

Genesis 10:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons b... This passage belongs to the primeval history section (Genesis 1-11) which establishes universal truths about God, humanity, sin, and divine purposes before focusing on Abraham and Israel. These chapters answer fundamental questions about human origins, the spread of wickedness, God's judgment, and the preservation of a righteous remnant.

Recurring patterns emerge: human sin escalating from individual disobedience to societal corruption, divine patience followed by judgment, gracious preservation of a remnant, and covenant promises ensuring redemptive purposes continue. The genealogies connect historical persons, demonstrate the fulfillment of divine promises (blessing and multiplication), and trace the line leading to Abraham and ultimately Christ.

Key theological themes in this section include:

1. sin's destructive progression affecting all humanity
2. God's righteous judgment while preserving mercy
3. human pride and autonomy opposing divine sovereignty
4. cultural development as both blessing and potential idolatry
5. God's sovereign plan advancing despite human rebellion.

These narratives provide the necessary context for understanding God's calling of Abraham and the covenant promises through which all nations will be blessed.

Historical Context

The primeval history (Genesis 1-11) parallels ancient Near Eastern traditions including Sumerian King Lists (pre-flood longevity), Akkadian flood traditions (Atrahasis, Gilgamesh), and Mesopotamian city foundation myths. However, Genesis demythologizes these traditions, presenting monotheistic history rather than polytheistic mythology. The genealogies connecting Adam to Noah to Abraham provide historical framework absent in pagan myths.

Archaeological evidence confirms ancient urbanization (chapter 4's cities), agricultural development, metallurgy, and musical instruments emerging in Mesopotamia's early history. The Babel account reflects Mesopotamian ziggurat construction (stepped pyramid temples), particularly in Babylon. Linguistic diversity requiring explanation was obvious to ancient peoples, making the Babel narrative culturally relevant.

For Israel in covenant with Yahweh, these chapters explained their relationship to surrounding nations. All peoples descended from Noah, but Israel descended from Shem through Abraham—chosen for blessing all nations. The flood demonstrated God's justice and mercy: judging wickedness while preserving the righteous. This pattern would recur throughout Israel's history, assuring them that God's covenant faithfulness endures despite judgment on the wicked.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and the gospel of redemption?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלֶּה	תּוֹלְדֹת	בְּנֵי יוֹשֵׁף	נֹחַ	שֵׁם	
H428	Now these are the generations	and unto them were sons	of Noah	Shem	
	H8435	H1121	H5146	H8035	
הָם	וְיָפֶתְ	וְלֹדוֹ	לֵהֶם	אַחֲרַי	
Ham	and Japheth	born	H0	and unto them were sons	after
H2526	H3315	H3205		H1121	H310
הַמַּבּוּל:					
the flood					
H3999					

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 9:1 (Parallel theme): And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

Genesis 9:7 (Parallel theme): And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

Genesis 2:4 (Parallel theme): These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

Matthew 1:1 (Parallel theme): The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Genesis 6:9 (Parallel theme): These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

Genesis 5:1 (Parallel theme): This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;

Genesis 9:19 (Parallel theme): These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.

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