

The Written Account of the Sons of Noah

10:1 to 11:9

Moses edited and compiled eleven family documents in the book of **Genesis**. The major structural word for **Genesis** is *toldot*, which means **the written account of**, or *this is what became of these men and their descendants*. The noun is often translated *generations, histories or descendants*. After the section on the written account of the generations of **Noah** from **6:9** to **9:29**, we have the fifth *toldot*, **the written account of the Sons of Noah**. **The previous toldot went from the judgment of the Flood to the blessing of saving Noah and his family; however, it also went from the blessing of Noah's righteousness to the curse of Canaan. Therefore, what this fifth family document tells us is what became of Noah's sons. And what became of Noah's sons was they went from the blessing of being fruitful and multiplying to the curse of the Tower of Babel.**

The name **the LORD** or **ADONAI** is used seven times in this section. Because this *toldot* ends in the divine judgment of a rebellious people, **ADONAI** *emphasizes that He is the One who always exists, the God of redemption and mercy.*

This section does not begin with the eldest son **Shem**, but deals with **Japheth** and **Ham** first to dispense with the non-Seed lines. **Shem** will be the line that **the Seed of the woman (3:15)**, or the Messiah, comes through, so the descendants of **Shem** will be dealt with last.

The purposes of this section are to show divine providence in the distribution of the nations, to show the relationship of Isra'el to the other nations (**Deuteronomy 32:8-9**), and to show the unity of humanity.

With very few variations, this section is copied in **First Chronicles 1:4-23** showing that it was quite historical. This document is quite unique in any Near Eastern ancient literature. There are several parallels to the early chapters of **Genesis**, but none to this chapter. It stands alone.

The names in **Chapter 10** fall into four categories. First, some names are listed as individuals. Secondly, some names are listed as tribes. Thirdly, some names are listed as cities. And fourthly, some names are listed as nations.