

Lesson 7 | October 16, 2022

One Race, Many Nations

Study Text: Genesis 10:1 through 11:32

Central Truth: All humans are descendants of Adam and Noah.

Key Verse: Acts 17:24–26

God that made the world and all things therein, . . . giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth (KJV).

[Act 17:24-26 KJV] 24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to explain how the earth was repopulated after the Flood, and how God scattered the nations.
- Students will acknowledge that God's plan must take precedence over any plans of their own.
- Students will submit their lives to God and to His plans for them individually.

Introducing the Study

Say: The human race, through the Flood, was reduced to righteous Noah and seven family members. As a result of sin and God's judgment, human history received a new beginning. After the Flood, the human population grew again, but did not follow God's directive to fill the earth. As a result, God took action to inhibit their ability to work together, and to bring about His plan. *v(Play the video available at [RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult](https://www.RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult).)*

Three things from the video:

Unity does not equal being identical. We don't have to all think alike but we must have one common goal focused on the Lord's will for us. I never wanted all those I led in the Air Force to think and act like me and never disagree with me.

Disagreement does not equal hatred. We need to learn how to disagree in love. We can't grow if we don't interact with others who don't think like we do.

When we focus on what unites us rather than on what divides us we can be salt and light.

Three Suggestions

Respect Everyone

Love people like Jesus does

Don't just talk about diversity, Live it out.

Opening Activity—Feeling Life Out

Ask. What settings have you been in where you didn't understand the language being spoken? How did it make you feel? I lived in a country that didn't speak my language and visited other countries.

Say: If you have visited a foreign country where you did not speak the language, you understand that a common language is essential for nearly everything we do with other human beings. A language barrier, on the other hand, hinders nearly everything. God wants people to communicate with one another, especially to share the message of Jesus Christ. However, **it became necessary for Him to confuse human language at the Tower of Babel to have them accomplish another of His purposes, the spreading out of the descendants of Noah over the whole earth.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Every human being is a descendant of Adam, Noah, and one of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, or Japheth. Although married before the Flood, Noah's sons and their wives did not have children before the Flood. **Genesis 10 shows the nations that descended from each of Noah's sons. This account helps us understand the origins of the various nations God has used for His purposes, including the nation of Israel, through whom He sent His Son, Jesus Christ.**

Part 1—From Noah Came All Nations

An Orderly Arrangement

Genesis 10:1,32

[Gen 10:1, 32 KJV] 1 Now these [are] the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood. ... 32 These [are] the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.

Say: Many people study genealogy to understand how their ancestors shaped the lives of those who came after them. The story of one's predecessors may include war, famine, or even personal attack that threatened to end the family line. God records in the Bible His own story of working through multiple generations to bring about His plan of salvation and blessing. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The Bible is, first and foremost, the story of God. However, by the close of its very first chapter, the Bible is also the story of humanity. Not satisfied to keep His love and glory to himself, God created human beings in His own image—beings who can experience His love and live to glorify Him.

God's recorded actions with human beings are not sporadic. Although He targets individuals in His appearances and communications, He also works through families—even over many generations—to reveal himself and to bring His will to pass on earth. The family of Noah was one such family.

Noah's three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—were married prior to the Flood, but did not father children until afterwards (Genesis 10:1). Genesis 10 shows the lines of descent of the clans of Noah's sons, as they eventually formed nations that would spread throughout the entire world (verse 32).

This record reveals several things. First, it shows Noah as the head and unifier of the human race after the Flood. As every human being is a descendant of Adam, everyone is also a descendant of Noah (1 Chronicles 1:1–4). Also, this genealogy illustrates how God's grace brought increase to the human race as they obeyed God's renewed command to multiply after the Flood. Third, it shows where individual nations came from. Fourth, the record shows where the Jewish nation came from (verses 22–25; 11:18–26). Finally, by showing the origin of the Jewish people, it reveals the earthly lineage of Jesus Christ (see Romans 1:1–4; Galatians 3:16; 4:4–5).

[Rom 1:1-4 NLT] 1 This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. 2 God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. 3 The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David's family line, 4 and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord.

[Gal 3:16 NLT] 16 God gave the promises to Abraham and his child. And notice that the Scripture doesn't say "to his children," as if it meant many descendants. Rather, it says "to his child"--and that, of course, means Christ.

[Gal 4:4-5 NLT] 4 But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. 5 God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.

Resource Packet Item 1: Your Spiritual Genealogy

Distribute the work sheet and give students a couple of minutes to begin working on it. Encourage them to take the chart home and continue working on it.

Discuss

? What examples can you give of how God's work in your family—even over many generations—has shaped your life today?

? Why is it important to recognize Jesus' earthly identity as a Jew?

Japheth, Ham, and Shem

Genesis 10:2,6,21–22

[Gen 10:2, 6, 21-22 KJV] 2 The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. ... 6 And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. ... 21 Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were [children] born. 22 The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.

Say: The nations that descended from Noah were scattered over the face of the earth, according to God's plan. His plan also meant that each nation—and each individual—reached centuries later with the message of Jesus Christ. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The descendants of Japheth are listed first (Genesis 10:2). They were the most numerous and widely spread from humanity's beginning. The descendants of Japheth's first recorded son, Gomer, moved into Asia Minor and later Thracia (the Balkans). They were called Cimmerians, and later called Celts. Magog was the father of the Scythians. The generations following Madai made their way to Media, and were called Medes.

Javan was the father of the Greeks, whose land is mentioned in Isaiah 66:19, (NLT). Tubal's descendants were the Iberians, a people of Asia (Ezekiel 32:26). Meshech was the ancestor of the Moschi, or Muscovites; Tiras, the father of the Thracians.

Next listed are the sons of Ham (Genesis 10:6). Cush was the ancestor of the Ethiopians and Arabians. Mizraim was the father of the Egyptians. It has been suggested that Ham accompanied Mizraim when his son settled Egypt. The Libyans and Moors descended from Ham's son Put. Finally, Canaan was the father of the Canaanites.

Shem's line is recorded last (verses 21–22). Elam was the ancestor of the Elamites, or Persians; Asshur, the father of the Assyrians. Arphaxad's descendants were the Chaldeans. Lud was the father of the Lydians, a people of Asia Minor. Aram's family line were the Syrians, or Aramites.

In drawing attention to Shem as the forerunner of the descendants of Eber, the writer shows that Shem's family line resulted in the Hebrews, or Israelites (verse 21). Out of this people would come the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Discuss

? Ask any class members with knowledge of their ancestry if they can identify their origins in Genesis chapter 10, and possibly which son of Noah is their ancestor.

? Read Genesis 6:10. Why do you suppose Noah's sons are listed in a different order in chapter 10?

Part 2—One Race United; Then Scattered Humanity Plans To Settle

Genesis 11:1–4

[Gen 11:1-4 KJV] 1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. 3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. 4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top [may reach] unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

Say: From the time of Adam and Eve, the human race shared the same language. Their power of unity would be misused at this point, as they set themselves to oppose God's plan together. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

As Genesis 11 opens, the entire human population shared a common language—the same vocabulary, manner, and form of speech (verse 1). No misunderstandings arose from disparate terminology referring to anything from family to religion to agriculture. This unity was valuable for cooperation and common endeavors— such as planning and building a city.

Not only did they share a language; they also remained together geographically. Moving eastward as one people, they found a place to establish a settlement—a

plain in Babylonia, or Shinar, later known as Chaldea (verse 2). The soil there was made fertile from deposits left by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Rejecting a nomadic lifestyle, they decided to build for permanence. The plain did not have stone to use for material, so they used brick. Although sun-dried brick was common in the area, brick hardened by fire in a kiln was more durable (verse 3). To hold them together, they used tar, another very durable material.

Their motivations in settling in Babylonia are brought out clearly in verse 4. Here, they decide to build a great city for themselves and to make a name for themselves. Not concerned with proclaiming the name of the God who created and sustained them, they focused on their own plans and fame. The centerpiece of their work would be “a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven” (verse 4, KJV).

Resource Packet Item 2: The Results of Pride

Distribute the work sheet and have someone read each of the Scriptures aloud. Discuss the results of pride described in each one.

Humanity’s desire in this moment was directly opposed to the plan of God. In declaring their hope to “keep . . . from being scattered all over the world” (verse 4, NLT), they set themselves against the mandate that God gave three times to the human race—to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the entire earth (see 1:28; 9:1,7). Instead of following His command, they planned a unifying empire with a capital city. Such a plan was foolish, wicked, and offensive to God.

Discuss

? Why do you suppose God wanted the human race to fill the entire earth, instead of remaining in one place?

? What happens when people reject God’s will and instead focus on their own?

Scattered by God

Genesis 11:5–9

[Gen 11:5-9 KJV] 5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. 6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people [is] one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. 7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. 9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the

language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

[Gen 11:5-9 NLT] 5 But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. 6 "Look!" he said. "The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! 7 Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other." 8 In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. 9 That is why the city was called Babel, because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.

Say: Some of God's actions in carrying out His plan among people may seem harsh or cruel. However, human sin makes necessary God's work of judging sin and bringing correction to sinning people. As people repent of their sin and accept His grace, they may come to better understand actions they once thought were heartless. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

What would it be like for humanity to be united with a fallen human nature?

In Genesis 11:5, God examined the city that humanity was building (similar language is used in 18:21 to describe God's evaluation of Sodom and Gomorrah). **God's survey of the city and tower is pictured as an examination a judge completes before passing sentence.**

Prior to the Flood, the thoughts of human beings were "only evil continually" (6:5, KJV). Following the Flood, this evil remained (8:21). Together, they rejected God's call to fill the earth. And together, they misused the strength and knowledge that were God's gifts, in their defiance of Him. God stated that anything they desired to do was within their abilities (11:6). Just as He prevented Adam and Eve from remaining in Eden after their sin and having access to the tree of life, He would prevent humankind from remaining together at the site of their widespread rebellion.

God's answer to humanity's plans was to confuse their language, so they could not understand one another. In verse 4, the people said, "Let us build us a city, and a tower" (KJV). **God uses the same terminology to describe His own counter actions: "Let us . . . confound their language" (verse 7, KJV). We can still see the effects of His action on a worldwide scale; it is estimated that there are about seven thousand spoken languages in the world today.**

Proverbs 16:9 states, “We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps” (NLT). At the tower of Babel, the people’s purpose in building and remaining was defeated (Genesis 11:8). God’s purpose of scattering people across the entire habitable world prevailed.

Resource Packet Item 3: Our Plans and God’s Plans

Distribute the case study sheet to class members. Have volunteers read the passages and case studies aloud. Discuss the students’ responses to the questions and ask what class members have done in similar circumstances.

God accomplished His purpose at Babel by confusing their language—giving them a variety of different languages (verse 9). God did the opposite on the Day of Pentecost: By giving Christ’s followers a variety of languages, He brought people of different nations together to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:4–12,37–39).

Discuss

? If unity can accomplish such great things—whether bad things or good—what does this tell us about the importance of believers working in unity to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ?

? What would happen in your life if you attempted to find and do God’s will in every situation, instead of your own?

Part 3—From Shem Came Abraham

The Family of Terah

Genesis 11:10–11,26–30

[Gen 11:10-11, 26-30 KJV] 10 These [are] the generations of Shem: Shem [was] an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood: 11 And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. ... 26 And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. 27 Now these [are] the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, 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 Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife [was] Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. 30 But Sarai was barren; she [had] no child.

Say: At this point in Genesis, we are introduced to Abram (later called Abraham). Through his life of faith, God would begin the nation of Israel, reveal His Law, institute the sacrificial system, and give us His Son, Jesus Christ. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Prior to the account of the Tower of Babel were recorded the family lines of Japheth, Ham, and Shem (Genesis 10). Immediately after God confounded the languages, the writer returned to the story of Shem's family (11:10–11). This is not a complete history, but focuses specifically on those descendants of Shem who led to the people of Israel, including the messianic lineage of Jesus Christ.

Eight generations after Shem and the others left the ark, Terah was born (verse 24). Terah was over 70 when he became the father of sons Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Abram is listed first of the three brothers, possibly because of his importance to the plan of God, although he may not have been firstborn. Comparing verse 32 with 12:4–5, Terah may have been about 130 when Abram was born. While he was yet alive, Terah suffered the loss of his son Haran (11:28).

Although there is no record of Haran's wife, the wife of Abram (whose name means "exalted father") was Sarai (meaning "my princess"); the wife of Nahor was Milcah (verse 29). Nahor's family line would yield wives for Abram's son, Isaac, and grandson, Jacob (see 24:47–48; 29:4–6,16,24,28).

Special mention is made of the fact that Sarai was unable to conceive, and had no children (Genesis 11:30). She is one of several women in her family line who bore children after a time of barrenness (see Genesis 25:21; 30:22). In Sarai's case, the blessing came as God enabled her to conceive past normal childbearing age (18:11–15; 21:1–2).

Discuss

? What role would Abram (Abraham) have in God's design to reveal himself to the world?

? Sarai was, at first, unable to have children. Why do you suppose God allowed her to suffer infertility?

Terah Leaves Ur for Canaan

Genesis 11:31–32

[Gen 11:31-32 KJV] 31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of 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.

Say: Say: Ur was a center of false worship, participated in by Terah, Abram's father. Terah decided to leave Ur and take his family with him, perhaps moved by the influence of Abram. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Much of the story of the Bible is told through geographical movement. Moses, under God's command, brought the Jewish people from Egyptian bondage to the border of the Promised Land (Exodus 3:7–10). Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem for a census in order for prophecy to be fulfilled regarding Jesus' birth (Luke 2:1–6). Jesus had to go to Jerusalem in order to die on the cross (9:51). The early Christians did not follow God's command to leave Jerusalem and extend the gospel message until God allowed persecution to scatter them (Acts 1:8; 8:1).

Joshua 24:2 reports that Terah, the father of Abram, worshiped false gods. Ur of the Chaldeans was a center of the worship of the moon god, Sin. Genesis does not record why Terah took Abram, Sarai, and Lot from Ur to go to Canaan (Genesis 11:31). Some commentators suggest that Abram's call to leave his native country had taken place already, and Terah was influenced by his son (12:1). Abram would distance himself from the false worship found in Ur and be instrumental in establishing the worship of the one true God in his family line. This may have meant sharing the revelation he had received with his father, creating the desire in Terah to leave Ur. Settling at Haran, about midway between Ur and Canaan, Terah passed away at 205 years of age (11:32).

Discuss

? Can you list some Christians, whether throughout history or believers you know personally, who have moved great distances to serve the Lord?

? Why does God call us to completely reject idolatry and false worship of all forms?

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: God always has a plan. He stated His plan to humanity at the very start that they should scatter and fill the entire earth. When the people after Noah decided they would not follow His plan, God took the action of confusing their language, making it impossible for them to work together. Immediately following this scattering, Abram (later, Abraham) is introduced. Through him, God would bless the entire world with salvation made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. All who would believe would be unified in Christ in faith and service to God, not unified in rebellion as at Babel. And all who believe will spend eternity in God's presence—Christians of every nation and language on earth.

Living It Out **Ministry in Action**

■ Look for ways to join other believers in evangelism, acts of compassion, and other priorities of God's plan.

- Ask God to help you follow Him even when you don't understand where He is leading you.
- Attempt to cross at least one barrier—language or otherwise— to reach someone for Christ this week.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

Eve, Mother of All.

Genesis 3:20 through 4:2

[Gen 3:20-24 KJV] 20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. 21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. 22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

[Gen 4:1-2 KJV] 1 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. 2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Tuesday:

Adam, Father of All.

Genesis 4:25 through 5:4

[Gen 4:25-26 KJV] 25 And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, [said she], hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. 26 And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

[Gen 5:1-4 KJV] 1 This [is] the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; 2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. 3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat [a son] in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: 4 And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters:

Wednesday:

God, Maker of All People.

Psalms 100:1–5

[Psa 100:1-5 KJV] 1 [[A Psalm of praise.]] Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. 2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3 Know ye that the LORD he [is] God: [it is] he [that] hath made us, and not we ourselves; [we are] his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, [and] into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, [and] bless his name. 5 For the LORD [is] good; his mercy [is] everlasting; and his truth [endureth] to all generations.

Thursday:

The Gospel for All Nations.
Matthew 28:18–20

[Mat 28:18-20 KJV] 18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen.

Friday:

All Nations Blessed in Abraham.
Galatians 3:6–9

[Gal 3:6-9 KJV] 6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Saturday:

The Saved From All Nations.
Revelation 7:9–17

[Rev 7:9-17 KJV] 9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and [about] the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, [be] unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of

God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.