

God of Nations (Genesis 10)

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- [0 : 00] 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, Goma, Magog, Madai, Yavan, Tubal, Meshech and Teras.
- The sons of Goma, Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togamah. The sons of Yavan, Elisha, Tarshish, Kitim 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, Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raamah and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah, Sheba and Dedan.
- [1 : 06] 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 Kalne in the land of Shinar. From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehobothir, Kala and Rezin.
- Between Nineveh and Kala, that is the great city. Egypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Patrusim, Kasluhim, from whom the Philistines came, and Kaphtorim.
- Canaan fathered Sedan, his firstborn, and Heth, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Archites, 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, Camorah, Adma, and Zeboim, as far as Lasha.
- [2 : 25] These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations. To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Yapheth, children were born.
- The sons of Shem, Elam, Ashur, Apakshad, Lud, and Aram. The sons of Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Tamash.
- Apakshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. To Eber were born two sons. The name of the one was Pelig. For in his days, the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Yoktan.
- Yoktan fathered Amodad, Shelah, Hazamaveth, Yerah, Hadorem, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Yobab.
- All these were the sons of Yoktan. The territory in which they lived extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the east.
- [3 : 35] 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. This is the word of the Lord. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you, Cheryl.

and thank you for listening in to a very complicated chapter, isn't it? But here at PCBC, we believe that all of God's word is God-breathed.

It's profitable. And we're going to ask God to help us to profit from this chapter today. So would you pray with me and let's hear from God together. Our gracious Father, we thank you.

[4 : 49] And we thank you that you are the God of nations. And we thank you that even as we hear of the nations scattering across the earth after the flood, you have paved the way for your future blessing through a future people and ultimately through a future king.

And so we ask in Jesus' name that you would bless this word to us today. In Jesus' name we pray now. Amen. Thank you again for joining us today.

Really great to see so many new visitors as well this week. And great to see Jaden back as well. I wonder if you maybe in the past few months have been to the CBD recently.

So earlier this week, a few of us from our family, we ventured into the city. And we were reminded of life at a different scale, you see.

Most of last year has been kind of hanging around at home, right? Our world is so small. Our backyard. Whatever we're allowed to go to during lockdown. And then it was quite a shock actually for us to venture into town and then just to see again enormous buildings, busy streets, crowds of people going to and fro from work.

[6 : 05] And the thing that impressed me the most were the skyscrapers. And there seems to be some new ones that have been, that are now under construction. And I think large scale could be a way to describe what we've just heard from Genesis chapter 10, right?

Because in the last three chapters from Genesis 6, we've kind of zoomed in on one family, right? Noah's family. We've kind of gone with their, you know, followed along in their family sitcom, the adventures there, to a wide angle now.

Almost like as if it was a drone footage of the nations. Genesis chapter 10. We've gone from the God of Noah and now we're looking at the God of nations. And as you remember last week, we followed Noah and his family off the boat.

And we had hoped that Noah and his sons would bring rest from all the pain and the suffering that was happening in the earth at the time. You remember that promise, right?

Right back to the Garden of Eden. Perhaps one of the descendants, one of Noah's children, would finally reverse the curse, would chart a way back into paradise.

[7 : 15] And yet our hopes were dashed. We heard of Noah's drunkenness and Shem's dishonor. We were reminded how the flood, it was judgment that wiped away wickedness and yet could not change the human heart.

Sin persists. And I wonder as Noah's told different destinies of different sons, judgment or grace, I wonder how you were challenged last week.

Were you challenged to follow the way of Ham's descendants? Or were you challenged to dwell in the tents of Shem, the Savior's line? And that was what we were challenged with last week from Pastor Nathan.

And now in the final weeks of our sermon series in Genesis, we've got this week in Genesis 10 and then 11, and then we're pretty much finished with our series. We will start to see how Noah's words begin to lay a firm foundation for us, for the rest of Scripture.

Just as we were previously introduced to the account of the heavens and the earth, again, we were introduced then in chapter 6 to the account of Noah. Chapter 10 seems to start a new section.

[8 : 27] This is the account. That's how it started. And this is the account of the world after the flood, from Noah's sons onwards. But I wonder as you notice the reading, instead of following one line down, like we did with Cain and Seth in Genesis 4 and 5, we seem to follow, it's less one straight line and more like a table of nations.

It's growing. It's very different, isn't it? Depending on how you count the names, actually, we get roughly 70 or so people groups listed. That's crucial because 70 is, in the Bible, a significant number.

Seven or 70 is a number that symbolizes completion. It's almost as if we're reminded, just as Genesis 1 described God's complete work of creation in seven days, here are now 10 sevens, and Genesis 10 is now describing God's complete work of the known world.

Briefly, I want you to make sense of this list by noticing a few things. Firstly, this list is a bit different from our previous genealogies. It leaves out ages and years. We'll see kind of that a person was so-and-so.

They were this old when they had their first child, and then they were this old when they died. We saw that pattern over and over again, didn't we, in the previous chapters. This formula does resume in the next chapter, but here it's missing.

[9 : 55] It's missing. And I think that's a clue that this chapter is not as focused on kind of individual families, but it's more giving us a picture of people groups and places.

I think chapter 10, to understand it rightly, we're thinking less of the genealogy and more the geography, where people are. It's like the difference between a turn-by-turn GPS.

You're following a family, following step-by-step. We're not doing that. Instead, we're looking at the whole picture. We're zooming out to see the whole map of where people have gone. And notice, too, another thing to notice is how broad some of the names listed were.

I mean, if you look in your Bibles again, chapter 10, you'll notice some big names, right? Cush, Mizrayim. These are actually, they stand for whole countries, not just an individual or family.

Genesis 10 is sketching out humans growing and spreading after the flood. They are being fruitful. They're increasing in number, as God has repeatedly promised right from the first chapter onwards.

[10 : 59] Be fruitful and multiply. And that is exactly what is happening. Despite the sin of man, God is still the promise-keeping God. He is still helping humans to be fruitful and multiply.

And I think the final thing to notice is some of you may have kind of section headings in your Bibles. And you'll notice just from a brief glance, they're kind of uneven, right?

The first section is pretty short. The second and the third sections are much longer. Why is this? I think this gives you a clue into what the author is focusing on, right?

The first section, it's Yapheth's descendants, and they kind of live in the rest of the world, furthest away from God's people reading this at the time, Israel.

And again, the author actually names seven children, seven grandchildren. I think perhaps we're here just meant to say, here's a summary of the distant nations. And I think we're probably included in there as well.

[11 : 58] Verses 6 to 20, right, the second section, it's much longer, isn't it? The author lists four sons of Ham, all large nations, and then 26 children and great-grandchildren.

And again, it's not that the mothers in this line were like, you know, twice as productive. Rather, these are the people groups that are more important to God's people because they live right next door.

And then finally, the last list, the Shemites, five sons of Shem are listed, and then 21 descendants. But you notice how the author keeps going down the tree, down to the fourth generation.

What he's saying is that this is the line that keeps going. This is the line that matters most to us because this is our line. This is the line from where God's covenant people will come from.

So that's Genesis 10 in a nutshell. But perhaps you're now wondering, why did I come today? What good is this geography lesson for me? I put petrol in the car and I came to church.

[13 : 02] How will I benefit from Genesis 10? Here, I want to remind us that Genesis, like the rest of the Bible, it was written for us, but it wasn't written to us.

Do you get the difference? It was written for us. We benefit from it today. But we need to remember there was an original audience, right? And who needed to hear this first and foremost? It was God's people, the Israelites, that this book was originally put together for.

And so the best way for us to understand this book is to put ourselves in their shoes. Imagine that we were the Israelites wandering around and needing to ask, why this table of nations?

Why does it matter to them? And then I think hopefully we'll see why it matters to us. So I have three simple points I want to share from this chapter.

So three points from the three sons. And the first point I want to share is this. Yafet's line calls us to remember God's heart for the nations.

[14 : 08] The line of Yafet, their descendants, calls us to remember God's heart for the nations. One of the turning points in one of our kids' most favorite films.

They'll want to watch it again if they could, over and over again, I'm sure. The Disney film Moana, right? We love it, don't we? Okay. So culturally close to Aotearoa and the Pacific Islands.

And spoiler alert, okay. What happens in the story is that she discovers that her island-loving family, who never want to go beyond the reef, they were actually descendants of a great seafaring people.

They were navigators. They were travelers, right? But they'd forgotten. Over thousands of years, they'd forgotten. And in much the same way, right, the people of God, Israel, they would, in later history, keep forgetting their purpose.

As God's special people. And what was their purpose? We hear it at the end of our Bible verse of the month that we've been trying to memorize, right?

[15 : 13] What is their ultimate purpose? What is Israel's ultimate purpose? They were to be blessed so that all peoples on earth will be blessed through them.

Genesis 12, verse 3. So you see, this means when there's a list of names from distant places, right, from the sons of Yapheth. When we read names like what we see in verses 2 to 5.

Okay. On first glance, they seem, okay, irrelevant. Can't find these places on Google Maps. Why bother? It turns out you and I are not alone. Israel thought this way too.

Out of sight, out of mind. Oh, Magog and Gomer. Tubal from the far north. Ezekiel 38. Don't know about them. Don't care about them.

What? Yavan, Elisha, Tashish, all the way out west. Aren't those, the boat people, far, far away? Who cares? You see, for Israel, all peoples didn't seem to matter so much.

[16 : 16] They had forgotten their purpose. But this chapter reminds us this is not how God feels about the nations. We know this because throughout the rest of the Bible, God repeatedly reminds His people that they should declare His glory among the nations.

Listen, for example, to the prophet Isaiah as he comforts his people with hope. Isaiah chapter 60 says this, Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

And then later he says, And nations will come to your light. Verse 3. Kings to the brightness of your dawn. You see that? And as Isaiah keeps prophesying, he starts to list some of these distant lands that will come into this light.

And I wonder if these names will become familiar to you. Verse 9. Surely the islands look to me, and the lead are the ships of Tashish, bringing your children from afar with their silver and gold to the honor of the Lord your God.

It's familiar, isn't it? It's right from Genesis chapter 10. Or what about verse 19 of Isaiah 66, where it says, I will send some of those who survived to the nations.

[17 : 38] So not just them coming in, God's people going to the nations, to Tashish, to the Libyans and Lydians, to Tubal and Greece, which is another way to say Yavan in chapter 10, to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory.

They will proclaim my glory among the nations. You see, our God is a missionary God. And if an inward-looking Israel needed to remember God's salvation plan must include the nations, then maybe an inward-looking church in New Zealand needs to remember the same.

Because if Israel was called to join a missionary God, to declare His glory among the nations, how much more should we, now as followers of Christ, who is the true light of the world?

All power and authority has been given to me, says the Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 28. So wherever you go, make disciples of one nation.

No, two nations. No, some people. No, all nations. Right? Baptizing them in the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey all that I have commanded.

[18 : 56] You see, PCBC, this is the missionary God who calls us to join Him in His mission. And I think we can get practical here, right?

Who are the missionaries that we support as PCBC? How well do we know them? Do we even know their names? How they serve? How we can support them?

I don't know. What of each of our cell groups could perhaps even adopt one of these people or families or organizations? Get to know them meaningfully. Pray for them. Support them practically and spiritually.

Or friends, do we know who are our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ? What ways can you and I remember our brothers in Afghanistan? North Korea?

Somalia? Libya? Yemen? China? And onwards? How can we remember them? Like Hebrews 13 verse 3 says, Remember those who are in prison as if you were in chains with them.

[19 : 59] And I don't know. Can you and I sit comfortably here while we just scroll past lists of names in our news, while we hear of millions in distant lands who are perishing without hearing the name of Christ?

Can we turn a blind eye to the suffering and sorrow beyond Aotearoa? There are spiritual battles, right? Even right now, going on. There are war-weary Ukrainians and Russians.

There are dissatisfied Chinese and Japanese. There are hurting Maori and Pacifica communities. How can we join in God's mission?

These are not just distant names. They are in our village. They've even come to New Zealand. If New Zealand was a village of 100 people, they would look something like this picture.

And so some of these nations are already on our doorstep. They are at the sports club we attend. The Pilates we joined in this morning.

[21 : 03] The mosque in Pakaranga. The shopping center in Ormiston. And yet also, some are further, right, beyond our borders. How will nations come to the light of Christ if they have never heard or met a Jesus follower?

How will kings know the brightness of the dawn of Jesus if they have never seen the power of the risen Lord from someone? These are not just foreign names when we read here in Genesis chapter 10, verse 2 to 5.

These remind us. They call us to remember God's heart for every nation, for every people group. So I wonder which people group you could start with.

Which nation you could adopt and start to pray for. Or which group of people in your life right now you could start to cross your cultural barriers to reach out, befriend, make disciples of Jesus wherever you and I go.

Our first line reminds us, calls us to remember God's heart for the nations. Secondly, harm's line, I think, warns us to stay loyal.

[22 : 21] To stay loyal to God while we live among the nations. I don't know how well you know your neighbors. But before the first lockdown, it turns out that we started to scramble.

We were panicking, right? There was this big announcement from the government, we've got to stay home, save lives. And so we did. But in the two days before it, there was a mad scramble. We didn't even know who our neighbors were. And so we kind of just knocked door to door and tried to form this kind of WhatsApp chat group.

At the very least, we could kind of talk to each other. And so we did that, stayed in touch as neighbors. It was pretty useful. And it's been useful since then. I still have this WhatsApp group for our street.

Great during a power cut or if a dog is on the loose, we could kind of ask each other what's going on. Could exchange gardening tips, dad jokes. Definitely helpful during lockdown.

And so we kind of had a bit of a neighborhood watch going. A neighborhood watch going. And what I think we have from verses 6 to 20 here in chapter 10 is a bit of a neighborhood watch for the people of Israel.

[23 : 29] As the sons of Ham are listed by their clans and languages and their territories and nations, here is a bit of a neighborhood watch for God's people who first read this. These people groups, they represent all the regions.

You can see it's colored in green. Are closest to God's people. What we call the Middle East, North Africa, bits of Babylon today. And they kind of set the scene for the key places and people that will shape Israel's future destiny.

Right? One of the sons of Ham is called Mitzrayim in some of your translations, which means Egypt. And we know Egypt becomes a place where Jacob and his 70 descendants move to.

And then in time they need to be rescued from Egypt to call out God's people for the first time. Psalm 105 actually, verse 23, describes how Israel came to Egypt. Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.

Another people group is the Canaanites. You see in verse 6, name there and his descendants. And actually even the borders are very strictly defined. In verse 18 and 19, this is where Canaan is.

[24 : 39] This is the first mention of the land that God will one day promise to give his people. We also see in Ham's line all the nations who will inflict pain and sorrow on Israel.

From Mitzrayim will come the Philistines, verse 13. The Philistines, as some of you know, will end up tormenting people like Samson and Samuel and Saul and David as they try and lead God's people.

From Canaan comes Sodom and Gomorrah, who God will one day judge with fire for their wickedness, their depravity. And from Cush, it turns out that the author wants to remind us of the mysterious character Nimrod.

Well, this is all we know about Nimrod, really, here in verses 8 to 11. But it seems like what's important for us is that Nimrod goes on a building spree and starts building cities, including the great city of Nineveh, okay, in Jonah's story.

And the cities are around with Babylon and Assyria. These end up becoming two nations that later will inflict much pain and suffering from Israel.

[25 : 49] And so this is a list that serves as a neighborhood watch for God's people. Even this early in the Bible, God is warning his people, you'll be surrounded by nations and people who do not honor the Lord, who worship other gods, who will lead you astray.

I wonder what we can learn from that today as we live among the nations, as we meet, live, work with, surrounded by people who do not honor the Lord, who worship other gods, who may lead us astray.

Now, I think there's two different kinds of dangers in how we respond to God's people, right? When it comes to people of other nations, ethnicities, religions, or worldviews, I think there are two opposite responses.

One is to look down on them. One is to show sinful prejudice to them. Some of you may have heard of what some people call the curse of Ham. Who's heard that idea before?

No one. One person, two people, okay? And actually, sadly, it's not something that's actually made such a big impact for the worse in lots of world history. This is where certain people have misread chapters 9 and 10.

[27 : 07] And they've said and looked at this passage and gone, the curse of Ham means that all dark-skinned people, they're under a curse. And they will be forever enslaved by people from the other lines, Yafeth Hashem.

And it's been used to justify things like the slave trade, or even justify a white supremacy still today. And can I just say up front, this is the wrong way to read this passage.

I mean, read your Bibles. Remember from last week, who was cursed? It was not all of Ham, right? What does it say? Verse 24 of chapter 9, it says, It says, And the key thing is this.

Canaanites, they were not cursed because of their skin color or some kind of physical feature. They were cursed because of their sin, their wickedness. Leviticus 18 actually spells this out in graphic detail.

All the things and the practices they did, okay? Including sexual immorality, including child sacrifice. This was the kind of wickedness that God one day then uses Israel to judge them for.

[28 : 17] To wipe them out, to conquer their land. And so friends, let me be clear. There's no such thing as a curse of Ham. A curse on a particular group of people in our world.

And I think actually it's a tragedy that some Christians in the past have taught this. And that some people still teach it today. For you and I, the only curse that should matter is the one that Jesus became.

To deliver us from the curse of sin. Galatians 3.13 says that, right? He became a curse. He was cursed on a tree to pay for our sins.

That is the only curse that should matter for the Christian. And so friends, there is no place to look down on someone because of their ethnicity, their appearance, or accent.

PCBC English. We must value and honor all people. We must hold out the good news of Christ without prejudice. Without looking down on people.

[29 : 22] And I think yet, when it comes to our neighbors, maybe some of you, you've never spoken a racist comment to someone before. But maybe you've got the opposite danger.

And I think it's just as deadly, right? Instead of sinful prejudice, you go to fearful cowardice. You would just shrink back and simply not want to challenge anyone who has a different worldview to you.

You would just want to shrink back and just blend in to the culture around you. Many of us actually are good at blending in. We've had to do that to survive, right? Living between cultures.

You can blend in at home with your family of one culture. You blend in at work with a family of another, you know, workmates of another culture and so on. So we're good at this blending in strategy.

And yet, friends, our desire to fit in, to blend in, will bring in its own dangers. And God knows this. I think that's why the first song in the Psalms says, Blessed is the one who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, or stands in the way of the sinners, or sits in the seat of scoffers, right?

[30 : 28] Rather to be planted deep in God's life-giving word. I think God knows this. It's why prophets like Hosea, they are called to plead with Israel. Stop sleeping with the enemy, as it were.

Stay pure and faithful to the one true God. The one who we believe in and trust, who loves you. You see, friends, however we live, eat, drink, study, work, sleep, God wants us not to fit in with our surrounding culture.

That would be fearful cowardice. And so, when it comes to how we live with our friends and neighbors, we need to be balanced. When it comes to just living life alongside the descendants of Ham, we must be balanced.

Let us welcome and respect God's image bearers. But let us stay loyal to the God who made us, who redeemed us. We are called from every nation, yes, but to be a kingdom of priests to God, to reign with the Son.

Called from every nation to be distinct among the nations. And I think one way to do this, a very practical way to be distinct, is to commit and to join together as a church family often.

[31 : 46] COVID has made it hard, hasn't it, to see each other as often. We get scared. We break out of habits of meeting together regularly. But this is a gift from God, to meet together.

What should church be if not a place, a safe harbor, where we can shelter from the storms that surround us? What if church, what is church if not a place where we can just share the wounds that we have?

We can be broken with each other. And we can be given the gospel again and again to heal. What is church if it is not a place where we can have a counterculture?

Where we shape our lives not by the light of other gods, but the light of Jesus Christ, who loves us and bled for us. What is church if not a place where we learn how to live by grace and not greed?

By forgiveness and not bitterness. By love and not lust. Friends, we cannot take our cues slowly from the culture around us. Church is a gift.

[32 : 56] Gathering is a gift where we can remember, remind each other how to live among the nations. We're thought of Yapheth's call to mission through Yapheth's line.

We're thought of kind of the reminder to stay distinct and loyal from Ham's line. I think finally, as we look at the last 10 verses, Hashem's line reminds us to trust God's plan to bless a divided world.

Hashem's line reminds us to trust God's plan to bless a divided world. Hashem's line reminds us to trust God's plan to bless a divided world. Last week, I booked my first international flight since border restrictions lifted.

I don't know about you, but if you scroll through a list of destinations, maybe it might not be life-changing for you. But for me, I was comforted and excited even. Maybe I won't be able to go to as many countries as Julianne, but I'd be comforted and excited, right?

Comforted because of the chance to see friends we haven't seen since COVID started. And excited because a bit of pre-COVID normality would be coming back into our lives.

[34 : 09] Maybe you might not be excited about a list of countries. You might be terrified. I don't know. Or maybe it's a different list that would make you comforted and excited. A list of movies on Netflix or a list of achievements you've unlocked or a list of assignments you've completed.

I don't know what floats your boat. But for the Israelites, okay, for the Israelites who first read verses 21 to 32, this is a list of people that would have comforted and excited them.

Okay? They look like a long list of names to us, yes. But they comforted and excited Israel. Because I'll give you some examples. In 1 Chronicles, the person who wrote down and keeps a record of Israel's history, he gets excited.

He copies this list almost word for word in 1 Chronicles 1. Or Luke, one of the gospel writers, actually decides that he wants to trace Jesus' ancestry all the way up to Shem in his gospel account.

So you'll read in chapter 3 of Luke's gospel, 35 to 36, he painstakingly copies down the same genealogy. This is a list of names that brought comfort and excitement to God's people.

[35 : 26] Aside from the familiar names that we see, and we'll look at a little bit more next week, two details I think would have stood out from Genesis chapter 10. All right? One, I think if we zoom into verse 21, you'll see.

Notice how one detail gets repeated. Okay? Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber. And here it's possible, I could be wrong, but it's possible that Eber is where we get the word Hebrew from.

And so here's the first hint of kind of God's people getting their name. All right? It's possible that this family line is starting from here, and their name comes from here.

Notice, and we'll scroll down to verse 25, Notice too how verse 25 describes the earth at the time. And it was divided. Why add this detail?

Why add this detail? Because we actually, you know, he talks about the division in the next chapter. But why add it here again? I think this detail must have mattered to God's people as they read through this list of names.

[36 : 30] All right? You see, if there are so many countries and peoples in this world, how is God going to rescue everyone? If people are spreading out all around the world, how can God bring a people back to dwell with him?

And friends, while it takes the rest of the Bible to answer this question, that's why it's called a foundation, right, in Genesis, ultimately, the solution to this question comes loud and clear after we hear the gospel.

The apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter 2 says it this way, right? He reminds a church, a little bit divided at the time, that it is in Jesus, a son of Abram, a son of Shem, who will one day break down the dividing wall of hostility.

Verse 14, between Jew and Gentile. And Jesus will break down this dividing wall. How? He will kill the hostility between people at the cross.

At the cross, he will sacrifice his own life. He will heal the rift that our sin has caused between us and God, and therefore, start to heal the divisions between us and other people.

[37 : 46] And so, friends, we live in a divided world today, right? We're divided over politics, over culture, over all kinds of things. But there is good news.

There is a gracious king who can break down divisions, who can unite families at war, who can bring peace to a broken people.

And perhaps you're not a Christian here today. I don't know what kinds of divisions you struggle with. At home, at work, other places.

I don't know what you look to for comfort and excitement. But I know that only Jesus can deal with your divided life, your broken life.

Only Jesus can free you from whatever is enslaving you. Only Jesus can gather a people from across cultures and backgrounds to form true God-glorifying unity in Him.

[38 : 53] And so, if you're not a Christian, the Lord invites you to admit your need for Him, to turn from a divided world and to follow Him, the Lord Jesus, by faith today.

And more important than that, I hope not just if you're not a Christian, but I hope all of us, all of God's people, will come away from even this chapter comforted and excited.

Comforted and excited. Because time and time again, right? Sin could have just wiped out any plan for God to bless His creation. Time and time again, though, God preserves a righteous seed.

He preserves a family line that will bring His promise of blessing, not just to one nation, but to all the nations, including us.

So, chapter 10 even reminds us that something like geography can even lead to the gospel. Isn't that good?

[40 : 03] As Kiwis, I don't think we do a lot of group singing these days. I think it's great that we can do that weekly at church. But actually, outside of church, probably the only two times you'll sing in a group would be maybe at a rugby game or maybe at an Anzac Day parade, right?

And both times, probably because you want to sing the national anthem. But I want to draw your attention to the best part of the national anthem, and it's actually the part that's not in English. It's the first verse in te reo, Maori.

Because up front, it declares, it is, E Ihoa, Yahweh, the Lord, the promise-keeping God of Genesis, who will bring blessing, not just to our nation, but to the nations around us.

So I wonder, as we close in prayer, that we could use these words, that I would lead us in these words, to pray and give thanks to the God of nations, whose blessings flow through the blood of Christ.

Let's pray. E hoa, atua. O Lord God, promise-keeping Father, O ngā iwi, māte ora, You are the Lord of nations and of us too.

[41 : 26] ■tawhakao rāngona. Listen to us. Me aroha noa. Cherish us. Show your love towards us again.

Kia hua, ko te pai. Lord, may your goodness flourish in this land and in us. Kia tōtou atawai.

And may your blessings flow, Father, through your Son, Jesus Christ. Manā ki tia mai, Aotearoa. We thank you, God of nations, for blessing us in Christ.

In His name we pray. Amen.