GENESIS PRACTICAL THEOLOGY | STUDENT HANDOUT

LESSON 9

SCATTERED NATIONS, PRESERVED PROMISE

From the Table of Nations and Babel to the Line of Abram

MAIN IDEA **Humanity seeks unity, security, and a great name apart from God, but the Lord judges proud autonomy, governs the nations, and preserves the promised line through which blessing will return to the scattered world.**

Lesson Objectives

- Trace how Genesis 10–11 moves from Noah's sons and the nations to Shem, Terah, and Abram.
- Identify the passage's major repetitions, sevens, name patterns, and literary symmetries.
- Explain the purposes of the Table of Nations and the Babel narrative.
- Distinguish clear textual claims from disputed or uncertain interpretations.
- Connect Babel, the Abrahamic promise, Christ, Pentecost, and the final gathering of the nations.
- Apply the passage to identity, unity, power, mission, and worship.

Teaching Overview

Genesis 10 maps the post-flood nations; Genesis 11 explains their scattering and then narrows the genealogy toward Abram. Listen for how names, numbers, repeated words, and mirrored movements connect Noah's world to the patriarchal promises.

Key Scripture Passages

- Primary passage: Genesis 10:1–11:32
- Textual divisions: 10:1–5; 10:6–20; 10:21–32; 11:1–4; 11:5–9; 11:10–32
- Earlier Genesis: 1:28; 4:16–17; 5:1–32; 6:4; 9:1, 7, 18–29
- Next movement: Genesis 12:1–3
- New Testament: Acts 2:1–12; Acts 17:26–27; Galatians 3:8, 16; Revelation 7:9–10

I. THE SONS OF NOAH BECOME THE NATIONS

Genesis 10:1–5

Guided Notes

- List the four repeated categories used to summarize the nations.
- Record the teacher's explanation of the 7 + 7 pattern in Japheth's branch.
- How does this section fulfill Genesis 9:1, 7?

Vocabulary

	STUDENT NOTES

t	

Discussion Question

What four categories are repeated in the summary formulas of Genesis 10?

Theology in Practice

Record one way this section challenges self-made identity, proud power, distorted unity, or neglect of God's mission.

II. HAM'S LINE: CANAAN, NIMROD, AND THE RISE OF KINGDOMS

Genesis 10:6–20

Guided Notes

- Trace the placement of Canaan within Ham's line.
- Record the correlation between Nimrod and the pre-flood "mighty men."
- Why does Babel appear in 10:10 before the tower narrative?

Vocabulary

	STUDENT NOTES

Discussion Question

How does Nimrod's description recall the "mighty men" before the flood?

Theology in Practice

Record one way this section challenges self-made identity, proud power, distorted unity, or neglect of God's mission.

III. SHEM, EBER, PELEG, AND THE TABLE'S LITERARY CENTER

Genesis 10:21–32

Guided Notes

- Sketch the movement Japheth → Ham → Shem.
- Record the two branches from Eber and why Peleg matters.
- What cautions belong with the traditional count of seventy?

Vocabulary

	STUDENT NOTES

Discussion Question

How does the first listing of Shem's descendants differ from the linear genealogy in Genesis 11:10–26?

Theology in Practice

Record one way this section challenges self-made identity, proud power, distorted unity, or neglect of God's mission.

IV. ONE PEOPLE BUILDS ONE CITY TO MAKE ONE NAME

Genesis 11:1–4

Guided Notes

- Underline the builders' three stated goals.
- Record the repeated "Come, let us" speeches.
- Sketch the Babel chiasm and mark its center.

Vocabulary

	STUDENT NOTES

Discussion Question

Which phrases reveal the builders' motives most clearly?

Theology in Practice

Record one way this section challenges self-made identity, proud power, distorted unity, or neglect of God's mission.

V. THE LORD COMES DOWN, CONFUSES, AND SCATTERS

Genesis 11:5–9

Guided Notes

- List the reversals between 11:1–4 and 11:5–9.
- How is scattering both judgment and fulfillment?
- Record the Babel/balal wordplay.

Vocabulary

	STUDENT NOTES
/ balal	

Discussion Question

Why does the narrator portray the LORD as coming down to see the tower?

Theology in Practice

Record one way this section challenges self-made identity, proud power, distorted unity, or neglect of God's mission.

VI. FROM SHEM TO TERAH: THE PROMISE LINE NARROWS

Genesis 11:10–32

Guided Notes

- Compare Genesis 5 and Genesis 11:10–26.
- Why is Shem's line repeated in a different form?
- What tensions are introduced by Terah's settlement and Sarai's barrenness?

Vocabulary

	STUDENT NOTES
t	

Discussion Question

What parallels connect Genesis 5 and Genesis 11:10–26?

Theology in Practice

Record one way this section challenges self-made identity, proud power, distorted unity, or neglect of God's mission.

VII. BABEL, THE NATIONS, AND THE GOSPEL

Genesis 10:1–11:32; Acts 2:1–12; Acts 17:26–27; Galatians 3:8, 16; Revelation 7:9–10

Guided Notes

- Classify each connection: explicit NT use, strong canonical pattern, or analogy.
- How does Pentecost address Babel without erasing languages?
- Trace: nations → Abram → Christ → worldwide worship.

Discussion Question

How does Acts 17 use the truth of shared human ancestry?

Theology in Practice

Record one way this section challenges self-made identity, proud power, distorted unity, or neglect of God's mission.

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE

SPHERE	APPLICATION PROMPT
Personal	Where am I trying to make a name rather than receive identity from God?
Family	How can our household honor peoples and languages while remaining centered on Christ?

Church	What kind of unity should our congregation pursue, and what false unity should it resist?
Ministry	How should the movement from Babel to Abraham shape our commitment to the nations?

Questions for Reflection

- How do Genesis 10 and 11 together explain both the unity and diversity of humanity?
- Which structural feature most helps you understand the Table of Nations?
- How do Shem/name, Babel/balal, and Peleg/division advance the narrative?
- Why is human unity not automatically righteous?
- How does God turn scattering into preparation for blessing?
- How does the genealogy of Shem answer the apparent dead end of Babel?
- What does the final biblical vision retain from the nations of Genesis 10?

Personal Notes

Key Takeaways

- One truth about God: _____
- One truth about humanity: _____
- One key interpretive insight: _____
- One connection to Christ or the gospel: _____
- One remaining question: _____
- One response of faith or obedience: _____

FINAL SUMMARY **Complete after the session: Genesis 10:1–11:32 teaches that _____.**

Resources Used

- The Holy Bible, Genesis 10:1–11:32 and listed canonical cross-references.
- Kenneth A. Mathews, Genesis 1–11:26, New American Commentary, vol. 1A.
- Victor P. Hamilton, The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17, New International Commentary on the Old Testament.
- No additional outside source was used.

