points in history, so that the morphological identification of a name in Gn. x with one in the extra-biblical sources can be completely valid only if the two occurrences are exactly contemporary. The changes in significance of names of this kind are due largely to the movements of peoples, in drift, infiltration, conquest, or migration. There are three principal characteristics of a people which are sufficiently distinctive to form some nuance of their name. These are race or physical type: language, which is one constituent of culture; and the geographical area in which they live or the political unit in which they are organized. Racial features cannot change, but they can become so mixed or dominated through intermarriage as to be indistinguishable. Language can change completely, that of a subordinate group being replaced by that of its rulers, in many cases permanently. Geographical habitat can be completely changed

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by migration. Since at times one, and at other times another, of these characteristics is uppermost in the significance of a name, the lists in Gn. x are unlikely to have been drawn up on one system alone. Thus, for instance, the descendants of Shem cannot be expected all to have spoken one language, or to have lived all in one area, or even to have belonged to one racial type, since inter-marriage may have obscured this. That this could have taken place may be indicated by the presence of apparently duplicate names in more than one list, Asshur (see *Assyria*), Sheba, Havilah, and Lud (im) under both Shem and Ham, and probably Meshek (Mash in Shem's list) under Shem and Japheth. Though these may indicate names that are entirely distinct, it is possible that they represent points where a strong people had absorbed a weaker." Again: "It is necessary to observe that names have been adopted from this chapter for certain specific uses in modern times. Thus in language study the terms 'Semitic' and 'Hamitic' are applied, the former to the group of languages including Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian, Arabic, etc., and the latter to the group of which (ancient) Egyptian is the chief. This is a usage of convenience, however, and does not mean that all the descendants of Shem spoke Semitic languages or all those of Ham Hamitic. Thus the entry of Elam under Shem, and Canaan under Ham, is not necessarily erroneous, even though Elamite was non-Semitic and Canaanite was a Semitic tongue. In short, the names in Gn. 10 probably indicate now geographical, now linguistic, and now political entities, but not consistently any one alone." W. F. Albright comments that the Table of Nations "shows such a remarkably 'modern' understanding of the linguistic situation in the ancient world . . . that it stands absolutely alone in ancient literature, without even a remote parallel even among the Greeks, where we find the closest approach to a distribution of the peoples in genealogical framework. But among the Greeks the framework is mythological and

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the people are all Greeks or Aegean tribes" (quoted by Cornfeld, AtD, 37). Cornfeld adds: "This Table is not the basis of the division of the races of mankind into the Aryan, Semitic and dark-skinned races. It knows nothing of the Far East and the Pacific and Atlantic races or of dark Africa south of Egypt. But it contains data about the geographical distribution of the ancient Near East, from the confines of Iran and Edom down to Arabia, of commercial and linguistic ties, and far-scattered tribes, 'nations,' countries and towns."

5. *The Line of Japheth* (10:2-5).

2 *The sons of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Mesbech, and Tiras.* 3 *And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.* 4 *And the sons of Javan: Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. Of these were the isles of the nations divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations."*

The Line of Japheth included the northern and western peoples: those who later spread over Europe and the Americas. *Gomer*: called *Gimirrai* in Assyrian texts: in Homer the Cimmerians (*Odys.*, 11:13-19): lived north of the Black Sea. *Ashkenaz*: probably the Scythians, living in the Black Sea region (cf. Jer. 51:27). *Riphath*: unidentified. *Togarmah*: *Tegarama* in Hittite, *Tilgarimmu* in Assyrian, inscriptions: lived in what was later known as Cappadocia (cf. Acts 2:9; 1 Pet. 1:1; Ezek. 27:14, 38:6). *Magog*: name of northern nomads, living in regions around the Caspian Sea (cf. Ezek. 38:2, 39:6; Rev. 20:8), equated by Josephus with the Scythians. *Madai*: uniformly translated Medes who lived South of the Caspian Sea, later formed an important part of the empire of Cyrus the Persian. *Javan*: Ionians: the name for the Greeks of Asia Minor. *Elishah*: the name traditionally associated with the Greeks of Sicily and southern Italy. *Tarshish*: many writers identify Tarshish with Tartessus

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of southern Spain (cf. Jonah 1:3, 4:2; Isa. 23:1, 6, 10; Jer. 10:9). *Kittim*: the island of Cyprus; later used to refer to the Romans (Dan. 11:30). *Dodanim* (or *Rodanim*): probably the inhabitants of the island of Rhodes (cf. 1 Chron. 1:7). *Tubal* and *Mesbech*: names occur together in Scripture (Ezek. 27:13; 32:26; 38:2, 3; 39:1); *Tabali* in Assyrian texts, in inhabited area near Cilicia. *Mesbech*, in Phrygia, was Assyrian *Mushki*, Greek *Moschi*. *Tiras*: probably identical with the Tyrsenoi of classical tradition and Turusha of earlier Egyptian texts; probably also the piratical sea people who invaded Egypt and Syria in the thirteenth century before Christ, thought by some to have been the Thracians. Occupied islands and coastlands of the Aegean, and said to have been ancestors of the Etruscans.

6. *The Line of Ham* (10:6-20).

6 *And the sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Put, and Canaan.* 7 *And the sons of Cush: Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah: Sheba, and Dedan.* 8 *And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.* 9 *He was a mighty hunter before Jehovah; wherefore it is said, Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Jehovah.* 10 *And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.* 11 *Out of that land he went forth into Assyria, and builded Nineveh, and Rehoboth-ir, and Calab, 12 and Resen between Nineveh and Calab (the same is the great city).* 13 *And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Ananim, and Lehabim, and Naphtubim, 14 and Pathrusim, and Caslubim (whence went forth the Philistines), and Caphtorim.* 15 *And Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Hetb, 16 and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, 17 and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanite spread abroad.* 19 *And the border of*

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the Canaanite was from Sidon, as thou goest toward Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Eboim, unto Lasha. 20 These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, in their nations."

Cush: Nubia, the region below the First Cataract of the Nile, misnamed Ethiopia by the Greeks. *Seba*: distinguished from Sheba by spelling; early geographers mention a city named Saba on the African coast of the Red Sea, but the identification is uncertain. *Havilah*: in central Arabia. Cf. 10:29, under the Line of Shem. *Sabtab*: definite location impossible as yet: Greek geographer Pliny mentions Sabota, a name that corresponds to Shabwat of the South Arabian inscriptions, on southeast coast of Arabia or on African Coast of Red Sea. *Raamah*: probably in southeastern Arabia. Two divisions of Raamah were *Sheba*, the land of the Sabaeans in Yemen (cf. v. 28), and *Dedan*, probably a people of northwestern Arabia along the Red Sea. *Nimrod*, the "mighty hunter" (see *infra*).

Mizraim: Egypt, extending northeast almost to Gaza. *Ludim*: in North Africa (served as bowmen in the armies of Egypt and Tyre [Isa. 66:19; Ezek. 27:10, 30:5]; probably not the Ludim [Lydians] of the Line of Shem [v. 22].) *Lehabim*: probably Lybians, on southern shore of the Mediterranean, west of Egypt. *Naphthubim*: identification uncertain; perhaps in the vicinity of Memphis, or in the Egyptian Delta, people of "lower" or northern Egypt. *Pathrusim*: identified with Pathros (Ezek. 29:14, Jer. 44:15), people of Southern or Upper Egypt, from Aswan to the head of the Delya. *Caslubim*: people from whom the Philistines were descended (v. 14); probably occupied northern coast of Africa, near Gulf of Sidra (inlet of Tripolitanian coast). *Caphthorim*: The people of Crete (Amos 9:7).

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Put or *Pbut*: late name for North African district lying west and south of the Nile Delta; however, its precise location is disputed. Some identify it with Cyrenaica on the North African Coast.

Canaan: originally used of the land of the Phoenicians and Canaanites of Syria and Palestine. We have here a list of the important Canaanite groups. *Sidon*: famous Phoenician city on west coast of Asia Minor; mentioned in the Amarna letters; the greatest of the Phoenician coastal cities until surpassed by its "daughter" Tyre. *Heth*: father of the Hittites whose political and cultural center was Hattusas, in the bend of the Halys River. In the days of Abraham they were settled in the Hebron area. *Jebusites*: their stronghold was Jebus, the name which was finally incorporated into the name Jerusalem. The city was captured by David and made the capital of united Israel (cf. 1 Ki. 9:20). *Amorites*: occupied the hill country on either side of the Jordan. (Cf. Exo. 33:2; Gen. 14:7, 13; Deut. 1:44, 3:8; Num. 21:34-35). They later settled in Mesopotamia where one of their leaders, Hammurabi, in Babylon, became famous as an able king and lawgiver. *Girgashites*. Nothing more is known of them as yet. *Hivites*: mentioned in connection with Shechem (Gen. 33:18, 34:2), Gibeon (Josh. 9), and Mount Hermon (Josh. 11:3), and Hamath (Judg. 3:5). (Cf. also 1 Ki. 9:20-22). *Arkites*: inhabitants of the Phoenician city of Arqa, at the foot of the Lebanons. *Sinites*: Assyrian records mention the people of *Siannu* "on the shore of the sea" (Mediterranean) along with the cities or Arqa and Simirra. *Arvadites*: people of Arvad, most northerly of Phoenician cities, 125 miles north of Tyre. *Zemarites*: location not definitely established: Amarna letters mention city of Sumur, and mention of Simirra occurs in Assyrian records of Tiglath-Pileser III. *Hamathites*: people of Hamath, a city on the Orontes River in Syria; at one time it formed the northern boundary of

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Israel (2 Sam. 8:9, I Ki. 8:65, II Ki. 14:25). Note that the land of the Phoenicians and Canaanites is described as extending from Sidon on the north to Gaza on the south, and inward as far as the Dead Sea. Note also that the people known as Hamites rose to prominence early in history, having settled generally in northern Africa and southwestern Asia. Israel had closer contacts with the Hamites than with the more remote Japhetic peoples.

7. Interlude: *Nimrod the Empire-BUILDER.* (10:8-12)

The story of Nimrod is intriguing, to say the least. He is described as "a mighty one in the earth," as "a mighty hunter before Jehovah." What does this mean? Lange answers (CDHCG, 349): "By such a proverb there may be noted a praiseworthy, Herculean pioneer of culture, as well as a blameworthy and violent despot [in ancient terms, tyrant]. In truth, the chase of the animals was, for Nimrod, a preparatory exercise for the subjugation of men." It can hardly be denied that Nimrod was an empire-builder. He belonged, it would seem, to what in Greek tradition was known as the Heroic Age: that is, he was a hero in the sense that Homer uses the word to describe the valiant (and often licentious and bloodthirsty) Greeks and Trojans of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. He impressed his name on subsequent generations to such an extent that the empire which he established was still, in the time of Micah the prophet, "the land of Nimrod" (Mic. 5:6). It is interesting to note, too, that the cities that are associated in Gen. 10:10-12 with Nimrod's empire-building have, for the most part, been clearly identified in secular history.

Cornfeld (AtD, 38): "According to this story, in the beginning Nimrod's kingdom was in Babylon, and from there he went to Assyria. This may not be historically true, but it accurately reflects the historic background pertaining to the early Babylonian and Assyrian kingdoms. The names of cities connected with him are well attested

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by archaeological research. The name of Nimrod is preserved in that of the present-day Arab village Nimrud, where ancient Calah was excavated. The modern name Nimrud may possibly contain an echo of that used in antiquity for its chief protector, Ninurta, god of war and the chase. The biblical name Nimrod, according to E. A. Speiser, does not echo a god but the reign of the vigorous Tutukli-Ninurta I (1243-1207) who built Calah, Assyria's second capital, and conquered Babylon. The description of Nimrod as a builder and 'mighty hunter before the Lord' well typifies characteristics of Assyria's early kings, as featured in illustrations of hunting scenes carved on rock."

"Nimrod" was a *personal*, rather than a geographical, name. He is presented in Scripture as founder of the following Babylonian and Assyrian cities: *Babel*: the rise of the great cities of Babylonia occurred very early in the historic period: "the whole religion, culture and political organization of Assyria were derived from the southern state" (Skinner, ICCG, 211). *Erech*: Babylonian city, *Uruk*, today ruins of *Warka*. *Epic of Gilgamesh* glorifies a legendary king of this perhaps most ancient city of southern Mesopotamia. *Accad* (Akkad), probably near modern Bagdad. Seat of the first Semitic empire and of a notable culture under its kings Sargon and Naram-Sin. *Calneh*: also in the modern Bagdad area. Cf. Calno (Isa. 10:9, Amos 6:2); this city, however, apparently was in Syria. The real Calneh was identified by Rawlinson with the ruins of Niffer on the east of the Euphrates. *In the land of Shinar*, that is *Sumer*. Note that Nimrod is described as having *gone forth into Assyria*, where he founded certain other cities, as follows: *Nineveh*: the original Assyrian capital was Asshur. Nineveh seems to have been put first here among Assyrian cities because of its dominant role in the ancient world beginning with the reign of Sennacherib in the 8th century B.C. *Reboboth-Ir*: Cf.

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Gen. 36:37—"Rehoboth by the River," that is, the Euphrates? Then was this an appellation for Asshur? No positive identification has yet been made. *Calab*: excavated by Layard 1845-8 and the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1949-61. Thought to have been founded by Asshur, a follower of Nimrod, moving from Shinar. Situated 24 miles south of Nineveh on the east bank of the Tigris, near the modern *Nimrud*. *Resen*: said to have been located between Nineveh and Calah. Must have been along the river Tigris, although positive identification has not yet been made.

The following brief sketch of the history of Mesopotamia is needed here (Cornfeld, AtD, 40): "In lower Mesopotamia, the region at the head of the Persian Gulf, the dominant ethnic, political and cultural group in the 3rd millenium B.C.E. called its land Sumer (biblical Shinar). This phase is featured in material and written illustrations from Ur, Uruch (biblical Erech), Lagash, and Eshnunna, among others. Following the long phase of Sumerian ascendancy came the historic period of the first Empire under the Semitic dynasty founded by Sargon of Accad. Sumerian and Semite co-existed and contended with each other for political leadership until the end of the millenium, but the prevailing culture was very much of a joint effort. Though Accad was the main city and capital of the first empire in Mesopotamia, it has not yet been identified. As the civilization of Mesopotamia expanded, it separated into different channels. In the south of Mesopotamia were the Babylonians, whose city Babylon (biblical Babel) became the capital of the great kingdom. Its peak of power and glory was reached in the 18th and 17th centuries under Hammurabi, one of the great rulers of Babylonia's first dynasty. The Semite inhabitants of western Mesopotamia were known as Amorites. In the north a city on the river Tigris was rising slowly to ever-increasing prominence. Its

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name was Ashur, as was also that of its chief god. The state the city came to control was Assyria. The political tide swung for the first time decisively in favor of Ashur during the reign of the vigorous Tukutli Ninurta I. The expansion of Ashur northward brought with it successive transfers of the capital of Assyria from Ashur to Calah to Nineveh. But Ashur remained the old tribal and religious capital in which the kings were buried, and Calah was the military capital of ancient Assyria until it was transferred to Nineveh. Thus Ashur, Calah, and Nineveh were Assyria's successive capital cities, well known in history and through archaeological discoveries."

8. *The Line of Shem* (10:21-32, 11:10-32).

21 *And unto Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, to him also were children born. 22 The sons of Shem: Elam, and Asshur, and Arpachshad, and Lud, and Aram. 23 And the sons of Aram: Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. 24 And Arpachshad begat Shelah; and Shelah begat Eber. 25 And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother's name was Joktan. 26 And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sbeleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, 27 and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, 28 and Obal, and Abimeal, and Sheba, 29 and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan. 30 And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest toward Sephar, the mountain of the east. 31 These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations. 32 These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations; and of these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood."*

The writer of Genesis, it will be noted, arranged his genealogies in such a way that the student is prepared for the elaboration of the Line of Shem through Terah and

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Abraham. The five major branches of the Semitic family are presented here: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram.

It is fitting to add here the complementary genealogical information from ch. 11:

10 *These are the generations of Shem. Shem was a hundred years old, and begat Arpachshad lived after he begat Shelah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters. 14 And Shelah lived thirty years, and begat Eber: 15 and Shelah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters. 16 and Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg: 17 and Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. 18 And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu: 19 and Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters. 20 And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug: 21 and Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters. 22 And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nabor: 23 and Serug lived after he begat Nabor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. 24 And Nabor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah: 25 and Nabor lived after he begat Terah a hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters. 26 And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nabor, and Haran. 27 Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah begat Abram, Nabor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. 28 And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. 29 And Abram and Nabor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nabor's wife, Milcab, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcab, and the father of Iscab. 30 And Sarai was barren; she had no child. 31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of*

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Haran, his son's son, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. 32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran."

Two important facts stand out in these Scriptures: (1) the steady decrease in the longevity of the patriarchs named (from 400 to about 200 years in the above table; later to 175 years in the time of Abraham [Gen. 25:7], and still later to 120 years in the time of Moses, Deut. 34:7); (2) that the inspired writer steadily narrows the Line of Shem down to its proper Messianic orientation as has been his objective from the beginning. He is pointing the Messianic development firstly toward the Abrahamic Promise, and secondly to the giving of the Law at Sinai, and ultimately to the incarnate ministry of Messiah Himself, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16). Such again is the unity of the Book of Genesis in relation to the Bible as a whole. We shall now return to the account of the Line of Shem.

Elam: well-known as the area beyond the Tigris, north of the Persian Gulf, in the region around Susa. The Elamites were warlike and at one time controlled Lower Mesopotamia. Later, Elam became a province of the Persian Empire. In the Behistun Rock inscriptions of Darius I, the Old Persian text is accompanied by Elamite and Babylonian translations.

Asshur: Assyria; the shortened form, Syria. The most fertile and densely populated area which lay east of the central section of the Tigris valley. Its three great capitals were Asshur, Calah, and Nineveh (cf. Jonah 1:1). Archaeology has proved that it was inhabited before 5000 B.C. At one time the Assyrian Empire extended across southwest Asia as far as the Mediterranean and Lower Egypt.

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Arpachshad (or Arphaxad): name not yet found in inscriptions, hence identification is not possible. (Cf. *Arrapa* of Ptolemy's Geography). *Shelab*: brought in from Gen. 11:12. Was this a *personal* name (cf. Methuselah, Gen. 5:22)? *Eber* (cf. v. 14): the name is translated "one who passes over," and is the same as the word *Hebrew* (*Habiru*) and as such was used later to designate Semitic semi-nomads. "In his days was the earth divided," hence the name of his son, *Peleg*, meaning "division." Does this have reference to the dispersion following Babel (11:1-9)? Or does it indicate a division between nomadic Arabs (a name which is probably a dialectical variant of 'eber', 'wanderer') and those peoples settled on irrigated lands, under *Peleg* (cf. NBD, 331)? *Peleg* (cf. v. 16), "division." *Joktan*, *Peleg*'s brother. Here we have the list of the thirteen Arabian tribes sired by *Joktan*; these tribes (or peoples) occupied the southern regions of the Arabian peninsula. Two of the names occur in the Hamitic Line, namely, *Sheba* and *Havilah* (cf. 10:7). Note the story of the Queen of *Sheba* who visited *Solomon* (1 Ki. 10:1-13, cf. 2 Sam. 20:1, 1 Chron. 5:13, Josh. 19:2, Ezek. 27:22, Matt. 12:42; also the mention of the "gold of *Ophir*," 1 Ki. 9:28, 10:11). *Sheba* and *Ophir* obviously were regions in the vicinity of modern *Yemen*; *Havilah* was north of these areas (cf. Gen. 25:18, 1 Sam. 15:7). (Concerning the appearance of *Sheba* as a descendant both of *Ham* [v. 7] and of *Shem* [v. 28], *Archer* writes [SOTI, 201]: "In all probability the Sabaeans were originally Hamitic, but continual intermixture with Semitic neighbors in South Arabia finally altered their ethnic complexion to make them predominantly Semitic. Thus both the relationship of verse 7 and that of verse 28 would be correct.") Note here also the supplementary list of the successive descendants of *Peleg* in the Messianic Line (11:18-26): *Reu*, probably a short form of *Reuel*, but not

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as yet identified; *Serug*, mentioned in Assyrian texts as a city of the Haran district; *Nabor*, appears as *Nakburu* in Mari texts of the 2nd millenium B.C.; *Terah*, the old city name of Haran district.

Lud, son of Shem. Probably refers to the Lydians of Asia Minor. When the rich Lydian King Croesus was defeated by Cyrus the Great (c. 540 B.C.) Lydian autonomy came to an end.

Aram: the fifth son of Shem named, v. 22. The region known as Syria; the most important of the Aramaic states, Damascus, played a leading role in later Biblical history. "Aram of the Two Rivers" (i.e., Paddan-aram) was the name given to the region around Haran in northern Mesopotamia where Laban and other members of Abraham's family settled. Note the "sons of Aram," v. 23: *Uz*, *Hul*, *Gether*, *Mash*: all unidentified as yet. Josephus takes Hul to be Armenia, Gether to be Bactria, and Mash to be district of Mesene at the mouth of the Euphrates. These identifications, however, are very questionable.

(For further appearances of the names in the Table of Nations, the student is referred especially to First Chronicles, chapter 1, and to any complete Concordance of the Old and New Testaments. For additional etymological, historical and geographical information concerning the names and places mentioned in the Table, see the Rand McNally *Bible Atlas* (BA), Baker's *Bible Atlas* (BBA), *The New Bible Dictionary* (NBD), and the Table of Nations Map 1, in the small but excellent *Standard Bible Atlas* (Standard Publishing, Cincinnati). Account must be taken of the fact that some differences occur as to the location of the different peoples represented in the Table, in the various maps in which they are placed geographically. Many of the persons and peoples given in the Table are simply as yet unidentifiable.)

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9. *The Importance of the Table of Nations*

Whitelaw (PCG, 156): "It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this ethnological table. Whether regarded from a geographical, a political, or a theocratical standpoint, 'this unparalleled list, the combined result of reflection and deep research,' is 'no less valuable as a historical document than as a lasting proof of the brilliant capacity of the Hebrew mind.' Undoubtedly the earliest effort of the human intellect to exhibit in a tabulated form the geographical distribution of the human race, it bears unmistakable witness in its own structure to its high antiquity, occupying itself least with the Japhetic tribes which were farthest from the theocratic center, and were latest in attaining to historic eminence, and enlarging with much greater minuteness of detail on those Hamitic nations, the Egyptian, the Canaanite, and Arabian, which were soonest developed, and with which the Hebrews came most into contact in the initial stages of their career. It describes the rise of states, and, consistently with all subsequent historical and archaeological testimony, gives the prominence to the Egyptian or Arabian Hamites, as the first founders of empires. It exhibits the separation of the Shemites from the other sons of Noah, and the budding forth of the line of promise in the family of Arphaxad. While thus useful to the geographer, the historian, the politician, it is specially serviceable to the theologian as enabling him to trace the descent of the woman's seed, and to mark the fulfillments of Scripture prophecies concerning the nations of the earth."

Dean (OBH, 18): "The tenth chapter of Genesis is the oldest authority on ethnology. It gives the descendants of Noah's sons and their distribution. (1) Ham had four sons who settled the Lower Euphrates and the Nile valleys. The earliest civilizations were Hamitic. (2) Shem's five sons settled southwestern Asia. They were ancestors of the Chaldeans who conquered the earlier

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Hamitic race on the Euphrates, of the Assyrians, Syrians, Arabians, and Hebrews. (3) Japheth had seven sons, from whom sprang the Medes, Greeks, Romans, and all the modern races of Europe. They scattered widely, were in obscurity for thousands of years, but for twenty-four hundred years have been the ruling races of the world."

10. *The Antiquity of Man*

We have already noted that in the Neolithic Age (roughly from 10,000 or 8,000 to 5,000 B.C.) plant and animal domestication was fully developed, and pottery began to put in appearance. We must take account also of the polychrome paintings on cave walls, of hand-carved artifacts (such as batons, used probably for magical purposes), many specimens of which have been dug up by the archaeologists and which must have been in existence about the beginning of the Neolithic Period. The Chalcolithic Age (c. 5,000 to 3,000 B.C.) was marked by many cultural advancements, skilled workmanship in copper, flint, basalt, marble, limestone, ivory and bone; high development of the imaginative-esthetic powers in man; and along with this a highly developed agricultural civilization. This age produced metallurgists, potters, weavers, smiths and many other artisans of high attainments. The beginning of skilled workmanship in bronze (in Scripture, brass) occurred between 3,000 and 2,500 B.C. (Bronze is, of course, an alloy of copper and tin). The discovery and widespread use of iron had its beginning from about 1,500 B.C.

When did *homo sapiens* first put in appearance? Some of the extravagant claims that are being made today for the antiquity of man are ridiculous beyond description. In recent months articles have appeared from time to time claiming the discovery of human skeletal remains—a few here, and a few there—which indicate an antiquity of some 100,000 years for the human being; by some this figure has been extended farther back into the limbo of

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unrecorded time. One Dr. Leakey has been spreading his assumptions of this character in the metropolitan press as if they were "law and gospel," when as a matter of fact there is no possibility of proving the reliability of his claims. One fact stands out in this connection which, to this writer, needs some explanation. It is this: At the rate of population growth such as we have witnessed in our time, if *homo sapiens* existed 100,000 years ago, or even 25,000 years ago, or even much fewer years ago, there would have been billions of such creatures walking the earth. If so, what happened to them? Have we found any abundance of skeletal remains to prove that they had already covered the surface of the earth with their presence? Why did they not invent anything of importance? Why did they make little or no progress? What are the evidences of their culture, even as existing prior to the evidences of culture found in the caves and on the cave walls of early prehistoric species? If the human race had spread over the earth fifty thousand years ago, or twenty-five thousand years ago, it must have been a race of "helpless critters." Or, is it a fact that the Flood did come and destroy them all? But even so, where are their fossilized remains? It is not about time to mix a little common sense with academic nonsense? Some of these claims are so absurd that—as an English philosopher once put it—only a very learned man could possibly conjure them up. It takes a great deal more "blind faith" to accept these academic conjectures than to let God work His sovereign Will as He may have chosen to do and does now choose to do.

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REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART TWENTY-THREE

1. How do the names of Noah's sons indicate the character of their respective Lines?
2. What is the correct meaning of the word "nation"?

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3. What is the over-all principle of classification in the Table of Nations?
4. Explain how the Table is arranged in climactic form?
5. State the geographical distributions of the progenies of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, respectively.
6. Why is the Table finally narrowed down to the Line of Shem?
7. What is the general trend of the content of Genesis at this point?
8. Why does the Line from Shem to Abraham trace a *personal* descent?
9. Explain some of the problems involved in the "explanation" of this Table of Nations.
10. Why were rivers the first arteries of transportation?
11. What do we conclude as to the original unity of the race?
12. What are some of the facts which help us in the interpretation of the Table of Nations?
13. Explain the three distinctive characteristics of a people which may cause subtle variability in names.
14. How can we account for duplicate names in two or more lists?
15. Explain what is meant by the statement that names can be taken over from the Table of Nations to equate with specific usages in modern times.
16. What is Albright's comment about this Table?
17. What is meant by the statement that this Table is not the basis of the common threefold division of the races of mankind into Aryan, Semitic, and dark-skinned peoples.
18. What was the geographical spread of the Japhethites?
19. Identify the following names in the Line of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tarshish.
20. Identify the following sons of the Line of Ham: Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

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21. Identify Havilah and Sheba of the Line of Canaan.
22. List the various Canaanite peoples and locate them geographically.
23. What was the general geographical location of the Phoenicians and Canaanites?
24. How is Nimrod described? What type of ruler does this description indicate that he was?
25. Name and locate the Babylonian cities associated with the name of Nimrod.
26. Name and locate the Assyrian cities associated with his name.
27. Explain the historical and geographical relations between Babylonia and Assyria.
28. Name the sons of Shem and indicate the areas held by the progeny of each.
29. Who were the Elamites and what was their location and general history?
30. Who were the Assyrians and what were their great Cities?
31. Who was Joktan? How many tribes were sired by him and what territory did they occupy?
32. With what people is the name of Lud associated?
33. Who were the Arameans and what territory did they occupy?
34. Identify Sheba and Ophir.
35. Discuss the importance of this Table of the Nations.
36. How long has *homo sapiens* been upon this earth? What are the objections to the extravagant claims regarding his antiquity?
37. To what ultimate events of such great importance to the Plan of Redemption does the writer of Genesis point by his method of gradually narrowing down the genealogies from Shem to Abraham?
38. To what extent does the genealogical table in chapter 11 contribute to that of chapter ten?