

GENESIS

Lesson 18

Sin and The New World, Genesis 9:1-28

We pick up our study of the post-flood world by examining at Genesis 9:1-28. Having just built an altar for sacrificing animals and worshipping God, Noah and his sons now receive God's instructions for living in the post-flood world. His instructions cover everything from what to eat, their responsibilities going forward, and a command about the value of life-giving blood.

God's Instructions to Noah and His Sons, Genesis 9:1-17

Let's take a look at the instructions God gives to Noah and his sons in verses 1-7 of Chapter 9. Read these verses, then consider the following:

1. What is God's very first instruction to the survivors of the world-wide flood?
2. God then gives them responsibilities specifically regarding the surviving animals, birds, and "every creature that moves along the ground," as well as "all the fish in the sea." What instruction does God give them?
3. Having given Noah and his sons instructions on multiplying and having dominion over God's created creatures, God now gives them instructions regarding what they are to eat. He also informs them about what will now be acceptable for their diet in the post-flood world. What does He specifically tell them about their diet in this new environment?
4. God concludes his instructions with one final instruction. What does He emphasize as important to Noah and his sons in verse 7? Do they fulfill this command? See Genesis 9:7 and Genesis 11:8.

5. What does God promise, or "covenant," following the great flood? And who does He make this covenant with? Note that the section dealing with God's covenant with Noah and humankind in Chapter 9 (verses 8-17) covers ten of the total twenty-eight verses in this chapter. This means God's promise is important enough that a lot of text is devoted to it.

Sin Survives the Flood, Genesis 9: 18-28

Now let's take a look at the back half of Genesis and discuss our findings. Read Genesis 9: 18-19 and address the following question:

6. Following God's instructions to Noah and his sons, the names of the sons are provided in verse 18. Their names are Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham, in particular, is called out in this verse as the father of one specific race. Which one is it?

Unfortunately, along with the animals and mankind, sin also survived the flood as well and re-entered the world with Noah and his three sons. It is important that we remember this—that although the new post-flood earth gave Noah and his descendants a new beginning, sin was very-much still alive, and it would infect the post-flood earth as it had God's original creation. We observe this clearly in the well-known story of Noah and his first vineyard.

Read Genesis 9:19-28 and answer the following questions:

7. Did Noah become a farmer, i.e., a man of the soil, after the flood?
8. Can you research how long it takes to get a fruit-producing vineyard from the time of the first planting of a vine?
9. What are the best soil and temperature conditions for planting and growing a vineyard?
10. Given the findings of your research regarding vineyard life cycles, do you believe Noah got off the ark and was so excited that he got drunk? (This is what I would refer to as the common understanding of this story.)

Given the amount of time it takes to plant, grow, and harvest grapes from a vineyard—not to mention the processing of grapes into wine—implies that this story happened well after Noah and his family were off the boat and adjusting to their new surroundings. It is also a good example of why it's important for us when we study scripture to understand the *context* of the text and the cultural environment surrounding the text. The alignment of text with the associated cultural and historical setting is referred to as synchronism. In this example, if we have a basic understanding of how a

vineyard is established and how wine is made, it provides us deeper insight into the text and evidence that the text is factual.

Understanding the above also enables us to infer that the location where the ark had come to rest—and moreover, the place where Noah and his sons were now living—provided fertile soil, slopes to plant on, and ample sunlight and water. Again, since the southern-facing sides of mountain and hillside locations are best for vineyards, we can infer that the ark and Noah's family come to rest and settled at some elevation in a mountain range. The region of the Mt. Ararat range in modern-day Turkey, for example, would have provided ideal planting conditions, and would provide further evidence regarding the accuracy of this text. It also implies that they had become established in one location, and three to eight years later, they were sustaining food sources for themselves.

So, Noah plants his vineyard, and he enjoys the fruits of his labor a little too much and becomes drunk. Read Genesis 9:21-23 and answer the following:

11. Is this passage a story of Noah's drunkenness, or something else? Why is this passage here? Is it intended to teach us the evils of alcohol, or something else? What is being pointed out here?

12. What was so bad about Ham's actions in this story? Surely others have accidentally seen one or both of their parents naked. Specifically, this story is more about Ham's—and his brothers'—actions following the discovery of his father's nakedness. What do Ham's actions imply to us regarding Ham and his family, including his brothers?

There is an additional lesson in this text—perhaps overlooked by many—regarding our children. This lesson is that raising our children in a Godly fashion does not guarantee that they will walk a Godly life when they leave home. It also shows us that parents can only do so much, just as Samuel found out with his sons (Samuel 8:1-3). Even today, being raised in a "Christian" environment is no guarantee that a child will follow God and do what pleases God as that child matures. In this study, Noah's sons had just seen God's prophecy of a terrible judgment come about and God's salvation of Noah's family. Nevertheless, Ham's actions indicate that sin was very much in his heart in the post-flood world. Furthermore, several generations later, mankind fully turns its back on God again—as recorded in the book of Judges, where we read in Judges 21:25 that "everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

Genesis Chapter 9 is a story of God's sovereign power, His great grace, and man's sinful heart. It is also the story of a new start for God's creation. We will see as we study further that man remains lost without a savior. The creator, who came down in the form of a man to offer himself so that others might live—whose love and unending grace continues today, seeking the lost to redeem them. Is he searching for you?

In the next lesson, we will be examining Genesis Chapter 10, the beginning of civilization in the post-flood world. We will recount the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth, which is referred to as the Table of Nations.

As we conclude this lesson, read and ponder Matthew 24:36-39. How does these verses compare with the story of Noah, and what do they tell us about the day we currently live in?

May the Lord find us faithful when he returns!

In Christ,

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