

CONCERNING THE WAY

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LESSON 15: GENESIS 10-11

Introduction - The Tower of Babel and the Dispersal of the Nations

We have discussed all along that studying Genesis 1-11 is like pouring a foundation of concrete for the rest of the Bible. You cannot understand creation, the Fall, or the rest of the Bible unless you understand these chapters. Well, we're almost finished pouring the foundation, so that we can go on to the rest of the Bible. Chapters 10-11 describe the 4th major event of history, that of the Tower of Babel and the dispersal of the nations. These are an amazing two chapters that sometimes people skip over. They have incredible historical significance. The table of nations listed in Chapter 10 has no parallel among any other religious or ancient writings! Even the Greeks had only mythological tables that included only Greek peoples.

- Dusty Rhodes

Chapter 10 - The Table of Nations

- Many of these names will come up again throughout the Bible, some prophetically
- Most of these names have been found archeologically, verifies the historicity of this table.
- Even the secular world recognizes the importance of this information, it is a historical document.
- Contains the earliest ethnological table in the ancient world. Compiled centuries before the Greek writings

Genesis 10:1 This is the account of Noah's sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood.

- This chapter will list the descendants of the three sons of Noah, each of which will become a separate nation. There are 70 nations listed in all, with 14 from Japheth, 30 from Ham, and 26 from Shem.
- In this chapter you see the background for every world culture that exists
- Each son's role in filling the earth is given in terms of four criteria: associated tribes, geographical domain, linguistic stock, and national identities. Chapter 10 is not, therefore, strict genealogy like Genesis 5 and 11. The "sons" here include entire people groups (e.g., names ending in "im" and "ites").
- Gives the justification for actual missionary work and exclusivistic teaching of scripture, why the Bible is so dogmatic that one subset of the human race seems to have a corner on the truth - how undemocratic!
- How arrogant of Jesus to say He is the only way to God. Our modern world believes that all cultures are equal, none better or worse than others, that all are valid

Genesis 10:2-5 *The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. (3) The sons of Gomer were Askenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. (4) The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittim, and the Dodanim. (5) From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to its language, according to their families, by their nations.*

- Every one according to it's language? How did there get to be different languages after the flood, when it was all one family? Note carefully what verse 5 says. This is actually describing the results of what happened in chapter 11 at the Tower of Babel.
- The genealogy of Japheth is given first. Their history is not pursued in the book of Genesis: their character was that of the energy of independence, and though at first it seems they were involved in the building of the tower of Babel (for all Noah's family evidently remained at that time close to that area), yet they soon spread northward and had no significant connection with Abraham and his descendants.
- One of the tools of ethnology is to trace the persistence of names through history. Some of these place names and names of individuals persist for a long time through the course of human events and form a kind of peg upon which we can hang certain important movements in history and by which we can trace certain developments. We can do this with many of the names in this passage. Letters may be transposed, endings added, prefixes taken away or added, but there is a basic root which persists for years and even centuries of time, and these give us a way of tracing the spread of the peoples of earth.
- The family of Japheth is essentially what we call the Aryans. Hitler made much of the Aryan race, claiming that the Germans were pure Aryans and the rest were mongrels. Of course, the Jews were of a completely different family; he was right about that, for the Jews are Semitic (from Shem), while the Aryans are from Japheth. But where Hitler made his mistake (and where many people today make a mistake) was to confuse differences between people with supposed superiority based on these differences. Because people are different is no sign that they are inferior or superior.
- Early in the history of the world, the Japhethites, or Aryans, split into two groups. One group settled in India and the other group in Europe. Together they form what is known as the "Indo-European" family of nations. Any ethnographer is familiar with these divisions, but they are the same basic stock. The next time you visit India you should realize that you are visiting your cousins in the same basic family.
- The interesting thing is that both of these divisions, the Indian and the European, trace their ancestry back to Japheth. This is not from the Bible but from history. The Greeks say that their ancestor was a man named Japetos, and you can see in that name the resemblance to Japheth. They regarded him as not only the father of their race but the father of all humanity. The Indians, on the other hand, have an account of the flood similar in many respects to the biblical account. The name of their hero is not Noah, but Satyaurata, and he had three sons. The name of the oldest was Iyapeti (you can see Japheth in that), and the other two were Sharma, and C'harma (Shem and Ham). The interesting thing about the Indian account is that C'harma was cursed by his father because he laughed at him when he got drunk-a certain echo of the story we have in Genesis. You see from this how this chapter is embedded in history. The Word of God is dealing with realistic matters when it traces these divisions.

- We learn here that Japheth had seven sons, but only two of them are traced for us in any detail. The first son was Comer. From this word, Comer, by a process of elision and transposition of letters, came the word, Gaul, or Gallic. These are the people, interestingly enough, to whom the New Testament Epistle to the Galatians is written. The Galatians were Gauls. Most of us have a Gallic or Celtic (or Keltic) ancestry, and the Gauls and Celts (or Kelts) were descendants of Comer. They migrated to the north and settled in Spain, France, Germany and in Britain. From these Gauls come most of the early families of Western Europe and, consequently, of the Americas as well.
- The oldest son of Comer was Ashkenaz. He and his descendants first settled around the Black Sea and then moved north into a land which is called Ascenia, later known as the Islands of Scandia, which we now know as Scandinavia. You can trace a direct link between Ashkenaz and Scandinavia. Another of the sons of Comer was Riphath. Although we do not know too much about Riphath we do know that he located in Central Europe, and some scholars feel that the word Europe itself comes from this name, Riphath. Another son is Togarmah. This name is easily traced. He was the ancestor of the present-day Turks and Armenians, who also migrated northward into Southern Germany. Certain scholars have felt that the word Germany derives from the word Togarmah. If you drop the first syllable, you have the basic root of Germany.
- Two others of the sons of Japheth were Madai and Javan. These are easily recognizable in history. The Madai became the Medes, of the famous Medes and Persian Empire. Javan is unquestionably the ancestor of the Greeks. The name, Javan, is still found in Greece in the form of Ionia. The Ionic Sea, and Ionic Peninsula all derive from this word, Javan. His sons were Elishah, from which we get the Greek word, Helles (the Greeks are still called "Hellenes") and Tarshish whom most scholars associate with Spain; Kittim, which is the Island of Cyprus; and Dodanim, who settled around the Black Sea, and still finds a modern parallel in the word, the Dardanelles. These can all be traced by the geographical titles and place names they left behind.

Genesis 10:6-14 The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. (7) The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. (8) Cush was the father of Nimrod; he began to be a valiant warrior on the earth. (9) He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. (That is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD.") (10) The primary regions of his kingdom were Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar. (11) From that land he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, (12) and Resen, which is between Nineveh and the great city Calah. (13) Mizraim was the father of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, (14) Pathrusites, Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came), and Caphtorites.

- The four sons of Ham are relatively easy to trace in history. Gush is associated with the peoples of Southern Arabia and Ethiopia. Ethiopians still trace their ancestry back to Gush. Egypt (or Mizraim, in Hebrew--an ancient name for Egypt) became the father of the Egyptian Empire, settling in the Nile Valley. Put is associated with Lydia, on the west of Egypt in North Africa. Canaan centered largely in and around Palestine, though the Canaanites later became much more widespread.
- The account zooms in on an individual named Nimrod, who is called a great hunter. He is a mysterious figure of great importance in ancient history. He is the founder of both Babylon and Nineveh, the two great cities of antiquity which became, ultimately, enemies of Israel.

The prominent thing that is said about him here is that he was a mighty man, a mighty hunter before the Lord. Now, it was the work of kings in those ancient days to be hunters. This was a time when civilization was sparse and wild animals were a constant threat to the people. Kings, having nothing much else to do, organized hunting parties and acted as the protectors of their people by killing wild animals. Nimrod evidently gained a great reputation as such a hunter, but he was more than a hunter of wild animals.

- The Jewish Talmud helps us here, for it says that he was "a hunter of the souls of men." By the founding of Babylon and Nineveh we have a hint given of the nature of this man. We are told here that he was "the first mighty man on earth," i.e., after the flood. That phrase, "mighty man," takes us back to Genesis 6 where, in that strange story of the invasion of the "sons of God" into the human race, there resulted a race of giants called Nephilim. We are told that "these were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown." This demonic invasion of the race--with sexual overtones-- brought into being a race of giants that were morally degraded.
- Nimrod apparently was one of these "mighty men," and therefore introduced a perverted, degraded form of religion into the world. It began at Babylon, spread to Nineveh, and can be traced in history as it subsequently spread throughout the whole of the earth. Thus, in this man Nimrod, we have the seed of idolatry and false religion coming in again after the flood.
- Mother and Child Cult - if you drop the first consonant of Nimrod's name and take the others--M, R, D--you will have the basic root of the god of Babylon, whose name was Marduk, and whom most scholars identify with Nimrod. In the Babylonian religion, Nimrod (or Marduk) held a unique place. His wife was Semiramis. (In Cairo, Egypt, the Semiramis Hotel is named after this woman.) Marduk and Semiramis were the ancient god and goddess of Babylon. They had a son whom Semiramis claimed was virgin-born, and they founded the mother and child cult. This was the central character of the religion of ancient Babylon, the worship of a mother and child, supposedly virgin-born. You can see in this a clever attempt on the part of Satan to anticipate the genuine virgin birth and thus to cast disrepute upon the story when the Lord Jesus would later be born into history.
- This ancient Babylonian cult of the mother and child spread to other parts of the earth. You will find it in the Egyptian religion as Isis and Osiris. In Greece it is Venus and Adonis, and in the Hindu religion it is Ushas and Vishnu. The same cult prevails in various other localities. It appears in the Old Testament in Jeremiah where the Israelites are warned against offering sacrifices to "the Queen of Heaven." This Queen of Heaven is Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod, the original mother of the Mother and Child cult. The cult has also crept into Christianity and forms the basis for the Mariolatry that has prevailed in the Roman Catholic Church, where the Mother and Child are worshiped as joint redeemers.
- This idolatrous religion culminates at last in the Bible in the book of Revelation. There, a "great harlot" appears, whose name is "Mystery Babylon the Great," the originator of all the harlotries and false religions of earth. The essence of Babylonianism, as we understand from Scripture, is the attempt to gain earthly honor by means of religious authority. That is Babylonianism, and it has pervaded Christian churches, Hindu temples, Buddhist shrines, and Mohammedan mosques. Everywhere it is the element that marks falseness in religion, the attempt to gain earthly power and prestige by means of religious authority. That is what Nimrod began and what God will ultimately destroy, as we read in the book of Revelation.

- The land of Shinar, mentioned here, is also the land of Shunar or Shumar from which we get the word, Sumeria, and the Sumerian civilization with which scholars are familiar. The city of Resen was founded by people who later migrated into the north of Italy and began the great Etruscan empire which again is familiar to any who study ancient history. We also have here the countries that came from Egypt and are associated with it, all of which are countries of North Africa.

Genesis 10:15-20 Canaan was the father of Sidon his firstborn, Heth, (16) the Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, (17) Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, (18) Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. Eventually the families of the Canaanites were scattered (19) and the borders of Canaan extended from Sidon all the way to Gerar as far as Gaza, and all the way to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. (20) These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, and by their nations.

- The second section of the sons of Ham centers on the descendants of Canaan: We have already seen that these constituted the morally degraded Canaanite tribes which occupied the land of Palestine at the time of Abraham. We must note certain individuals in this listing, but not all. Sidon is mentioned as the first-born of Canaan. He founded the city by the same name, located near Tyre on the coast of Phoenicia. The fact that there is no mention of Tyre here indicates how early an account this is.
- Heth is the father of the Hittite nation. The Hittites were once regarded by archeologists as a biblical blunder; they said the Bible was absolutely wrong when it mentioned the Hittites--there were no such people. But Hittite relics have since been discovered in abundance, and scholars are now well aware of the great civilization that flourished under the Hittites.
- The Hebrew form of this word, Hittite, is Khettai, and from this comes the word, Cathay, which you will recognize as an ancient name for China. Certain of the Hittites migrated eastward and settled in China. Another name in this list, the Sinites, is also linked with China. It derives from a presumed son of Canaan whose name was Sin. The Sinites migrated eastward until they came into Western China where they founded the ancient empire of China and gave their name to the land. There is a direct connection between the word, China, and the word, Sinim, the biblical name for China. They pushed eastward and toward the north over the land bridge into Alaska. The Sinites are the people who settled the Americas in prehistoric days and became the ancestors of the Eskimos and Indians.

Genesis 10:21-31 And sons were also born to Shem (the older brother of Japheth), the father of all the sons of Eber. (22) The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. (23) The sons of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. (24) Arphaxad was the father of Shelah, and Shelah was the father of Eber. (25) Two sons were born to Eber: One was named Peleg because in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. (26) Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, (27) Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, (28) Obal, Abimael, Sheba, (29) Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan. (30) Their dwelling place was from Mesha all the way to Sephar in the eastern hills. (31) These are the sons of Shem according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, and according to their nations.

- The noteworthy thing here is that Shem was the father of the children of Eber--actually, Eber was a great-grandson of Shem--and from Eber comes the word, Hebrew. Abraham, who was really the founder of the Hebrew nation, was six generations beyond Eber. Yet Eber is of such

note that Abraham is identified as an Eberite, or Hebrew.

- Elam, the next son of Shem, is associated with southern Mesopotamia. Archeologists have now found that the earliest inhabitants of this area were Semites, not Hamites, as they once thought. Asshur is the one who gave his name to Assyria.
- The genealogy closes with two sons of Eber named Peleg and Joktan. The tribes listed as from Joktan are all associated with Arabia. The boundaries of Mesha and Sephar given here are both within the Arabian peninsula. Our main interest, however, centers on Peleg and this cryptic comment made about him, "...in his days the earth was divided." What do you think that means? Peleg, in Hebrew, means "division," but in Greek it means "sea." We get our present English word, archipelago, from this: archi-pelagos, the first sea. The Greeks called the Aegean Sea "The Archipelago," the first sea, drawing the name from this man, Peleg.
- There is some evidence to link this with the scientific theory of continental drift--the idea that once the continents were bound together in one great land mass, but some time in the past they separated and began to drift. Some have suggested that this may have occurred as late as the days of Peleg. Many geologists, of course, would raise questions about this, saying this is far too late in history for anything like that to have occurred. It may have been that the American continent was still in view of Europe and Asia in those days, and that as it moved westward, it gradually disappeared from the horizon. This perhaps gave rise to the many myths and stories about a lost continent called Atlantis which disappeared beneath the Atlantic.
- I believe it is more likely that the statement about Peleg refers to what happens in the next chapter at the Tower of Babel. This would have been hundreds of years after the flood.

The Funnel's Neck

A funnel is an instrument or device for narrowing a flow of liquid or powder from a wide expanse to a narrow one. That is what God is doing here in Genesis 10. Shem is put last of the sons of Noah because God is narrowing the flow of sacred history down to the Semitic races. Shem is the neck of the funnel. God is restricting the stream of humanity that he will deal with personally and directly down to one family group, the family of Shem. In chapter 11, from verse 10 to the end of the chapter, he takes this up again and narrows it still further to one man, Abraham. From there it begins to broaden out again to take in Abraham and all his descendants, both physical and spiritual. The rest of the Bible is all about the children of Abraham, physically and spiritually. We have here, then, one of the most important links in understanding the Bible.

Now why does God do this? He has been accused of showing favoritism in picking the people of Israel for his link with humanity. But God is no respecter of persons, as we are told. He does this because it is necessary in view of the limitations of our minds, not of his. No one man can grasp the whole widespread, varied world of mankind. We cannot do so even today. At election time we take polls to determine what people are thinking, because we cannot grasp or assimilate in any way what the entire mass of a people are thinking. We must take polls, or samples. God is doing this with Israel. Israel becomes the sample nation, the sample people.

Through the rest of the Bible, whatever is true of Israel is true of everyone; their story is our story--your story and my story. Their stubborn rebellion is the same rebellion that we display, and their spiritual blessing under God is the same kind that we can expect if we open ourselves to respond to the grace of God. One fact comes drumming through all this otherwise dry genealogy: God is seeking somehow to break through into our hearts and wills. He presses in upon us, both in the great historic sweeps and in the minor incidents that happen to each of us. But in every case it is the same truth; God is essential to us. We cannot live without God. You cannot fulfill yourself, you cannot find yourself without him. He loves you, is seeking you, wants you, and is drawing you to himself.

Ray Stedman

Genesis 10:32 *These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations, and from these the nations spread over the earth after the flood.*

- Was this boring to read? Are you asking, "Why should we spend time with a passage like this?"
 - It is extremely important that we understand God's movements in history. This chapter helps us realize and accept the fact that what we read in Scripture about eternal life and the things of the Spirit is realistic and true to life around us, that we are dealing with the Word of God and therefore with life as it really is.
 - Chapter 10 of Genesis is a record of how mankind fanned out over all the earth, like spokes in a wheel, radiating from a center which both science and Scripture place in the Middle East. The Middle East has been called, "The cradle of civilization": or "The cradle of mankind." You could spend hours tracing the development of these families of man, but we just did a quick survey, pausing where Moses (the author of Genesis) also pauses to comment on certain names that appear in this section. These are important comments and we need to understand why Scripture suddenly turns the spotlight upon certain individuals.
 - God keeps good records! These were real, historical people, and it gives further validity to the Word of God

Genesis 11:1-2 *The whole earth had a common language and a common vocabulary. (2) When the people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.*

- This was hundreds of years after the flood, and apparently "the people" had all remained in the same general area where the ark landed. This would seem to be disobeying what God had commanded in chapter 9:1 to "fill the earth". The land of Shinar would later become Babylon.

Genesis 11:3-4 *Then they said to one another, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." (They had brick instead of stone and tar instead of mortar.) (4) Then they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens so that we may make a name for ourselves. Otherwise we will be scattered across the face of the entire earth."*

- They wanted to do something for themselves, they didn't want to listen to the God of Noah, they wanted to guarantee their power and security in the world.
- Notice they seemed to be afraid of dispersing across the earth, as God had commanded
- Another reason they may have built it, according to Josephus, was to protect themselves against another flood-judgment of God, Autonomous man tried, in addition to define the meaning and goal of world society, to erect a place of perfect security--even from God's judgments! The high intelligence and technology of early postdiluvian man had become prideful and arrogant.
- The name "Babel" is composed of two words, "bab" meaning "gate" and "el," "god." Hence, "the gate of god." (A related word in Hebrew, "balal" which means "confusion".) Perhaps the purpose of the tower was to become a gateway to the heavens. There has been some speculation that the tower was not necessarily very tall, but rather was to be used as an astronomical observatory and temple.
- Some archaeologists have felt that they may even have found the foundation of this original tower of Babel. That is very hard to determine. But they did find that the Babylonians built

great towers called ziggurats, which were built in a circular fashion with an ascending staircase that terminates in a shrine at the top, around which are written the signs of the zodiac.

- The top floor was “heaven”, and contained walls of blue glazed tile (representing heaven), a golden disk (the sun), and a crescent moon. The signs of the zodiac were the five planets that would have been visible to them - Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. They studied these “stars”, and thought they were “gods” controlling men’s lives.
- In the middle of the room there was a throne with an idol made of solid gold. This was the pinnacle of human blasphemy.
- Below on the left is a painting done in 1563 of the Tower of Babel, by Pieter Brueghel the Elder, a Flemish Northern Renaissance painter. Below in the middle is a poster produced by the European Union symbolically depicting their mission. It combines the 12 stars of the EU flag with the rebuilding of the tower of Babel with the motto **Europe: Many Tongues One Voice**. Note also that the stars are shown as inverted pentagrams, an occult satanic symbol.



- The EU built the European Parliament in Strasbourg France, the Louise Weiss Building. The tower of the complex (shown above right and below), although it looks unfinished, was designed with the expressed purpose of resembling the tower of Babel!



- Obviously, the tower was a religious building, intending to expose man to the mystery of the heavens and the greatness of God. That, perhaps, is what is meant here by the statement that they intended to build a tower with its top in the heavens. They were impressed by its greatness architecturally, that is, they may have thought of it as reaching into heaven. But they also unquestionably were thinking of it as a means of communication with God, of maintaining contact with him.
- Even today, in most cultures around the world, we see towers and buildings "with their tops in the heavens" erected "to the glory of God". But the truth is they are not erected to God's glory at all. They are erected so that we can "make a name for ourselves". This is at the heart of every religion. There is an underlying pride which says that we are "like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). We are still trying to live out Satan's lie.
- The fact that this was a religious tower-and yet built to make a name for man-reveals the master motive behind religion. It is a means by which man attempts to share the glory of God. We must understand this, otherwise we will never understand the power of religion as it has pervaded the earth and permeated our culture ever since. It is a way by which man seeks to share what is rightfully God's alone. This tower was a grandiose structure, and undoubtedly it was intended to be a means by which man would glorify God. Unquestionably there was a plaque somewhere attached to it that carried the pious words, "Erected in the year ____, to the greater glory of God." But it was not really for the glory of God; it was a way of controlling God, a way of channeling God by using him for man's glory. That is what man's religion has always sought to do. It is a way of making God available to us.
- Man does not really want to eliminate God. It is only sporadically and then only for a relatively brief time, that men cry out for the elimination of God. Atheism is too barren, too pessimistic and too morally bankrupt to live with very long. No, we need "dear old God," but let's keep him under control. Do not let him get out of his place. "Don't call us, God; we'll call you." This is the fundamental philosophy of society. It is the tower of Babel all over again.
- This is not only true of all the pagan religions, but of most "Christian" denominations as well. Some more traditional denominations make enormous shows of their buildings saying they are "the house of God", while the newer denominations make enormous shows of how many people they have at their services. The truth is that we are all trying "to make a name for ourselves".
- Jesus was angry with the Pharisees for this type of hypocrisy. We are glorifying not God, but Man. We are trying to "make a name for ourselves". How different this is to the attitude that Jesus had. Every time he healed someone "he took them aside" and "charged them not to tell anyone about him".
- It is also interesting to note that throughout the Bible we see God "giving names" to various people, e.g.. Abram becomes Abraham "father of many nations", Jacob becomes Israel "prince of God", Simon becomes Peter "the rock" etc. It is ironic that God will "give a new name" to those who overcome all the trials and pitfalls of this life (Revelation 2:17). We spend our whole life trying to make a name for ourselves, when God is ready to give us a name that will endure forever.
- The Babel of this chapter is typical of the New Testament Babylon (Rev.17-18), a great

religious system devised by men, though it claims to be "the church." They have great aspirations, first, "let us build for ourselves a city" (v.4). It is human selfishness that desires "a city," a great company in which they might boast. Abraham was of a different character: "he waited for the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God" (Heb.11:10- NKJV). Faith can wait for God to accomplish what is of lasting value. His city will be one of absolute purity (Rev.21:18) in contrast to the intrigue, violence and corruption that is characteristic of men's cities.

Genesis 11:5-6 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the people had started building. (6) And the LORD said, "If as one people all sharing a common language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be beyond them"

- This is not a primitive concept of God at all. Rather, it is an ironic expression--a humorous expression, designed to indicate to us in a very clever way the ridiculousness of this whole situation. Here is this tower that men erect, thinking that it will take God's breath away, that it will impress Him or even threaten Him. Men think: here we are, we've dared to invade the heavens! You had better watch out, God! But up in the real heavens this tower is so little that God can't even see it. So God says, "I'll come down and investigate." It is language designed to set in contrast the ridiculous suppositions of men with the greatness of God. He "came down" to investigate this tiny tower that men had erected.
- God took note that man is an inventive creature, and he is a united creature. As a result of these two factors at work in society, God comes to a startling conclusion: "Nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible to them." That sounds rather up-to-date, does it not? That is exactly what man has thought about himself and what he is saying in a thousand ways today. He loudly announces continually, "There's nothing we can't solve, nothing we can't do." The startling thing from the Scriptures is that there is truth in that. God himself acknowledges it! He says it is true; if man puts his genius to any given, specific task, then his native creativeness and his persistent spirit will solve that problem eventually. Nothing will be prevented him.
- OR - was God talking about sin here, that there would be no evil they wouldn't do if left to themselves? Maybe He was talking about both sin and technology.

Genesis 11:7-9 Come, let's go down and confuse their language so they won't be able to understand each other." (8) So the LORD scattered them from there across the face of the entire earth, and they stopped building the city. (9) That is why its name was called Babel — because there the LORD confused the language of the entire world, and from there the LORD scattered them across the face of the entire earth.

- Notice again in verse 7 a hint of the Trinity here ("let us go down")
- Now why does God do this? What is behind his actions here? Is he jealous of man? Is God threatened after all by this tower of mud and slime that these men have built? Does it mean that he is afraid that men will master all things and that he cannot any longer control them so that the very foundations of the universe will be threatened? No, that is the way man wants to read this. We are always telling ourselves that we can do anything we want if we want it badly enough. Therefore, we don't need God; God is optional in human life.
- What does man actually purpose or propose to do? The final answer is: to glorify himself, to be the center of things, to be the master of the universe--in other words, to be God. God knows

that man is incapable of this, he is a creature. He is a dependent being; he always was and always will be. The very forces that he thinks he can manipulate to accomplish his aims are forces that are part of his own life, which he did not make and upon which he continually depends. Therefore, he is constitutionally incapable of being the God he attempts to be.

- Linguistic studies show that many languages have common roots, some from very widely different cultures that were far from each other. The evidence shows that all languages came from one common source language.
- God spread out the peoples into different families, languages, lands, and tribes slowed down the development of sin. Notice that language barriers are shrinking today - English is one of a few major languages in the world, the internet and fast transportation shrinks the world - this speeds up development of sin again.

Man in his inventiveness thinks he can master the earth. But the very solutions he works out become the bigger problems with which he can no longer cope. The whole vast scheme of things eludes him; he is not able to put them all together. Thus, for man's sake (this is the heart of it), -not because God is afraid of man--but for man's sake, to protect him from himself, God says in effect, "Let us go down and confuse their language. Let us stop man, in his mad folly, from destroying himself; he is not God enough to handle the problems he has created." So God came down, and, suddenly, as the workers gathered for work one morning, they found they could not communicate with each other any more.

What a scene this must have been. The foreman would give orders, but the men would shake their heads--they didn't understand. The foreman would yell, but they wouldn't get it. They would try to explain, but he couldn't understand them. You can imagine what list-shaking, table-pounding, and yelling went on here. It was utter confusion.

Since that day, men have been divided by this confusion of tongues. It is striking that the confusion of tongues is most evident, even today, in the Hamitic families of earth. Linguists know that most of the languages of earth can be gathered into family groups - the Japhetic line, (e.g., the Indo-European family of languages), and the Semitic line they are quite closely allied. It is not difficult to group those various tongues. But in the Hamitic languages all is utter confusion. Tribes of people, growing up close by one another, have completely different languages. It still persists into this day, and it still divides mankind.

We think we have solved this confusion by translating one language into another, but any linguist knows that language is much deeper than words; it is a basic, fundamental element, reflecting the thought, life, and cultural pattern of a people. Merely to know the words of a man's language by no means guarantees that you can communicate with the man. This confusion of language represents a loss of basic understanding between peoples, the loss of the ability to communicate at the deepest levels of thought.

The impressive thing to me is that man is still haunted today by the lack of unity. He feels the need for it. He feels that if we can only get together, if we can just cooperate, we can do anything with our technological abilities. Is that not the dream that hangs over humanity? If we can merge--this is the day of the merger, corporations are merging, nations are merging, companies are merging, churches are merging--if we can just become one great community again, then, with our technological excellence we can master the earth.

The dream still endures, but God still scatters. God yet continues the confusion of tongues. This may be hard for the Wycliffe translator who is seeking to put Scripture into the various languages of the earth, but, nevertheless, it is the kindness of God that confuses the speech of men. It is God's way of preventing the ultimate catastrophe. When man at last gets together again and, under the illusion of technical ability, thinks he can master all the great and intricate mechanisms of life, we will have achieved the ultimate disaster. This is why God continues to humble men everywhere, to scatter, to humiliate, to bring low the proud. Jesus said in the opening words of the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the poor in spirit [the man who has nothing, the man who has lost everything upon which he can depend, outside and inside himself] for his is the kingdom of heaven." When you no longer depend on anything in you, then God is ready to give you everything he possesses. *Ray Stedman*

- As the people scattered, over time they also began to look differently, because the common gene pool was shattered, and recessive genes began to surface. Isolation and in-breeding began causing different cosmetic features to appear.
- So, why did cause cause the division of people? This is God's plan to slow down sin and evil in the world. As long as Satan is the god of this world, God uses division to thwart Satan's plans and programs, and bring some light to the world.
- There are about 6,000 languages spoken today, obviously a small amount were created at Babel (maybe 70 - one for each nation?), and many more languages have developed over time. Today Mandarin Chinese is the most common language in the world, followed by English
- Evolutionists say all languages developed originally from our ancestor apes making guttural sounds that evolved into language. These primitive languages evolved over millions of years into the thousands of different languages we have today
- The Bible says we all started with one language, and more were miraculously created at Babel by God, and many more developed later. Few languages are the same as they were at Babel, because language is always developing.
- Same thing with living things - there were no toy poodles or Yorkshire terriers on the ark, there was only one dog species. But tremendous variation in the animal kinds occurred after the flood, and variation among people was accelerated at Babel when they were scattered all over the world.

The Anti-Babel program

Started at Pentecost - people from all over the known world heard the gospel in their own languages miraculously. This program continues today with missionaries.

Just one example is in the Central African Republic - a land-locked poverty stricken country in Africa. The language was Songo. For hundreds of years these native peoples were isolated. Then missionaries went in, learned enough of the language to be able to tell them about Jesus. The response was explosive. Today there are over 600 churches there.

Genesis 11:10-32 *The Genealogy of Shem*

This is the account of Shem. Shem was 100 years old when he became the father of Arphaxad, two years after the flood. (11) And after becoming the father of Arphaxad, Shem lived 500 years and had other sons and daughters. (12) When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Shelah. (13) And after he became the father of Shelah, Arphaxad lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters. (14) When Shelah had lived 30 years, he became the father of Eber. (15) And after he became the father of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters. (16) When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg. (17) And after he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters. (18) When Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu. (19) And after he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters. (20) When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug. (21) And after he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters. (22) When Serug had lived 30 years, he became the father of Nahor. (23) And after he became the father of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters. (24)

When Nahor had lived 29 years, he became the father of Terah. (25) And after he became the father of Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters. (26) When Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

- From verse 10 the line of Shem is traced further than in Chapter 10:21-31, which goes as far as Joktan the son of Peleg and stops with his thirteen sons. This genealogy of Chapter 11 continues with Reu the son of Peleg, ignoring Joktan and his sons. The reason is clear, for Reu's line continues with Nahor, Terah and Abram, and God had purposed Abram to be the father of a chosen race whom He would separate from the rest of the nations. There was to be absolutely no doubt of this though Abraham did not receive the son of God's promise until he was 100 years of age. God has been careful to trace that line down through the ages, and Matthew 1 begins the New Testament by showing that Jesus the Messiah of Israel is the official descendant of Abraham, because He was officially the son of Joseph. The actual line is found in Luke 3:23-38, traced backward from the virgin Mary through Abraham to Adam. The marriage of Joseph and Mary was absolutely essential to accomplish the purpose of God in this matter.

(27) The Record of Terah

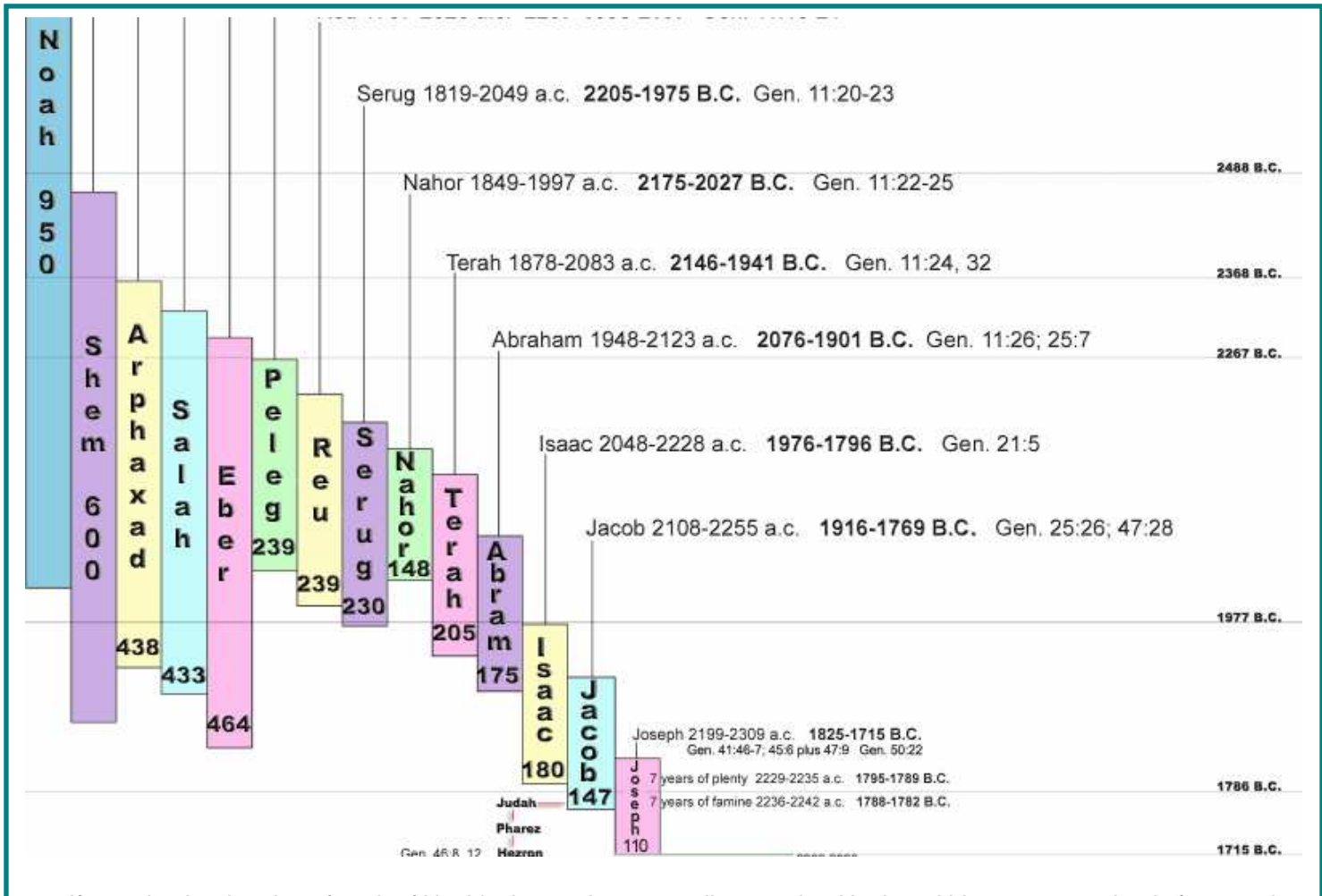
This is the account of Terah.

Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. (28) Haran died in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans, while his father Terah was still alive. (29) And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and Iscah. (30) But Sarai was barren; she had no children. (31) Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (the son of Haran), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and with them he set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. When they came to Haran, they settled there. (32) The lifetime of Terah was 205 years, and he died in Haran.

- Terah had three sons, Abram, Nahor and Haran, and Haran died before his father did (v.28). Then our interest is focused on Abram and Nahor, who were married to Sarai and Milcah respectively. We'll hear more of Nahor, but much more of Abram, for Nahor is only considered insofar as he is connected with Abram's history. The brief mention is made here that Sarai had no child.
- From Ur of the Chaldees Terah took his son Abram (not Nahor, however) and his grandson Lot, who was the son of his deceased son Haran) and Sarai, Abram's wife, with the intention of going to the land of Canaan; but they journeyed only as far as Haran (not even crossing the Euphrates River), and stopped there. It may be they named the place after Haran, Lot's father. Terah died there at the age of 205 years. The reason for their move is seen in Chapter 12.

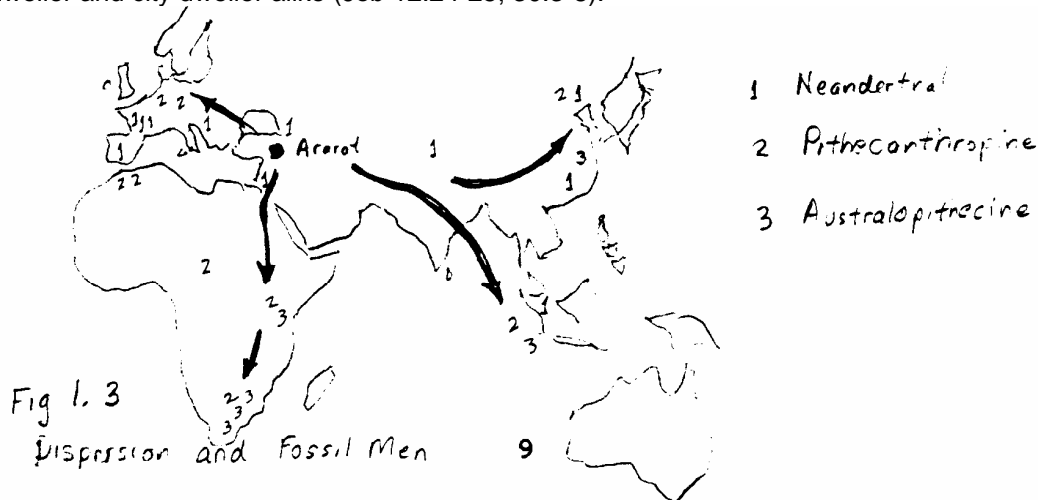
That's the end of the main lesson for this week, but don't miss the following article about what it might have been like for the first four to five centuries after the flood. I think you'll find it very interesting. Take a look at the chart on the next page. Note that Shem outlived all but one of his nine descendants. That's amazing! What was going on? How can this be explained?

*Next we'll be moving into a series on the patriarchs. Next time we'll study some important events in the life of Abraham. As we have done from the beginning, we will focus on events which are critical to understanding the rest of the Bible, and the plan of God to bring a Redeemer into the world for all mankind. *Dusty**



- If you plot the duration of each of Noah's descendants, you discover that Noah and his sons were clearly far superior physiologically to their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
- The simultaneous co-existence of Noah, Shem, Japheth, and Ham with their distant progeny must have made for a dramatic contrast. The founding patriarchs would have seemed as "gods" to the weaker future generations. During this period, all but one of the twenty-five dynasties of the Sumerian King list and the first twelve dynasties of Egypt ran their course. Shem outlived most of them.
- This era of the cohabitation of the earth by men who were virtual "gods" alongside men of more obvious mortality parallels the future Millennial Kingdom when resurrected saints will coexist with mortal humanity in building the greatest civilization history has ever seen.
- World population would have mushroomed rapidly since all generations simultaneously existed for the first five centuries.
- During this early rapid growth of each cultural and racial group, all of them would have had direct knowledge of Noah and his sons. Their names, however, are not obvious in the memory of the various world cultures. What happened?
- Immediately prior to Abraham all of Noah's progeny--the entire set of transitional fathers--died within a few centuries of each other. The effects of this "dying out" cannot be underestimated. The historical memory of mankind was suddenly lost. Add to that the linguistic confusion of Babel, and a "curtain" descended upon the real story of civilization's origin.
- Noah and his sons must be known in world cultural origin myths under alien names. Buried in the diversity of post-Babel language, they await biblical scholars who can "decode" their identities. Pilkey is one such scholar who believes he has decoded many of these identities. For example, he thinks Shem is remembered as Balih of First Kish, as Dadasig of Second Kish, as Tata of Awan, as Sahlamu of the Amorites, and as Melchizedek of Canaan.

- There is much good evidence that the Flood caused the Ice Age. All scientists agree that there have been at least one Ice Age, many now assume there have been many in the lifetime of the earth. What no one has been able to determine is "What started the Ice Age?" Computer models fail when trying to answer this question. The problem? Large glaciers would need a long period of heavy snow to create them, and extreme cold over a long period to keep them from melting. But you can't have both! You've heard the expression, "It's too cold to snow". It's true - the colder the air the less moisture it will hold. The kind of cold it would take to keep the glaciers from melting would make it too cold to snow! So, scientists have a major problem trying to explain how the glaciers got started.
- If you plug the conditions caused by a catastrophic global flood into these same computer models, however, formation of glaciers and the Ice Age become very feasible.
- To properly visualize the dispersion of Noahic mankind, we must recall the natural environment in which they had to live. For all five centuries between Noah and Abraham the Ice Age must have dominated the globe. Migration routes were changed as the glaciers expanded. Storm tracks overran what is now the dry Middle East. The natural environment shaped human as well as animal dispersion routes and timing from the Ark's landing sight.
- With the climate deteriorating in the centuries that followed the flood and the vastly longer lifespans than at present, physiological stress would have been significant. The further men migrated away from the Ararat area, the more primitive conditions and less advanced culture they enjoyed.
- This implication appears to be the only way to explain the peculiar observation shown below that human fossil skulls become more "primitive" in form the further their location from Ararat. Human "primitive" fossil finds apparently show, not stages of evolution, but degrees of stress along the land migratory routes into the new postdiluvian world. In isolated regions of the earth, early settlers lived in caves. Job refers to the stressful living conditions of cave dweller and city dweller alike (Job 12:24-25; 30:3-8).



- The first settlements, therefore, even in the Middle East were not the permanent structures of later Sumerian and Egyptian cultures but lowly shelters of mud and clay. The Ice Age storm tracks with frequent heavy rains repeatedly destroyed them. Thus in the lowest levels of ancient cities, archeologists find many layers of rebuilt dwellings. Unfortunately, the uniformitarian interpretation of these findings, thinking in terms of today's drier climate, estimates each such layer to be as long, perhaps, as a century or two. Then these multiple levels are seen as proof of a "predynastic" historic period lasting thousands of years. In fact, they show only a few decades of marginal survival of Noah's immediate descendents.

THE EARLY POSTDILUVIAN CIVILIZATION

- The civilization that arose in the environment just described was the result of an unprecedented, incredible program of global colonization by those listed in Genesis 10. Their program has largely been forgotten, buried by the evolutionary insistence that early civilization could not have come from high intelligence and advanced technology. It had to have come about, it is believed, through a lengthy process of upward evolution from primitive humanoids.

- Where are the evidences of high technology by Noah and his immediate family besides early Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures? The evidence is slowly coming to light. We must be reminded of what famed Ancient Near Eastern scholar Cyrus Gordon wrote:

"Mankind. . .often lapses into collective amnesia. The Egyptians forgot how to read their ancestors' hieroglyphs, and the Persians lost their knowledge not only the script but also of the history and very names of Cyrus, Cambyses, and Xerxes who made their ancestors the rulers of the world. . . .We [Americans] believe, at least tacitly, that white men did not come to America before Columbus' discovery of our continent in 1492--or certainly not before the Vikings around A.D. 1000. And yet. . .the Greek author Theopompus in the fourth century B.C. wrote of an enormous land inhabited by a race quite unlike the Greeks. Three centuries later, Diodorus of Sicily described a great land, with navigable rivers, west of Africa, discovered by Phoenicians blown across the ocean by strong winds."

- Detailed evidences of ancient Egypt and Sumer, we must recall, have really only been unearthed and studied during the last two centuries. Do we really think that all the evidence of civilization's origins has been found?
- Enough evidence, I believe, has already been found that points to a coordinated world-wide colonization by a Semitic culture with high technology during the Ice Age at the time Egypt and Mesopotamian cultures were beginning. This evidence consists of two parts: detailed regional maps of every continent composed as glaciers were retreating in the northern hemisphere (but before the Antarctic icecap grew to its present size); and a worldwide presence of key names of Semitic origin.

1. Ice Age World Maps - Geography professor Charles Hapgood spent most of the 1950s and 1960s analyzing certain world maps available to medieval navigators. He and his students worked with librarians, cartographers, and historians in order to determine the sources behind these maps. Using the tools of projective geometry and trigonometry, Hapgood showed that several key world maps of the medieval period depended upon very ancient originals. These original sources featured: (1) a value for the circumference of the earth more accurate than that of Eratosthenes the Egyptian; (2) great details of local regions on every continent far exceeding the accuracy of medieval cartographers; (3) evidences of spherical trigonometry before the Greeks; (4) details of Antarctica's shorelines now buried under its icecap; and (5) remnant glaciers in Britain, Sweden, and Germany.



Hapgood summarizes:

"The evidence presented by the ancient maps appears to suggest that in remote times, before the rise of any of the known cultures, of a true civilization, of a comparatively advanced sort, which either was localized in one area but had worldwide commerce, or was, in a real sense, a worldwide culture. . . .In astronomy, nautical science, mapmaking and possibly ship-building, it was perhaps more advanced than any state of culture before the 18th century of the Christian Era. . . .Mapping on such a scale. . .suggests both economic motivations and economic resources. Organized government is indicated. The mapping of a continent like Antarctica implies much organization, many exploring expeditions, many stages in the compilation of local observations and local maps into a general map, all under a central direction."

This 1513 Piri Re'is map shows a knowledge of the true ice-free portions of Antarctica. The longitudes for twenty-four sites are accurate within one half a degree of the true positions. This standard accuracy could not be matched until 1735 when John Harrison invented the marine chronometer. The ice cap in those portions of Antarctica are presently about a mile thick.

Hapgood and his students studied a series of ancient, yet amazingly accurate, maps of the globe. Strangely, the charts revealed areas of the world, such as China, North America, South America, and ice-free portions of Antarctica, long before they had been drawn by European explorers.

'Most of these maps were of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. But maps of other areas survived. These included maps of the Americas and maps of the Arctic and Antarctic Oceans. It becomes clear that the ancient voyagers traveled from pole to pole ... It is clear, too, that they had an instrument of navigation for accurately determining longitudes that was far superior to anything possessed by the peoples of ancient, medieval or modern times until the second half of the eighteenth century.

'The correct coastline of Antarctica was shown as it exists under the ice that now covers it. Another, the Oronteus Finaeus world map (1531), not only gives the most correct longitudinal coordinates but shows in the as yet undiscovered Antarctic continent rivers, valleys, and coastlines in their correct position under the glacial ice as well as the approximate location of the South Pole.

'This evidence of a lost technology will support and give credence to many other hypotheses that have been brought forward of a lost civilization in remote times. Scholars have been able to dismiss most of that evidence as mere myth, but here we have evidence that cannot be dismissed. The evidence requires that all the other evidence that has been brought forward in the past should be re-examined with an open mind.'

2. Worldwide Key Words of Semitic Origin - While Hapgood was investigating maps during the 1950s and 1960s, another innovative researcher was investigating the occurrence around the world of certain key words. John Cohane assembled a rather short list of word stems that appear in languages across the earth.

For example, he points to Eber/Ber/Bar. There is the noun Hebrew, the name of Abraham and his descendents who were the progeny of the Genesis 10 patriarch Eber. There is the Iberian peninsula named from the Ebro river where the first known inhabitants settled. There is the classic name for Ireland, Hibernia as well as one of the founders of Ireland in mythology, Eber. There is the area which is now known as Georgia in what was the old Soviet Empire, known since its ancient settlements as Iberia. Cohane traces other key words like Adam, Eve, and Eloah (=God) throughout cultures in both Western and Eastern hemispheres. [e.g., Eve/Hawah/Hawaii; Aloha/Eloah; etc.] He summarizes his findings:

"In prehistoric times. . .there were two dispersions from the Mediterranean, the first truly worldwide, the second petering out along the eastern coast of the Americas in one direction, in Japan, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand in the other direction."

Besides the Ice Age maps and worldwide Semitic key words, there is the obvious rapid rise of sophisticated architecture with common forms (pyramids in Egypt and Mexico), advanced medicine including drilling of teeth (Egypt), gears, levers, wheels, animal breeding, and a host of other evidences of high technology right from the dawn of civilization.

Interestingly, the general area of the first postdiluvian settlements--eastern Turkey, Palestine, and Mesopotamia--is the area closest to all other areas of planet earth for surface travel. It literally is the "center of the earth" as shown by computer research over two decades ago. How fitting that God had Noah's Ark come to rest in exactly the area that was the best place to begin filling the earth!

With their intelligence and high technology, early postdiluvian mankind migrated away from the Middle East into all the continents, mapping them, building architectural masterpieces, and leaving traces of their still Semitic-like language wherever they went.

Charles Clough