



# Genesis 11:10-32

The Line of Shem

# **SUB-THOUGHT BREAKOUT:**

- Genealogy of Shem → Preservation of the promised line
- Time compression after Babel → Lifespans shorten, dispersion reality
- Transition from nations to one man → Abram
- Contrast: Babel system vs. covenant calling
- Terah's partial obedience → Abram's future testing ground

# WHERE THIS SECTION FITS IN

- **Genesis Flow:**
  - Genesis 10 = Nations spread
  - Genesis 11:1–9 = Babel (false name system)
  - Genesis 11:10–31 = True Name line preserved (Shem → Abram)**
- This is the pivot from **global rebellion** → **personal covenant**.
- This section begins the narrowing funnel:
- Creation → Nations → One Line → One Man → One Nation → One Messiah

# SHEM (Name)

- Babel showed us what happens when humanity unites around a false identity—build, structure, control, name for ourselves.
- Now God shifts the focus.
- Instead of many building a name, God preserves **one line carrying His Name forward**.
- This is quieter... but more powerful.
- Because God doesn't compete with systems—He outworks them through covenant.

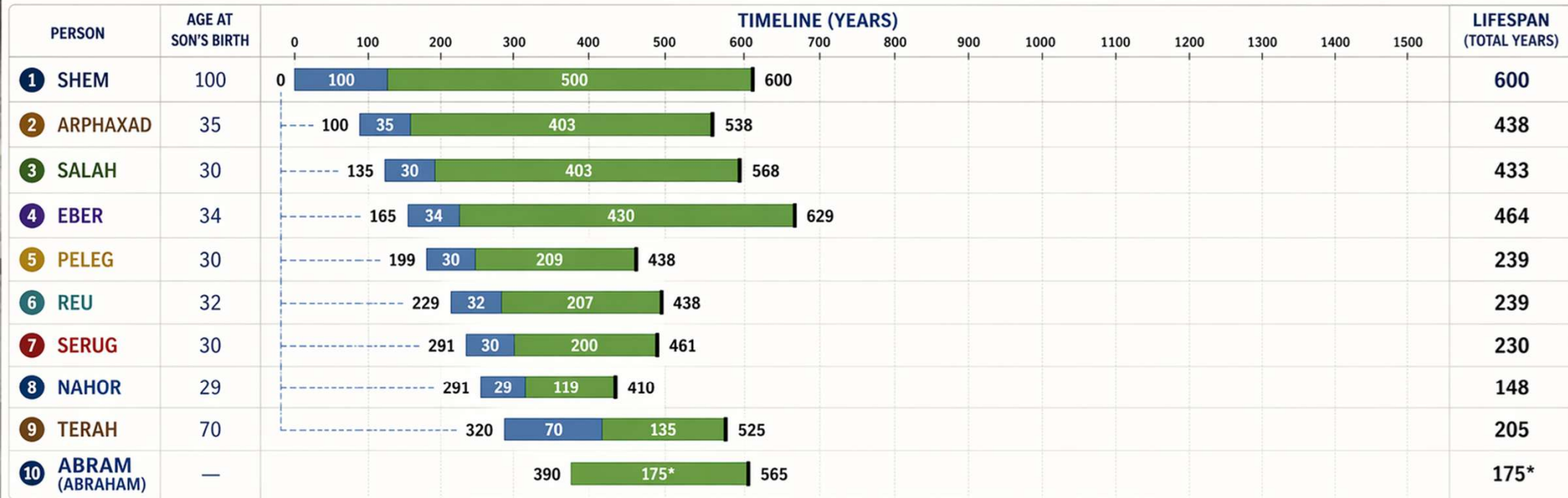
# The Line Of Shem

- **Shem**
- **Arphaxad**
- **Salah**
- **Eber**
- **Peleg**
- **Reu**
- **Serug**
- **Nahor**
- **Terah**
- **Abram (Abraham)**

# GENESIS 11:10-32 • TIMELINE OF THE DESCENDANTS OF SHEM TO ABRAM

Lifespans, Births, Deaths, and Overlapping Generations

■ Years before son was born (Age at which son was born)    
 ■ Years after son was born (Years lived after son was born)    
 | Death (End of life)    
 - - - - Overlapping generations (Living at the same time)



### KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Shem lived 500 years after Arphaxad was born and died at year 600.
- Shem was alive 210 years after Abram was born.
- All ten lived at the same time with overlap.

### SHEM DIED 210 YEARS AFTER ABRAM WAS BORN.

This means Abram had access to the testimony of the pre-Flood generation through his great-grandfather Shem.

### \* NOTE ON ABRAM:

The Bible does not record how many years Abram lived after Terah died. Jewish tradition and Acts 7:4 indicate he lived 175 years, dying at age 175.

### TOTAL TIME SPAN

From the birth of Shem to the death of Abram = 565 years

# GENESIS 11:10-11

- **שם Shem**  
Pronounced: *shame*  
Meaning: Name, reputation, identity, authority
- Remember, Genealogies in Scripture track covenant movement, not just biology.
- Shem is the carrier of the “Name” promise.
- God does not rebuild or start over, He continues with His plan and His line.
- Man builds systems to secure identity, but God builds people to carry identity.

- Again, the Hebrew word *Shem* means name, reputation, authority
- You see this same pattern in your own life—when things fall apart that you tried to build in your own strength, God doesn't rush to fix your system, He redirects you back to identity.
- The hidden reality here is that God's work never stopped at Babel—it just shifted focus.

# GENESIS 11:12–17

- **עֵבֶר Eber**  
Pronounced: *eh-ver*  
Meaning: To cross over, pass through
- “Hebrew” identity tied to Eber (crossing over people)
- “Hebrew” doesn’t just mean ethnicity—it means **one who crosses over**.
- “**The one who crosses over**” fits with **Eber / Hebrew / Abram’s line** as a picture of separation, passage, and covenant identity.
- “Hebrew” is commonly linked to this thought — a people marked by **crossing over, passing through, and being called out**.

# Eber

- crossing over from one realm to another
  - leaving one identity for another
  - coming out from the world system
  - moving by faith into what God has promised
- 
- **Babel** = man building upward
  - **Abram** = man called outward
  - **Babel** = false unity
  - **Abram** = covenant separation
  - **Babel** = self-made name
  - **Abram** = God-given name
  - **Babel** = rebellion unto
  - **Abram** = obedience unto promise

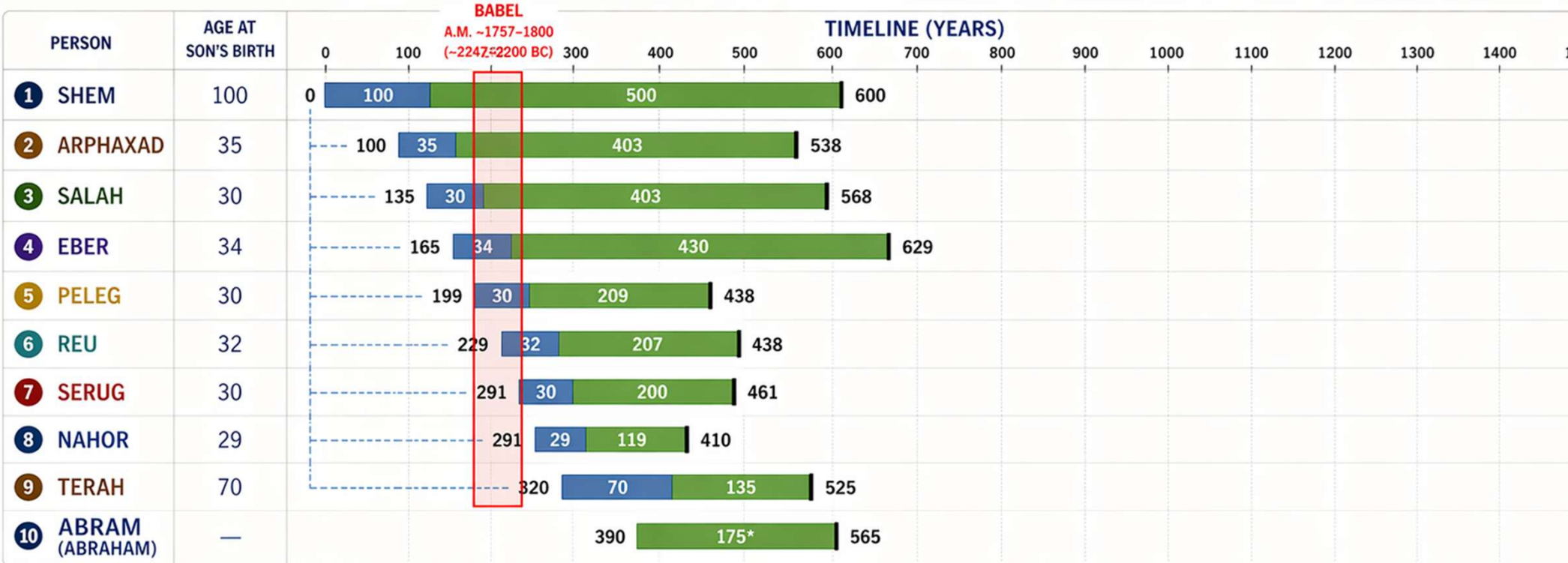
# So...

- “The line of Eber becomes the line of crossing over — out of the world’s rebellion, out of false identity, and ultimately, in Christ, out of death and into life.”
- Note: Eber and Abraham overlap by ~239 years
- Eber outlives Abraham by ~64 years

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**T**  
**From**  
**to**  
**=**

# Meaning of 10 in Hebrew

- Completeness / Fullness of Order
- The Hebrew number for 10 is tied to the letter:
- י Yod
- Yod is the smallest letter, yet it represents:
- A point of origin
- The hand of God
- The idea that something has reached a complete unit
- So when you see “10,” it often means:
- A full cycle completed according to God’s order.

# Divine Order / Law / Structure

- Throughout Scripture, 10 is connected to God establishing order:
- 10 Commandments → complete moral law
- 10 Plagues in Egypt → complete judgment cycle
- 10 generations Adam → Noah → complete era of humanity before judgment
- 10 generations Noah → Abraham → complete era before covenant
- So the pattern is not random—it signals:
- God allowed a full measure of time and accountability before acting.

# What 70 means in Scripture

- In the Bible, 70 often points to:
  - the nations
  - fullness on a larger scale
  - a complete period of judgment or restoration
- Examples:
  - 70 nations in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10
  - 70 elders of Israel
  - 70 years of Babylonian captivity
  - 70 weeks in Daniel 9

- So if 10 is a complete unit, 70 often looks like:
- complete fullness worked out in history among people, nations, and kingdoms.
- What 490 means
- $490 = 70 \times 7$
- That matters because:
- 70 = fullness of a historical cycle
- 7 = spiritual completeness, divine completion, covenant completion
- So 490 becomes:
- a divinely completed full measure of time for God's purposes to be finished.
- That is why Daniel 9 is so important.

# How the pattern builds

- Here is the flow:
- **10 generations**
- A full cycle before God intervenes
- Adam → Noah = full cycle before judgment
- Noah → Abram = full cycle before covenant
- **70**
- Fullness expanded into nations and kingdoms
- nations spread
- empires rise
- judgment/restoration cycles unfold

- **490**
- A prophetic super-structure of completion
- not just genealogy
- not just history
- now a measured redemptive countdown
- So the pattern seems to move from:
  - family line completion
  - to nation-level completion
  - to Messianic prophetic completion
- That means:
  - Adam → Noah ends in **judgment**
  - Noah → Abram ends in **calling (Eber)/covenant (Abram)**
  - And then Daniel's 490 points toward **Messiah**
  - God shows His redemptive program on a measured clock

# The 70/490 pattern also ties to sabbath structure

- This is important.
- Biblical time often runs on **7s**:
- 7 days
- 7th day rest
- 7 years
- 7th year sabbath
- $7 \times 7$  years to Jubilee
- $70 \times 7$  in larger prophetic pattern
- So **490** is not just arithmetic. It fits the whole Bible structure of:
- God ordering time in sacred cycles.

# GENESIS 11:18–23

- פֶּלֶג **Peleg**  
Meaning: Division
- Peleg = “division” → ties directly to Babel
- Nations divided during his time
- Genealogy reflects spiritual and physical fragmentation
- Peleg means division, and that’s not accidental—it’s a timestamp of what Babel produced.
- You see it today everywhere—nations divided, families divided, churches divided—not because God fractured things, but because man tried to unify apart from Him.
- But here’s the key: while everything else is dividing, God’s line is continuing.

# GENESIS 11:24–26

- אַבְרָם Abram (Avram)  
Meaning: Exalted father
- Introduction of Abram → major shift in Genesis
- Genealogy now leads to a focal person
- From nations → to one chosen man
- God doesn't start with a perfect man—He starts with a chosen man.
- There's no résumé given—just a call and gave a promise.

- Deuteronomy 7 — God chooses Israel not because they're great, but because of His love and purpose
- Romans 9 — God's purposes stand by His choosing, not human effort
- Reason #1: God chose Abram because He decided to, to start a covenant line of grace.
- Abram responded in faith
- Abram's defining trait is faith—he trusted God before he understood everything.
- He was detachable—God could move him, shape him, and build something new through him.
- Abram becomes the model of walking with God, not just following rules.

# God chose Abram:

- not because he was the best
- but because he would **believe**, **follow**, and **carry the promise**
- God chose Abram so He could show what He can do through someone who simply believes Him.”
- If you want to be chosen by God, remember this.
- You don't develop these traits to be chosen.  
You respond with these traits because God is calling.

# What Abram shows (and what to imitate)

- **Faith before understanding**
- Hebrews 11:8 — he went not knowing
- **For us:**  
Move when God speaks, even if the full picture isn't clear.
- **Willingness to leave what's familiar**
- Genesis 12 — leave your country, people, father's house
- **For us:**  
Let go of what anchors you to comfort, identity, or control.

- **Trust in God's promise**
- Genesis 15:6 — believed God
- **For us:**  
Trust what God said more than what you see.
- **A life of building altars (worship)**
- Abram repeatedly builds altars (Gen 12–13)
- **For us:**  
Return to worship and dependence—again and again.
- **Growth, not perfection**
- Abram has failures (Egypt, Hagar), but he keeps walking
- **For us:**  
God uses people who keep going, not people who never stumble.
- **Surrender when it matters most**
- Genesis 22 — willing to offer Isaac
- **For us:**  
Nothing is off-limits to God—not even the promise.

# GENESIS 11:27–31

- **אורUr**  
Meaning: Flame, fire, possibly linked to pagan worship center
- Abram doesn't come from a godly environment—he comes out of Ur, a place tied to false worship, system religion, and cultural idolatry.
- That should immediately break the idea that God only calls people from clean backgrounds.
- But notice this—Terah starts the journey toward Canaan... and stops in Haran.
- That's partial obedience.

- Haran becomes a place of settling instead of continuing.
- You see this all the time—people leave something behind, they start moving toward God, but then they settle halfway because it's comfortable.
- The danger is that partial obedience feels like progress, but it delays purpose.
- Abram will have to continue the journey his father didn't finish.
- That's a strong real-life pattern—sometimes God calls you to finish what the previous generation started but didn't complete.

# Side Note

- Sarai ( שַׂרַי – Sarai)
- Root: *sar* שַׂר ruler, prince
- Ending “-ai” = **my**
- Meaning:  
“**My princess**” (or “princess to me / my noblewoman”)
- Sarah ( שָׂרָה – Sarah)
- Same root (*sar*)
- No limiting suffix
- Meaning:  
“**Princess**”
- **Sense:** broader, **universal / national / royal**

# As we close

- The question was: are you building your life through systems you control, or walking in the line God is establishing?
- Genesis 11 answers it clearly.
- Babel builds systems and stops at self-made identity. Shem carries the true Name forward. Abram steps into calling that he didn't create.
- God is not asking you to build something impressive—He's asking you to follow something eternal.
- The call to action is simple:
- Stop trying to make your name...  
and step into the one God is calling you into.



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