

The Divine Programme of The World's History Chapter II. The Noahic Programme. – Part II.



Continued from [Chapter II. The Noahic Programme. – Part I.](#)

Now it is evident that before we can trace the fulfilment of this prophecy, we must to some extent *divide the races* of mankind, both ancient and modern, into ethnic groups, distinguish the families of nations apart each from the other, ascertain which sprang from Shem, which from Ham, and which from Japheth. The question consequently arises, Are there in existence such materials as enable us to disentangle the complex ramifications of the genealogical tree of the human race during the last four thousand years, so as to arrive at satisfactory conclusions on this subject? If not, it must of course be impossible to demonstrate that the Noahic programme has been fulfilled.

The reply is, There *are*, in the good providence of God, ample materials in existence for this preliminary inquiry— a rich and ever-increasing abundance; and so well have these materials been utilised of late by scholars that the main questions connected with this difficult problem are practically set at rest. Many a minor point may still remain obscure. There are certain tribes and peoples, both of ancient and modern times, whose ethnic relations may be doubtful, but the outline is clearly ascertained, and details do not affect our argument. The sources of information are: the wonderful genealogical table in the tenth chapter of Genesis, and other Bible notices on the subject; the statements and tables of profane historians and other ancient writers, such as Herodotus, Strabo, Josephus, etc.; the hieroglyphic and cuneiform inscriptions on monumental remains and other antiquities, brought to light and deciphered by modern archaeological research in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and elsewhere; the ever multiplying observations and investigations of modern explorers and travellers into the languages, laws, customs, traditions, and ethnic affinities of newly visited tribes and peoples; and last, but not least, the very important and interesting, though somewhat bewildering, young *science of language*, which though almost the youngest of the sciences, is yet one which has already secured great acquisitions of knowledge, read some of the puzzling riddles of antiquity and

ethnology, and, like all other true science, confirmed in a wonderful way the veracity of Scripture. We must gather and focus a few of the rays proceeding from these various sources on the point we have in hand.

The tenth chapter of Genesis—the most ancient genealogical table in existence—a wonderful and profoundly interesting document, is our first guide. It is a book in itself, the book of “the generations of the sons of Noah”; and short as it is, it contains more important matter than many a bulky volume. A careful study of it will show that the first five verses give us the names of the seven sons of Japheth and their descendants; the next, and by far the longest section (verses 6 to 21), mentions the four sons of Ham and the nations which sprang from them, including the Canaanites; while the third and closing section enumerates the five sons of Shem with their posterity, including that family descended from Eber, from which Abraham the Hebrew was ultimately called out. The great value of this ancient record in our present investigation is, that it links the three races of mankind with the geographical spheres which they originally occupied, and from which their first migrations took place.

“It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this ethnological table. Whether regarded from a geographical, a political, or a theocratical standpoint, ‘this unparalleled list, the combined result of reflection and deep research,’ is ‘no less valuable as a historical document than as a lasting proof of the brilliant capacity of the Hebrew mind.’ Undoubtedly the earliest effort of the human intellect to exhibit in a tabulated form the geographical distribution of the human race, it bears unmistakable witness in its own structure to its high antiquity, occupying itself least with the Japhethic tribes which were furthest from the theocratic centre, and were latest in attaining to historic eminence, and enlarging with much greater minuteness of detail on those Hamitic nations, the Egyptian, Canaanite, and Arabian, which were soonest developed, and with which the Hebrews came most into contact in the initial stages of their career. It describes the rise of states, and, consistently with all subsequent historical and archeological testimony, gives the prominence to the Egyptian or Arabian Hamites, as the first founders of empires. It exhibits the separation of the Shemites from the other sons of Noah, and the budding forth of the line of promise in the family of Arphaxad. While thus useful to the geographer, the historian, the politician, it is specially serviceable to the theologian, as enabling him to trace the descent of the woman’s seed, and to mark the fulfilments of Scripture prophecies concerning the nations of the earth. In the interpretation of the names which are here recorded, it is obviously impossible in every instance to arrive at certainty, in some cases the names of individuals being mentioned, while in others it is as conspicuously those of peoples.”

From this table we learn:—

1. That the descendants of Japheth’s seven sons peopled “the isles of the Gentiles,” in which expression not islands only are included, but all those countries from which visitors would approach Palestine by sea—the coasts of the Mediterranean and the adjoining maritime provinces, the shores of the Black Sea, and of the Caspian, the Levant, Archipelago, and Adriatic.

2. That the four sons of Ham settled in the more southern, portions of the then known world—in Southern Babylonia round the head of the Persian Gulf, in Southern Arabia, in Abyssinia, Ethiopia, Egypt, and other parts of Northern Africa; and especially that Nimrod, the first founder of imperialism, was descended from Cush, Ham's eldest son, as well as that the seven nations afterwards expelled by the Jews from the land of promise were the offspring of Canaan, his youngest son.

3. That the five sons of Shem were ancestors of the Syrians, Lydians, Elamites, Arabs, and Hebrews.

Now here we have, as we have said, three ethnic groups linked with three distinct sets of localities; the young nations are mentioned in connection with their respective habitations. In other words, the primary geographical distribution of the descendants of the sons of Noah is plainly indicated in this genealogical table of his posterity. Profane history, as far as it has anything at all clear to say on the subject, adds its confirmation to these statements, and modern discovery and research are producing every year fresh proof of their accuracy.

But Noah's predictions about his threefold posterity have less to do with their primitive settlements than with their permanent fortunes. The question we must therefore consider next is, whether it is possible clearly to connect these original nations and peoples, first, with their representatives in the ages of subsequent history, and secondly, with their descendants now living? This will evidently be no easy matter. Peoples, tribes, and nations flourish for a time and then fade from view, to reappear afterwards under other names in other connections, and possibly in distant spheres. Nation rises against nation, conquest leads to the subjection of one people to another, to the merging of many into one, or again to the breaking up of one into many. Such political changes have introduced great complexity into the mutual relations of the different peoples of the earth; so that in the course of ages the problem of their ethnic affinities becomes of necessity an exceedingly difficult one. Unless, however, it can to some extent be solved, it is evident that we can never discern the fulfilment of the Noahic programme.

We ask then, have historians been able to do for the existing nations of the earth what Garter King-at-Arms and the College of Heraldry do for the representatives of ancient families—trace out their genealogies, establish their relationship by unquestionable evidence, exhibit their connections, and show, not only the line of their own descent, but that of the collateral branches of their families? The answer is, that, to a large extent, they have.

In the first century of our era, for instance, Josephus gives a glance at the problem as it presented itself in his day, eighteen hundred years nearer to the dispersion of mankind than our own, and when consequently it must have been comparatively easy to trace back the genealogy of nations. He says:—

“Now they were the grand-children of Noah, in honour of whom names were imposed on the nations by those that first seized upon them. Japheth, the son of Noah, had seven sons. They inhabited so, that, beginning at

the mountains Taurus and Amanus, they proceeded along Asia, as far as the river Tanais, and along Europe to Cadiz; and settling themselves on the lands they light upon, which none had inhabited before, they called the nations by their own names. For Gomer founded those whom the Greek now called Galatians (Gauls), but were then called Gomerites. Magog founded those that from him were named Magogites, but who are by the Greeks called Scythians. Now as to Javan and Madai, the sons of Japheth; from Madai came the Madeans, who are called Medes by the Grecks; but from *Javan*, Jonia (or Ionia) and all the Grecians are derived. Thobel founded the Thobelites, which are now called Iberes; and the Moscheni were founded by Mosoch; now they are Cappadocians. There is also a mark of their ancient denomination still to be shown; for there is even now among them a city called Mazaca, which may inform those that are able to understand, that so was the entire nation once called. Thiras also called those whom he ruled over Thiracians; but the Greeks changed the name into Thracians. And so many were the countries that had the children of Japheth for their inhabitants. Of the three sons of Gomer, Aschanaz founded the Aschanasians, who are now called by the Greeks Reginians. So did Riphath found the Ripheans, now called Paphlagonians; and Thruggramma the Thragrammeans, who, as the Greeks resolved, were named Phrygians, Of the three sons of Javan also, the son of Japheth, Elisa gave name to the Eliseans, who were his subjects; they are now the Aeolians. Tharsus to the Tharsians, for so was Cicilia of old called; the sign of which is this, that the noblest city which they have, and a metropolis also, is Tarsus, the Tau being by change put for the Theta. Cethimas possessed the island Cethima: it is now called Cyprus; and from that it is that all islands, and the greatest part of the sea-coasts, are named Cethim by the Hebrews; and one city there is in Cyprus that has been able to preserve its denomination; it is called Citius by those who use the language of the Greeks, and has not, by the use of that dialect, escaped the name of Cethim, And so many nations have the children and grand-children of Japheth possessed. Now when I have premised somewhat, which perhaps the Greeks do not know, I will return and explain what I have omitted; for such names are pronounced here after the manner of the Greeks, to please my readers; for our own country language does not so pronounce them. . . .

"The children of Ham possessed the land from Syria and Amanus, and the mountains of Libanus; seizing upon all that was on its sea-coasts, and as far as the ocean, and keeping it as their own. Some indeed of its names are utterly vanished away; others of them being changed, and another sound given them, are hardly to be discovered; yet a few there are which have kept their denominations entire; for of the four sons of Ham, time has not at all hurt the name of Cush; for the Ethiopians, over whom he reigned, are even at this day, both by themselves and by all men in Asia, called Cushites. The memory also of the Mesraites is preserved in their name; for all we who inhabit the country (of Judea) call Egypt Mestre, and the Egyptians Mestrians, Phut also was the founder of Libya, and called the inhabitants Phutites, from himself. There is also a river in the country of the Moors which bears that name; whence it is, that we may see the greatest part of the Grecian historiographers mention that

river and the adjoining country by the appellation of Phut. But the name it has now, has been by change given it from one of the sons of Mestram, who was called Lybyos, We will inform you presently what has been the occasion why it has been called Africa also.

"Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, inhabited the country now called Judea, and called it from his own name Canaan. . . , Nimrod, the son of Cush, stayed and tyrannized at Babylon, as we have already informed you. Now all the children of Mesraim, being eight in number, possessed the country from Gaza to Egypt, though it retained the name of one only, the Philistim, for the Greeks call part of that country Palestine. . . .

"The sons of Canaan were these; Sidonius, who also built a city of the same name; it is called by the Greeks, Sidon; Amathus inhabited in Amathine, which is even now called Amathe by the inhabitants, although the Macedonians named it Epiphania, from one of his posterity; Arudeus possessed the island Aradus; Arucas possessed Arce, which is in Libanus. But for the seven others (Eucus), Chetteus, Jebuis, Amorreus, Gergesus, Eudeus, Sineus, Samareus, we have nothing in the sacred books but their names, for the Hebrews overthrew their cities.

"Shem, the third son of Noah, had five sons, who inhabited the land that began at Euphrates, and reached to the Indian Ocean. For Elam left behind him the Elamites, the ancestors of the Persians: Ashur lived at the city of Nineve and named his subjects Assyrians, who became the most fortunate nation, beyond others. Arphaxad named the Arphaxadites, who are-now called Chaldeans. Aram had the Aramites, which the Greeks call Syrians, as Laud founded the Laudites, which are now called Lydians.

"Of the four sons of Aram, Uz founded Trachonitis and Damascus; this country lies between Palestine and Celesyria. . . . Sala was the son of Arphaxad; and his son was Heber, from whom they originally called the Jews, Hebrews, Heber begat Joctan and Phaleg : he was called Phaleg or Peleg because he was born at the dispersion of the nations to their several countries; for Phaleg, among the Hebrews, signifies division. Now Joctan, one of the sons of Heber, had these sons. . . . And this shall suffice concerning the sons of Shem."

This statement of Josephus—and many similar ones might, if space permitted, be presented from both earlier and later historians—forms a link between the primitive state of things and the present. It gives us a glance at one of the countless stages by which the young nations enumerated in the tenth of Genesis have been gradually developed in the course of four thousand years into the world full of nations and peoples, civilized and savage; with which we are familiar.

The process has resembled that of organic growth. The Noahic acorn has become an immense and ancient oak, its three main stems having divided into numerous great branches extending in all directions, each giving rise in its turn to countless shoots and twigs bearing generation after generation of leaves.¹

¹ Is it not destined to develop yet into a forest, and to fill many of the myriads of worlds belonging to our own galaxy, with the ransomed race of man?

Josephus modernizes in measure the archaic nomenclature of Genesis. "The isles of the Gentiles" are seen to include "Europe and Cadiz," Gomer becomes "the Galatians and the Gauls," "Javan" changes into the Ionians and the Grecians; and instead of a list of names which convey to our modern minds only the most hazy ideas, we get Cappadocians and Thracians, Phrygians or Eolians, the island of Cyprus, the land of Palestine, Egypt, Judea, Persia, the Indian Ocean, the Lydians, the Chaldeans, and the Syrians. Here we see our way, and feel that there can be no insuperable difficulty in connecting the condition of things in Josephus day with that existing in our own.

It might be difficult to recognise in old age a man known only in infancy, but not so if he had been seen at intervals through life. To the uninitiated it may seem that there must be a good deal of guess work and uncertainty in the identification of modern nations with primitive peoples, but the historian who has traced the whole process of development feels that he stands on *terra firma*, and his conclusions may be accepted with confidence. He begins with the main branches of the oak, and following one till it forks, he traces its divisions down to the latest shoot.

The student of language, on the other hand, adopts the opposite course, and approaches the problem the other way. He examines the languages of existing nations, and traces them backwards to their origin. He finds the latest shoots running into older twigs, these again into small branches, these in their turn to larger ones, and these finally into one or other of the three main stems of the old tree. When the results of historian and philologist agree, we may rest satisfied that they are substantially correct.

But there are multitudes of nations to-day in Central Africa, Asia, Western America, and elsewhere, who have no history, who have sunk so low that, like the arab children of our streets, they do not know where they were born, nor how old they are, nor to whom they belong, and scarcely can tell their own family name. In discovering the birth and parentage, the relationships and affinities of such nations, the science of language is especially helpful. Experience has proved that there is no basis for a classification of the innumerable nations and tribes into which mankind is now divided so broad and so certain as that of language.

"Physical resemblances, or diversities, are not found to present so ultimate a ground of classification as those of the human speech. The Word is the highest outward expression for the soul; and the properties of the immaterial part of man—his unconscious instincts, his hopes, his passions, his imaginings, his tendency of thought, his general habit of nature, appearing in language and its forms—are transmitted more entirely from generation to generation, and are less liable to be changed by external influences than any features of the face or the body. It is well known that time and external circumstances, and the mingling with other stocks, can change to a considerable degree (how far, is not here in consideration) the colour, the hair, the shape of the skull, and the size of the body. Yet after many generations, when

the physicist could scarcely, by external signs, recognise the bonds of common blood binding different peoples together, the student of language discerns the clearest and most irrefutable proofs of their common descent. What scholar doubts now the brotherhood of descent, at a remote period, between the Hindu and the Englishman? and yet how few physical ethnologists could discover it by any bodily feature. It is as if the more intangible properties of man's nature were those most acted upon by the principle of inheritance, and the last to be changed or destroyed by external physical influences." (Brace's "Manual of Ethnology," p. 3.)

Language then, alone or in connection with history, is the clue to the discernment, not of nationality, but of race—a far stronger and deeper bond than mere nationality. There is a mysterious, far-reaching influence connected with heredity and conveyed by blood, which associates a distant ancestor with his remotest posterity, and links together by common characteristics the families, tribes, and nations descended from him, marking them off at the same time from all others.

It might have been supposed that the mixture of nations which has taken place all over the world during the last four thousand years, through emigrations, conquests, and colonization, would have so mingled languages that it would now be impossible to distinguish their original character. This is far from being the case. Such agencies have extensively modified language, but research shows that no tongue is ever entirely obliterated by another, and that the primary streams of language, even though they may meet in close contact, never merge into each other, as Norman and Saxon did in the formation of English. These were cognate tongues to begin with, spoken by different families of one race. But where, as in Western Asia at present, three primary languages, belonging to three different races—Tartar, Arabic, and Persian—co-exist side by side, it is found that no such combination takes place; the three races remaining distinct in speech, as in appearance, character, and habits.

Now, at the furthest point to which history and tradition can conduct us in the past, we discover *three prominent families of nations* from whom have come down through the ages of history *three broad streams of language* covering the ancient continents, from which have branched out the almost innumerable rivulets of speech which now interlace with each other all the world over. They are THE HAMITIC, THE SEMITIC, and THE ARYAN, or INDO-EUROPEAN, families of language. These three, however, do not include all the languages of the world.

There is no fourth family, but there is a fourth *group*—the Turanian languages. This large and widely scattered group is less distinctly defined, and its various branches are less distinctly related to each other than are those of the three families above named, though they have some common characteristics. It includes the nomad languages, those which are less settled and more changeable than any others, which have a remarkable facility in assuming new forms and producing rapidly diverging dialects of great irregularity.

According to some authorities it includes also the Chinese language, which

has been called the most infantile form of human speech, and which seems in some respects to antedate other forms even of Turanian language. But this is one of the unsettled problems of the science, other authorities classing Chinese as Hamitic. The group of so called "Turanian" or barbarous tongues will probably be in due time, as a result of further investigation, to a large extent distributed among the three principal families—leaving a residuum of dialects which may be degenerate descendants of the mother tongue, from which all languages alike sprung. At present the Turanian group is considered by Professor Max Muller to consist of the Tungusic, Mongolic, Turkic, Samoyedic, Finnic, and aboriginal Indian languages.

The ethnological connections of this Turanian group being extremely uncertain, it is evident that it can have no bearing on our present argument. We pass it by consequently, remarking merely that the existence of such a group of miscellaneous unclassified languages affords no presumption against the historical veracity of the statement in the tenth of Genesis, that the human race divided after the flood into three great branches.

The genealogies there refer of course to descent by blood and not to linguistic connection. We know that tribes and nations often change their languages, though they cannot alter their ethnic connections. All Jews, for instance, are children of Abraham, no matter what language they may speak; and the Negroes in America do not cease to be Africans because they talk English. In a word, language may or may not be a clue to the ancestry of a people. It needs to be considered in connection with history and geography; taken alone it may be valueless.

In the case of the Turanian nations, where history and geography afford little light, language is an insufficient guide to genealogical connection; while in the case of the three great families of language, their speech forms a principal clue to the relation of the different nations and peoples, leading us to attribute a common descent to some that are now far separated socially and geographically, though their earliest ancestors dwelt under the same roof tree.

The conclusions of ethnologists do not contradict the genealogical table of Genesis 10, but confirm it. It asserts that there were three original races. The science of language asserts that there are still three distinct families of nations, but it adds that there are also a number of nations whose ethnic relations cannot be traced out from either historic or linguistic clues. What more natural than that such should be the case after the lapse of four thousand years, and especially with regard to the less important and more uncivilized and remote branches of the human race? New dialects, not to say new languages, spring up even now as a result of isolation and barbarism among peoples who have no literature and hold no public assemblies.

But if the Turanian *group* throws no light on our subject, the three *families* of language throw not a little, and we will now proceed briefly to consider them in their order.

THE SEMITIC FAMILY.

The Semitic family is divided into three main branches— the Aramaic, the Hebraic, and the Arabic. The Aramaic includes Syriac and Chaldee. The former is still spoken in a corrupt form by the Nestorians and other Christians in Kurdistan and Armenia; and the latter was the language adopted by the Jews in Babylon. After the captivity, Syriac became vernacular in Palestine; it was the language spoken by our Lord and His disciples, and was the speech of common life over all the territory extending from the Mediterranean to Mesopotamia.

The Hebraic includes the Biblical Hebrew, the language in which the Samaritan Pentateuch was written, and the language of the Carthaginian and Phoenician inscriptions. It was the language of the later Canaanites, though not of the original seven nations of Canaan.

The Arabic branch includes the Amharic tongue, the Gees language of Abyssinia, and the ancient Himyaritic inscriptions in Arabia. It includes also the languages spoken along the north of Africa from Egypt and Ethiopia to the Atlantic Ocean.

“Of all the families of man, the Semitic has preserved the most distinct and homogeneous mental characteristics.

“Always, in all its branches, tenacious of the past, conservative, not inclined to change or reform, sensual and strong of passion, yet deeply reverent and religious in temperament, capable of the most sublime acts, either of heroism or fanaticism, it was, from the first, a fit medium for some of the grandest truths and principles which can inspire the human soul. Its very peculiarities—its tenacity and sensuousness and reverence —adapted it to feel and retain and convey Divine inspirations. The Semitic mind was never capable of artistic effort, but has made its great contributions to human knowledge in the invention of the alphabet, and in the exact sciences. In poetry, it has given to the world the most sublime lyrics which human language can present; though in the drama, it has produced only as it were the type or introduction, and in the epic it has contributed nothing. The Semitic races have never shown themselves skilled in colonization—even the Phoenician colonies formed no permanent States —and they seemed almost as little capable of organizing enduring governments. Individuality has been too strong with them for permanent associated effort.

“In one of their earliest branches—the Phoenicians—and in the modern Jew, they have manifested a wonderful capacity for traffic and commerce. In the primeval ages, probably no one influence tended so much to unite and civilize mankind as the Semitic commerce and ingenuity under the Phoenicians, The sensuousness and the religious reverence of the race —so vividly shown in the Bible history—united in the heathen Semites, the tribes of Syria and Asia Minor, to produce a mythology debasing and corrupt beyond what the human imagination has anywhere else brought forth; a mythology which, transplanted to Greece and refined by the Grecian sense of beauty, has poured through all ages a flood of sensual and licentious imaginations, corrupting art and literature almost to the present day.

"Three of the great religions of history—Mohammedanism, Judaism, and Christianity—have come forth from the Semitic races, and through future time it will be their glory that with all their former vices, and their subsequent degradation, one of their humblest tribes was fitted to receive and was appointed to convey the purest oracles of God to all succeeding generations."

The influence of the Semites reasserted itself very strongly in the Middle Ages. Under the rule of the Aryan Romans and Byzantines they had been subject and inferior tribes; but—

"With the tenacity peculiar to the race, they had still retained, under all the conquests, their national characteristics, and after centuries of submission and quiet they rose again at the call of religious fanaticism, with the same fire and passion which they had shown as Jews, under the Maccabees or against Titus. The foundations for their remarkable conquests were laid by the constant emigration of Arab tribes to Persia and various countries of Asia, whose population became thus gradually much mingled with Semitic elements.

"In 622 Mohammed proclaimed the Semitic doctrine of the unity of God and the peculiar tenets of the Islam faith. Within twenty years vast countries of Europe and Asia were overrun and conquered by his fiery disciples. Syria was subdued from 632 to 638; Persia from 632 to 640; Egypt in 638; Cyprus and Rhodes in 649.

"Within a century the Semitic Moslems had conquered Asia from Mount Taurus to the Himalaya and the Indus, and from the Indian Ocean to Mount Caucasus and the Iaxertes on the north; they held the north of Africa, and after defeating the Teutonic Goths in Spain, took possession of most of that country. They had even invaded France, and seemed about overrunning all Europe, when they were defeated at Tours, in 732, by Charles the Hammer. . . . Since this brilliant period of conquest, the Semitic family of nations has never again attained to a leading place among the races of men.

"Even as in the ancient days of Semitic glory in Assyria, this race again distinguished itself in the exact sciences and in architecture. Geometry, astronomy, anatomy, and chemistry, all witnessed a revival under the new Arabian civilization; and the Moorish architecture, a product of the sensuous Semitic mind, under the more graceful influences of Byzantine taste, covered Spain with its gorgeous and fantastic structures.

"This family of the human race is distinguished by the peculiar character of the language which it spoke. Those languages, in fact, constitute a group clearly separated from the other leading forms of human speech. The great peculiarity of the group lies in the very structure of its roots, which consist mostly of three consonants, while those of the Aryan and Turanian groups have only one or two. Out of these tri-literal roots the mass of their words were coined by merely varying the vowels, and in some cases by adding a syllable; on the other hand, words formed by composition are almost unknown. The verb has but two tenses, the noun but two genders, and the relations of cases are not, in general, expressed by inflected forms. In the structure of the sentence, the Semitic dialects present little more than a process of

addition; words and propositions are placed side by side, and are not subject to the involution and subordination of clauses, so striking in many of the Indo-European tongues.

"In short, these languages have a kind of poetic power, and express passion and feeling with great intensity; but they are lacking in logical precision, deficient in analytical terms, and imperfectly adapted to embody the grandest results of human thought.¹

¹ "Long before recorded history, perhaps even before the full formation of their distinctive language, that family of mankind from which the Semitic tribes have come, poured forth its hordes from Asia over the northern portion of Africa. Of these, one vigorous tribe, with the tenacity of the Semitic stock, have held possession of the valleys of the Atlas under all the successive waves of conquest which have passed over Northern Africa. The colonies and conquests of the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Vandals, and the Arabs, have not destroyed or absorbed this tough and warlike people. Pressed farther to the south by the fierce attacks of the Arabs, in the first half of the eleventh century, they could not be driven from the desert; and they hold, now, a larger extent of territory than is occupied by any other race on African soil." From the Atlantic Ocean, on the west, their tribes extend to the borders of Egypt on the east, and from the Atlas chain on the north over the oases of the Great Desert.

Their traders form the great media of commerce between the Soudan and the Mediterranean coast, "while their wild and nomad hordes are the special obstacle and danger to the traveller. They are known under the name of Libyans in the most ancient history; their distinguishing features are beheld even on the pictures of Egyptian monuments, and, on the other hand, the most warlike and distinguished of modern military corps is formed originally of their soldiers, the *Zouaves*.

"The name by which this race is best known is BERBER, a word much disputed, but whose origin may be naturally traced to the Roman name of these people, *Barbari*."—(Brace's "Manual of Ethnology," p. 171.)

The Semitic territory in antiquity included Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Assyria, Susiana, and the immense deserts of Arabia. The Semites had less tendency to spread abroad in the earth than either of the other great families. It was not till the thirteenth century before Christ that they began to become prominent; and though at that time their political importance was not great, they soon rose to be the principal *commercial and manufacturing* people in the world. They planted commercial stations around the whole length of the Mediterranean, which it took at that time seventy or eighty days to traverse. Their ships brought tin from England, and the luxuries of India from the mouths of the Indus. They had a chain of commercial stations into the interior of Asia, and traded between points as far separated from each other as Babylon and Cadiz, Italy and India, Arabia and Armenia. During the same period they established the *old Assyrian empire on the Upper Tigris*, an empire which lasted over six and a half centuries, and held a vast extent of country in subjection, from Suza in Persia to Lower Egypt. The turning point in the history of this empire was the destruction of Sennacherib's host by pestilence, B.C. 691. It gradually declined after that event, and its great city, Nineveh, fell before an *Aryan* king, Cyaxares the Mede, in B.C. 625. The second Babylonian empire lasted scarcely a century, and the MEDO-PERSIAN empire which followed was the

opening of the Aryan period of history. Cyrus the Persian belonged to the Aryan race; and when his empire fell, the ruling power in the world passed from Asia to Europe.

“What is especially remarkable of the Semitic family is its concentration, and the small size of the district which it covers compared with the space occupied by the other two. Deducting the scattered colonies of the Phoenicians, mere points upon the earth’s surface, and the thin strip of territory running into Asia Minor from Upper Syria, the Semitic races in the time of Herodotus are contained within a parallelogram 1,600 miles long from the parallel of Aleppo to the south of Arabia, and on an average about 800 miles broad. Within this tract, less than a thirteenth part of the Asiatic continent, the entire Semitic family was then, and, with one exception, has ever since been comprised.

“Once in the world’s history, and once only, did a great ethnic movement proceed from this race and country. Under the stimulus of religious fanaticism, the Arabs in the seventh century of our era burst from the retirement of the desert, and within a hundred years extended themselves as the ruling nation from the confines of India to Spain. But this effort was the fruit of a violent excitement which could not but be temporary, and the development was one beyond the power of the nation to sustain. Arabian influence sank almost as rapidly as it had risen, yielding on the one side before European, on the other before Tartar attacks, and, except in Egypt and Northern Africa, maintaining no permanent footing in the countries so rapidly overrun. Apart from this single occasion, the Semitic race has given no evidence of ability to spread itself either by migration or by conquest. In the Old World, indeed, commercial enterprise led one Semitic people to aim at a wide extension of its influence over the shores of the known seas; but the colonies sent out by this people obtained no lasting hold upon the countries where they were settled, and after a longer or a shorter existence they died away almost without leaving a trace. Semitism has a certain kind of vitality—a tenacity of life—exhibited most remarkably in the case of the Jews, yet not confined to them, but seen also in other instances, as in the continued existence of the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia, and of the Berbers on the North African coast.

“It has not, however, any power of vigorous growth and enlargement, such as that promised to Japheth, and possessed to a considerable extent even by the Turanian family. It is strong to resist, weak to attack, powerful to maintain itself in being notwithstanding the paucity of its numbers, but rarely exhibiting, and never for any length of time capable of sustaining, an aggressive action upon other races. With this physical and material weakness is combined a wonderful capacity for affecting the spiritual condition of our species, by the projection into the fermenting mass of human thought, of new and strange ideas, especially those of the most abstract kind. Semitic races have influenced, far more than any others, the history of the world’s mental progress, and the principal intellectual revelations which have taken place are traceable in the main to them.” (Rawlinson’s “Herodotus,” vol. i. p. 661.)

Continued in [Chapter II. The Noahic Programme. – Part III.](#)

All sections of The Divine Programme of The World's History By H. Grattan Guinness

- [Introduction](#)
- [Chapter I. The Adamic Programme. – Part I](#)
- [Chapter I. The Adamic Programme. – Part II](#)
- [Chapter II. The Noahic Programme. – Part I](#)
- [Chapter II. The Noahic Programme. – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter II. The Noahic Programme. – Part III.](#)
- [Chapter III. The Abrahamic Programme – Part I.](#)
- [Chapter III. The Abrahamic Programme – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter III. The Abrahamic Programme – Part III.](#)
- [Chapter IV. The Mosaic Programme – Part I.](#)
- [Chapter IV. The Mosaic Programme – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter V. The Davidic Programme. – Part I.](#)
- [Chapter V. The Davidic Programme. – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter VI. The Daniel Programme – Part I.](#)
- [Chapter VI. The Daniel Programme – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter VI. The Daniel Programme – Part III.](#)
- [Chapter VI. The Daniel Programme – Part IV. The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks](#)
- [Chapter VII. The Christian Programme – Part I.](#)
- [Chapter VII. The Christian Programme – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter VII. The Christian Programme – Part III.](#)
- [Chapter VII. The Christian Programme – Part IV.](#)
- [Chapter VII. The Christian Programme – Part V. The Apocalyptic Section of the Programme](#)