

The Line of Japheth

10: 2-5

DIG: Why is Japheth mentioned first of the three brothers? How many nations resulted from the line of Japheth? What was the occupation of a majority of Japheth's descendants? What areas did they settle in?

We begin with the eldest of Noah's three sons, Japheth. He is mentioned first, because he was the eldest, and then Ham, so that the genealogy of Shem, the youngest, can lead to Abraham without a break. Japheth's descendants became the Indo-European people who settled east into parts of Asia, north into Europe, and westward into Spain. The line of Japheth produced the Caucasian and Oriental races. He had seven sons (10:2) seven grandsons (10:3-4), and fathered fourteen nations (2X7).

Gomer fathered the Cimmerians who located southwest of the Black Sea. After being defeated by the Assyrians they settled in the area between Armenia and Cappadocia (Ezekiel 38:2 and 39:6). They ultimately settled in places like Germany, France and Wales.

Magog was the second son. He located between the Black and Caspian Seas in what is now southern Russia. He is associated with both **Meshech and Tubal** in Ezekiel 38:2 and **Gomer and Togarmah** in Ezekiel 38:6. The Scythians, the Slavs, Russians, Bulgarians, Bohemians, Poles, Slovaks, and the Croatians came from **Magog**.

Madai was the third son. His descendants are mentioned in Second Kings 17:6, 18:11; Isaiah 13:17, 21:2; Jeremiah 25:25, 51:11 and 28. The Indians and the Iranic races such as the Medes, Persians, Afghans, and the Kurds all came from **Madai**, who located southwest of the Caspian Sea.

Javan was the fourth son and is pronounced *Yavan* in Hebrew. It is the source of the name *Ionia* from Homer's *Iliad* and refers to the Hellenic race. These people settled along the coast of Asia Minor, which is Greece. They are mentioned in Isaiah 66:19 where they are connected with **Tarshish and Tubal**, and Ezekiel 27:13 where they are connected with **Meshech and Tubal**. There is a Greek legend that says that *Eipetos* is the father of the Greeks and *Eipetos* is the Greek form of **Japheth**. So the Greeks, Romans, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italians all came from **Javan**.

Tubal was the fifth son and his descendants are the *Tabali* of the Assyrian inscriptions. They lived in east Asia Minor and included areas of Russia and as far north as Tobolsk on the Tobol River.

Meshech was the sixth son and are the *Mushki* of the Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions. They are also mentioned in Egyptian literature. They located between the Black and Caspian Seas. The territory they settled was Russia, and they are always mentioned in conjunction with **Tubal** as seen in **Ezekiel 27:13, 32:26, 38:2-3 and 39:1**.

Tiras was the last son (10:2). The Thracians, the Teutons, and the Anglo-Saxon race, the English people, came from **Tiras**. Seven more came from these seven.

Three northern tribes came from the sons of **Gomer** and the grandsons of **Japheth**: **Ashkenaz** was the first son of **Gomer**. The Jews identified Ashkenaz with Germany and, to this day, German Jews are called the *Ashkenazi*.¹⁸⁵ Their territories included Germany, Skandia, Sexon, Denmark and Armenia. They are mentioned in **Jeremiah 51:27** in conjunction with **Ararat** and **Minni**.

Riphath was the second son of **Gomer**. In **First Chronicles 1:6** his name is spelled **Diphath** because the *r* and the *d* are very much alike in Hebrew. They located on the southern edge of the Black Sea.

Togarmah was the third son and the ancestor of the Armenians, as they themselves claim (10:3). Other references to them are in **Ezekiel 27:14**, where they were noted for exporting horses to Tyre, and in **Ezekiel 38:6**, where they are part of the LORD's army.

Then, the sons of **Javan** or *Yavan*, the grandsons of **Japheth**, were related to the Greeks: **Elishah** was the first son of **Javan**. They located in Cyprus and Crete.

Tarshish was the second son of **Javan** and means *refinery*. His descendants were located in southwestern Spain. Other references to them are found in **First Kings 10:22**, which says they were exporters of gold, silver, ivory, apes and baboons; in **Isaiah 23:1** where they are connected with ships; in **Jeremiah 10:9** where they were exporters of silver; **Ezekiel 27:12** where they were connected with Tyre and the export of silver, iron, tin and lead. This was the destination of **Jonah (Jonah 1:3)** and was also the place of Solomon's trading ships (**Second Chronicles 9:21**).

Kittim was the third son mentioned, which is the Phoenician part of Cypress. Other references are in **Numbers 24:24** which are associated with ships; **Isaiah 23:1**, where Tyre is destroyed, and **Ezekiel 27:6**, where it is described as an island.

And Rodanim, or as sometimes pronounced Dodanim because the r and the d sound so much alike in Hebrew (**First Chronicles 1:7**), was the fourth son. They located in Greece and Macedonia (**10:4**).

From these the maritime peoples spread out into their territories. This is stated to tell how it came about that the people were scattered so soon after the Flood, and it links up with the story of the Tower of Babel, which explains how the different languages arose. Moreover, it shows how ADONAI in His love kept His covenant with Noah and did not destroy his descendants. A majority of Japheth's descendants made their living on the sea, in one way or another. They spread out both east and west, going as far as Europe in the west and Persia, India and most of Asia in the east. They spread out over so much territory, that they fulfilled the prophecy of **9:27** where Noah said: **May God extend the territory of Japheth**. Then they were divided by their clans within their nations and fourteen nations came from Japheth (**10:5a**). This shows they had some kind of social structure. The time span given here is three generations within fourteen nations. Each of these clans had its own language (**10:5b**). This proves that this was written after the dispersion of **Chapter 11**.

These northern tribes did not figure predominantly in Israel's history, but occur frequently in prophetic writings (**Ezekiel 27, 37-39**).¹⁸⁶