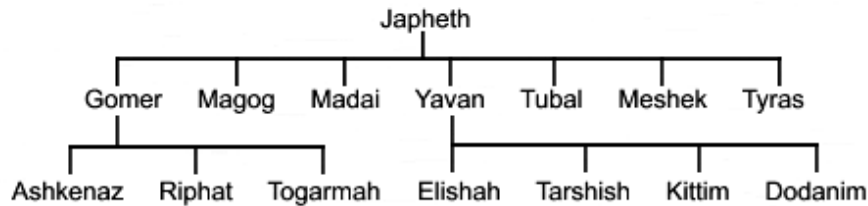
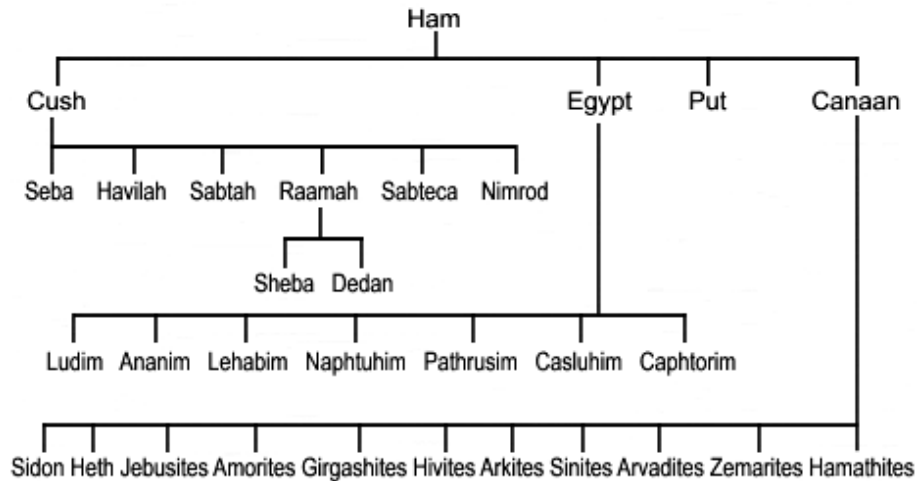


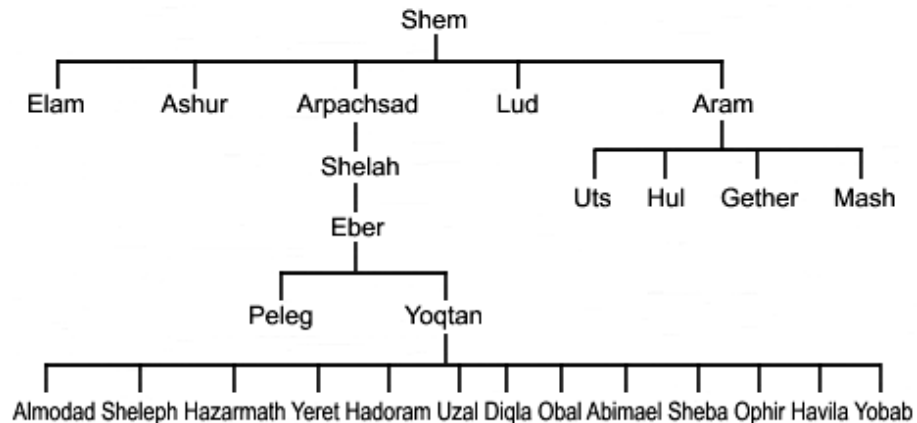
The family tree of Japheth



The family tree of Ham



The family tree of Shem



Prayer

Jesus Christ; You are our constant companion in life,
 our guide throughout the roughest storms,
 our companion who shares our deepest thoughts,
 our support when unexpected trouble comes;
 our tutor in the midst of all our learning;
 touch our hearts afresh today and grant us peace. AMEN

Other Prayer Suggestions

Weekly Theme: Nuclear power

Pray today for the people who work in places of great danger or potential danger. Pray that people will understand the full risks of the technology used and maintain safety.

On-going prayers

- Give thanks for the joy of worship and the love of God
- Pray for Australia and the terrible loss of life there in fires
- Pray for Madagascar, and the political unrest there

Meditation

Where do you find peace?

In a quiet moment sitting down with something to read?
 Wandering about in a garden, with its sights and smells?
 Thinking to yourself whilst alone for a few moments?
 Walking briskly through the hills on a weekend break?
 Putting your head back for an afternoon snooze?
 Talking to the one you love on a lazy Saturday morning?
 Doing what you know you can do well, and enjoying it?

Where do you find peace?

Perhaps the truest peace comes unexpectedly,
 When, in moments never guessed or pre-determined
 Something of God's love has opened like a flower:
 We stop, we look, and as we take the offered gift,
 We find that everything seems different;
 And it is ...

Bible Study - Genesis 10

Please note that much of this text refers to genealogies, and it is easiest to understand these in chart form. For this reason, I have put as much of the text as possible into charts, which reduces the text to the additional explanatory information in the chapter.

¹ Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, had children after the flood, and these are their descendants ² The descendants of Japheth (see chart of Japheth) ⁵ These are the descendants of Japheth who spread out as coastlands peoples, with their own lands, language, families, and nationality.

⁶ Ham's sons were Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. (see chart of Ham) ⁸ Cush was the father of Nimrod; he was the first great hero on earth. ⁹ He was a great

hunter before the LORD; which is why it is said, "Nimrod, a mighty hunter in God's eyes!"¹⁰ The centre of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.¹¹ From that land he went into Assyria, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, and¹² Resen between Nineveh and Calah, the capital. (see chart of Ham)¹⁸ Later, the Canaanites were scattered.¹⁹ Their boarders stretched from Sidon to Gerar and as far as Gaza, towards Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, and also Lasha.²⁰ These are the sons of Ham, their families and languages, their lands and nationalities.

²¹ Shem, the elder brother of Japheth, also had sons; he was also the forefather of the children of Eber. (see chart of Shem)²⁵ Eber had two sons, one named Peleg (in his days the earth was divided) and his brother was Joktan. (see chart)³⁰ The territory in which the descendants of Joktan lived stretched from Mesha to Sephar, in the eastern hill country.³¹ These are the sons of Shem, their families and languages, their lands and their nationalities.

³² These are the descendants of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent and nationality. From them, the nations spread over the earth after the flood.

Review

God had said to Noah and his sons, 'be fruitful and multiply!' (Gen 8:17, 9:1, 9:7), and Genesis 10 is the evidence that God's command has been obeyed! It is very easy for us to feel overwhelmed by the list of odd sounding names here. This, however, is an unfortunate response to an important part of scripture, which sets the scene for everything that follows. It identifies the social structure of nations within which the people of God (Israel) would eventually take their place, for Abraham was the son of Terah, in the ancestral line of Peleg, Eber and Shem. We must remember that Noah blessed the descendants of Shem, and cursed those of Ham and Canaan in particular; and the line of his other son Japheth is of little significance.

The world is one Many peoples of ancient times had 'national' gods, and believed that their god 'made' their own nation before going on to make others. This is a short sighted view of humanity, which fails to understand the integrated nature of the world because of the insecurities of ancient people. This is easily seen by reading ancient myths and legends from other Middle Eastern cultures. In contrast to this, the grand sweep of these records in Genesis is magnificent. From the beginning of Genesis to this point in chapter 10, it makes the claim that all humanity is related to a common ancestor created by one God. The beginning of the Bible assumes no moral judgement on people because of who they are, only on what they do (as in the stories of Cain and Noah), and all of this was radical thinking in its day.

The United Nations of the Bible! The genealogies of Genesis 10 identify the known world, with the descendants of Noah creating all the nations (10:32). Most of the sociological and geographical settings within which the story of God's people is set are found here; for example, Canaan and its borders (10:18), a people who would one day be evicted by the Israelites. Also, we find Assyria (10:11) and Babylon (10:10), both founded by Nimrod, a renowned ancient hero who was known for building cities, in the footsteps of Cain (4: 17ff); these became the two empires which invaded and destroyed Israel (Assyria) and Judah (Babylon) respectively, centuries later.

The line of Shem Of all the genealogies, that of Shem is the most important. The line to follow is through Arpachshad to Shelah, Eber and Peleg, for as we will find out, this leads eventually to Abraham. The tribal groupings represented by these names are reckoned to be peaceful nomadic groups, in contrast to the warlike city states founded by Nimrod (see above); according to Noah's blessing of Shem (9:26).

There is a great deal of debate as to whether the name 'Eber' is the basic word from which we get the term 'Hebrew', with more and more agreement that this is most likely to be the

case. Independent ancient literary sources confirm the existence of a mysterious nomadic group called the 'Eberites'; they are even mentioned in some Egyptian Hieroglyphics of around 1,500 - 2,000 BC, for example. Most believe that these people were 'Hebrews', possibly also linked with the descendants of Abraham. Peleg and Yoqtan are the last key pair here; the name 'Peleg' means 'divided', this refers to the coming story of the 'Tower of Babel' when God divided the nations and their languages to keep the nations humble (Gen 11:1-9), and the other son Yoqtan is described as possessing substantial mountainous lands 'to the east', a natural habitat for nomadic tribal groups.

Genesis 10 is the most ancient document possessed by anyone, which affirms that all people are related to each other. If we reflect that this is the great principle upon which even the Charter of the United Nations is founded, then we must accept its significance. This passage of scripture refers to nations, languages and tribal groupings, but their difference are reported, not highlighted. Most of the chapter consists of names, because skin colour or culture are not relevant to God; all are made in His image and related to each other, and our past, present and future is intertwined.

Questions (for use in groups)

1. What names do you recognise in this list? Can you place where you find them elsewhere in scripture?
2. Within your group, make a list of the reasons why a genealogy such as this is important for the Bible.
3. Does it matter that the names in this list do not cover parts of the world that we now know about?

Discipleship

Personal comment:

There are times when each of us needs to stand in awe at the vastness of not only Creation, but the huge numbers of people on this planet. The population of the world is approaching 5 billion people just now; and as a consequence of Genesis 10 we must think in terms of God's mission to this very large number of people. The scale of God's mission is daunting, however, instead of being daunted, why is it not possible for us to be excited? God does indeed care for each and every person, whatever their origins and wherever they are, and it is our concern to do what He requires of us to be a 'light to the nations'.

Ideas for discipleship programme

- Have a look in an encyclopaedia, or use the internet, to look up the names of all the nations in the world today, and explore some facts about one or two you do not know well. See if you are thereby challenged about the vastness of God's creation and the nature of the world in which we live.
- Pray for the nations of the world and their great differences. Pray that the United Nations will become a more effective force for what is good within our world, and not merely be a focus for its ills and problems.

Final Prayer

Lord God, Creator of the World and Saviour of all, show Your majesty and might through the things You do all around us; through signs and wonders, through works of love and peace, and through the sustenance and guidance of the poor in heart. Bless this world You have made we pray. AMEN