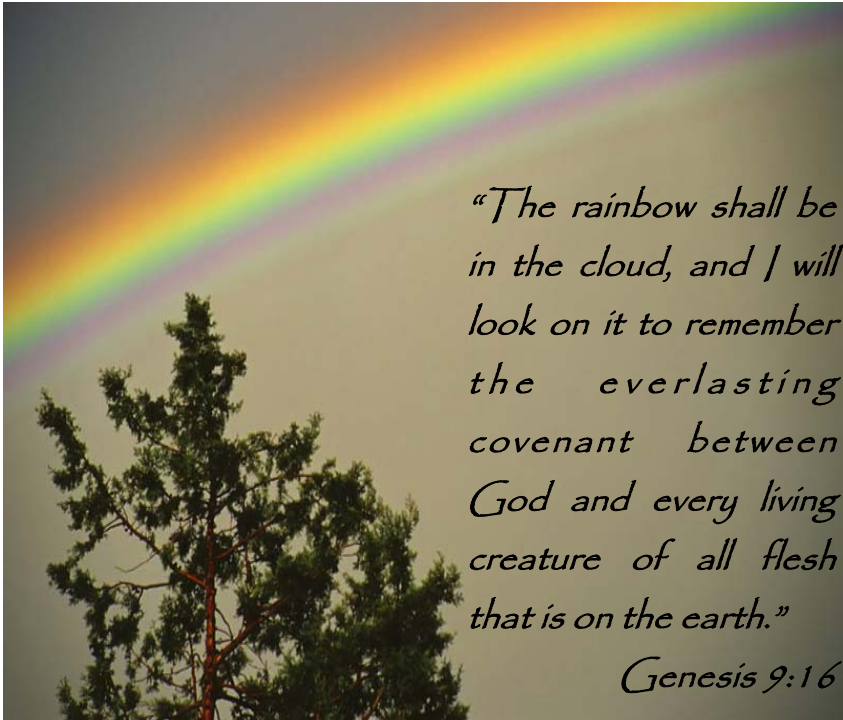




Sowing the Word



Genesis 9-11

January 28th, 2009

So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

(Nehemiah 8:8)

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Study Links..... | 3 |
| Outline..... | 4 |
| Pastor Jim’s Notes and Helps..... | 5-15 |
| Q&A With Pastor Phil..... | 16-18 |
| With the Word Commentary..... | 19-20 |
| C.H Spurgeon Devotional..... | 21 |
| Pages to take Notes..... | 22-25 |

Helpful Study Links:

Additional Commentary: (Great Resource!)

http://preceptaustin.org/genesis_commentaries.htm

Further Research Sources

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/>

Ken Ham's Website. Great resources, articles. Also a great source for books and videos you can get a hold of. (we have these in our library too)

<http://www.drdino.com/>

Kent Hovind's website. Another great site, with lots of answers, and another great video series you can get a hold of. (We also have these in our library)

<http://www.creationscience.com/>

Walt Brown's website. Very helpful, detailed, but not too hard for a non-science major to read. Has a book you can order that has all that is on this website if you prefer it in your hands.

<http://www.discovercreation.org/>

The Alpha Omega Institute's website. This institute is dedicated to teaching the Biblical and scientific evidence of creation throughout the world.

<http://www.icr.org/>

The Institute for Creation Research.

Helpful Study Resource:

Explore the Book by J. Sidlow Baxter

Commentary:

The commentary used with permission throughout this booklet is:

With the Word Bible Commentary

by Warren W. Wiersbe.

ISBN 0-8407-9108-9

Outline

Genesis Outline

- I. Creation (1–2)
- II. The Fall of mankind (3)
- III. Early History of mankind – first thousand years (4-5)
- IV. Noah and the Flood (6-9)
- V. Tower of Babel (10-11)
- VI. Abraham (12-25:18)
- VII. Isaac (25:19-27)
- VIII. Jacob (28-36)
- IX. Joseph (37-50)

This weeks Outline

- IV. Noah and the Flood (6-9)
 - A. The Preparation for the Flood (6)
 - B. The Protection during the Flood (7)
 - C. The End of the Flood (8)
 - D. Entering a Post Flood World (9)
 1. Changed relationship with animals – fear & food (9:1-4)
 2. Capital punishment for murder (9:5-7)
 3. Covenant established by God with Noah (9:8-17))
 4. Sign of the Covenant-the Rainbow (9:12-17)
 5. Noah's Sin (9:20-27)
 - a. Noah Drunk (9:20-21)
 - b. Ham's Sin (9:22)
 - c. Shem & Japheth's love (9:23)
 - d. Ham & Canaan's Curse (9:24-25)
 - e. Shem and Japheth's blessing (9:26-27)
 6. Noah's death (9:28)
 - E. Noah's Descendants (10:1–32)
 1. Japheth (10:2–5): a list of his descendants, including Gomer, Magog, Tubal, and Meshech.
 2. Ham (10:6–20): a list of his descendants, including Canaan and Nimrod.
 3. Shem (10:21–32): a list of his descendants, including Peleg.
- V. Tower of Babel (11)
 - A. Man's Sin of Babel (11:1–4)
 - B. God's Sentence at Babel (11:5-9)
 - C. Genealogy from Shem to Abraham (11:10-32)

Booklet Notes

Chapter 9 Highlights and Helps by Pastor Jim

Covenants

What is a covenant?

A contract or agreement between two parties. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word is *Berith*. *Berith* is derived from a root which means “to cut,” and hence a covenant is a “cutting,” with reference to the cutting or dividing of animals into two parts, and the contracting parties passing between them, in making a covenant (Genesis 15; Jeremiah 34:18, 19).

A covenant is a sovereign proclamation from the lips of God that declares His solid commitment with a man, a family, or a nation. In all the covenants that God makes, He gives some sort of sign or proof that would be a reminder of the validity and promise of the covenant that He has made. There is some debate among Bible students about how many covenants there are in the Bible, but if we look only at the places where the word “covenant” is officially used, then there are five covenants. The first one is found in our passage this week – Genesis 9.

The Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9).

- Specifically that God would not destroy the earth again with a flood.
- The Sign of this covenant is the Rainbow.

The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12).

- God’s promise to bless Abraham and his people, and give them the land of Israel. But the best of all, that Messiah would come through his lineage.
- The Sign of this covenant is circumcision.

Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 20)

- Also known as the Law
- The Mosaic covenant is a conditional covenant. Over and over, God says, “You’ll be blessed if you do these things, cursed if you don’t.”
- The Sign of this covenant is the Sabbath.

Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7)

- This is the covenant wherein God promised that from David would come a Ruler who would reign forever and ever—again, pointing to the Son of David, Jesus Christ.
- The Sign of this covenant was the descendants of David reigning.

The New Covenant (Hebrews 8)

- The new agreement God has made with mankind, based on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The concept of a new covenant originated with the promise of the prophet Jeremiah that God would accomplish for His people what the old covenant had failed to do (Jeremiah 31:31–34). Under this new covenant, God would write His Law on human hearts. This promised action suggested a new level of obedience, a new knowledge of the Lord, and a new forgiveness of sin.
- The Sign of this covenant is Communion.

Covenant is a concept central to the message and the history of the OT. The covenant theme continues into the NT as a way of interpreting the Christian gospel. Meaning in human life is to be found in a covenant relationship with the living God. Yet sinful human beings cannot work their way into such a relationship; God alone initiates it. According to the NT, God's act in giving His son, Jesus, to die opened up the covenant relationship to all human beings. The forgiveness made available by Jesus' "blood of the new covenant" makes it possible for any individual to enter into a covenant relationship with God. Entry into such a relationship, today as in Abraham's time, hinges upon faith (Galatians 3:6–14).

The Sin of Gossip

When we read of the sin of Ham in Genesis 9, for many they are shocked. We can find ourselves wondering about the sin and the grave consequences. For this reason, some try to make the sin here worse than it is – some wondering if there was a homosexual act or such thing. But clearly that is not what it says. Part of the problem is the lukewarm age we live in. Sin is so rampant, so normal, that sometimes seeing sin does not look all that bad. Yet to God, it is bad. Consider the two fold aspect of Ham's sin.

First – he looked. He looked on his father's sin, intentionally. There is something here for us to understand – to delight in sin, even just in observing it – is sin. Think of what it tells us in Romans 1 about the depth that sin can bring us to:

who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:32)

Notice that God refers to those who approve others sin. The word there has the idea of applauding and enjoying seeing other sin. There is

something perverse about this – yet today, it is so normal that few would even view it as sin. We live in a day were talk shows, magazines, newspapers, blogs and more spend their words exposing other people's failures and sins. Many people are drawn to it like a moth to a flame. They delight in seeing other people's sin. "Inquiring people want to know". Yet, what we need to see here is, just delighting in and intentionally viewing others sin—is sin. Wow, that is a call to holiness that would shock many if we lived like it.

In the church, this sin is rampant as well. We can delight in exposing other people's faults, passing along "prayer requests" that in reality are exposing others sin. The danger is we can draw after this, not even seeing it is sin.

Second – he shared. He gossiped. Ham saw what was going on "inside" with Noah, and told those "outside". This is the clear opposite of what the Bible calls us to. We are called like Shem and Japheth to "shoulder the burden" of covering other sins. We should not delight in hearing or sharing other people's sin. Again, the danger here is – gossip is so normal, so constant inside and outside the church that we can almost struggle seeing it as sin...but it is.

Webster definition of gossip: a person who habitually reveals personal or sensational facts about others. A person who likes talking about other people's private lives.

The apostle Paul described some of the early believers as "not only idle but gossips [tattlers, KJV] and busybodies" (1 Timothy 5:13).

May God deliver us from this common sin!

Chapter 10 Highlights and Helps by Pastor Jim

Nimrod the mighty hunter (v.8)

Many an avid hunter has tried to look at this verse as an honor to their hobby. Yet, realistically, it is not so. Hunting is not a bad nor unbiblical thing. In Genesis 9:3 man is called to hunt and eat from the animal kingdom – thus God's blessing on this. That said, Nimrod is not listed here for his animal hunting practices. It seems instead, he hunted men. Perhaps literally he hunted and killed men, or maybe it is a picture of hunting men's souls.

The name, Nimrod, literally means "rebel." Nimrod builds Babel (Babylon) in rebellion against God, and also Nineveh in Assyria (see v. 11), another enemy of God's people.

Jerusalem Targum says: "He was powerful in hunting and in wickedness before the Lord, for he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them, 'Depart from the judgment of the Lord, and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod!' Therefore it is said: 'As Nimrod the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the Lord.'"

Newer versions properly render this verse, "He was a mighty hunter against the Lord." Nimrod was a mighty, powerful rebel who hunted souls and ripped people off.

Nimrod was a prototype of the ultimate rebel—the antichrist. Based out of the revived Roman Empire—or the European Union—the antichrist will head a one-world government and seek to establish a one-world religion. He will be powerful, charismatic, and amazingly persuasive.

The Earth was divided (v.25)

The Hebrew word translated "earth" in verse 25 is *erets*, which always refers to the geological, physical earth rather than to the people on the earth. The fact that the earth was divided explains how the animals were able to spread from Mount Ararat into all corners of the world.

It seems that following the flood and the cataclysmic changes that took place, the tectonic plates of the earth were moving. Here we see a division of the nations. Before this time, there was one continent, or all the continents were connected. But here we see the continents begin to divide, which is what we have in our world today.

Thus, the cynic who scoffs at the truth of the account of the Flood and of Noah's ark on the grounds that it doesn't explain how animals ended up all over the world—is silenced again.

Chapter 11 Highlights and Helps by Pastor Jim

In Genesis 9:1 God told Noah's descendants to multiply, and fill the earth. Instead they came together under the leadership of a man named Nimrod. Nimrod founded the city of Babel that would become the base of false religious systems until the end of time. We see in Revelation 17-18 that God judges Babylon there because of the continued sin that starts here.

What was the sin of Babylon? There are a lot of thoughts on this, much interesting written about this. Yet here, I want to just challenge you to look and see what the Bible says they did, not what others think or surmise they did. As God describes it, He lists at least three things that mark what

"Babel" and "Babylon" would be known for till the end of time:

1) **Man's Power** – "Come, lets us build ourselves a city"

- A city for man, by man and all about man (leaving God out)
- Many see a constant struggle that begins here between "the city of God" and "the city of man"
- There is some interest even in the fact that they use bricks instead of stone. When God calls for His city and His temple, He calls for them to use whole stones.
- All this is accomplished in the power of man

2) **Man's Religion** – "a tower whose top is in the heavens"

- This does not mean they were seeking to build a tower so tall it stretched into outer space. This is a religious statement not a physical statement
- The idea is that they were creating their own religion, man's attempt to reach heaven on their own. Every religion of man...is this and begins here.
- Manmade religion – which is always a works based religion for building one's self a road to heaven

3) **Man's Glory** – "let us make a name for ourselves"

- This would be putting the emphasis and glory on man. Glory that is only and rightly God's, man seeks to steal and make the focus on man.
- It is now all about man

Consider the right contrast in the prayer that Jesus taught us to address God with : *For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.* (Matthew 6:13)

Notes on Shem, Ham and Japheth

by Ray C. Stedman

"Blessed by the Lord my God he Shem; and let Canaan he his slave. God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan he his slave..."

Here we have the three families of mankind. The family of Ham is represented by Canaan, although not limited to his descendants. In certain of the old versions, in these two verses referring to Canaan, the account

reads, "Ham, the father of Canaan," which is probably the more accurate rendering. Now this is a most important passage. We can hardly overrate its importance in understanding the world of our day...

Notice that Shem is given religious primacy among mankind. The Semitic people, the descendants of Shem, were responsible under God to meet the spiritual needs of mankind. That is their role in humanity. It is most striking, isn't it, that the three great religions of earth, which can properly be called religions, all come from the Semitic family: Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. There is much distortion of truth in these, granted, but the sense of mission by the Semitic families of earth is very evident. This family includes the Jews, the Arabs, certain ancient peoples, as well as other modern groups.

Japheth was promised enlargement. The Japhethic people are, in general, the peoples of India and Europe, the Indo-European stock, with which any demographer is familiar. It is largely from this family that we Americans come. It is most interesting that history has recorded their geographical enlargement. The entire Western hemisphere of our globe is settled by Japhethic peoples, and the Indians (Hindus) are of the same stock. But there is much to suggest in history that the enlargement that is promised here to Japheth is also intellectual. Historically, all the great philosophers are Japhethic. The Greeks, who began modern philosophy, are descendants of Japheth, as we will see in the very next chapter, also the Hindus. The Greeks and the Hindus are the two truly great philosophic races of earth. Some of you may say, "Well, what about Confucius; he was a Hamite?" But Confucius was not a philosopher; he was a teacher of practical ethics. Anyone who studies him will realize how true this is.

There is a very astute Christian scholar, whose writings are privately distributed, who has been a great help to me in various fields of Bible study. His name is Dr. Arthur Custance, from Toronto, Ontario, to whom I am greatly indebted for some of these concepts. He takes the phrase, "let him [Japheth] dwell in the tents of Shem" as predictive of the Cross, when the spiritual guidance of humanity passed from the Jews to the Gentiles, i.e., to the Japhethic family. To Shem was given the primacy of religious teaching, but there comes a time when Japheth enters that field ("dwells in the tents of Shem"), and philosophy (which is essentially Japhethic) was married to theology. This has been the case since the dispersion of the Jews around the world.

Let me speak briefly about Ham. Ham is given the role of a servant in relation to both of these other families of earth. But, notice carefully, not a

servant in the sense of enslavement. That role was limited to the descendants of Canaan. "A slave of slaves," is the Hebrew way of emphasizing, of intensifying a statement. Canaan was to be that, but not the rest of the sons of Ham. However, they were to fulfill a servant relationship, not in the sense of enslavement, but as the practical technicians of humanity. If you study ancient history and technological achievements which were in many ways the equal of, or superior of, much that we have today, were founded and carried to a high technological proficiency by Hamitic people. This is the role in history given by God to the descendants of Ham. The Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Mayans, the Aztecs, all were Hamitic people. They were the great inventors of mankind. It may come as a shock to some, who boast in Aryan superiority and think of Americans as the most inventive people on the earth, to know that almost every basic invention can be traced to the Hamites, rather than to the Japhethites, which we represent. All that Japhethic people do is to develop the philosophy of science and apply technology, but the discovery of these are largely traceable to the Hamitic peoples of the earth.

Now all of this is reflected most interestingly in the New Testament. We have for instance, the so-called Synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), which are very similar to one another and quite different from the gospel of John. Yet Matthew, Mark, and Luke are not copies of one another but they represent differences of approach. It has often been pointed out that they are aimed at different types of people. The interesting thing is that when you inquire who these people are you find that they are Shem, Ham, and Japheth, in that order. Matthew is aimed at the Semitic people. It is the gospel for the Jews, above all others. Mark is clearly the gospel of the servant. This is stressed by Bible teachers whenever they teach Mark; his gospel is profoundly the presentation of the servant, the practical mind, the Hamitic mind. Luke is clearly aimed at the Greek, or the Japhethic mind.

It is also interesting that three groups are recorded in the New Testament as specifically coming to seek the Lord Jesus. They are: the shepherds, the Wise men, and the Greeks. Here you have again the order: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The shepherds were Israelites, Semitic. Most Bible scholars feel that the Magi, the Wise men from the East, were really not from the East (that was a general term) but from Arabia, and represent the Hamitic peoples. The Greeks are clearly Japhethites. So there again, always in the same order, we have Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Also, the gospel, was first preached in this order. In the book of Acts we

are told that on the day of Pentecost Peter stood up and said, "Ye men of Israel," and addressed the gospel to them. Then in the next section we find Philip called to leave a revival in Samaria and go down to preach to a single individual in the desert, who is a Hamite, an Ethiopian, the treasurer of Ethiopia. Then, a little bit later on, Peter is sent to the Japhethites, preaching the gospel to Cornelius, a centurion of Rome.

Furthermore, all three of these groups are represented at the crucifixion. Each branch of mankind took part in the crucifixion. The moral responsibility for it fell upon the Jews. It is they who said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." The physical burden of bearing the cross fell upon a Hamite, Simon of Cyrene, a stranger in Jerusalem who was impressed into the task of bearing the cross for our Lord on the Via Dolorosa. Finally, as you know, executive responsibility for the crucifixion rested with the Romans, who gave the official order for the death of our Lord.

Now I think this is enough to show how accurately the Bible previews history, and how it deals realistically with these matters. There are often hidden in trace them, carry us into vast and exciting fields of discovery. We have looked at enough to confirm to us this fact: that the race, the whole race, is but the individual written large. There are three divisions of mankind, as there are three divisions in man, in you. To each of these divisions is given the responsibility for meeting one of the basic needs of man, spiritual, physical, and intellectual. In each one of us these same three divisions are found. We each have a capacity to worship; we each have a capacity to reason; and each has a capacity to create. These are the things that distinguish us from the animals. This is the image of God in man. Each of them needs to be held in perfect balance. The world is in a state of confusion, uncertainty and despair because the balance God intended has been left unfulfilled, so, in your individual life you are in a state of confusion, despair, frustration, weakness, or whatever it may be, because you have neglected to fulfill the three-fold capacities of your own nature. You can only do so as they are kept in perfect harmony, one with the other.

It is wrong to think of man as essentially spiritual. He is also intellectual and physical. It is wrong to think of him as being essentially physical, and to develop the athletic abilities to the neglect of the others; he is also spiritual and intellectual. The interesting thing is that in the Bible the intellectual is put last. If the order of scripture obtains for the individual as well as for the race, the order within us is also Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

First the spiritual, then the physical, then the intellectual. In that order mankind finds its complete fulfillment. If we understand ourselves we will also understand the world around us. The glory of the gospel is that it addresses itself to mankind exactly on those terms. We find ourselves entering into fulfillment, into excitement, into a dramatic sense of being what we were intended to be, when we open our lives to God through Jesus Christ, making that our first priority; then developing the physical life, taking care of physical needs, physical demands; and through these two working together, developing the intellect to an understanding of ourselves..."

Babel

by John Whitcomb

God's judgment of the Tower of Babel was one of the greatest catastrophes in the history of the world. In one moment, a massive, highly complex building project, involving the entire human race, came to an end. Thousands of workers suddenly found themselves incapable of communicating with anyone outside their extended family group. Overwhelmed by fear and frustration, each family group moved away from the others. Mankind has never recovered.

But what really happened, and why? For centuries, Bible students have wondered about the following statements:

'Come, let us build for ourselves ... a tower whose top will reach into heaven' (Genesis 11:4). God's amazing response to this:

'Behold, they are all one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them' (Genesis 11:6).

The Towers

Let us now consider these statements in order. First, were these Mesopotamians who descended from Noah's family actually attempting to build 'a tower whose top [would] reach into heaven' (Genesis 11:4)? The clear answer is 'No!' The NASB puts the words 'will reach' in italics, which means that they are not in the original Hebrew text, but were added in an effort to make sense out of the wording. (The KJV italicizes 'may reach'.)

But what happens when the Hebrew wording is translated literally? We then have 'a tower whose top [is] into heaven.' (cf. NKJV). And this is exactly what ancient Mesopotamian ziggurat temple-towers were for! The top compartment represented heaven. The inner walls, in all probability,

were decorated with blue glazed tile, with the sun, the moon, and the five known planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn) lined up along the plane of the zodiac. In the centre of the room would be their 'god' seated upon a throne! Nebuchadnezzar later rebuilt such a tower in Babylon, which the Sumerians had called E-TEMEN-AN-KI ('the building of the foundation-platform of heaven and earth').¹ The pyramids of Egypt and, much later, the great Mayan temples of Central America, reflected the design of the original Tower of Babel.

This was not an innocent, scientifically naive, primitive effort to reach the highest heavens! It was, instead, a brilliant but blasphemous effort to dismiss forever the God who had commanded Noah and his three sons after the Flood to 'be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth' (Genesis 9:1). Instead of honoring His name (i.e. His character and attributes), they said, 'Let us build for ourselves a city ... and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth' (11:4).

The entire enterprise simply reeked with human pride and arrogance. Satan almost succeeded in completely dominating mankind again, as he had done at the fall of Adam and Eve, and as he had done before the Flood (with the exception of one family [Genesis 6:5; Heb. 11:7]).

The Response of God

The second statement is the astounding response of God to the Babel project: 'Nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them' (Genesis 11:6). The triune, sovereign God of the universe, anthropomorphically viewed as coming down from the third heaven, through the immeasurable distances of 'outer space', views this tower emerging from the tiny speck called Earth with a sadness that only He can know, and pronounces judgment: 'Let us ... confuse their language ... So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth' (vs. 7-8).

But how did their linguistic unity provide the possibility and potential for immense iniquity? Perhaps we can find the answer by looking at the vast English-speaking world today. Almost instantly, demonic perversions and poisons can penetrate and permeate the minds of millions through the Internet, as well as via avalanches of morally hideous films, videos, books and magazines.

Now, what would happen to this Satanic sewage if the more than 300 million people who speak English suddenly discovered that their linguistic unity was shattered? The blow to Satan and sinful men would be

staggering. God's intervention at Babel, dividing and separating people from each other, had a holy and loving purpose.

Consider briefly the positive and the negative aspects of the Babel judgment with respect to God's love for the world (John 3:16). Positively, as we have seen, Babel has been God's enormous roadblock to Satan.

Negatively, however, linguistic pluralism has proven to be for the church, weakened by centuries of theological and spiritual corruption, a great hindrance to the spread of the Gospel and the written Word of God, apart from occasional special divine enablement. The widespread use of Greek in the Roman Empire when the church was born on the Day of Pentecost was God's provision for the Gospel message to reach millions of people in a relatively short period of time (Col. 1:23). But our Lord never intended the Gospel to be confined to Greek! He commanded us: 'Make disciples of all the nations ...' (Matthew 28:19).

Just ten days after His ascension, a great linguistic miracle occurred: 'There were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And ... they were each one hearing [the Apostles] speak in their own language' (Acts 2:5–6). Not just Greek, but over a dozen other languages are listed (vs. 9–11)! Here was Babel in reverse in one sense: of Babel; but in the days of the Apostles thousands of people from many lands were united for many months, 'continuing with one mind ... and continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching' (Acts 2:42–46).

The church, however, has only partly succeeded in fulfilling the Great Commission. Several thousand languages, after two millennia, still have no part of the written Word of God. How tragic! How many of us will 'suffer loss' at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:15) because of disobedience to our Lord's commands?

Nevertheless, at the end of this age, there will be 'a great multitude ... from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues ... and they will cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb"' (Rev. 7:9–10). The curse of Babel, the division of peoples, the separation of nations, and the confusion of tongues will end forever; and the wisdom and love of our great God, even in His judgments, will be understood in a new way by those who have put their trust in Him.

Q & A With Pastor Phil

Why was Canaan, and not Ham, cursed in Genesis 9:25?

Noah was a just man – a preacher of righteousness that found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah walked with God when the entire world walked after sin. Noah stands out in scripture as a hero of the faith, but the Bible is also painfully honest, and it is here that we see Noah's failings. It is good to understand that although Noah truly is a worthy example, he also was a man with weaknesses and therefore was prone to sin. Genesis 9:20-27 is a brief section of scripture, it begins with Noah becoming a farmer and ends with Canaan, the son of Ham, being cursed.

The Continuing Problem of Sin

Some people are troubled by the quick reemergence of sin into the world following the flood. They have assumed that God's purpose in the flood was to purge the earth of wickedness. This is not true. In Genesis 8:21, God promises to never again destroy the earth as he did in the flood despite the fact that *the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*. Following the flood, you would think to find a respite from temptation as the whole of society was destroyed. What we quickly discover is that, even in a righteous man like Noah, there is the propensity to sin. The problem of sin lies within the heart of man. The purpose of the flood was not to remove sin from the world. It was to reveal to man that God will judge wickedness. In the flood we see God's wrath poured out upon the whole earth. He did it once before and He will do it again. With that understanding, we can see Satan's attempts to discredit the Biblical account of the flood and argue that it never happened. He would like nothing more than for the world to be blinded to the coming judgment.

What was Ham's sin?

There is some debate about Ham's sin in this section. In Leviticus 18 there are laws given to govern sexual morality. There is a command not to uncover the nakedness of your father (Lev 18:7). This verse speaks of an illicit sexual relationship. Some believe that while Noah was drunk, Ham entered the tent and uncovered the nakedness of his father. That view seems very unlikely from the text. Verse 21 states that while Noah was drunk he became uncovered. There is nothing in the passage to suggest that it was Ham who uncovered Noah, only that he saw him. Furthermore, if Ham had committed such a vile act, he probably wouldn't have told his two brothers outside. And his brothers would have likely dealt much more

harshly with him. It seems far more likely that Ham's sin was that he failed to honor his father. Noah was a just man who walked with God. The Bible never speaks of Ham as having similar character. The passage seems to suggest that Ham took the opportunity to ridicule his father and bring him dishonor. As Christians, we should keep in mind that the world is watching, waiting for us to fail so they might dishonor us and also the Lord (2 Sam 12:14). May the Lord give us strength to stand!

Generational Curses?

We can understand what Ham did wrong. Shem and Japheth respond by doing what Ham should have done. They cover the nakedness of their father by carefully walking backward so as not to look upon Noah. Instead, Ham left his father naked and then announced it to his brothers further dishonoring him. However, when Noah awoke, it was Canaan, Ham's son, that was cursed. Why? Some have taken this and other passages and used them to form a doctrine that God punishes the children for the sins of the father. Although there are many who embrace this, is it valid? Ezekiel chapter 18 refutes this idea. The main idea of the chapter is this: judgment will fall on the person who sins. The son will not bear the guilt of the father if the son does what is right. In this chapter, the people were calling God's character into question saying that the way of the Lord is not fair. God refutes this claim and calls for their repentance. Deut 24:16 also affirms that fathers shall not die for the sins of children and children shall not die for the sins of the fathers. Much of the confusion concerning generational curses stems from Exodus 20:5 *For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.* God says a similar thing in Exodus 34:7. What does God mean when He says that He visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations? The word translated *visit* has the idea of examining, inspecting, or watching over. This gives a different understanding as opposed to God placing the sin upon subsequent generations. Furthermore, it seems that it would be a violation of Ezekiel 18:20 and Deut 24:16 if God were to punish the children for the sins of their father.

The Effects of Sin?

I have talked to people who believe that God has cursed their children because of sins from their past. I think this calls God's character into question. Rather than view this as some kind of mystical curse that must be broken, I think it we should simply consider the effects of sin. In that

far reaching effects. The father who walks in rebellion against God lays a foundation for his children to do the same. This becomes so apparent in regions of the world where there is no gospel witness. From generation to generation the people drown in darkness. Is it a curse or is it the ramifications of living apart from God. We don't know much about Ham and Canaan, but it is certainly possible that Ham failed to nurture a God fearing attitude in his son.

Fulfilling Prophecy

The curse upon Canaan was not merely a malicious wish. Nor was he doomed, because his father, Ham, sin against Noah. Instead Noah gives a prediction or a prophecy concerning the future of his sons. Perhaps Noah recognized the character of his grandson and saw that he would be humbled. Maybe God gave him a clear vision of the future. Regardless, God sovereignly purposed that Shem and Japheth would excel while Canaan would be subject to them. This of course comes to pass. Shem's descendants are the Semitic people including the Jews. The descendants of Canaan become those dwelling in the Promised Land when the children of Israel come out from Egypt. The land is given to the Israelites and the Canaanites are largely driven from the land while the remainder became slaves. It wasn't Noah's words that caused it to happen. What takes place in Canaan's descendants is outside of Noah's control. Instead, Noah was used to prophesy that which God would bring about.

With the Word Bible Commentary

GENESIS 9

Government (1–7). God gave some new rules for life on the cleansed earth. He always guides His redeemed and shows them His will. Noah and his family could now eat animal flesh (Gen. 1:29), *but they were forbidden to eat the blood* (Lev. 17:11–14). The sanctity of human life was affirmed in the ordaining of human government (Rom. 13). God established government because man is basically a sinner and must be kept under control. Murder is a terrible crime because man is made in the image of God, and to kill a human being is to attack God's image. All people are not children of God, but all belong to one human family because God made us of one blood (Acts 17:26).

Grace (8–17). God gave assurance that He would never send another flood to destroy life on the earth. The covenant included not only man but also birds, cattle, and the beasts of the field (Ezek. 1:10; Rev. 4:7). The sign of the covenant was the rainbow, a bridge of beauty that joins heaven and earth. Whether we look at the rainbow or not, *God* looks upon it and remembers His promises. Noah saw the rainbow *after* the storm; Ezekiel saw it *in the midst* of the storm (Ezek. 1:4ff.); and John saw it *before* the storm of judgment (Rev. 4:1–3).

Guilt (18–29). Imagine, a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5), who was over six hundred years old, *getting drunk!* (See Gen. 6:5; 8:21; 1 Cor. 10:12.) Ham should have grieved over his father's sins, not gloated over them (Prov. 14:9). His brothers did what love always does: “covers all sins” (Prov. 10:12; 12:16; 17:9; 1 Pet. 4:8).

Noah's words must not be interpreted to mean that certain races are inferior and destined to be enslaved. In fact, history shows that some of Canaan's descendants were mighty nations with great empires. For that matter, even the Jews, the descendants of Shem, have had their share of captivity. His words were a prophecy: the sin of Ham would be visited on his son Canaan, who must have been involved in some way; Shem would have God's blessing (Rom. 9:1–5); Japheth (the Gentiles) would multiply and would worship the God of Shem. John wrote, “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). People who trust Christ for salvation are all one in Him (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). With the word Bible commentary (Ge 9:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

GENESIS 10–11

From Noah's three sons, God made a new beginning in human history. He set apart Shem to be His special channel of blessing, and it was through Shem that Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, was born (11:10ff.).

Sin always separates: man from God (chap. 3); brother from brother (chap. 4); family from family (chap. 9); and now nation from nation.

Note the name of Nimrod (10:8–10). The phrase "mighty hunter" implies that he was a rebel against God and a tyrant against his fellowman. He founded two cities important in Bible history: Babylon and Nineveh.

Man seeks unity and notoriety, and he tries to accomplish these things by his own wisdom and strength. Lucifer wanted to be like God (Isa. 14:14), and man wanted to make a name for himself. But only God can make a person's name truly great (Gen. 12:2; Josh. 3:7).

Babel means "confusion," and "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Cor. 14:33; see also James 3:16). Babylon will appear often in the biblical record as the enemy of God's people. Wherever there is confusion, the spirit of Babylon—the world and the flesh—is at work. Ultimately, the whole "Babylonian system" will be destroyed (Rev. 17–18).

The confusion of tongues that began at Babel was reversed at Pentecost (Acts 2:7–8). A descendant of Ham, an Ethiopian, was saved in Acts 8; a descendant of Shem, Paul, was saved in Acts 9; and the gentile descendants of Japheth were saved in Acts 10. Unity is not worked up by man; it is sent down by God (Ps. 133; Eph. 4:1–6). As we share the gospel with others, we are helping to unite what sin has torn apart (Eph. 1:10–11). Christians are indeed the peacemakers of the world.

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). With the word Bible commentary (Ge 9:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

"And I will remember my covenant."

Genesis 9:15

Taken from *Morning and evening*

Written by C. H. Spurgeon

Mark the form of the promise. God does not say, "And when ye shall look upon the bow, and ye shall remember my covenant, then I will not destroy the earth," but it is gloriously put, not upon our memory, which is fickle and frail, but upon God's memory, which is infinite and immutable. "The bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant." Oh! it is not my remembering God, it is God's remembering me which is the ground of my safety; it is not my laying hold of his covenant, but his covenant's laying hold on me. Glory be to God! the whole of the bulwarks of salvation are secured by divine power, and even the minor towers, which we may imagine might have been left to man, are guarded by almighty strength. Even the remembrance of the covenant is not left to our memories, for we might forget, but our Lord cannot forget the saints whom he has graven on the palms of his hands. It is with us as with Israel in Egypt; the blood was upon the lintel and the two side-posts, but the Lord did not say, "When you see the blood I will pass over you," but "When I see the blood I will pass over you." My looking to Jesus brings me joy and peace, but it is God's looking to Jesus which secures my salvation and that of all his elect, since it is impossible for our God to look at Christ, our bleeding Surety, and then to be angry with us for sins already punished in him. No, it is not left with us even to be saved by remembering the covenant. There is no linsey-woolsey here-not a single thread of the creature mars the fabric. It is not of man, neither by man, but of the Lord alone. We should remember the covenant, and we shall do it, through divine grace; but the hinge of our safety does not hang there-it is God's remembering us, not our remembering him; and hence the covenant is an everlasting covenant.

