

An Old World Problem

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[0:00] What we're looking at is Genesis chapter 9, and we've kind of worked our way through the first 17 verses.

It was a description of this new world that Noah and his family experienced after the floodwaters went down, after God allowed them to go out of the ark.

A whole new world, and about everything in it was different for them than it was prior to the flood.

Anyway, so we have the new world order, but we have an old world problem.

And that problem is what? It's sin. That has not gone away because it's still in the nature of man.

And so, we got through that portion of the chapter that deals with this new world. And just stopped short of getting into the remaining verses in the chapter that deal with the old world problem.

[1:24] And that is, of course, sin. Let me go ahead and read, starting with verse 18. I'm just going to read all the way through to the end of the chapter so that we can have those verses in our minds, whether you're looking at your Bibles as I read or just listening.

Now, the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. And the Bible makes note of that because he's going to figure in to what comes next.

These three were the sons of Noah. And from these, the whole earth was populated. The whole earth. By the way, there's another clear indication that the flood was universal.

Destroyed the entire planet. All of its population. Because the Bible says clearly that the world, the whole world is going to be populated out of these sons of Noah.

Noah. And Noah began to be a farmer. And he planted a vineyard. You know, I got to thinking, well, hi, come in. Hi.

[2:30] Come right on in. Good to have you with us tonight. She might need a little help finding her boys. Oh, okay.

Got some boys up in the water. Yeah, yeah. Let's go on. Would you like or one of you get some notes there? And your name? Mary. Mary. Hammer. Hammer.

Well, I was going to have you with us, Mary. We're in the book of Genesis. Okay. That's kind of a study guide. I don't have another Bible in here. All right.

We're in Genesis chapter 9. You want to find there? And I'm kind of reading. Start over with verse 18. And I'm up to verse 20. Okay. Sorry to interrupt. That's all right. No problem. All right.

So verse 20. And Noah began to be a farmer. And he planted a vineyard. I was about to say, it kind of struck me that, though I don't, you know, it's implied here that maybe he wasn't a farmer before.

[3:35] We don't know what his occupation was. Other than for the last 120 years. He's been a carpenter. He's been a carpenter building an ark. I would say that was not his vocation necessarily prior to.

Maybe it was. But now he's a farmer. And he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk and became uncovered in his tent.

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Ham, or Japheth rather, took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father.

Their faces were turned away and they did not see their father's nakedness. So Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done to him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants, he shall be to his brethren.

And he said, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant.

[4:54] And Noah lived after the flood 350 years. So all the days of Noah were 950 years and he died. And that's how the chapter ends. And when you get on into chapter 10, then you have the genealogies or what some have called, and I think it's a good way to title it, the Table of Nations.

And so we'll get into that next time. But we'll finish up here, chapter 9. And this old world problem. Brand new world. A lot of it quite different than what it was prior to the flood.

But yet still an old world problem. And that problem, of course, is sin. Let me get my notes straight here. I've got something out of the sink here.

Let me get that out of the way. I've got to find where I was last week. All right. The old world problem.

And really it's highlighted there, starting with verse 20. But I've divided this latter part of the chapter into two parts.

[6:14] That is, we have the problem. And it's a big one. And it's sin. And then we're going to have the prophecy. Now, a new world order with an old world problem, that being sin.

And we're going to discover that as a result of the problem, sin, we're given a really very interesting prophecy. Now, I know that generally we think of what Noah said to his son, his grandson, Canaan, and his sons.

We think of that as a curse and a blessing. And indeed, it is as a result of what happened, the sin that took place. But more than just a curse, it is a prophecy.

Because the curse itself is attached to future things that are going to come about. And Noah was allowed to see, apparently see these things. And that's why he cursed Canaan in the way that he did.

So this is really a prophecy and not just simply a curse. Let's look at the problem first. The problem is, of course, sin.

[7:22] And it's the depravity of mankind. And that's the old world problem that has carried over into the new world. And so what happened?

Well, first we have these verses that speak of Noah getting drunk. Noah's drunkenness. And that's in verses 18 through 21.

We'll not read that text again. But in verse 18, I will read that again. Now the sons of Noah, he mentions it, who went out of the ark, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah. And from these the whole earth was populated. Now here is the beginning of the problem. Verse 20. And Noah began to be a farmer and he planted a vineyard.

Now nothing wrong with that, is there? Now that's innocent enough. And verse 21. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk and became uncovered in his tent.

[8:24] All right. So there's just a short little statement there in verse 21 about this event. This thing that Noah did. He drank. Now, I'd have to say that this is just a little bit troubling if you think about it.

Because prior to the flood, the Bible refers to Noah as a man of righteousness. A righteous man. Blameless, the Bible says, in his time.

That's in chapter 6 and verse 9. And so here he is getting drunk. And it's really rather startling. Wouldn't you agree? I mean, you've been reading.

And so far, everything that we have read in the Bible concerning Noah has been very positive. I mean, he was favored by God. Built this ark.

Was a preacher of righteousness throughout that 120 years as he built the ark. And then got his family on board. All this is positive. And then, through the duration of the flood, God preserved his life and his family.

[9:29] And you have some sense that right on the heels of that, here's Noah getting drunk. And uncovering himself, you know.

Acting unbecoming. Albeit, we have to assume he was doing this in privacy. And so it's a little bit disturbing and kind of shocking to have this story just suddenly right after the flood.

Now, I think you ought to consider that it's very likely. In fact, I didn't bring it with me. But I read some theologians who've done some study on what the earth may have been like prior to the flood. That it's possible that fermentation did not exist prior to the flood. And all the atmospheric things had changed. And a lot of things had changed.

And so it could have been a very innocent thing that Noah made some wine from the fruit of his labors. His vineyard. And it was fermented.

[10:37] And so, you know, he just kind of suffered innocently. And, of course, our first reaction is to say, well, now, Pastor, you're just kind of reading something in there.

I mean, it just seems very clear he got drunk. But you need to consider this, that Moses, who wrote Genesis and wrote these verses, nowhere here mentions the sin of Noah.

There isn't anything said here that gives us an indication that what Noah did was some overt sinful activity. Now, I'll just leave that there with you.

You can think about that if you want to. Certainly, the focus of the text is not necessarily Noah and his drunkenness. It was just simply the occasion that led to the sin of his son and grandson.

I think Canaan was involved. We'll talk about that here in just a minute. So you have Noah's drunkenness. That kind of sets the stage for something to happen. And then you have Ham's depravity.

[11:47] Ham's depravity. Verses 22 and then verse 24 also gives us an indication of that. Verse 22 says, And Ham, the father of Canaan, and here we have another reference to Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father.

He saw it and told his two brothers outside. They were outside the tent. Now, on the surface, this seems to be innocent enough, really.

I mean, just think about it. If you didn't read any further, you would think, well, you know, this just seems like a kind of an innocent thing. And, you know, you might be thinking that Ham just walked into his father's tent by chance.

Maybe he heard some ruckus. You know, his father's drunk in there. No telling what was going on. So, at first glance, at least on the surface, you might think this was just an accidental thing.

But not so. So, the way this is written reveals a few important truths about this event that we ought to consider. First of all, it would seem that Ham and his two brothers, the way this is written, it would seem that they are alerted to Noah's condition.

[13:06] All three of them are. And they are standing outside the tent. Because as soon as this Ham sees his father's nakedness and whatever happens there, he goes right out and tells his brothers outside the tent.

And so, it seems that they are all three aware of what's going on. That their father is drunk. And I don't know that they necessarily were aware of his nakedness.

But he is certainly drunk. But it is only Ham that goes into the tent and, you know, his indiscretion here, entering the tent and seeing his father naked.

Secondly, you ought to consider that since Ham's son Canaan is mentioned here, it is likely that he too went in the tent. Now, the Bible does not say that.

But it is very pointed in referring to Canaan. It does not refer to any of the other sons of Ham.

[14:15] And just Canaan. And Ham did have other sons. And so, it does not refer to any of it. So, Canaan very likely went in the tent with his father.

Very possible here. And then, Ham, third, that Ham would come out and relate to his brothers what happened inside the tent.

What he saw. Maybe what he had done. And we'll get into that here in just a minute. Seems to point to some amount of pleasure that he had, that he received by way of this incident.

He went right out and told the whole story to his brothers. And so, consequently, I think this was no accident that, on Ham's part, it was deliberate.

Deliberate. So, what happened in the tent between Ham and his father Noah? Ham and possibly his son Canaan with his father Noah. What happened?

[15:23] Verse 24. So, Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done to him. Now, that clearly indicates that something had been done.

And we don't know what it was. It seems clear from the text that Ham apparently did more than just look upon his father's nakedness. And he may have violated him in some way.

There's room for that here in what is said. And not just in this statement about Noah asking, inquiring, or not inquiring, but knowing what his son had, quote, done to him.

But then, what Noah does as a result, the cursing, indicates that this was something far more than just an innocent, kind of by chance, accidental, entering into his father's privacy and just seeing him drunk and naked, lying on the floor, on the bed, or whatever.

So, it had to be more than that based upon what happened as a result. And many scholars believe that Ham may have committed some kind of immoral act therein with his father.

[16:48] Now, I'll leave that for you to decide. Leviticus 18 gives very clear laws concerning uncovering your father's nakedness, your mother's nakedness.

And it's not just talking about seeing them naked in that context. It's talking about immorality. And so, there are certain laws to govern this kind of activity that was not to take place within the family context at all.

And so, the fact that Ham and Canaan may have seen Noah naked, it had to be more than that.

And, by the way, I think we ought to consider the way Moses reported this incident.

I have said more by way of speculation than Noah said. And I make this point. Here is Moses writing this, and with a minimum of details and descriptions.

There are clear implications, but no details, no description. And he told a story as if he was one standing outside the tent.

[18:09] Very, in such good taste. And he places himself, and us, by the way, the readers, outside the tent with Shaman Japheth.

And I don't think we have to guess how Hollywood today would tell the story in great detail and do it on the big screen.

Hollywood, you see, would take us inside the tent. Moses kept us on the outside of the tent. And yet, still, even with a minimum number of words, we have an understanding of, at least to some point, what took place there.

That it was immoral. All right, so here's the old world problem. It's sin. So, we have Noah's drunkenness, Ham's depravity. And then we also have a word about Shaman Japheth's discretion. Verse 23. But Shaman and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

[19:22] That's an interesting verse. In fact, I think the lengths to which Shaman Japheth went in order not to see their father's nakedness, to many of us, if we would admit it, seems extreme, doesn't it?

But I would have you think about this. I think, sadly, and this includes all of us, we are products, to some degree or another, of a sexually permissive society.

Where, you know, television and Hollywood have desensitized us to these kinds of things, nakedness and such. There's very little value put on modesty anymore in our culture, in our society. Very little, if any. And so, this is not extreme. It may seem that way to us. But Shaman Japheth are being very honoring of their father, and very reverent.

And they're going to great lengths, so that they do not look upon his nakedness. All right, so we're looking at a new world with an old world problem, and it's sin. And we see the problem.

[20:31] Next, we see the prophecy. And I really want us to think of this more in terms of a prophecy, verses 25 to 29.

Noah reacted swiftly, didn't he? After this event, we don't really have a sense of the passage of time.

It's always difficult in the Bible, because the Bible's not trying to fill in all the details. Time certainly has transpired since the flood, because Ham has a son, and sons.

And so do the other sons of Noah, have children. And I guess we are to suppose that there was a little lapse in time, you know, for Noah to recover from his drunken stupor, and clothe himself again, but he knew what had happened.

And his reaction to it was very swift. We have this sense of it. And so, first, there is this curse on Canaan.

[21:37] The curse on Canaan, verse 25. He said, Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren. Now, it seems clear that Noah had already discerned something about, not only Ham, his son, but certainly about Canaan.

They had already discerned something about his evil bent, even before this incident. I think there's room to understand that.

At the very least, we know that this immoral trait became a reality in the years and centuries to follow, with Canaan's descendants.

But I want you to notice that Noah did not speak this curse directly to Ham. The Bible says Ham went in. It doesn't say Canaan was with him, though I think it's clearly implied.

But the curse is not spoken directly to Ham, is it? It's spoken to Canaan. And by the way, and we know from the genealogies that Ham had other sons, the curse is not spoken to them.

[22:52] It is spoken directly to Ham's son, Canaan. Now, why is that? Why just him? I think that's why we need to see here, more than just a curse, this is a prophecy.

This is a prophecy. Noah was apparently given divine foresight. He could see. God allowed him to see. And he revealed to him the future abominations of the line of Canaan.

Do you know anything about the Canaanites? In the days when Israel went into the land, conquered the land, cleansed the land. Let me read something out of Leviticus 18.

God spoke these words, really words of warning, right after some words of instruction concerning moral purity and sexual morality. He gives several instructions in that regard.

And then he gives this warning. He says, Do not defile yourselves with any of these things. The things he has just mentioned, and I won't mention them. Some of them are quite graphic.

[24:03] Do not defile yourself with any of these things. For by all these, the nations are defiled. He's talking about the nations in the land of promise, the promised land. By these things, these immoral, sexually immoral things, the nations are defiled.

Which I am casting out before you. For the land, he said, is defiled. Not just the people. But the land itself, defiled by their immorality.

Therefore, I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it. And get this expression, the land vomits out its inhabitants.

That's pretty vivid language there. Vomits them out. Talking about a civilization of people in the promised land who were so vile morally.

And, I mean, some of the most grotesque and heinous kinds of sexual immorality that you could ever imagine.

[25:11] Maybe we're seeing some of that in our day. And they were living in the land. And God says, the land vomits out these inhabitants. Now, who were the people that occupied the promised land prior to Israel going in and conquering?

The Canaanites. The Canaanites. And so Noah, he is cursing Canaan. But his curse is really a prophecy of things to come for the descendants of Canaan.

And their sexual immorality. And that's why, since the curse is attached to Canaan and what they became, then that is another indication that what happened inside that tent was something more than just an accidental walking in on Noah's privacy and seeing him naked.

There was something much more to that. And Canaan is cursed. He's cursed. And then Noah said, as a part of the curse, a servant of servants, he shall be to his brethren.

To his brethren. That is, the descendants of Shem and Japheth. Canaan will be servants, a servant of servants. And that double emphasis of servitude just simply means that Canaan will be cursed with the lowest, as the lowest degree of servanthood and bondage to the descendants of his brothers.

[26:44] In fact, in verse 26, it says that Canaan will be a servant of Shem. And then in verse 27, it says Canaan will be a servant of Japheth. A servant of servants.

Now, I would add in here that that does not mean that the descendants of Canaan will somehow be excluded from any possibility of salvation. That's not the curse.

Many will be saved. Remember Melchizedek in the Bible, in Abraham's day? He was a Canaanite. You remember Rahab in Joshua's day?

She was a Canaanite. Going into the New Testament, the Syrophenician woman in Jesus' day that came to Jesus and asked him to heal her daughter.

And she was a Canaanite. She had, and Jesus, remember what he said about her? What great faith she had. And so it's not, the curse did not exclude all the descendants of Canaan from any possibility of salvation.

[27:52] Many of them were saved. But the civilization itself became exactly what Noah said they would become. They were cursed. Next we have the focus going to Shem, the blessing, and I would call that the covenant.

The covenant through Shem. And this is very important to see. In verse 26, and he said, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, and may Cain be his servant.

Now, this is a prophecy. Clearly a prophecy concerning the lineage of Shem. Out of which, of course, one day Israel would come. Alright? When Noah said, blessed be the Lord.

You know, he didn't say blessed be Shem. Though it's going to work out as a blessing for them. But blessed be the Lord. But this is the key phrase there in that verse. The God of Shem.

The very specific thing about Shem. Yahweh God is his God. Shem. And when Noah made that statement, it's a statement of prophecy.

[29:01] He was revealing that God's redemptive plan was going to be accomplished through Shem. And we know that to be the case. See, the godly line is to be preserved now through Shem.

We've been following this as we've been going through Genesis. It starts with Adam, of course. And then his son Seth. The godly line.

And then that extended all the way up to the flood. And Noah was of Seth's line. And then after the flood is over, one of his sons, Shem, will continue the godly line.

And out of Shem, one day Abraham will come. Out of Abraham, Isaac. And then Jacob. And then David. And we can follow that all the way up to Jesus.

See, the Messiah. So, here's the blessing. It is, blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem. Because God's redemptive plan is going to be accomplished.

[30:10] His covenant work is going to be accomplished through Shem's line. And so that's a great blessing. And then finally, we have the connection to Japheth. I don't want to forget Japheth.

Probably. I wouldn't say all of us in this room. But most of us in this room are descendants of Japheth. Most Americans are descendants of Japheth.

And we'll get into that in the next chapter. But here's a connection. God makes a very important blessing by way of connection. Verse 27. May God enlarge Japheth.

And may he dwell in the tents of Shem. And may Canaan be his servant. All right. Now, it's a two-fold blessing. Japheth, first of all, he says, will be enlarged.

Enlarged. Some of us are being enlarged as the years go by. But it doesn't mean that, of course. It means his descendants. He's going to have many descendants.

[31:11] In fact, the word Japheth means enlarged. It's almost a play on words here. But the blessing is this, that they will enjoy a widespread habitation of the earth.

And as those who have traced the descendants of Japheth can see that readily here on the globe, that the larger part of the population of the planet are descendants of Japheth.

But there's a second part to the blessing. Japheth's descendants will also enjoy a special connection with Shem's descendants. Just as Shem's descendants will be blessed because of their unique relationship or connection with Yahweh God, the one true God, Japheth's descendants will be blessed through a special connection with Shem's descendants.

And that is Shem's descendants will be partakers of the spiritual blessings of Shem and the worship of Shem's God, Yahweh, by and large, though not totally.

But Japheth's descendants into our world today, as they are in our world today, are primarily followers of Yahweh God.

[32:30] And so there's going to be a connection there, and we'll talk more about that when we get into chapter 10, as we kind of trace all the descendants from the sons of Noah.

And the chapter ends, of course, with this statement about Noah and how old he was when it was all done. He lived after the flood 350 years.

All the days of Noah were 950 years. .