

GENESIS

FOUNDATIONS



Studies in the book of Genesis
PART THREE—Genesis 6-10
Group Applications
Personal Study



FOUR OAKS CHURCH

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and the following people who contributed to the content and production of this booklet

General Editor

Bryan Zhang

Authors

Genesis 6:1-8 Bryan Zhang (Midtown)
Genesis 6:1-7:24..... Zack Latham (Midtown)
Genesis 8:1-9:17.....Brittney Harlacher (Killearn)
Genesis 9:18-29Jamie Shuman (Midtown)
Genesis 10:1-32Joe Haverlock (Killearn)

Discussion Questions

Scott Stake (Killearn)
Hayley Scott (Midtown)

Copy Editor & Production

Debbie Tanis (Killearn)

Proofreaders

Lori Ivarson (Killearn)
Jeannie Pierce (Killearn)

Cover Design by Forrest Hughes
Download this study guide at fouroakschurch.com/guide.

Genesis 6:1-8

And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them. — Numbers 13:33

The Nephilim

Let's admit it: this passage is confusing. Nephilim? Sons of God? What in the world is happening? If you feel this way you're in good company: nobody really knows exactly who these sons of God were or what to think about the Nephilim. However, we do have a couple of sensible options.

First, the Nephilim may be the descendants of fallen angels ("sons of God") impregnating women. The Nephilim are giant men of "great renown" who survive the flood and serve as constant enemies for Israel. On a literary level, we see how God's power helps tiny Israel face off against these massive giants. It's a powerful image that demonstrates God's power over the strong men of the world. God destroyed most of these Nephilim with the flood, but sent Israel to destroy the remaining few in His holy wars. In a sense, Israel was called to "finish the job" God started with the flood.

Second, the Nephilim may just be a symbolic way of describing men of great power and military might. In this scenario, the "sons of God" are mighty men who intermarried with "daughters of men" who did not follow the Lord. Therefore, the descendants of these sons of God and daughters of men were men of great power who refused to obey God.

We may never get full clarity on the identity of the Nephilim, but we do know for sure that God opposes the proud and exalts the humble. God humbles the proud Nephilim through the tiny nation of Israel. We often forget how daunting a task it was for a group of former slaves to not only conquer but keep a land of rich resources. Israel had nothing to offer on their own. They were completely dependent upon the provision and protection of their God.

Do we have this type of faith in God? Our God fights for us just as He fought for our forefathers in the faith. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We do not have to fear man no matter how mighty he may be. We have the security of knowing the same favor God shone upon Noah shines upon us.

Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how.

Grow

1. What does this passage tell us about God's relationship to sin?

2. What does it mean for God to be "sorry" that He made man?

Go

1. What are difficulties modern audiences have with this text?

2. How would you help them work through those difficulties?

Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you think the world is more or less depraved today than it was in Noah's time? Why or why not?

2. Look at Genesis 6:5 and observe all the adjectives used to describe the wickedness of man. What does Moses want the reader to know about the state of the world at that time?

3. What does Genesis 6:5-6 reveal about the heart of man and the heart of God? How can you relate to this reality?

4. Look at Genesis 6:6-7. Compare it to God's view of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. What is the cause for this shift?

5. What is your initial reaction to God's plan to destroy creation? How does this compare to your reaction to wickedness in your own life? What is the right way to react to sin in our own lives?

Additional Reading

From *How Do You Decrypt Confusing Bible Verses* by John Piper

Wrestling with a Difficult Text

What happens when you come across a passage that's hard to understand? It's easy to skip it and move on, right? But instead of running from hard texts, if we dig deep and wrestle with difficult texts, we can find gold in God's word.

So, when difficult texts have you in a headlock, what can you do? Here are a few options:

- Identify what is clear from the passage. Start with what you can figure out from the passage as a whole and then return to the unclear parts.
- Find the main point. Often the confusing parts do not contain the main point of the passage. Identifying the main point can give us clues as to the meaning of the confusing parts.
- Look for clues within the book and surrounding context. Search the book for key words and phrases found in the tough passage.
- Cross-reference. Utilizing cross-references, especially when a New Testament verse cites the Old, helps us to have a fuller understanding of what the authors were trying to communicate.
- Ask specific questions of the text. Addressing a challenging text as a whole can seem insurmountable. But breaking a passage down by asking specific questions about it can help unravel the meaning, question by question and answer by answer.
- Use a trusted commentary. Be careful with commentaries. This caution includes trusting bad commentaries and relying too much on good ones. But commentaries can be used well, and great biblical scholars give helpful insights.

¹Piper, John. "1 Peter 3:19–20: How Do You Decrypt Confusing Bible Verses?" *Desiring God*, 11 Aug. 2019, www.desiringgod.org/labs/how-do-you-decrypt-confusing-bible-verses.

Genesis 6:1-7:24

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. — Lamentations 3:22-23

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. — Romans 5:6-8

The Steadfast Love of the Lord

Regret. The Lord felt regret for creating Man. This is a rather sobering reality for a couple of reasons. For one, this means God is attentive to and cares about His creation. The Lord is not a distant, inaccessible being who has more important things to attend to than the silly goings-on of a small blue rock in the midst of a vast universe. Rather, the Lord is very near and present. He is concerned about His creation, especially with the activities of the small creatures that inhabit the tiny blue rock in the vast ocean of His universe. This leads to the second observation: of all the vast and wonderful things the Lord has created, it is the actions of tiny humans that matter the most to Him. In the beginning, the Lord was elated with the creature He had formed from the dust of the newly created earth. Now, He regrets creating the being that is speedily returning to the cursed earth as dust. While we know that centuries pass between the creation of humanity and this moment here in Genesis, to us as readers we see it as mere pages. It is a few short chapters that span the gap between perfection and utter ruin. This is the genius of Scripture: we get to see things from the perspective of God. We reach the ugliness of Genesis six while we can still freshly recall the beauty of Genesis one and two. It is so near, yet we know it was so long ago. The curse of sin was irreversible, and it was only getting worse. So few pages have gone by, so little time in the mind of God, yet the earth, and the beings that bore the image and likeness of God, had become completely unlike what they were originally created to be. Adam was dead. No one now existed

who remembered what it was like to be perfect: to exist in harmony with God, to walk in Eden with the Lord in the cool of the day. No one remembered except for the Lord, and He regretted it. Man had become distant from God as he busied himself with the dark deeds of a broken earth. Man forgot who he was, but the Lord remembered. And He regretted. He regretted to the point of destroying the creation that He loved for the loss He had endured.

“But...” Many theologians and preachers have exhorted the wonder of this word in the Bible. In the pages of Scripture, it is indicative of hope in hopeless circumstances. Was the hope of the world dependent upon Noah earning the Lord’s respect and favor? Is our continued existence based solely on the good fortune of there being a single good human being on the earth? No, for if that were the case our race would have been made extinct a long time ago, seeing as how statistics runs contrary to good fortune and a man’s goodness is subject to his frailty (something we will see in Noah in the coming chapters). Rather, the hope of all creation rested upon (and continues to rest upon) the faithfulness of God. In the midst of humanity’s fall, at the beginning of man’s decomposition back into dust, at the entryway of sin’s destructive reign upon the cursed earth, the Lord made a promise. The Lord promised a Seed, an Heir, one who would crush the head of the serpent. Greater than the Lord’s regret or grief is the Lord’s faithfulness. Despite the pain of seeing His image marred and His creation steeped in ruin, the Lord keeps His promises. The promise would continue to carry on through Noah, and pass through Shem, and onto Abraham, and then to Isaac, and onto Jacob and Judah. It would come through slaves and outcasts and pass through kings and exiles. It would pass through those who were being crushed by the tyranny of foreign kings, the tyranny of their own counselors, and the tyranny of their own sin. The Lord would make sure to preserve His promise in the midst of countless faithless and evil generations. For to God the length of time that separated the fall of Adam and the birth of Jesus was mere pages. Several chapters in a book. Indeed, longer than the pages separating Genesis one and two from Genesis six, but still pages all the same. God knew that there was no going back to before the fall, but He relented from wiping us all out in Genesis six because, by His own faithfulness, He saw something greater to be had in Matthew one and beyond. The Lord would rewrite creation through His promised heir.

This is the lesson of the Flood. By God’s own faithfulness He would make us remember who we are. He would make us alive again. The flood was merely a flavor of God’s faithfulness to His promise. Ultimately, it would culminate in something much worse and something far more stunning. God’s faithfulness would eventually lead to the cross.

Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how.

Grow

1. Write a list of the ways God has been faithful in your life.

2. Write three reasons why we find it difficult to trust in the faithfulness of God.

Go

1. What themes in Genesis 6-7 are difficult for our culture to grasp?

2. How would you explain the concept of God's promises to a non-Christian?

Additional Reading

From *The Fellowship of the Ring* by JRR Tolkien¹

A heavy silence fell in the room. Frodo could hear his heart beating. Even outside everything seemed still. No sound of Sam's shears could now be heard.

"Yes, to Mordor," said Gandalf. "Alas! Mordor draws all wicked things, and the Dark Power was bending all its will to gather them there. The Ring of the Enemy would leave its mark, too, leave him open to the summons. And all folk were whispering then of the new Shadow in the South, and its hatred of the West. There were his fine new friends, who would help him in his revenge!

"Wretched fool! In that land he would learn much, too much for his comfort. And sooner or later as he lurked and pried on the borders he would be caught, and taken—for examination. That was the way of it, I fear. When he was found he had already been there long, and was on his way back. On some errand of mischief. But that does not matter much now. His worst mischief was done.

"Yes, alas! through him the Enemy has learned that the One has been found again. He knows where Isildur fell. He knows where Gollum found his ring. He knows that it is a Great Ring, for it gave long life. He knows that it is not one of the Three, for they have never been lost, and they endure no evil. He knows that it is not one of the Seven, or the Nine, for they are accounted for. He knows that it is the One. And he has at last heard, I think, of hobbits and the Shire.

"The Shire - he may be seeking for it now, if he has not already found out where it lies. Indeed, Frodo, I fear that he may even think that the long-unnoticed name of Baggins has become important."

"But this is terrible!" cried Frodo. "Far worse than the worst that I imagined from your hints and warnings. O Gandalf, best of friends, what am I to do? For now I am really afraid. What am I to do? What a pity that Bilbo did not stab that vile creature, when he had a chance!"

"Pity? It was Pity that stayed his hand. Pity, and Mercy: not to strike without need. And he has been well rewarded, Frodo. Be sure that he took so little hurt from the evil, and escaped in the end, because he began his ownership of the Ring so. With Pity."

"I am sorry," said Frodo. "But I am frightened; and I do not feel any pity for Gollum."

“You have not seen him,” Gandalf broke in.

“No, and I don't want to,” said Frodo. “I can't understand you. Do you mean to say that you, and the Elves, have let him live on after all those horrible deeds? Now at any rate he is as bad as an Orc, and just an enemy. He deserves death.”

“Deserves it! I daresay he does. Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgement. For even the very wise cannot see all ends. I have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many—yours not least. . . .”

¹Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994. Print

Genesis 8:1-9:17

I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. — Genesis 9:13

God Hates Sin, but Loves His Creation

NOT a Children's Story

The story of Noah and the flood is one children know very well.

“Who built the ark?” “Noah!”

“How did the animals board the ark?” “Two by two!”

“What did God put in the sky after the flood?” “A rainbow!”

It's easy to read this story we have known since childhood and forget that it depicts one of the most terrifying and tragic events of the Old Testament. God ends the life of almost every living thing on the planet except for a handful of people and animals piled into an ark. What do we learn about God? God hates sin, and His judgment is real. But God is also a good God of grace and redemption. He is a God who remembers.

God Remembers

One glimmer of hope appears in the first verse of chapter eight: “But God remembered.” What did God remember? His love for His creation. In particular, God remembers Noah. We see here God's gracious and particular love for sinners as He sets His creation back into place. God causes the waters to recede and sets people and animals free to roam and populate the earth once more. God does not stop there: He establishes His love for His world through a covenant not only with Noah, but with all Noah's offspring and every living thing on the planet. God will never again destroy the earth by water. He not only promises this to His creation, but He also seals it with a sign: the rainbow. This is a sign for us. We see in the sky a reminder not only of the beauty of God's creation, but the faithfulness of God's character.

I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.

—Genesis 9: 13-16

I will remember. I will see it and remember. God sets that rainbow in the sky as a reminder to Himself of the promise He made. He knows the hearts of men. He knew that we would quickly turn from the altar of worship and turn to sin and selfishness, shutting Him out. Yet He shows us grace and mercy. Noah was not the final answer to the sin problem (his story unravels pretty fast), nor was the rainbow God's final act of redemption. The rainbow points forward to the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who pays the penalty for our sin. Jesus took the ultimate flood of judgment to bring us safely through the waters. Through Jesus, God remembers us by not remembering our sin. Through Jesus, God fulfills His covenant with us.

Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how.

Grow

1. What is a “covenant”? Look at Genesis 15 and 17 for help.

2. Why does God show favor to Noah?

Go

In what ways does modern culture view the story of Noah and the Flood?

How do we explain God's judgment to a non-Christian?

Group Discussion Questions

1. Talk about a recent natural disaster. How might God's mercy and judgment both be seen in the same event?

2. How do you think Noah and his family felt as they prepared to step outside the ark? Where might they have seen both God's mercy and judgment?

3. Compare and contrast God's instructions to Adam in the Garden with those given to Noah in Genesis 9:1-7. How might they apply to us today? To what extent are we following them?

4. How does this story of Noah fit into God's bigger story of redemption? Where do you see the coming of the promised offspring and restoration of all creation in this story?

5. Look at Psalm 29:10-11. What do these verses communicate about God's role in the midst of disaster? Pause and think about how God is with you and rules over you and the disasters you face. How might your group pray for you right now?

Additional Reading

¹From *Crazy Love—Overwhelmed by a Relentless God* by Francis Chan¹

Recently, out of a desire to grow in my love for God, I decided to spend a few days alone with Him in the woods. Before I left, a friend prayed, “God, I know how you’ve wanted this time with Francis...” Though I didn’t say anything at the time, I secretly thought it was a heretical way to pray and that he was wrong to phrase it that way. I was going to the woods because I wanted more of God. But He’s God; He certainly wouldn’t want more of me! It seemed demeaning to think that God could long for a human being. The more I searched the Scriptures, however, the more I realized my friend’s prayer was right on, and that my reaction to his prayer indicated how much I still doubted God’s love. My belief in God’s love was still theoretical, not a reality I lived out or experienced.

“The word of the Lord came to me, saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.’”

—Jeremiah 1: 4-5

In other words, God knew me before He made me. Please don’t skim over this truth just because you’ve heard it before. Take some time to really think about it. I’ll say it again: God knew you and me before we existed..This is the God we serve, the God who knew us before He made us. The God who promises to remain with us and rescue us. The God who loves us and longs for us to love Him back..The very fact that a holy, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, merciful, fair, and just God loves you and me is nothing short of astonishing. The wildest part is that Jesus doesn’t have to love us. His being is utterly complete and perfect, apart from humanity. He doesn’t need me or you. Yet He wants us, chooses us, even considers us His inheritance (Eph. 1:18). The greatest knowledge we can ever have is knowing God treasures us..The irony is that while God doesn’t need us but still wants us, we desperately need God but don’t really want Him most of the time. He treasures us and anticipates our departure from this earth to be with Him—and we wonder, indifferently, how much we have to do for Him to get by.

¹Francis Chan. *Crazy Love – Overwhelmed by a Relentless God*. Colorado: David C. Cook, 2008. Print.

Genesis 9:18-29

“Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed.”
— Psalm 34:5

Shame and Dysfunction

How peculiar this passage seemed to me at first! Noah and his family have survived the flood and received the promise of God’s covenant with them, that He will never again flood the earth. When Noah drinks the wine of his vineyard’s harvest, his youngest son discovers Noah’s drunken, naked stupor—and this is apparently a very big deal, to the point of incurring a curse. Why is this so?

Here, in what some call Noah’s “fall,” we encounter the effects of Adam’s fall in this remnant of God’s creatures. Why the big deal about Noah’s nakedness being uncovered and covered? The fall of Man led to shame and hiding—shame, because when Adam and Eve ate of the one fruit forbidden them, “the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths” (Genesis 3:7). Sin, corruption, and death entered the world through their disobedience, and their eyes were opened to their nakedness. Nakedness is a physical representation of our human lack of glory, inherent in our fallen flesh (God is robed in majesty and glory, and we “all have sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God”). Nakedness and shame go hand-in-hand. God knew they needed better covering for their nakedness than their figgy attempt at clothing themselves, and His gracious choice to cover them was the first sacrifice recorded in Scripture: “And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21).

We see the results of shame in the story of Ham and Noah. Ham walks in on his father Noah’s nakedness and brings upon himself God’s curse. Why? We do not know the exact details, but we can imagine Ham telling his brothers outside about his father’s nakedness inside the tent. Ham failed to cover his father’s shame, but instead exposed it. Noah found favor with God, but his shame was not removed. He required a covering. We do too.

Ham gloated over his father’s shame. How often do we do the same? We fail to remember that we too require a covering for our sin and shame. We too depend upon

Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how.

Grow

1. What is the purpose of God's curses and blessings?

2. What does God's response to Ham teach us about His character?

Go

1. What are modern ways people "cover" their own shame?

2. What are some conversations you have had with non-Christians about shame?

Group Discussion Questions

1. Share a time when you felt ashamed. What were the circumstances and how did God and/or others meet you?

2. Before this story, when was the last time shame & nakedness were portrayed in the Genesis narrative? How did God respond to it? See Genesis 3:21.

3. Noah fell into sin almost immediately after being brought safely through the waters of God's judgment on sinners. What does that show us about Noah, the nature of sin, and the Christian life?

4. Are there any opportunities for sin that you need to walk away from or remove from your life? What are they and how might you seek the Lord and others for help?

5. Talk about how Noah's three sons respond to his nakedness and Noah's different responses to them. How might you seek to live like Shem and Japheth towards others right now?

Additional Reading

From *How Would You Respond to Someone Who Thinks Whites Are Superior?* by John Piper¹

Q: How would you respond to church members who claim to follow Christ but believe that whites are superior to other races by God's design?

A: How I respond to people is governed not just by facts that I know from the Bible and from experience, but by the moment of the interchange. In other words, what am I seeing? What is their attitude? I'm trying to read their heart as well as their head here, because I can immediately respond with, "Uh, I got some facts for you from the Bible and from life." But that may not be the most immediate thing to do.

So the answer is that I'm not sure how I would respond. But I would try to discern why this person is saying what they're saying.

Is it on the basis of some book they've read, like *The Bell Curve*? Or are they saying it on the basis of some experience they've had growing up around a certain ethnic group where they've seen everybody act a certain way so they're generalizing over the whole group? Are they saying this because some one person did something horrible in their life? Or is it because their dad always talked this way? Just where are they coming from?

And I want to try to go for that heart issue along the way. Maybe not first, but somewhere along the way. So that's the first thing I would say.

The second thing I would say is that I think they would be hard pressed to show from the Bible that white supremacy is true. I've written a paper about whether the so-called "curse of Ham" in Genesis is God's way of saying that, because Ham was the father of the Africans, and since Ham was made the servant of Shem, therefore all Africans are subservient to those who are the descendants of Shem. I just don't think that works, because the curse fell on Canaan, and Canaan is not the father of the Africans. He's the father of another group of people.

If you try to work out the details of that old Hamitic curse and say, "That's the biblical basis for this," I don't think it'll stand exegetically. So that would be the second direction I'd go.

Here's the last thing I would probably say: I would say, Look. My guess is that if you took every single nationality—Korean, German, Chinese, Indonesian, Indian—every one of

them has traits about them. I don't know if they're genetic or due to upbringing, but those traits are different.

Frankly, I've got stereotypes. To me, Germans are clean. "Sauberkeit! Sauberkeit!" I spent 3 years in Germany, and those women were always out there cleaning their cement steps every morning. I said, "What is this?"

So I've got this stereotype that Germans are that way. I frankly think that's a good thing, but we can have negative stereotypes about one group.

Now we're all different. I don't know how genetically based these things are. But here's what I know. God calls me to love my neighbor as I love myself. God calls me to love my enemy. Therefore, I think it is, in one sense, irrelevant what all those different stereotypes are in the way we begin to treat people and love people and care for people.

So I want to take that person by the neck, if they're in my church, and say, "You can just lay this thing down. You can lay this stereotype, this prejudice, this racism down, because when it comes to how we relate to each other, the cross is the issue. Not your stereotypes about white, black, red, yellow or any other ethnicity in between."

¹Piper, John. "How Would You Respond to Someone Who Thinks Whites Are Superior to Other Races By God's Design?" *Desiring God*, 11 Aug. 2019, www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-would-you-respond-to-someone-who-thinks-whites-are-superior-to-other-races-by-gods-design.

Genesis 10

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

— Revelation 7:9–10

Hope for the Nations

I have always wondered if genealogies were the broccoli of the Bible— it's good for you because it's in the Bible, but you complain about having to eat it. Genealogies are not a good source of "life verses" nor do they make for inspirational devotionals.

But if we take a closer look, we'll find that genealogies are an incredible testimony to God's faithfulness. This list of names, sandwiched between the Flood and the Tower of Babel, demonstrate God's sovereign plan of redemption.

First, God shows us that He is the Sovereign of all nations, tribes, and tongues. From the very beginning, God's plan was that His name would be known to all the earth. Adam and Eve, God's image bearers, were to continue to cultivate the garden and expand its borders. They were to multiply and fill the earth. In this chapter we see the nations expanding in rebellion, not in obedience. The Tower of Babel in chapter 11 does not follow chapter 10 chronologically, but probably took place sometime during the days of Peleg (v. 25). Peleg—whose name means division—was apparently around at the time when God divided the nations at the tower of Babel. Nimrod was a mighty tyrant who had some role in the great city of Babel (vs 10) and its rebellious reputation. Rebellion caused God to spread the nations with His judgment. It was another bleak moment of chaos on the earth right after God had judged the earth with a terrible flood. In this dreary list of nations, would there be any hope at all? We can take heart that God determines the boundaries of the nations. There is still hope in chaos.

Second, God is gracious to give us a glimmer of hope in this chaotic backdrop of human

rebellion. The last son of Noah mentioned in this list is Shem. From this line, we will be introduced to Abraham and the Hebrew nation. God will not allow the spreading of His name to be hindered. Though Adam, Israel, and all of humankind failed to spread the Kingdom of God throughout the earth in obedience, there is hope in the line of Shem. One will come whom Daniel describes as having “dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:14).

In the chaos and rebellion we experience in our world today, there is hope that God will complete His promise of salvation to us. So pray for God's Kingdom to continue to advance in our day. This passage should also give us hope to spread the name of Christ to the nations. John's vision is the grand finale in God's plan for the nations He created: “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” (Revelation 7:9–10).

Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how.

Grow

1. How have you experienced difficulty in seeing God as sovereign and in control amidst the chaos in your life?

2. How has your view of God expanded after reading this table of nations?

Go

1. How does this chapter change your desire to see God's name and kingdom expanded?

2. What are some ways in which we can be involved in God's plan to spread His name to our community and our world?

Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you think it's helpful to be aware of generational sin in your family? Share some ways it could be helpful or harmful.

2. Why is the genealogy of Noah's sons in Genesis 10 important? Where is the story headed?

3. What theme is repeated to describe Noah's descendants in Genesis 10:5, 18, & 32? Discuss why this theme is important and where else it is present in Scripture.

4. What is a people group? Genesis 10 lists 70 people groups that dispersed from the Tower of Babel and from which the earth's peoples are descended. How many people groups are there now? How many are reached vs unreached with the gospel? (See <https://joshuaproject.net/> for help.)

5. Compare the curse Noah gave to Canaan in Genesis 9:25-27 to the description of the Canaanites in Leviticus 18. How were the Israelites to view and treat the Canaanites? How might this be the same or different for us today?

6. Revelation 7:9-17 reveals that Jesus will be worshiped by a great multitude from every tribe, people, and language. How might this encourage your heart as you consider both the curse of Genesis 9 and the blessing of the gospel? Spend some time praying for the unreached people groups and our missionaries who are seeking to reach them.

Additional Reading

From *God's Concern for the Nations* from Ligonier.com¹

One of the earliest passages to deal with the nations outside of Israel is Genesis 10, wherein we find the so-called “table of nations.” After destroying all living things, except for those on the ark (Gen. 6:1–8:19), the Lord made a covenant with creation that He would never again destroy the whole earth in a flood. In turn, human beings were tasked with doing justice and with reproducing and filling the earth (8:20–9:17). Genesis 10 lists the descendants of Noah’s sons, demonstrating how the command to reproduce was first fulfilled.

It is likely that this is not a comprehensive list of every single nation descended from Noah but only a representative group, for the peoples listed here would have been of special interest to the ancient Israelites. Genesis 10 lists seventy nations in all. Seventy is a number for completeness in the Bible; thus, it seems Moses (the author) is saying that the nations of the world in their fullness come from Noah — without having to name every single people group. Roughly speaking, the sons of Japheth include those located furthest from Israel, such as the Greeks and other Indo-Europeans. Ham fathered the peoples of Canaan, Africa, and other southern tribes. The Semitic peoples, including the Hebrews and Arabs, come from Shem (vv. 2–31).

Geographically speaking, the ancient Israelites would have been reminded that the Lord placed them in the middle of all these nations, surrounded as they were on every side. Being located in the midst of these nations, of course, was an implicit way of calling Israel to the vocation of being God’s light to the world (Isa. 42:6). From the beginning, then, the Lord was concerned that there would be a witness to His glory for all the nations, a fact confirmed when we see that a mere chapter intervenes between the table of nations and the plain revelation of our Creator’s plan to bless the whole world through Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:1–3).

Coram Deo

Though we in no uncertain terms disagree with his Arminianism, John Wesley’s sentiment on the need for world evangelization is one that all Christians should share: “I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation.” In what ways are you making manifest God’s love for the nations?

¹“God’s Concern for the Nations.” *Ligonier Ministries, The Teaching Fellowship of R.C. Sproul*, www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/gods-concern-nations/.



FOUR OAKS CHURCH




Killearn Congregation

4500 W Shannon Lakes Dr
www.fouroakschurch.com/killearn
@fouroakskillearn   

Midtown Congregation

526 E. 8th Ave
www.fouroakschurch.com/midtown
@fouroaksmidtown   

East Congregation

650 Trojan Trail
www.fouroakseast.com
@fouroakseast   

850.385.0004 | fouroakschurch.com | info@fouroakschurch.com

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