

# 17-18 Bible Study #22

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# Genesis 9

# Prior Planning

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# Genesis 9

- **Genesis 9:1-2**

- This language sure sounds like **Genesis 1** except for one major difference which changed since leaving the Garden
- There would not have been a chapter division between **Gn 8 and 9** in the original text
- Here we have *Noah* and his sons being told to be fruitful and multiply
- In **Genesis 1** we heard about God's blessing to include ***Adam* having dominion** over the animals and the earth

# Genesis 9 (Cont)

- Here after God's blessing it says that **the animals and all living things would live in fear and dread of Noah**, his family and their descendants
- What changed is man's dominion will now cause "**fear**" in the lives of the animals (and all other living things) because since they are no longer in the garden, they are going to be eaten
- Man was forbidden to eat animals who were alive (containing blood) so they had to be killed \*

# Genesis 9 (Cont)

- **Genesis 9:3-8**

- In this passage we hear about the restoration of the creation of man who in a certain sense is a **new Adam**
- Look at these parallelisms
- We hear about *Noah* and his family being fruitful, their dominion over the earth and being in the image and likeness of God
- In **Genesis 2** we heard about God's blessings and then his resting on the seventh day (covenantal language) \*

# Genesis 9 (Cont)

- **Genesis 9:9-17**

- What we are seeing here is a “framing device” from the beginning of the flood story where we had a reference to the sons of *Noah*
- This is a hinge, a little extra detail, that will tell us something about what is to follow in the next story where we will hear about *Ham’s* son, *Canaan*
  - Do not confuse Cain and his sons who are now deceased with Ham’s son Canaan
- **Genesis 9:8-17** is parallel to **Genesis 2:1-4a** where we were told that God rested on the seventh day and we know that seven was a symbol for the covenant

# Genesis 9 (Cont)

- We don't have the word "seven" here, instead we see the word "covenant"
- The meaning of the word "covenant" is a swearing or taking an oath
  - The Hebrew verb "*sheba*" means "to swear" and the noun for seven was the word "*shevah*"
- The word "covenant" appears seven times within this text
- Also, the term "between you and me" or "between God and man" appears seven times
- Seven is all over this text



# Genesis 9 (Cont)

- Whenever you see the number seven you will usually see the word “covenant”
- This is not because seven is God’s lucky number
- It is because seven contained a great deal of symbolism to the Hebrews as its roots were the same as the verb to swear an oath
  - To submit to something, to make a deal or a contract, a promise, a covenant
- This is important for the entire Old Testament
- This changes in the New Testament since there is no such similarities in the Greek words like this \*

# Genesis 9 (Cont)

- **Genesis 9:18-20**

- Again, we see a framing device being used with the names of *Noah's* sons and it contains a hinge to the next story
- This reminds the one telling the story that he is about to tell the next story which is about *Ham's* son, *Canaan*
- After we hear about God resting on the seventh day in **Genesis 2**, we learn about God planting a garden where he placed *Adam* who gets in trouble (nakedness) by eating the “fruit”
- In this passage we see a parallel structure with *Noah* in a garden getting in trouble with the products of grapes (wine) while he was in his nakedness\*

# Genesis 9 (Cont)

- **Genesis 9:21-29**

- This is a very strange story
- *Noah* came out of the ark, planted a vineyard, waited until it bore some grapes, made some wine and got drunk in his tent unclothed
- His son *Ham*, the second oldest walked in and saw his father's nakedness
- He told his two brothers about their father's drunkenness and nakedness
- The brothers entered the tent looking the other way and covered their father's nakedness

# Genesis 9 (Cont)

- *Noah* woke up and was very angry at what his son *Ham* had done
- He proceeded to curse *Ham's son Canaan!*
- First, we need to look again at the parallelisms of these stories
  - Just like Genesis 2 and 3 there was fruits coming from plants, and, like Adam, Noah was naked because of the fruit he had eaten (wine)
  - Next, you have curses (including the offspring Cain and Able) because of what had gone on before
- The parallelisms are here as memory devices to assist the story teller in the oral tradition to remember the details in each subsequent generation

# Genesis 9 (Cont)

- The rabbis and “Fathers of the Church” read this story the same way
- In it they see *Ham* disrespecting his father, resulting in *Ham* and his descendants being in trouble with their inheritance and blessing
- Some modern commentators, however, have interpreted this incident as a violation of **Leviticus 18:6f\*** in which *Ham* committed incest with his mother
- Father Sebastian suggested that the best answer was to stay with the first interpretation presented by the “Fathers of the Church”

# Genesis 9 (Cont)

- Either way what we find is that there was enmity between the offspring of the sons of *Noah*
- And that mankind, like the covenant from *Adam* through *Seth*, will go from *Noah* (the new *Adam*) through the line of *Shem*
  - The righteous line was from Adam through Seth
  - The righteous line was from Noah through Shem leading to Abraham
- The parallelism is unbelievably beautiful

# Genesis 10

# Transition

- After the flood ended we can see the structural parallelism between **Genesis 4-6** and **Genesis 10-11**
- Right after the curses to Adam and Eve the author presented us with *Adam's* descendancy (*Cain, Able, and Seth*)
- Here we are told about the three sons of *Noah*: *Shem, Ham and Japheth*
- *Able* was killed leaving one righteous line via *Seth* and one unrighteous live via *Cain*



# Transition (Cont)

- In this story *Japheth* will only play a minor role
- We will see a righteous life via *Shem* and an unrighteous line from *Ham*
- Once we are introduced to this division we will learn about *Nimrod*, a son of *Ham*, just as we learned about the wicked *Lamech* in the line of *Cain*

# Transition (Cont)

- 30 Nations came out of *Ham*
- 26 Nations came out of *Shem*
- 14 Nations came out of Japheth

# Genesis 10

- **Genesis 10:1**

- These framing devices echoes back to **Genesis 9:18** which describes the sons of *Noah* going forth from the ark with the added information about *Canaan*, a son of *Ham*
- This is a hinge (framing device) into the next story which will be about *Canaan*
- These textual parallelisms are amazing
- So this new story will be all about a new descendency, who were the sons of *Noah*: *Shem*, *Ham* and *Japheth*

# Genesis 10 (Cont)

- **Genesis 10:2-5**

- Here we will see some of the names of people (nations) that we will see throughout the Old Testament and especially among the prophets
- From *Japheth* we hear about three who become the foundation for the “coastal people” (Greeks and Romans):
  - Javin
  - Kittim (mentioned in the Book of prophet Joel)
  - Tarshis (later known as Spain and seen in the Book of the Prophet Jonah)
- Thus, *Japheth* will be known as the father of the northern coastal people, including all of the island people of the North and Middle East\*

# Genesis 10 (Cont)

- **Genesis 10: 6-14**

- *Shinar is Babylon*
- From that land (Babylon) *Nimrod* went into *Assyria* where he built the city of *Nineveh*
- Listen to the names of the peoples who descend from the sons of *Ham*: the *Canaanites*, the *Babylonians*, the *Assyrians*, the *Philistines* \*

# Genesis 10 (Cont)

- **Genesis 10:15-20**

- Do not confuse *Canaan* with *Cain* (whose descendants died in the flood)
- These names who descended from *Ham* became the enemies and major competitors of *Israel* after they returned to the land of *Canaan* (the Promised Land) \*

# Genesis 10 (Cont)

- **Genesis 10:21-29**

- This gives us the beginning of the genealogy of *Shem*
- The line of *Japheth* is obviously not too important as the author does not give us as many details as he does for the line of *Ham* and *Shem*
- This will become very important when *Israel* leaves *Egypt* (a part of the land of *Ham*) and moves into *Canaan* (another descendant of *Ham*)
- In this section we see three references to *Eber* (vs 21,24,24)
- Some commentators believe that this might be the foundation for the name “Hebrew”

# Genesis 10 (Cont)

- At this point Father Sebastian provided clarification of four names that often get misunderstood  
**Hebrew** can also mean “those who have crossed over”
  - They could be the descendants of Eber who crossed over the Jordan, or the Nile, or the Red Sea
  - There remains much confusion over this
- A second term that needs clarification is **Semite** or a descendant of *Shem*
- The term **Jew** refers to those who descended from *Judah*, the son of *Jacob*
- The **Samaritans** were the remnant of the 10 tribes and more\*



# Genesis 10 (Cont)

- **Genesis 10:30-32**

- This section ends with the middle of the genealogy of *Shem* with a summary statement on the families of *Noah* and that they spread to the ends of the earth after the **flood**
- Then suddenly out of nowhere we get the story of the “Tower of Babel” at **Genesis 11:1-9**
- But first we will look in **Genesis 11** at the continuation of the genealogy of *Shem*

# Genesis 11

# Genesis 11

- **Genesis 11:9-10**

- This is a continuation of the genealogy of *Shem* two years after the flood
- Again, we see a parallelism between the genealogy of *Seth* (Son of *Adam*) and that of *Shem* (son of *Noah*)
  - The genealogy of Seth was interrupted by the story of the flood and finished with the family of Noah
  - The genealogy of Shem which was interrupted by the story of the tower of Babel, and then was finished two years later

# Genesis 11 (Cont)

- Further, as *Noah* was the covenantal individual in the genealogy of *Seth* who was to save humanity, so *Abram* in the line of *Shem* will be the covenantal individual who will save humanity (as *Abraham*)
- At this point we will go back and look at the “Tower of Babel” story \*

# Genesis 11 (Cont)

- **Genesis 11:1-5**

- Unfortunately, in English you do not get the play on words that exists in *Hebrew* as this story is located right in the middle of the genealogy of *Shem*
- In Hebrew the name “*Shem*” means “name”
- The entire story is about a people who are not from the line of *Shem* who want to make a *Shem* (name) for themselves
- They want their own king, their own leader who will unite and protect them

# Genesis 11 (Cont)

- Here we see a reference to the term “sons of men”
- In the genealogy of Adam we saw that the sons of *Seth* were in the image and likeness of God
- That made them sons of God in contrast to the sons of *Cain*
- Then the two lines came together when the sons of God looked after the daughter of man (*Cain*)
- The same problem is arising here as the sons of God are causing trouble once again \*

# Genesis 11 (Cont)

- **Genesis 11:6-9**

- The following is another parallelism that some scholars see between the “Tower of Babel” and the Flood story  
One of the many pagan myths about the flood story depicts a man who outsmarted the gods in their attempt to destroy all of mankind via a flood by climbing to the top of the highest tree on the highest mountain
  - Those in the Tower of Babel story might have been building a tower into the heavens above the waterline to avoid dying in the flood\*

# Genesis 11 (Cont)

- **Genesis 11:12-27**

- This section presents the continuation of the genealogy of *Shem*
- Reading down we contact some important names:
  - Nahor was the father of Terah, who was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran, who was the father of Lot
- This is similar to the naming of the sons of *Noah*: *Shem*, *Ham* and *Japheth*, and Ham listed as the father of *Canaan*\*



# Genesis 11 (Cont)

- **Genesis 11:28-30**

- After learning about the important men leading to *Abram* we see two other characters:
  - Sarai
  - Lot
- We also are told about a major problem in the story and that is that *Sarai* was barren\*

# Genesis 11 (Cont)

- **Genesis 11:31-32**

- Do not confuse the town *Haran* with the guy named *Haran*, the deceased brother of *Abram*
- The elder brother *Abram* took care of his dead brother's son, *Lot*
- They, under the leadership of their father *Terah*, left *Ur* in the land of *Chaldea* in *Mesopotamia* and headed north to the town of *Haran* at the top of the "Fertile Crescent"
- *Terah*, *Abram's* father, died in *Haran*
- *Abram* and his family, to include *Lot*, moved down the "Fertile Crescent" to the land of *Canaan*\*

# Genesis 11 (Cont)

- This departure from *Ur* happened before the call of God came to *Abram* (*Genesis 12:1-3*)
- *Terah* (Abram's father) starts the move and *Abram* finishes it
- For an explanation for this move look at **Joshua 24:2-3**
  - From this we can see that the purpose of this movement was for the revelation of the one true God
  - Prior to the move these people were pagan polytheists
  - Thus, they can be seen as being led by God from polytheism to monotheism by going to the land of Canaan

# Important Approximate Dates to Keep in mind

- 5000 BC creation of Adam and Eve
- **3000 BC Noah and the Flood**
- **2500 BC Tower of Babel**
- **2000 BC Abraham**
- 1500 BC Moses
- 1000 BC David
- 500 BC Exile to Babylon

# Chiasm of the Tower on Babel

- A Line of Joktan (10:21-30)
  - B These are the sons of Shem (10:31)
    - C “let us make a Shem (name) for ourselves”  
(11:4)
  - B’ These are the descendents of Shem (11:10)
- A’ Line of Peleg (11:10f)

# The Pattern

- New creation, covenantal language, man, garden, fruit, sin/nakedness, curse, brotherly rivalry/genealogy, more sin, flood/Tower