

# OpenTheo

## January 10th: Genesis 10 & John 5:25-47

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Reflections upon the readings from the ACNA Book of Common Prayer (<http://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net/>).

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## Transcript

Genesis 10. These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood.

The sons of Japheth, Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshach, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer, Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togama. The sons of Javan, Elisha, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

From these the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language by their clans in their nations. The sons of Ham, Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. The sons of Cush, Siba, Havala, Sabta, Rehama, and Sabtika.

The sons of Rehama, Shiba, and Dedan. Cush fathered Nimrod. He was the first on earth to be a mighty man.

He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Therefore it is said, like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord. The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Akkad, and

Kalneh, in the land of Shinar.

From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Kela, and Resen, between Nineveh and Kela. That is the great city. Egypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehebim, Naphtahim, Pathrusim, Kazlehim, from whom the Philistines come, and Kapturim.

Canaan fathered Sidon, his firstborn in Heth, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvidites, the Zemurites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the clans of the Canaanites dispersed, and the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admar, and Zeboim as far as Lashar. These are the sons of Ham by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

Teshem also, the father of all the children of the elder brother of Japheth, children were born. The sons of Shem, Elam, Asher, Arpakshad, Lud, and Aram. The sons of Aram, Uz, Hul, Getha, and Mash.

Arpakshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. To Eber were born two sons. The name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan.

Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleth, Hazar-Meveth, Gerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Dikla, Obel, Abimele, Sheba, Ophir, Havala, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan. The territory in which they lived extended from Mesher in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the east.

These are the sons of Shem by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations. These are the clans of the sons of Noah according to their genealogies in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood. Out of Eden flowed a river which divided into four rivers which watered the surrounding lands.

Out of Noah flow three lines of descendants, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and these go into the wider world and eventually are divided up and settle all the different surrounding nations. The attention given to these nations depends in part upon their proximity to Israel, and so the nations with which they had the greatest dealings are given most attention within this chapter. But this is the table of the nations.

There are 70 nations listed. That number 70 is an important one in scripture. Later on we'll see 70 descendants of Jacob going down into Egypt, and on various other occasions in scripture this number occurs.

Going through the lists of the names we can maybe notice particular patterns. The first thing to note is the significance of the number seven. Of the sons of Japheth there are seven, and then there are seven grandsons as well.

Such a list needn't be exhaustive. Such a list can sometimes exclude certain characters and include others in part to reveal a numerological significance. The sons of Ham are of a particular significance to the author of Genesis.

These are nations with which Israel would have more to do. The Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, all of these descend from these particular peoples. The emphasis of this text is not so much on a genealogical succession as the spreading out, the multiplication, the division of different peoples within the world.

The world is populated by different families of peoples, and as you look through this passage you'll see a certain refrain that occurs. Spreading in their lands with their own language, by their clans, in their nations. In verse 5 you see a similar thing.

In verse 20 these are the sons of Ham by their clans, their languages, their lands and their nations. And in verse 31 these are the sons of Shem by their clans, their languages, their lands and their nations. And in verse 32 the clans of the sons of according to their genealogies in their nations.

And from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood. This is how the world is populated and it's a world populated by different families of people, different families that have a particular character. As we saw already in the connection between Ham and his son Canaan, there is a connection between persons and their genealogy.

People are characterized in part by the persons or groups of persons that they have descended from. Nations have characters and within Genesis chapter 10 you're reading about some of these different nations and the characters that they have. The figure of Nimrod particularly stands out in this chapter.

He's a mighty hunter before the Lord, he's a kingdom builder, an empire creator. He gets Babel, Akkad, Assyria and Nineveh and all these other places as part of his vast reach of his imperial power. And as he's doing this he's presumably the person who founds the Tower of Babel.

He has this great intent to form this vast powerful kingdom that takes many people into itself. Canaan is described in more detail as well. Not surprisingly these are the people that Israel would have to deal with more closely.

The Jebusites, the Amorites, the Gurgashites, the Hivites, the Archites, the Sinites, the Arvidites, the Zemurites and the Hamathites. And all of these different clans are peoples who will be within the land that Israel will have to remove. The territory of the is described and again it has that refrain of the way that the sons of Ham have been divided out and that they've been dispersed according to their clans, languages, lands and nations.

Shem is introduced to us as the father of all the children of Eber and as the elder brother

of Japheth. Japheth presumably comes first because he is the elder brother of Ham and Shem comes last because Shem is the one with whom the rest of the story will really have to do. Shem is the one who is the father of all the children of Eber.

Perhaps Eber's name is related to Hebrews. Eber's sons are also singled out in certain ways. Peleg, we're told the meaning of his name, that the division that his name speaks of is related to the division of the earth during the days of his life.

Peleg's brother's name is Joktan and Joktan's descendants are listed in detail here. The question of why they are given so much attention is a difficult one and I'm not sure I have a good answer for it. It's worth looking into I'm sure.

It's another line of the family that will produce on the other side Abraham and his descendants and so maybe that's part of the purpose to reveal some of the significant people groups that arose from that particular line of the family, distant cousins and relations as it were. One question, as we're reading through this list of names there are a number of points where we recognise certain names associated with particular people groups and at one specific point we're told that the Philistines come from the people of Egypt and that suggests an association between those two groups of people. How might this prove an important piece of information as we read further in scripture? John chapter 5 verses 25 to 47.

Do not marvel at this for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. I can do nothing on my own as I hear I judge and my judgment is just because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. If I alone bear witness about myself my testimony is not true there is another who bears witness about me and I know the testimony that he bears about me is true.

You sent to John and he has borne witness to the truth not that the testimony that I receive is from man but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light but the testimony that I have is greater than that of John for the works that the father has given me to accomplish the very works that I am doing bear witness about me that the father has sent me and the father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard his form you have never seen and you do not have his word abiding in you for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and it is they that bear witness about me yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from people but I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in my father's name and you do not receive me.

If another comes in his own name you will receive him. How can you believe when you

receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the father. There is one who accuses you Moses on whom you have set your hope for if you believe Moses you would believe me for he wrote of me but if you do not believe his writings how will you believe my words? The claims that Jesus makes concerning himself at the end of John chapter 5 are truly astonishing.

The language of the hour that is coming recurs here. An hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live. What is the hour that is coming? And now is.

This is not just something that's in the future, the day of future resurrection. This is something that is already occurring here and now. Christ is calling sick people, dead people, wounded, invalid people and he's calling them to new life and health.

People who hear his voice are those who live and the emphasis upon the voice here is also important. Christ is the word and throughout the gospel of John it's the voice of Christ, the word of Christ, his speech and people's hearing and obeying and believing that word that really stands out. The father has life in himself and has granted the son to have life in himself too, given him authority to exercise judgment as the son of man.

These are startling statements. These are statements that declare Christ's status as the son of man, as the one who is equal with the father and if this is astonishing that Christ is calling Israel and people who are in a position of death and exile and suffering, if he's calling them to new life that's nothing compared to what's happening in the future. The day will come in the future where he will call people from the grave itself and they will come out to the resurrection.

Christ is the agent who will bring God's resurrection. John has already spoken of Christ as the word through whom all things were created and now his is the word through whom all things will be recreated, the one who will by his voice bring resurrection just as by his voice he brought creation. Now at this point Christ is challenged for witnesses.

He's challenged as one who is bearing false witness, making claims that are not just false but blasphemous and he points out that he can't do anything by himself. He's receiving things and acting in his father's name. When he acts and he judges he does so justly because he's not just doing it out of his own will but after the will and the authority of the one who sent him.

If he alone bore witness about himself that witness would not be valid. However there are witnesses beyond Christ himself that can be appealed to. First of all there's John, John the Baptist.

He bore witness to the truth and the testimony that John the Baptist bears is a true one.

Christ doesn't need that. His testimony that he depends upon is not primarily from man but he points out the witness of John because the witness of John might point people to the truth and to his true character but yet beyond that we can also see that there's a testimony that he has that is greater than John.

As he performs the signs and the miracles and the works that he performs the father is witnessing through those works, those works that he sent Christ to accomplish, the true status of his son. The father's witness is not merely seen in the works of Christ but also in the words of the scriptures. Those bear witness to who Christ is and whereas the Jews who are accusing Christ do not have those words within them, they do not believe the one that God has sent, yet nonetheless they search the scriptures believing that they have eternal life in them and yet those very scriptures bear witness to who Christ is and they refuse the one to whom they bear witness.

Christ in contrast to his accusers does not receive glory from people. In verse 44 Jesus accuses them of receiving glory from one another and not seeking the glory that comes from the only God. However Christ receives the glory from God and they do not recognise it.

They might accuse Christ of bearing witness to himself and there's a sort of irony in Jesus' response that he will not be the one that accused him to the father either. He's not bearing witness to himself ultimately. The father bears witness through the words and through the works that he has given Christ and also John the Baptist bears witness but yet there will be another who accuses them to the father.

Moses himself, the very one that they place all their hope upon, is the one that will actually be found as the accusing witness. If they believed Moses they would believe Christ because Moses wrote concerning Christ. In the gospel of John these themes of witness recur on several occasions.

Jesus brings forward Moses here as a witness to himself. Later on he brings forward Abraham as a witness and Isaiah as a witness. All of these characters speak and anticipate Christ and his work and yet the Jews who have heard all these witnesses, who depend upon all these witnesses, will not actually ultimately hear them.

But if you do not believe his writings how will you believe my words? One question. Jesus claims that his accusers do not have the word of God abiding in them nor did they have the love of God within them. What do these accusations suggest by contrast about the disciples of Christ, those who hear his word and about the theology of John concerning their participation in God?