

Ray Mondragon

We continue in our study of the Early History of Civilization. We saw the decline of civilization and the judgement—the world-wide flood—and now we are in chapter 9, the new era or dispensation with Noah as the focus until the end with something of a transition to the three sons which is where we start today. The 3 sons will be prominent in chapter 10.

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1. Decline of Civilization	4.1-6.8
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3. Dispensation of Noah	9
a. Directions of Dispensation	9.1-7
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We saw the Directions in which God re-iterates some of the same things that He gave to Adam and Eve since here we have a new head of the human race and the most important aspect was to be fruitful and multiply. We also saw in the Dedication of God with His dedicating Himself in His Covenant to not bringing again a flood. This is a review of that Covenant:

Noahic Covenant

1. Occasion - New Beginning or era or dispensation where the whole earth is new, in the process of being replenished. There are only 4 families, so you could say that all of humanity is just beginning in terms of a new timeframe.
2. Source - Elohim The main party of the covenant is *Elohim* or the Creator God Himself.
3. Content - No Flood The main stipulation of the covenant is that God will not bring a flood and we saw that the Noahic Covenant actually focuses on the creation—therefore He will be sovereignly controlling all aspects of the natural realm and we can do science because of this covenant.

4. Design - Assurance One of the main purposes or design of the covenant is to give assurance to not only Noah but his descendants, immediate and us as well—that there will be no flood. We don't think about it because we are far away from it, but He is giving assurance that there is going to be a stable environment and we can thus *do* science because of the stability that is established by the Noahic Covenant.
5. Effects - Creation The main effects will have to do with the creation itself, or natural realm.
6. Sign - Rainbow We saw that the sign of the covenant is the rainbow that we can even see today; as we see a storm passing, we see a rainbow. It should remind us of what God has said and is committed to and remind us of the Covenant, the legal document that God entered into to give that assurance.

9.17 And God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

God is the initiator, the primary party, the unconditional effector of it; it doesn't depend on man, but solely on God, so He says I have established and it is between Me and all flesh that is on the earth, including all human flesh. Some of the characteristics of that Covenant:

Characteristics of the Noahic Covenant

1. Decreed We say that God *decreed* it and this is reiterated in verse 17.
2. Unconditional It is unconditional; only God can bring it about or effect it.
3. Universal It is as universal as the flood, long range in terms of its timeframe.
4. Gracious Given over and over, not dependent on anything in man.

5. Physical We emphasized the physicality of it.
6. Permanent We also saw that it is a permanent covenant that has long range effects—even we are living under the provisions or stipulations of the Noahic Covenant.

And I think this Jeremiah passage is an allusion to the Noahic Covenant. Chapter 33 gives a closer indication of it, being the only one that has this physical aspect to it.

Jeremiah 31.35 *Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day And fixed the order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name:*

Jeremiah is writing on the occasion of the destruction of the nation, the city, the temple, in fact the destruction of everything Jewish. God is giving them *assurance* that even though this is going to be very devastating and they will go into exile for 70 years—a whole generation or two will pass before they are brought back to the land. Jeremiah specifies the 70 years, so it is on the occasion of a calamity that is coming.

But in that context God is giving the children of Israel assurance that He is not done with them; this is one of the clearest and strongest passages that gives that assurance. Jeremiah 31 in just the prior verses we have the New Covenant which will replace the old, Mosaic Covenant. And that New Covenant is, I believe, future even from our time because the parties to it are the nation of Israel.

But the assurance and the allusion to the Noahic Covenant is:

35 ...the fixed the order of the moon and the stars...all of astrophysics is in view. The ‘fixed order’ alludes to the natural realm, the stability of the natural realm. Then referring to God *Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name.* He is sovereign over the natural realm *so that its waves*

roar. The LORD of hosts is His name: as long as this fixed order is in operation—and I take it as the Noahic Covenant.

Jeremiah 31.36 *“If this fixed order departs From before Me,” declares the LORD, “Then the offspring of Israel also will cease From being a nation before Me forever.”*

The next verse, 36, *If this fixed order departs From before Me,* That is a conditional clause that God gives them as if it were possible to depart, but he presents it to them to give the assurance that just as they can count on the sun, the moon going around the earth and stars appearing in the sky. If any of that were not to continue, they the *offspring of Israel also will cease From being a nation before Me forever.*

So, the commitment that the Lord has to the children of Israel is as sure as the natural realm and the laws of nature that God has fixed and the Noahic Covenant, I believe, is the document that God enters into, is what the ‘fixed order’ refers to.

Jeremiah 33.25 *“Thus says the LORD, ‘If My covenant for day and night stand not, and the fixed patterns of heaven and earth I have not established,*

Then 2 chapters later we have a similar promise and this one is even clearer in its relationship to the covenant. It starts with: *If My covenant for day and night stand not,* possibly referring to Genesis 8.22 and also remember that it deals with the natural realm,... *and the fixed patterns* referring to the stability of the natural realm...*fixed patterns of heaven and earth I have not established.* Obviously the opposite is true, He *has* established it and you can do scientific experiments and test it out and see that there is stability. But if it is *not* the case, then he goes on in the negative:

Jeremiah 33.26 *then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, not taking from his descendants rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.*”

And then a contrast. *But I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.* This is long-range; it won't happen for at least for another 70 years. So he is alluding to this fixed order or patterns that He has established and in 33.33 presents the negative: if He has *not* established them, then He is going to reject them. But since it *is* established, they can be reassured that it is established and He will, in fact, restore them.

Job 38.33 “Do you know the ordinances of the heavens, Or fix their rule over the earth?”

Job probably lived in pre-patriarchal times, so this would be after the flood, obviously. I think it refers to the natural realm: *Do you know the ordinances of the heavens?* Secularists call that the laws of nature, so they are not too far off; they just don't acknowledge the lawgiver, the one that has established these ordinances.

Or fix their rule over the earth? The idea of this fixity of the natural realm and law... We acknowledge God not only as creator but as one that gives that stability and is the lawgiver, not only at Sinai, but the lawgiver for scientific law as well. So these are strong statements that you may pass over without giving much thought to it, but very profound in terms of their relationship, tying them together in terms of what we have in Genesis 9.

Now that we have the focus on Noah, what we will see looking ahead is that this focus in the NT by Paul when he acknowledges that all men come *from one man*.

1. All from Noah - Acts 17.26 *and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,*

This might include Adam as well, but it would go through Noah because he would be the new head of the human race surviving the Genesis Flood. This is an intro to chapter 10 in which is the Table of Nations, where all of the nations came from, and the origin of the nations in chapter 11 as a result of the scattering.

But Paul is giving the Athenian philosophers a Biblical world view that includes creation, the source of all humanity from one man going through Noah. That is another implication of this passage.

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c. Decline of Family	9.18-29

That brings us to the next item in our sequence which is the decline of the Family. Now we have the descendants of Noah reiterated and this is something like the 4th occasion where they are actually named...chapter 5.31, 6.10, 7.13 and now in 9.18.

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1) Descendants of Noah	9.18-19

The descendants are going to be the focus. That is why I say this is a transition from Noah to the 3 sons.

9.18 Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan.

By the way, there is no indication anywhere else that Noah and his wife had any other children; these are the only ones that are ever mentioned anywhere in Scripture. And they were the only ones that obviously survived the flood and perhaps the only ones that they had. And all the people of the earth—the next point when we get to chapter 10—come from Shem, Ham or Japheth.

That is probably not the order of their age for the sequence even though in every one of the listings this is the order. I think Shem, who is not the oldest is listed first because he is the one that the line of the seed of the woman will go through. Through Shem, obviously the nation of Israel, but eventually the Messiah will come. Ham will be very important and he is listed 2nd because the Shemites, in particular the Israelites or the Jewish people will have lots of contact with Ham, more with him than with Japheth. There are 3 prominent peoples that the nation of Israel will have contact with, during their history, that are descendants of Ham: the Egyptians, the Babylonians and the Canaanites:

9.18 Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan.

Ham was the father of Canaan. That is going to be prominent, the Canaanites. And there is another one that is not so evident, but the Babylonians are *Hamites*. So the children of Israel will have lots of dealings—in fact they will be in bondage by the Egyptians, destroyed by the Babylonians, and they will have a long history of dealing with the Canaanites.

When we get to chapter 10 we will see that the Japhathites will have some contact, but not as much and they are more distant and probably most of us here come from Japhath, unless you have Jewish blood—then you have Shemite blood.

Why does it call attention to Canaan? Canaan will be very important in relation to Israel, and interestingly, we will see Canaan brought forward later on in the passage and he is cursed; eventually the Canaanites will display the reason why they are a cursed people. This is the first time we are introduced to Canaan, and the reason for it is that they will have a very direct relationship with Shem.

9.19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

Then a kind of re-iterating, without naming them, verse 19, These three were the sons of Noah. Then, very, very specifically, and from these the whole earth was populated. This word, *populated*, in other places is translated ‘scattered’ or ‘dispersed’. There are no other descendants besides these three, so the Table of Nations is the best source for where all of the nations that even exist today came from. In fact the secular world doesn’t have any better data in terms of where the nations came than what is contained in the Genesis 10 passage.

I think these are the passages that Paul has in mind when he is dealing with the Athenians in Acts 17.26.

Implications

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| 1. All from Noah - | Acts 17.26 |
| 2. Transition from Noah - | to sons |

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| C. Early History of Civilization | 4.1-9.29 |
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| 1) Descendants of Noah | 9.18-19 |
| 2) Disgrace of Noah & Ham | 9.20-22 |

The next passage is the only negative passage concerning Noah and it will involve Ham as well, so I call it the Disgrace of Noah and Ham, 20-22.

There are several things we will have to consider as we work our way through this passage:

Difficulties

1. Why is Noah's sin mentioned?
2. What did Ham do?
3. Who is Canaan?
4. Why is Canaan cursed for something he did not do?
5. What is the curse on Canaan?
6. Are destinies of sons fixed?

1- Why is Noah's sin mentioned? Nowhere else do we even have a *hint* of any issues in the life of Noah; in fact he is spoken of in glowing language: he is the only one that found favor or grace in the eyes of the Lord and then at every point it talks about God commanding Noah to do certain things and then immediately Noah does everything.

So you see an example of obedience and no hint of sin, and then, all of a sudden now at the end—and keep in mind that Noah is not a youngster, he has had a full life, and here we have a sin mentioned. Now we know that he is human and no one would claim that he didn't have *any* sin or didn't even have a sin nature, but now it is brought forward and we might ask the reason why.

One of the answers: the Bible is very clear in that throughout it doesn't idolize the heroes of the faith; in fact they are presented

as real-life human beings and all of them would have had the same problems that all of us face, some more faithful than others, obviously, but none of them without sin.

2- One thing that is debated by some theologians is what did Ham actually *do*? What was *his* sin? We will look at the text and see what it tells us—it is not a lot but it hints at a few things and I think we can come to some conclusions.

3- Who is this Canaan? I have already given away a lot of who this Canaan is and we will see more detail and development as we get further into the passage. The first question is Who is Canaan? And the second is:

4- Why is Canaan cursed for something he did not do? In the text, Ham is the one that sins and then when we get into the blessing and cursing of Noah, it is Canaan that is cursed rather than Ham...

5- What is that curse? Again theologians have kind of gotten off tract in some ways and there are even some lingering ideas today that we need to dispense with because I think they are damaging to a culture.

6- Another difficulty: Are these *destinies* that seem to be mentioned at the end of the passage? The last three are in a later part of the passage. But are these sons *fixed*? What about volition and choice; did they not have any choice in the matter or is this all this determined ahead of time by God Himself?

So, starting with the first 2 questions, What is Noah's sin mentioned? and What did Ham actually do? To start off with we have a kind of neutral statement:

9.20 Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard.

I don't have a better translation for it, but there are things such as the word 'began' with the idea of 'began to plant', or in this case, began 'farming'—kind of a beginning stage of a new endeavor amongst humanity after the flood. Keep in mind that this is probably much later, after the flood and the Noahic covenant, the context of this passage, just because of the mention of Canaan. Canaan being part of the narrative and is the last son, the fourth of Ham (chapter 10), so a lot of time has elapsed here. And it refers to farming as a beginning process. There is a word that doesn't show up in some translations. The word *ah-dah-má* refers to the earth or soil. That is where Adam (*ah-dám*) came from, or was formed from the *ah-dah-má*. So the *ah-da-má* began farming. There is a slight tie-in with Adam.

But the focus is the vineyard that Noah planted. And in the next verse we see a problem that arises from that.

9.21 He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.

There are a lot of things we could talk about. In the Bible *wine* is mentioned as a positive and a negative.

Psalm 104.15 *And wine which makes man's heart glad, So that he may make his face glisten with oil, ...*

Wine throughout the OT was not only very useful, but very common and it had a very definite use. Even as early as Noah, he had an understanding of fermentation and the production of wine and its usefulness, but like anything—I think sometimes we take a good thing and turn it into a negative thing; and that is the case oftentimes with things like wine. But in and of itself sometimes even in the Christian community there is a negative connotation. In the Bible, a lot of things are amoral: it is either their overuse, in this case becoming drunk, and/or their abuse that makes it sin. But the thing itself oftentimes has a positive. Another positive verse is:

Deuteronomy 14.26 *“You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household.*

It is very positive, a good thing; I guess you could say food itself can be abused if people overeat, for example. So it is a good thing; it is not a negative, but its abuse or overuse is the case we have here. And there are lots of passages in the OT and NT where wine can be abused and obviously produce the drunkenness—and in this case, one sin leads to another. So I would say that even an overuse of good things, no matter what they are, can become sin.

Here we have the first mention of sin by Noah and the drunkenness causes another problem...

9.21 He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.

...and it says uncovered himself inside his tent. Throughout Scripture nudity or uncovering of oneself most often is presented as a negative, shameful and an indication of shame. You might go back to Genesis 3 where Adam and Eve first sinned they felt the sense of *shame* and covered themselves and then God provided the skins, the garments from the animals to cover themselves. So this idea of nakedness throughout Scripture is a negative. I think this is a very good translation: *uncovered himself*. I think that is the *sin* and it is a result of Noah uncovering himself (reflexive, *he did it*) in a drunken state. This is a hero of the faith that obviously has a sin nature and in a laps of faith, in a laps of a walk. The Bible doesn't hide the flaws of the hero, because we are all in the same state, have a sin nature and we all sin—and certainly all fall short of the glory of God. And all are in need of salvation, although we would say Noah was already a saved individual.

Implications

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| 1. All from Noah - | Acts 17.26 |
| 2. Transition from Noah - | to sons |
| 3. Honesty - | sin of heroes |

Scripture gives us Honesty in describing the sin of the heroes.

9.22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.

One of the sons, 2nd in the list, Ham, 2nd mention of his being the father of Canaan, so attention is being called to Canaan. The reason for that is what we will see in the later verses. So Ham saw. The Hebrew word is more than just a glance; it has the idea of ‘saw’--in the sense of *concentrating, focusing attention*—saw the nakedness of his father.

Some commentators say there might even be an element of seeing with the light; and the *attitude* of Ham as one of *disrespect is the sin* here. An attitude of relishing the failings of his father, saw the nakedness. (And by the way, the nakedness here is being emphasized; we see it in the next verse as well.) And then Ham goes beyond that and told his brothers outside, so not only does the sin involve the focus but it also involves the communicating to the brothers, exposing them to the possibility of the same sin as well.

9.22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.

We are in the context of the flood—one of the most important events of all human history and all *earth* history as well, physical history, you might say. And in this passage, the aftermath of the flood, and beginning to lay a foundation for the rest of world history, all of these little things that we are noting here are going

to play out and be very, very important as we get further into not only the book of Genesis but the rest of the Bible. But one of the things that we can say is that the flood, as drastic as it was, as universal as it was, did not remove the sin nature.

Insights

> Flood is one of most important events of all human and earth history

> Flood did not remove sin nature

We already saw that in a prior passage that we looked at, so mankind is not radically changed—the earth is, and many of the sciences were radically changed, and even anthropology has changed, but one change that didn’t take place is the removal of the sin nature. And we are going to see that the sin nature *persists* throughout world history until the very final event of world history.

> Sin has long term effects

And we are going to see that sin has long term effects. That is in the next passage, but it is already hinted at, just in the mention of Canaan—and if you know the history of Canaan, then you will see that the sin we have in Genesis 9 is going to have ripple effects throughout a long history into the times of the Canaanites.

> Parents leave either a positive or negative legacy

Another thing we can draw—in fact an application—is that parents can leave either a positive or a negative legacy, or even a mixed legacy a mixture of both positive and negative. And it’s up to parents to do everything they can to leave as much of the positive legacy as they possibly can.

> Characteristics of 3 branches of race

And, we are going to see in the following passages that the characteristics of all humanity will be reflected in the characteristics of the 3 sons, the 3 branches of the race, the

descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth are going to carry the characteristics that will be laid out in this passage. And we can look back and see that a lot of that has been fulfilled in time in the descendants of those 3 sons. So sin has long-range effects, not just from parents but from all descendants that travel through history.

> God is sovereign over history

And we could also say that God is *sovereign over history* to use mankind and to develop positive qualities in the midst of all this negativity and sinfulness of mankind. We will develop more of that when we get to verse 24 to the end of the chapter.

But in the last part here, the Defense of Shem and Japheth, 9.23, I use ‘defense’ in the defending of Noah and the other two brothers who do not go along with Ham, so they distinguish themselves.

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1) Descendants of Noah	9.18-19
2) Disgrace of Noah & Ham	9.20-22
3) Defense of Shem & Japheth	9.23

9.23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father’s nakedness.

But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward... We have a series of little statements here and verbs.

9.23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father’s nakedness.

But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward... a series of clauses... and covered the nakedness of their father... a series of positives... We saw some negatives concerning Ham, but now we have positives... and their faces were turned away—as opposed to gaze as Ham did—so that they did not see their father’s nakedness. That is, they protected themselves from taking away of the dignity of their father.

9.23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father’s nakedness.

Leviticus 18.6 says, *None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover nakedness*; I have counted the use of this phrase in Leviticus to be over 20 times. It is in the context of eventual relationships. There is a relationship between the nakedness itself but it doesn’t *necessarily* mean it refers to the sex act; in fact, the thrust of the commands not to uncover the nakedness of the various relatives is noted in Leviticus 18.

their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father’s nakedness. So we have a string of positives that will lead to the next passage where Noah is going to deal with the sons based on this response.

We have talked about the cycles of sin before.

Cycles of Sin

1. God's work of grace
2. Sin begins corrupting effect
3. God patiently endures sin
4. Sin reaches full corruption
5. God intervenes to judge and save

1. God works a work of grace—which we see throughout the Bible with the Genesis Flood and now we are going to see it here again. In fact the Flood is an act of grace, God's *saving* humanity from destruction of sin.

2. Sin begins its corrupting effects, and that is what we are seeing here with Noah himself.

3. God is going to patiently endure sin and we will see a development of that. You already see a little of that in Ham taking one sin to the next stage or step. There is not a lot of detail, but we will see more in chapter 11.

4. Then sin reaches its full corruption—at the tower of Babel in Genesis 11.

5. And then God intervenes to judge and save again which is also the story of the tower of Babel.

Parents have an important role in your relationship with your children, and grandparents can have a continuing role with good influence and a legacy that will produce good things. But beware and be cautious because even the Noah's can stumble and have long range negative effects as well. We need to stay close to our Lord and continually confess sin, stay in fellowship, that we may better leave a positive legacy.