



Genesis – Chapter 9:8-9:29
God's Covenant and Man's Folly
(Lesson #18)

9:1 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. 2 The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. 3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. 5 And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. 6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. 7 And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 9 "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, 10 and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. 11 I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." 12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: 13 I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." 17 God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth." 18 The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) 19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.

Vs 8 - Theologians call this the **Noahic covenant**. Now you may not have realized it, but you were already introduced to a few components of the Noahic covenant last week.

The **elements of his covenant**, that he commands of man:

- 1) Marriage (multiply and fill the earth)
- 2) Do not consume blood (this will come up again in Acts 15)
- 3) Government
 - a. Capital punishment

If you like, you could also say that part of this covenant is the new freedom to eat meat.

Notice when **God speaks** this time he is not speaking to just Noah. No in fact, the Bible is clear, he is speaking to Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth).

Vs 9-10 - As I mentioned when we were there in Genesis 6, God established a covenant with Noah. I told you that would come back around in Genesis 9.

Here it is the **second use** of this Hebrew word “**covenant**” in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word is **ברית (b^riyth)**. It is used over 280 times in the Old Testament.

It will be used again in verses 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17!

Notice who this covenant is ultimately made with: You, your offspring after you, every living creature with you, birds livestock, every best of the earth...

Vs 11 - Here it is the **third use** of this Hebrew word “**covenant**” in the Old Testament.

Here God enters into a **covenant** with Noah, his **immediate family**, and his **offspring (you and I)**. But it is also with all the living creatures, it is with all the beasts of the earth.

As we will see this covenant is an **unconditional covenant**. God is going to **set limits** on **Himself** regardless of how man responds.

We saw three things that God commanded man, but this covenant is not conditioned upon man's obedience. Now many covenants (indeed most) are conditioned upon obedience, but some are not.

In this case, God is going to do, what He said he is going to do... **PERIOD**.

Let's look at promises associated with the covenant.

Vs 11b – *“that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”*

Here are God's promises in this covenant:

- 1) God will never again, send a flood to **cut off all flesh**.
- 2) God will **never again**, send the **flood waters to destroy the earth**.

I want to camp here for a few points:

FIRST. If the flood was not global and did not cut off all flesh that lived on the planet. If it was only local and killed on only some, as some people teach, then God has broken his promise, for if the flood was local, there have been many local floods that took lives.

To claim the flood is local is to impugn the character of God.

SECOND. Did you catch that **second promise**? It was to never again **destroy the earth**.

Maybe you are thinking God did not really “destroy the earth.” Absolutely he did, that is the testimony of Moses and Peter:

“13 ¶ In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried (made desolate) from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was (made desolate) dry. 14 In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out (dried up).” (Ge 8:13-14 ESV)

“5 For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, 6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.” (2Pe 3:5-6 ESV)

THIRD. When God says something pay attention to the small print! God says that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, never again shall there be a food to destroy the earth! But he also says:

“7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. 8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.” (2Pe 3:7-10 ESV)

Now, we know that one day God will judge the world, but He will never again send a **global deluge**. It appears the next time it will be by **fire**.

Again, not to bang the drum, but I want to bang the drum. The Bible declares the flood was global (Old and New Testament). We see evidence, in many different ways, across our planet of a global flood.

I am not building my case on the lines of evidence. I am building my case on the **Biblical text**, which is **overwhelming!** But the various lines of evidence are in line with the Biblical text.

Vs 12 - God speaks again and provides a **sign** of His unconditional covenant between man and every living creature for future generations.

You have seen this **particular Hebrew word**, two other times now, the Hebrew word is **אוֹת** ('**owth**). It means **sign, token, or mark**.

"And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years," (Ge 1:14 ESV)

"Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him." (Ge 4:15 ESV)

Here the rainbow will serve as a **sign**, as a **banner**, as a **token**. That God will never destroy man, God will never destroy the planet again, with a flood of waters.

This sign is also for all "**future generations.**" A promise that God will never do this again.

When the global flood is rejected, the **significance** of this sign is erased!

Vs 13 - The **rainbow** will be the sign of the **covenant**. Notice this covenant is between **God and all the earth!** Now, for those who believe there was a canopy, might here say, see the new thing (rainbow) is to serve as the sign.

I would just say, the rainbow is to be the sign, but that does **not necessarily mean that the rainbow did not** exist before. But I would tend to think it seems more likely that the rainbow was a new thing.

As you think about this a few things should catch your attention:

- 1) The covenant, that God will never again do what he did here when he wiped out, when he blotted out everything on the plant that had the breath of life, is a big deal with God. He will mention it 8 times.
- 2) It will remind God, the God who needs no reminding. Again, we see the anthropomorphic language.
- 3) It is an "everlasting covenant" It is perpetual in nature and it is not conditioned on anything we do.
- 4) The promise never again to "flood the earth" with water.
- 5) We rarely talk about this covenant. Yet this covenant was made with all mankind. This covenant is where we get the idea that man is not to murder, this covenant is where we get the idea that there is to be a government established to enforce laws. This covenant is where God reiterates marriage.
 - It is this covenant, where God says, early on, man is not to consume blood.
 - Yet we rarely mention this covenant. I suspect this promise really meant something to the eight and their immediate family members.
- 6) It is interesting that the rainbow symbol has been hi-jacked.

Vs 16 – This is an everlasting covenant, it is between God and every living creature. Between God and all flesh that is on the earth!

God will see it and it will serve as a reminder that regardless of what man does, regardless of how God is offended, God will not take this step again.

APPLICATION: Even wiping out all unrighteous people, regardless of how large that number may have been, and leaving it just to the people who follow God by faith did not fix the problem! Fixing the outside cannot fix the deeper problem on the inside.

Vs 17 - Again, this is the covenant between me and all flesh.

Now when we see clouds forming and a rainbow, I am not sure of how much we think beyond, wow isn't that a beautiful rainbow.

When the **storm clouds formed** what do you think went through the minds of **Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth**, along with their wives?

You can imagine, **they worshipped God** when they **saw the bow** in the clouds!

As you think about this, if the ark delivered the 8, yet did not **change their heart**, what can God do to ensure the planet does not once again sink back into chaos and lawlessness.

The answer, until the **Lord's final return**, He will ordain and establish human government, a gift of God, given by God, to punish evil-doers and to be a **stabilizing force** in society to **hold back, hold in check**, the **widespread lawlessness** we saw in the Pre-flood days.

It does not "fix" the heart, but it restrains sin, until the one who does fix the human heart comes! When He comes men and women can be born again, and receive a new nature and that changes, at least for them, everything!

The rainbow appears only three more times in scriptures:

1) The first is Eze 1:28 where it is connected with the glory of God. This could be a reference to His throne.

2) The second is Rev 4:2-3 where it is connected to the throne of God:

"2 At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. 3 And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald." (Re 4:2-3 ESV)

3) Then finally, we see it again:

"1 ¶ Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. 2 He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, 3 and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded." (Re 10:1-3 ESV)

Instead of a crown of thorns, this mighty angel, is wearing "the rainbow" upon his head.

Now it is possible that this "mighty angel" is just a random angel. But, when you read the description, this mighty angel is wrapped in a cloud, face like the sun, legs like pillars of fire, roars like a lion.

The token of the everlasting covenant that God made with Noah, is here portrayed on the head of this mighty angel!

Vs 18 – So Noah and his sons leave the ark, of course with their wives.

Now scriptures are quite explicit in teaching that all men now living in the world are descended from Noah through his three sons. We will see the summation in Genesis 10:

"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." (Ge 10:32 ESV)

"if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;" (2Pe 2:5 ESV)

"because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water." (1Pe 3:20 ESV)

And almost in passing, we are told this seemingly strange piece of information that Ham was the father of Canaan. Actually, Canaan, is Ham's youngest son:

"6 The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan." (Ge 10:5-6 ESV)

We will look at these people groups soon enough, but it seems that Ham had four sons and Canaan was the youngest, although we cannot be sure about the order and we have no idea of the ages.

Now at first this seems weird and out of place, why are the Canaanites being mentioned here?

We do not know why they are singled out here. It is possible because it was the ancestors of great grandfather (Canaan) who were inhabitants of the land promised to Abraham and to the children of Israel at the time when Moses was editing Genesis.

Vs 19 - I take this to mean that Noah does not have any additional children. But, it also means exactly what else that it says: *from these* (these three men) *the people of the whole earth were dispersed.*

All of us in the room trace back to Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives. All genetic variability was contained within these three families. Most of us are likely a mix of these three, but we are descended from these three couples.

As you look at the table of the nations coming up in Genesis 10, which Lord willing we will dive into next week, we will clearly see this.

20 Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. 21 He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. 23 Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. 24 When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, 25 he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." 26 He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. 27 May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant." 28 After the flood Noah lived 350 years. 29 All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

The next event we are about to read about took place (as we will see from the text) decades after Noah and his family, with all the animals left the ark.

Vs 20 – So, Noah became a man of the soil, a husbandman, although he was 600 years old, Noah still had some vigor left in his body and he became a farmer, and he planted a vineyard.

Vs 21 - Here we run into a very short, yet very devastating, report of our brother Noah.

Here we see the sin of an amazing man of God. In spite of his faithfulness, he was not perfect, he was not the Messiah. **He too sinned.**

He planted a vineyard, and obviously over some time this vineyard began to produce, and Noah made wine (on purpose or accidentally, we do not know). He consumed enough to get hammered, stripped off his clothes, and passed out naked in his tent.

In the Hebrew, the verb (translated uncovered) is a reflexive action. Like he washed himself, he dressed himself, he **uncovered himself!**

So, the Hebrew is telling us that Noah drank the wine, became drunk and uncovered himself in his tent.

- 1) This is the first-time wine is mentioned in Genesis.

2) This is the first-time drunkenness is mentioned in Genesis.

Noah **drank so much** that he became **intoxicated**, and so intoxicated that it seems that he **stripped off all his clothes** and passed out in his tent.

In our sadness we can imagine an older, wiser Noah, who has walked with God, a man who is cataloged in the hall of faith, passed out on the floor of his tent, trashed, drunk and naked.

You see, Noah too was a fallen sinner, in spite of a display of great faith in the whole flood account, here on the backside of that event, he exhibited great folly!

This is sinful behavior by Jewish or Christian standards, we suspect it is by **Noahic standards** also. Regardless of Noah's intent, how much he knew about wine, etc., there are a few **lessons for us**:

1) **Intoxication is forbidden in the Scriptures.** The number of times we are told this is exhausting, so I will just provide two:

"18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart," (Eph 5:18-19 ESV)

"12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy." (Ro 13:12-13 ESV)

2) **Past spiritual successes**, regardless of how many or how long the successes are, do not protect us from future lapses in judgement. We must purposely (day-by-day) walk in the Spirit!

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." (Ga 5:16 ESV)

3) As a Christian we are never **"off-duty"** in a moral sense.

4) You and I are not islands unto ourselves, sin impacts others. Even ones we never intended to impact.

Vs 22 - Here we see **the sin of Ham**.

OK, we are not told how, but Ham goes into Noah's tent, he **saw**, he **gazed upon**, he **looked upon** the nakedness of his **intoxicated father**.

The word translated **saw** is **ראה (ra'ah)**. It is in the **most common verb pattern** in Hebrew and represents a simple action. He ate, he went, **he saw**.

The word itself is **very common** used **over 1300 times**, a few examples (Gen 9:23, 12:14, 13:10).

Whatever the events that got him here, Ham goes into Noah's tent and sees his father naked and **then went and told his two brothers**.

A great deal of "speculation" has occurred around this story. What did Ham really do?

First, let me give you my theory, which I believe is in line with the **clear teaching of the text**:

Ham saw his dad passed out naked, and rather than covering him up, he went and told his brothers.

Likely **publicizing** his dad's misconduct, likely **making sport** of the "old man" passed out naked in his tent. This was **VERY disrespectful** to his father. It was conduct **very unbecoming** of a **follower of Yahweh**.

This sin **violated a boundary** that has to do with **respecting** and **honoring** his father. It was the **height of disrespect**, it was the exact opposite of what **family love** and indeed **brotherly love** should have moved him to do.

Maybe you are thinking, really that is it, disrespecting dad! I would remind you what God says on this matter:
"*Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death.*" (Ex 21:17 ESV)

This same idea will be used when we are told in the next verse what Shem and Japheth did, which by way of contrast, should have been what Ham did.

Vs 23 - So Ham shared with his brothers, whatever he said, caused them to immediately take action, a **totally different kind of action**.

Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on their shoulders and walked backward into the tent and, here it comes again, "**covered the nakedness of their father**" and they "**did not see their father's nakedness.**"

These two sons treated their father, in spite of his personal folly, with great respect. Ham made sport of his father.

Vs 24 - Many have used this verse as the proof that it had to be something like sodomy or having sexual relationship with Noah's new wife for when Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done.

It more likely means when he was over the **devastating intoxicating effects** of the wine he consumed, having been hammered but aware of the mocking, jesting, and joking. **He knew what Ham had done.**

We do not know, and we are not told how he knew. But he knew. Maybe he vaguely remember it from the stupor or one of Ham's brothers told him.

Vs 25 - Ok, this is surprising for a couple of reasons:

- 1) First, as best I can tell this is the first time we have recorded something that **Noah says!**
- 2) Noah having observed or learned what Ham did, curses Ham's fourth son, Canaan.

This means for sure that they have been off the ark long enough for Ham to father four sons as outlined in 10:6.

This verse has been used to justify mistreatment of blacks. This verse does not say that. Equally, to treat disrespectfully any human (regardless of skin color) is to disrespect a person who is made in the **image of God**.

The curse is upon Canaan, the father of the Canaanites. Who will be the people living in the promised land when the nation of Israel arrives there in many years from now.

But this is likely more than a curse born out of the heart of Noah, but God moving Noah, to **declare predictive prophecy**. So, as you consider this, consider that this is prophecy! This is a prophetic utterance from Noah!

The **first component** of this proposed prophecy is a curse upon Canaan. The contents of this prophetic curse: "**a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers.**"

Notice Canaan we be a **servant of servants**, this is a **superlative**. The **ultimate servant**. Think of the holy of holies. **Canaan is going to be a servant of both of his brothers!**

Why would God curse the fourth son of Canaan through Noah, what is going on here? We do not know for sure, but here is what I believe we are seeing.

Because often **the fruit does not fall far from the tree**, we learn that the rebellious heart in Ham, will find full bloom in his fourth son (Canaan).

Canaan is not only going to **imitate the disrespect of his dad** (Ham), it is going to grow and multiply in his life and his descendants, **the Canaanites will become a lawless people.**

It is that lawlessness, first displayed in dad (Ham), further grown in fourth son (Canaan) that would **produce lawless societies** that Joshua would be directed to **wipe out in Canaan.**

Equally, this is how the **sins of the fathers** can be **visited upon the sons** (Nu 14:18).

APPLICATION: Our children and sometimes grandchildren are watching us, and sometimes they will take the **sin we dabble in** and **master it!** Having first seen it in us!

Vs 26 - Now before we go unpacking this verse, I want to remind you of the promise we received immediately after the fall:

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Ge 3:15 ESV)

So what happened to this promise. We are going to pick up the thread right here.

Then Noah declares "**blessed be Yahweh, the God of Shem.**" Here we see in this **prophetic declaration, Shem** is given a place **above** even **Japheth.**

The truth that is being developed is that it is **through Shem** that God will indeed **crush the head of the serpent!**

We now learn the promised Messiah will come through Shem. From the Shemites. **The promised Messiah will be semitic.** We will continue to develop this thread as we move forward.

OK, the second component of the curse: Let, again "**Canaan**" be the **servant of Shem.**

Vs 27 - Here **additional components** of the **curse.** A blessing is **pronounced upon Japheth,** may **God enlarge Japheth!**

Now **Japheth's name** means to open or to **enlarge.** So there is a play on words.

The largest number of descendants will come from Japheth.

The Japhethites will dwell in the tents of the Shemites, they would have communion with the Shemites.

What is amazing, as you think about all this and we will see it unfold, it is the **Japhetite's** (Europe and North America), to a **much larger degree** than the Hamites, who have adopted the **God of the Shemites!**

Let Canaan be his servant, in this case it seems to be that Canaan will be servant to both Shem and Japheth.

Vs 28 - Here the **chapter draws to a conclusion.** Noah lived an **additional 350 years after the flood.**

Vs 29 - Having served God, having walked with God, Noah went home. Having lived to the very old age of 950! In fact, Noah is **only outlived** by **Jared (962)** and **Methuselah (969).**

Oh that we could model the faith in our brother Noah. He was not perfect, but he walked by faith :

"By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith." (Heb 11:7 ESV)