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SIXTEEN GRANDSONS; or, THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

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Genesis chapter 10 is our target today. Now, when you look at Genesis 10, you might start thinking to yourself, “Why in the world is Brother Jeff going to preach on Genesis 10?” The answer is, of course, “Because it’s there,” or maybe, “Because no one else wanted to do it!” My question in looking at it is, not *why*, but *how*: “How do I preach on this?” Thus the overhead projector, which, by the way, is something special due to its great age. I suspect its the oldest functional projector in Waverly Hall—*and it works great!*

Why should we look at this chapter, which simply lists Noah’s sixteen grandsons and some of his great-grandsons? Believe me, I’ve no intention of preaching through every genealogy in the Bible, but I do want to examine this one today for a couple of reasons.

First, I want to counter some of the secular notions that have so thoroughly saturated our thinking. The general idea that we have of ancient times is that people very slowly acquired the ability to write, to build cities, and so forth. We have this idea that our ancient ancestors stumbled upon even the most basic ideas of fire and the wheel. Let me pause here and ask you a question: do any of you have the History Channel? I love the History Channel, but there are some things about it that are completely biased and useless. Anything on the History Channel about the American Founding Fathers is extremely suspect, and anything they say about the Bible is just absolutely false most of the time. Other than that, I do enjoy the History Channel. Now, of those of you that have that channel, how many have seen advertisements for a show called *Ancient Aliens*? This just cracks me up! There are many who believe that aliens came to earth thousands of years ago and built, or assisted humans in building, the great monuments that we find all over the world. The arguments in favor of this theory are basically that the ancient monuments we find are so large, so precisely built, and so extremely complicated that humans could not possibly have made them. In fact, even with our modern technology, we could not replicate some of these actions even today. The reason that theory has any credibility at all is that we have it ingrained in our minds that ancient men were un-intelligent and uncivilized. We assume there was a time when men could not write and knew nothing of mathematics, physics, metallurgy, or any other scientific pursuit. We are told that civilizations arose gradually over time as men became more sophisticated. If you carry this back further into alleged history, you come to a time when men could not even speak, but learned to speak by grunting at each other.

What we actually find, though, is that ancient civilizations generally tend to appear rather suddenly in the historical record, with writing, agriculture, religion, and culture already present right from the outset. We find this all over the world. Furthermore, we find that once a civilization is established, it tends to degrade over time, becoming less than what it was at the outset. Even more surprising is our modern realization that speech is “wired” into us at birth; in fact, feral children (brought up without human contact) actually suffer brain damage which prevents their learning language or entering into normal human society.

Let me ask you another question: can you, or anyone else, prove that there was a time when people

could not write? How would you prove such a thing? You might point to cave paintings and say, See? They didn't write!" But even if that proved the cave artist couldn't write, would that prove that no one anywhere else could write? Of course not. There are plenty of illiterate people in the world today, and there are even people who live in caves today. We usually call them "bachelors," but that's beside the point. The point is that we need to consider that maybe secularized history is wrong, and that perhaps we've been influenced by it more than we realize. The Bible reveals that God made man fully formed, capable of rational thought and high levels of verbal expression on the very first day. It's not hard to imagine that man was made with the ability to write as well as to speak, or to imagine that he would figure out how to write very early in his existence. The Bible also reveals that early men lived a long time, allowing them to accumulate a great deal of stored knowledge.

The first reason to study this passage is to help us re-evaluate the secular notions of ancient history, but the second reason to study this passage is to go the next step and understand that the Bible gives us the true history of mankind, and in fact the true history of the universe. You see, liberal scholars look at the Bible and say, "Well, once you get to Genesis chapter 12, the historical setting seems to be pretty authentic once we de-mythologize it properly. The Bible does seem to have some historical basis from that point on; but Genesis 1-11 is clearly a mixture of mythology, primitive religious belief, and invented history." Because of this widespread belief, many churches and even whole denominations have abandoned belief in Genesis 1-11; and the results are predictable. Once you abandon those first 11 chapters, you undermine the entire Bible. You end up with apostasy and unbelief, especially in the next generation. Genesis 1-11 is the foundation of the whole Bible, and "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps. 11:3). You see, Genesis 1-11 tell us our place in the universe, our place in the world, and plant the seeds of every major doctrine in the rest of the Bible. That is why the enemy focuses his attacks on these chapters: if he can get us to abandon them, then his final victory over our faith is only a generation away.

These chapters are true, though. In fact, these sixteen grandsons of Noah, along with their sons, have left their names on our world, even into modern times. We will look at these names today and connect them to various geographical locations, keeping in mind the following guidelines:

1. *The Bible tells us what we need to know, not all we'd like to know.* The purpose of this chapter is not to prove that the Bible is true; rather, it is simply a recording of the family lines of Noah's three sons.
2. *The passage of time, differences in language, along with the shifting, splitting, and melding of populations,* has made impossible to trace every people group mentioned here with 100% accuracy, although there are quite a few that we can trace without a doubt.
3. *This list is not exhaustive.* Daughters are not mentioned. Some males are not mentioned. Some of these people groups later split and gave us people groups not mentioned in this list. We do not know for certain, for example, which family line to which to attach the Polynesians, American Indians, or Australian Aborigines, among others.
4. *The movements recorded in this genealogy are the result of the events of chapter 11.* Chapter 10 gives the family lines; chapter 11 gives the reason they moved apart at all.
5. *This chapter was put into its final form by Moses, for primary use by Hebrews.* This is to say

that the tribes closest to Israel, either as friends or enemies, have special mention. The original written list or lists that Moses consulted may have been longer.

With that in mind, let's dive in.

JAPHETH

“The father of all the Indo-European peoples, it would be surprising indeed if his name had gone unremembered among them. As it is, we find that the early Greeks worshipped him as Iapetos, or Iapetus, whom they regarded as the son of heaven and earth, the father of many nations. Likewise, in the ancient Sanskrit vedas of India he is remembered as Pra-Japati, the sun and ostensible Lord of Creation. As time went by, his name was further corrupted, being assimilated into the Roman pantheon as Iupater, and eventually Jupiter.... None of these names are of Greek, Indian or Latin origin, but are merely corruptions of the original name of Japheth.”¹

Gomer

“He was the founder of the Cimmerians who settled originally on the shores of the Caspian Sea. They were later driven away by the Elamites.... At the time of the Babylonian Exile, the Jews knew them as the tribes that dwelt in the *'uppermost parts of the north'* (Ezekiel 38:6). The Assyrians referred to them as the Gimirraya. Esarhaddon (681-668 BC) records his defeat of the Gimirrai; whilst King Ashurbanipal tells us in his records of the Cimmerian invasion of Lydia (see Shem 5) in the days of the Lydian king Gugu around the year 660 BC ”²

Ashkenaz

Some link Ashkenaz to Germany, because Jews have used the name Ashkenaz for Germany since medieval times. In fact, German Jews are still known as Ashkenazi Jews. However, that application may not be correct.³

“[T]he Assyrians tell us in their inscriptions of the **Askuz**a, a tribe who allied themselves with the Mannai in a revolt of the 7th century BC, an event that is also mentioned in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 51:27). Indeed, it is in this statement that Jeremiah incidentally confirms the identity of the Ashkenazim with the Askuz. This name, the Askuz of the Assyrian records, later became the **Skythai** (Scythians) of Herodotus. Other early sources confirm their place of settlement to be the area later known as Pontus and Bythina, where the peoples of Ashchenaz gave their name to the lake and harbour of Ascanius, and to the land of Ascania. Josephus tells us that they were subsequently known to the Greeks as the Reginians.”⁴

1 Bill Cooper, *After the Flood*. Available at <http://www.ldolphin.org/cooper/appen3.html>. NOTE: Of the many sources I consulted, this one is the very best and is thus used extensively in this sermon, almost to the exclusion of other excellent sources.

2 Ibid.

3 This is the view of Henry Morris in *The Genesis Record* and of Harold Hunt in “The Sixteen Grandsons of Noah” (available at <http://creation.com/the-sixteen-grandsons-of-noah>).

4 Cooper.

Riphath

“His descendants gave their name to the Riphæan mountains, which early cosmographers thought of as constituting the then northernmost boundary of the earth. Pliny, Melo and Solinus record the name of Riphath as that of the Riphaci, Riphaces and Piplataci who were later known to history as the Paphlagonians, the descent and identification of which is confirmed by Josephus.”⁵

Togarmah

“His earliest descendants settled in Armenia. We know from certain Hittite documents that in the 14th century BC, the then region of Tegarama, which lay between Carchemish and Haran, was sacked.... The records of both Sargon II and Sennacherib mention the city of Til-gari-manu.... [it] was not finally destroyed until the year 695 BC. It was after the destruction of Til-gari-manu that the descendants of Togarmah became lost in obscurity. In line with the Assyrian policy of that time, the survivors were uprooted and transported to other lands within the Assyrian empire.”⁶

Magog

“His immediate descendants were known as the **Magogites**, being later known to the Greeks as the Scythians, according to the testimony of Josephus. However, given the subsequent history of the peoples of Ashchenaz, who are far more certainly identified as the later Scythians, it is more likely that the early Magogites were assimilated into the peoples of Ashchenaz, thus making up merely a part of the Scythian hordes.”

Madai

The descendants of Madai are known to us as the Medes, a connection established by many ancient authorities. Some of them moved into India as the Aryans, and others joined with Elamites (Persians) to form a great empire.

“The Assyrians recorded the name as Amada; the Greeks as the Medai; and the Old Persian inscriptions speak of them as the Mada. The earliest surviving reference to the Medes that is found in secular documents, appears in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria from ca 858-824 BC, in which he tells us that he invaded the land of the Medes to plunder them of their fine horses. Both Strabo and Herodotus confirm the fact that the Medes were of Indo-European (Japhetic) origin, and we know also that their language was of this group.”⁷

Javan

“The name of the next grandson, Javan, is the Hebrew word for Greece. Greece, Grecia, or Grecians appears five times in the Old Testament, and is always the Hebrew word Javan. Daniel refers to ‘the king of Grecia’ (Daniel 8:21), literally ‘the king of Javan.’”⁸

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Harold Hunt and Russell Grigg, “The Sixteen Grandsons of Noah.” *Creation Ex Nihilo* 20(4):22-25, September-November 1998. Available at <http://creation.com/the-sixteen-grandsons-of-noah>. NOTE: While this source is generally

Elishah

“He was the ancestor of the Aeolians, his name being frequently referred to in Greek history and mythology. Two Greek cities were named after him, these being Elis and Elissus. Likewise, an entire area was named Elias in his memory. His name lies behind the origin of the term Hellenic, and there is every reason to believe that his name is also perpetuated in the Greek paradise, the Elysian Fields. The Armana tablets referred to his descendants as the Alashia, the Hittites knew them as the Alasiya, and the Egyptians as A-ra-sa. Josephus rendered the name as Elisa. The name also appears in the Ugaritic inscriptions.”

Tarshish

Probably southern Spain. The Mediterranean used to be called the “Sea of Tarshish,” but we do not have an exact geographical fix. However, we do know that Jonah tried to escape to Tarshish.

Kittim

“This is a collective name of a people who are spoken of in the Old Phoenician inscriptions as the kt or kty, and who settled on the island of Cyprus. They were to give their name to the ancient Cypriot city of Kition (modern-day Larnaka). The Romans preserved the name when they named the city Citium, and Josephus gave the name as Cethimus.”⁹

Dodanim

“This also is a collective name of a people descended from Dodan, who were known to the Greeks as the Dardani, the Dardanians of Asia Minor. They settled initially around the area of Troy whose coastal regions are known to this day as the Dardanelles. The founder of this people was deified by his descendants and worshipped under the name of Jupiter Dodonaeus. (Here we have a mingling of the names of Japheth and Dodan.)”¹⁰

Tubal

“The descendants of Tubal first come to our notice in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I, king of Assyria in about 1100 BC. He refers to them as the Tabali whose original area of settlement (i.e. Tabal) was adjacent to that of Tegarama (see 5). Subsequently, Josephus recorded the name of Tubal's descendants as the Thobelites, who were later known as the Iberes. Their land, in Josephus' day, was called by the Romans Iberia, and covered what is now the (former Soviet) state of Georgia whose capital to this day bears the name Tubal as Tbilisi. From here, having crossed the Caucasus mountains, this people migrated due north-east, giving their tribal name to the river Tobol, and hence to the famous city of Tobolsk.”¹¹

sound, some of the statements made in it seem to be inaccurate.

9 Cooper.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

Meshech

“The descendants of Meshech are often spoken of in close association with those of Tubal, the Assyrians for example mentioning **Tabal** and **Musku**, whilst Herodotus writes of the **Tiberanoi** and **Moschoi**. A very much earlier reference to the peoples of Meshech, is an inscription of ca 1200 BC which tells us how they overran the Hittite kingdom; and an inscription of Tiglath-pileser I of Assyria from ca 1100 BC, who tells us that, in his own day, the Mus-ka-a-ia were able to put into the field an army of 20,000 men. The activities of this same people are also subsequently reported by Tukulti-ninurta II, Ashurnasipal II, Sargon and Shalmaneser III, the last of whom refers to them as the Mushki. Josephus knew them as the Mosocheni (LXX Mosoch), whom, he says, were known in his own day as the Cappadocians. Some later writers have pointed out that the name of Meshech is preserved in the old tribal name of the Muscovites of Russia, after whom Moscow is named. Such an identification, it must be said, is not at all unlikely, especially when we consider the subsequent history of their historically close associates the people of Tubal, and the fact that the city is still known today in the Russian tongue as Moskva, an exceedingly close, not to say identical relationship to the Assyrian form, Musku.”

Tiras

“Merenptah of Egypt, who reigned during the 13th century BC, provides us with what is so far our earliest reference to the people of Tiras, recording their name as the Tursha (or Turusha), and referring to them as invaders from the north. The Greeks later knew them as the Tyrsenoi, a nation of marauding pirates. Josephus identifies them as the tribe who were known to the Romans as the Thirasiens, and who we now know as the Thracians. They were a 'ruddy and blue-eyed people', who spent most of their time in state of 'tipsy excess', as one authority put it! Tiras himself was worshipped by his descendants as Thuras (i.e. Thor), the god of war. The river Athyras was named after him, and it is not at all unlikely that the Etruscans, a nation of hitherto mysterious provenance, owe to him both their name and descent. The ancient city of Troas (Troy) appears to perpetuate his name, as does also the Taurus mountain range.”

HAM

Cush

“Time has not at all hurt the name of Chus; for the Ethiopians, over whom he reigned, are even at this day, both by themselves and by all men in Asia, called Chusites.”¹²

Seba
Havilah
Sabtah
Raamah
Sabtechah

These left their names and are recorded historically in a number of sources as people who inhabited the Arabian Peninsula, the Horn of Africa, and the west coast of Africa along the Red Sea.

12 William Whiston, trans., *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (Hartford: S.S. Scranton Company, 1905), 48.

Nimrod

“Nimrod was undoubtedly the most notorious man in the ancient world who is credited with instigating the Great Rebellion at Babel, and of founding the vs, astrology and even human sacrifice. Moreover, there is much evidence to suggest that he himself was worshipped from the very earliest times. His name, for example, was perpetuated in those of Nimurda, the Assyrian god of war; Marduk, the Babylonian king of the gods; and the Sumerian deity Amar-utu.... Nimrod was also worshipped by the Romans under the name of Bacchus, this name being derived from the Semitic bar-Cush, meaning the son of Cush. A mountain not far from Ararat, has been called Nimrud Dagh (Mount Nimrod) from the earliest times since the Flood, and the ruins of Birs Nimrud bear the remains of what is commonly reputed to be the original Tower of Babel. The Caspian Sea was once called the Mar de Bachu, or Sea of Bacchus, as is witnessed by the map appearing in Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World, published in 1634. One of the chief cities of Assyria was named Nimrud, and the Plain of Shinar, known to the Assyrians as Sen'ar and the site of the Great Rebellion, was itself known as the Land of Nimrod.”¹³

Mizraim

Numerous sons

This is the Hebrew word for Egypt even to this day. The modern Arab word for Egypt is Misr. We have a plethora of testimony from history that Mizraim settled the Nile Valley. He may even be the legendary first king of Egypt, Menes.

Phut

Libya. Confirmed by Josephus and others, including ancient Egyptian and Persian records. Josephus records that Egyptians changed the name of the land to their west from Phut to Libya, but at the time of Josephus, a river in that land still bore the name Phut.¹⁴

Canaan

Father of the Canaanites, who lived in a land named after him. These are listed in some detail because they are being shown to the Israelites as the inheritors of the curse of Canaan in the previous chapter. The Canaanites inherited their father's disregard for morality and became very depraved people.

Sidon

The ancient city of Sidon still bears his name and has survived until this day. The Phoenicians originated in Sidon.

Heth

Father of the Hittite people, well known now as an historical people. They were early smelters of iron and formed a major empire that vied with ancient Egypt for power. Uriah, the first husband of Bathsheba, was a Hittite in David's service.

¹³ Cooper.

¹⁴ Whiston.

And the following groups:

Jebusites: Founded Jerusalem, recorded as Urusalimmu in the Amarna tablets.

Amorites: Sumerian Martu; Akkadian Ammurru; conquered Babylon.
Hammurabi was an Amorite ruler of Babylon.

Girgasites: Referred to in Ugaritic, Hittite, and Egyptian records.

“They settled to the east of the river Jordan, between Galilee and the Dead Sea, and their descendants are probably to be identified with the Gadarenes of the NT.”¹⁵

Hivites

Arkites

Sinites: Modern towns Nahr as-Sinn and Sinn addarb still exist.

Arvadites

Zemarites

Hamathites: Modern city of Hamah was the ancient home of the Hamathites

These all are recorded in many ancient registers, including Assyrian, Akkadian, Egyptian, and Roman.

SHEM

Elam: Elamites are known to us as the Persians. They joined with the Medes to form the Medeo-Persian Empire. This is very well documented by many ancient sources.

Asshur: The Assyrians were a major world power and made many other people miserable by their fierceness and cruelty, including the Jews. Their capital of Ninevah was the target of Jonah’s mission.

Arphaxad

“He was the progenitor of the Chaldeans, his name, apparently, corresponding to that of **arp-keshed**, the border marches of Chaldea. That he was indeed the forebear of the Chaldeans is confirmed by the Hurrian (Nuzi) tablets, which render the name as **Arip-hurra**--the founder of Chaldea.... Ptolemy recorded the name of their land as **Arrapichitis**, whilst it was known to others as **Arphaxitis**. Their very earliest settlement, however, would appear to be what is today a 2.5 acre ruin that still bears the name **Arpachiya**. It lies some four miles to the east of ancient Nineveh, and is the remains of a very early farming community.”¹⁶

Eber: We get the name “Hebrew” from him. Ancient records speak of the “Habiru” people, of which the people we normally think of as “THE Hebrews” were a part.

Peleg: The division noted here is more fully recorded in the next chapter, the Tower of Babel incident.

15 Cooper.

16 Ibid.

Joktan: Numerous children listed. These also inhabited the Arabian Peninsula and are shown here as kindred of the Hebrews. Arabs call him Yaqtan, and the city of Jectan near Mecca still bears his name.

Lud: Lydia became a great empire in the area of modern-day Turkey. The wealthy Croesus was king there at the height of its power; the tale of his defeat by Cyrus is among the best known of ancient history. There can be no doubt of the connection between *Lud* and *Lydia*; it is well-attested throughout ancient literature.

Aram: Numerous sons listed here. Aram and his family are known in antiquity as the Aramaeans, founders of Syria. (By the way, note the difference between *Syrians* and *Assyrians*!) Their main city was Damascus, which exists today as the oldest continuously lived-in city in the world. Damascus was a major center of trade in the ancient world, and as such, the Aramaic language became a common language for much of that part of the world. In fact, it became so common in Palestine that by the time of Christ, most Jews spoke Aramaic. Jesus spoke it, and we have in Scripture a number of His statements recorded in Aramaic. It is still a spoken language, and it is still called by the name of this early ancestor.

I know this is a lot of information, but I point back to the two reasons I gave at the beginning: we need to divest ourselves of the assumed history of mankind that saturates our thinking, and we need to understand that the Bible is the true history of mankind and of the entire universe. It is not primarily an history textbook, but where it speaks concerning history, it is trustworthy. Where it speaks concerning matters of faith, it is trustworthy. If we can't trust it for history, how can we trust it for faith? We can't, and that is just the problem that engulfs those who deny the validity of Genesis in order to appear rational to an unbelieving world.

I believe the Bible is the Word of God, and my reasoning supports my faith. I do not ask anyone to believe blindly, but rather to accept the light God has given us. I say as Jesus said, "Thy word is truth."