

GENESIS

Lesson 9 - Chapters 9 and 10

Open your Bibles to Genesis 9. We've been studying Genesis 9. To get us back on track from last week, I'm going to read from verse 18 to the end of Genesis 9.

In V18 of Chapter 9, the NEW history of man begins; let's explore that for just a few moments. Just as Adam was the beginning of all mankind on earth, so it is with the new Adam...Noah. If it is true that it is patterns that we should look for to understand God and His ways, then we ought to find an identifiable pattern begun with Adam, from who all men would come, that carries over to Noah, the one from whom all men would come after the flood. And, of course, we do. And while we all relate the fall of Adam to the Fall of Man, we seldom remember that Noah also fell, and rather quickly I might add. Let me list just a handful of the attributes of this God-pattern that we see in Torah:

1. Adam was made dominant over all the Creation. Noah was made dominant over the entire purified new world.
2. Adam was blessed by God and instructed to be fruitful and multiply. So was Noah.
3. Adam was placed in a garden, and his job was to till...that is, care, for the garden.....as the world's first farmer. Noah began as a gardener as well, for he was the first to plant a vineyard, as the new world's first farmer.
4. Adam fell by means of eating of the fruit that grew in the garden he tended. Noah fell by means of eating (drinking) of the fruit (wine) in the garden he tended.
5. Adam's nakedness was uncovered as a result of his sin of eating the fruit. Noah's nakedness was uncovered as a result of his sin of eating (drinking) of the fruit.
6. Adam's sin resulted in a curse being placed onto man. Noah's sin resulted in a curse being place on the entire line of Ham.
7. Adam had 3 sons, among whom one, Seth/Shet, was to be the line of righteousness, through which the Messiah would come. Noah had 3 sons, among whom one, Shem, was to be the line of righteousness, through whom the Messiah would come.

There are several more parallels, but that is enough to illustrate how the patterns God establishes repeat; and because of these established patterns of God, history itself is cyclical ... it repeats.

Now, at this point we are introduced to the 3 distinct lines of descendancy from which every human alive today comes: the 3 sons of Noah. We're told these are Ham, Shem, and Japheth (or in Hebrew, Yefet). You, and I, come from one of these three sons of Noah; and likely many of us have some of all 3 of them in us.

Now, notice that of the 3 sons, Ham is spoken of as "the father of Canaan". That is a little unusual in the Hebrew format for a father to have his familial identity wrapped up in his son..... It's usually the other way around. Well, we'll quickly found out why that it is.

A story is told that begins in V20, and continues through V27; it is so emotionless and told in such a matter-of-fact way, that it seems almost trifling, unimportant....and not just a little difficult to understand. In several places in the OT we run across these odd scenes - like the one with Noah in his tent- that seem almost out of place, and slightly out of context. The problem is not with the verses, it's with our inability to connect them to the matters of grave importance they address.

So, let's examine closely what happens here; this is about Noah planting a vineyard, making wine, and getting drunk. Then crawling inside his tent, and falling asleep, naked as a jaybird. Yes, the great, godly man Noah got snookered on booze. In this case wine (and btw, this is the first mention of wine in the Bible). Now, much argument over these verses has occurred over the centuries, mostly centered on whether or not Noah accidentally created wine and innocently drank it and had the world's first hangover. Not a chance. Noah undoubtedly knew the result of fermenting grapes and then drinking the results. See, Noah was just a man. He had flaws, and the beauty of our Holy Scriptures is that they don't sanitize humans and make them perfect and infallible like all the false religions tend to do with their leaders and founders. Not even the greatest men of the Bible are mentioned without including some of their faux-pas and disagreeable character traits. And the reason for this is very straightforward: our righteousness before God is not dependent on us, it's dependent on God. Always has been, always will be.

For some reason, Ham enters the tent of Noah and discovers him drunk and naked. He goes out of the tent and tells his two brothers, Shem and Yefet; the 2 brothers then drape a cloak over their shoulders, walk backward into Noah's tent and let the garment fall over their father's nakedness without having looked upon it.

When Noah wakes up, he's offended and angry and takes his wrath out not so much on Ham, but on Ham's son Canaan. He pronounces a curse upon Canaan. Yet, there is more to what is going on here than only a curse on Ham's line; there are also some blessings pronounced upon Shem and Yefet.

Before we discuss those blessings, the logical question here is: why was Noah so upset, and why did his grandson Canaan, who doesn't appear to even be involved in this event, get the brunt of this curse? Well ancient sages have come up with all sorts of reasons. Without going into detail, the thought is that Ham did far more than just happen upon his father's nakedness. That Ham committed some type of unnatural act upon Noah, because Ham had become a wicked man. Virtually every competent Bible version uses words in V24 that say something like "and when Noah awoke he knew what his youngest son had DONE to him." Yet, though I used to think so, I no longer accept that Ham did anymore to his father than to see him naked.....and then to run out and report what he saw to his brothers. After a lot of reading of the ancient Hebrew sages, I see that there were likely two crimes committed here by Ham: first was the crime of dishonoring his father. It was not the seeing of Noah drunk and naked that was the crime; it was what Ham did about it. Rather than show respect by covering his father and then leaving without uttering a word, Ham dashed outside and tattled to his brothers. In so doing Ham did NOT honor his father. And what a principle is laid down here. Noah deserved to be honored because a) he was Ham's father, and b) because God called Noah, of all men on earth, tzaddikrighteous.....in His sight. If God thought Noah righteous that's the end of the matter. Ham should not have pointed out his father's sin to his brothers. The second crime Ham may have committed (and this is my own theory on the matter) is that called lashon hara in Hebrew. Lashon hara is speaking evil of someone, usually in the form of gossip. Though it may not sound all that serious, in fact once we get to Leviticus and begin discussing tzara'at (what is usually mistakenly called Leprosy), we'll see that this disease is thought to be a punishment of God; and that the crime, or sin, usually associated with contracting tzara'at is lashon hara.....speaking evil of someone.

Canaan was named as the cursed one, likely because he would have more to do with Israel directly than any other descendant of Ham, but as the Bible shows us, in reality all of Ham's line was cursed, not just Canaan.

Noah's other two sons, Shem and Yefet, reacted correctly; they discreetly and honorably covered their father's nakedness, making every effort to give their father the utmost respect.

Here in Genesis 9, verses 25, 26, and 27, the futures and destinies of Noah's 3 sons - and the 3 lines of descent from which every human alive today is attached - is set in stone. In other words, what we have contained in these few words is a powerful prophesy for the future of the human race.

Now, before we get there, let me first mention that the name Shem means "glory" but can also mean "name"; "name" in the sense of someone making a name for himself, a powerful person, full of authority. Ham means "hot, warm, or even burning heat"; and the name Yefet means "enlargement" as in fruitfulness but can also indicate "beauty". Bearing this in mind let's look at the curses and blessings that Noah pronounces on his children:

“Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.” Canaan, Ham’s son, receives a curse. What is a curse? It’s the opposite of a blessing. A blessing is a beneficial thing; a curse is a judgment. Just as people who are born into the line of blessing, the line of Shem, did nothing to merit such good fortune, so it is with people who are born into the line of the curse, the line of Ham; they did nothing to merit their misfortune.

The people that came from Ham’s sons, primarily Canaan, became the races that occupied Africa, who have for centuries suffered the fate of subjugation. Now, there is much more to this than just a lack of personal freedom, but the idea is that the descendants of Canaan, and actually all of Ham, will be subject to the descendants of Shem and Yefet. We must take note that if we look at ALL of Ham’s descendants, they represent enemies of Israel at one time or another in history; and so we’ll find Israel either conquering, or being conquered, by the descendants of Ham. The people of Egypt come from Ham; and, interestingly, so do the Philistines.

”Blessed be Adonai, the God of Shem, and Canaan shall be their slave.” Here we have more proof that something went very wrong with Ham and his children. For it indicates that while Shem will follow God, Ham’s descendants will choose another direction. But what we have here is also indicating that Shem’s ancestors will carry the authority for Noah’s family; which basically means all mankind, right? Let me say that again: the ruler ship of mankind is within the line of Shem, because it was handed over to him by Noah in this blessing we are examining. Noah had every right to do that. Just as Adam was preeminent over all other men for a long time, so was Noah in essence “the king of the world” immediately following the Great Flood. He was the head of the only family that existed on planet earth. His authority was absolute over men. And Noah chose to hand over that power to Shem. And we see that this is so because God, the only God, is called *Shem’s* God.....indicating a linkage, an allegiance, a relationship between Shem and Yahweh. And this relationship with Yahweh is not associated with either Yefet or Ham. Shem would become the Hebrews, the Arabs and most of the Orientals.

“May God enlarge Yefet; and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.” This blessing bestowed upon Yefet was somewhat dependent on his relationship with Shem. The descendants of Yefet would benefit when they were in good relations with Shem (which is the meaning of ‘shall dwell in the tents of Shem’). Yefet was the branch of the family which would “enlarge”.....that is, grow greatest in population and wealth. Yefet is the ancestor of the Romans, the Greeks, and most of the European peoples, who are the ancestors of the earliest American Colonists. And, at no time in the history of the world has such wealth and fruitfulness been seen as in what happened first in Rome, then in Europe, and then in America..... and it all has to do with the blessing upon Yefet. And again, the descendants of Canaan (but in reality, Ham) were to be subject to Yefet’s offspring just as they would be subject to Shem’s offspring.

In the last couple of chapters of Genesis this exact pattern of blessing and cursing is repeated, and it

concerns the blessing that a dying Jacob, Jacob called Israel, pronounced on his 12 male children. In a few months, when we arrive there, we will look extensively at this blessing, because it is every bit as monumental as Noah's blessing upon his 3 sons.

Let me give you just a slight preview so that you can see the important relationship between the blessing of Noah, and then hundreds of years later and the blessing of Jacob.

Soon in Genesis we're going to be introduced to the formalized biblical concept of the Firstborn blessing. In essence, this Firstborn blessing ceremony is like the reading of the family will at the death of the father. Only the firstborn blessing took place BEFORE the death of the father' because it was to be pronounced by the father. The father at some point, usually late in his life, would decide it was time for him to tell his boys who was to receive what upon the father's eventual death. And, by tradition, it was the first male child born to a man (the firstborn) who received the bulk of everything the father owned PLUS that son was now the patriarch.....the ruler.....of that family or tribe. The firstborn was NEVER a female. So the firstborn blessing consisted of two major components: first, the passing forward of the right to the family's authority and power, and second, the passing forward of what came to be called the "double-portion" of the family's wealth. In theory, the double-portion meant that the firstborn son got double the amount given to of any other son. So, for instance, if a man had 4 sons, he would divide all he had into 5 parts, and give his firstborn son 2 of those five parts, and then the remaining 3 sons each got 1 part. It wasn't always that neat and clean, though, because it was not necessarily the giving of exactly double; it could have been almost everything, and it could have been just a tad more than the other sons; the father had great latitude in his decision.

Stay with me, because understanding the first-born blessing is most helpful in understanding Scripture.

So, the firstborn son, by tradition, gets all the power and the bulk of the family's wealth. His siblings are now under the firstborn's authority. What we saw in Noah's blessing was a type of firstborn blessing before it was formalized and given that name. Of Noah's 3 sons, 2 got blessings, and one got a curse. Now, what is interesting is that in the typical firstborn blessing, the transfer of family authority and family fruitfulness (wealth) goes to the same son. But in Noah's firstborn blessing, the blessing got split; Shem received the authority, and Yefet the fruitfulness, the wealth....the biblical term is enlargement. Strange.

Fast forward several hundred years. Jacob, called Israel, is now living in Egypt; he calls his 12 sons to him as he's on his deathbed. He knows his time is nearing, so he performs the all-important firstborn blessing (Genesis 49). Due to the indiscretions of the first 3 of his sons, Jacob winds up declaring Judah, his 4th son, as the firstborn. Actually, doing that isn't all that strange, it happened with some frequency that the real firstborn was passed over for a younger son who had won favor with his father. The real strangeness is that Jacob goes against all custom and tradition and splits the firstborn blessing: he gives

the family's power and authority to Judah, but he gives the double-portion.....the family's wealth.....expressed as the blessing of enlargement and fruitfulness.... to Joseph. This is HIGHLY unusual; yet, it is exactly the same thing Noah had done all those centuries earlier. The impact of what Noah did merely set the destinies of all the peoples and nations of the world until history ends. The impact of what Jacob did set the stage for the emergence of the Messiah (who would redeem mankind and put an end to history as we know it) through Judah's offspring, and the taking the fruitfulness of the Gospel to the whole world through Joseph's family. We will spend probably a month on this subject when we get there so vital is its importance.

Now, here's the thing to keep at the forefront of your mind as we go forward: the accursed Canaan, son of Ham, is the founder and namesake of the Land of Canaan.... the Land that God told Moses and then Joshua to take away from its inhabitants (who were the descendants of Canaan). The land that God set aside for his chosen people, Israel, as they came up out of Egypt. The Canaanites, Ham's descendants, would eventually bow down to the Israelites, Shem's descendants. And Noah's prophetic blessing set all this into motion and will culminate when Messiah comes in the near future.

Chapter 9 ends by informing us that Noah lived for another 350 years after the Great Flood, dying at the ripe old age of 950.

It is quite common in teaching the bible, to go around Genesis chapter 10. Typically the reason is that the content is about as interesting as reading a dictionary..... a dictionary full of difficult names that have little bearing on much of anything except, perhaps, to bible academics.

Well, we're going to read chapter 10 and chew on it for a while. And the reason is that here we will see what is often referred to as the Table of Nations. I DO think it's important to know which nations come from which family lines of Noah. And one of the reasons this is important is because of the blessings and curses and destinies that God decided would follow each of these family lines. You see, we are tied to these destinies, like it or not, because we are tied to Noah's sons. So, when you find yourself in one of these 3 lines of humans, don't scream at me about it; complain to God. These blessings, and curses, and destinies have not ended. Rather, their true fulfillment is playing out in our time, and will continue until Christ is on His throne on Earth.

To God family lines are always key. We've already seen this constant pattern of God dividing, selecting, and separating; that was a major part what occurred in Noah's blessing of his 3 sons; because the blessings created division. We saw this principle established early on when God divided light from dark, and good from evil. We saw it when he divided mankind into male and female. We saw it when Seth became the line of good and his brother Cain the line of evil. Now we see it with Shem becoming the line of good and Ham becoming the line of evil, and Yefet the line of fruitfulness. And, if we were to follow this theme all the way to the NT, we find Christ that "seed of the woman" who had to come from

a specific family line divided off from all other family lines. Let us remember that these lines of good are the paths that the eventual “seed of the woman”, (the woman being Havah- Eve), would eventually come. Knowing these details about family lines is key to understanding not just the OT but the NT as well.

READ GEN 10 all

Since Noah’s 3 sons have populated the entire present world, it is only fitting that we would know something of those who followed them. Interestingly, though academics tend to scoff at the Bible, they grudgingly admit that the 10th chapter of Genesis is the most accurate and complete document of its kind pertaining to the origination of the nations and races.

It would not be inaccurate to say that, generally speaking, Shem populated Asia, Ham populated Africa, and Yefet (Japheth) populated Europe. Of course, there are exceptions.

As we look at this map, many of the names I have just read to you start to appear. Without touching them all, we find for instance that the descendants of Yefet became the Cymry, from Gomer, who were the first to settle the area of Wales and Brittany; the Scythians, from Magog, who formed the Russian people; the Medes, from Madai; the Greeks, from Yavan; and the Thracians, from Tiras, who became the Macedonians, from who eventually came Alexander the Great.

From these groups of people came the Germans, Celts, and Armenians. We should also take notice that in the line of Yefet was Tarshish. This is primarily modern day Spain. Some of you prophecy buffs will recognize the name Tarshish, for it is mentioned in Isaiah. Let’s take a few minutes and examine a prophecy that is 2700 years old, but whose fulfillment has begun in most of our lifetimes and is continuing as we speak; Isaiah chapter 60; we’ll only read from verses 1- 12 for now.

READ ISAIAH 60:1-12

If you don’t have a chill running down your spine, then you completely missed what I just read to you. OUR GENERATION is in the midst of this very event. This is about the Jews returning to Israel. But even more, it is about *all Israelites* returning to Israel. We’ll get into this more fully in the months ahead, but for now just know that the Jews only represent TWO of the 12 tribes of Israel. There are other Israelite tribes in existence in Asia, who will be returning to the land very soon. How do I know this? Not only is this prophecy in Isaiah, but it is even more specifically, and in a more detailed fashion, spoken of in Ezekiel 37. AND.....the Israeli government officially acknowledged for the first time in March of 2005.....a mere 2 months ago.....that indeed, there have been found members of what has been termed the “lost tribes of Israel”; and that they are Israelites, but they are NOT Jews. That may be a little murky for you, but later it won’t be.

I have often heard bible teachers and pastors speak of how ships will come from Tarshish to bring to Jews back home to Israel in the last days. But that Tarshish wasn't literal; it was just a word that was symbolic of far away places. They must have been among the many who chose to skip over Genesis 10. For we certainly see exactly who Tarshish is: a son of Gomer, who is a son of Yefet.

Not only that, but one of the largest sects of Jews in existence is called Sephardic Jews. Sephardic Jews are Jews who come, primarily but not entirely, from a large group of Hebrews who settled in Spain during the 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries. Many Sephardic Jews led the way back to the Holy Land late in the 19th century, and then again after WW's I and later after WWII. Spain = Sephardic= Tarshish. This is neither speculation nor allegory; just simply historical fact.