

GENESIS

Lesson 18 w/Answers

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?
 - a. ANSWER: Be fruitful and multiply. This is just as with the beginning of creation when God gave Adam and Eve the same instruction. God wants us to be fruitful and multiply. This explains why marriage is such an important concept. From the beginning of creation, multiplying is so important that God repeats it in verse 7. In this verse—just as in verse one—God again commands Noah and his sons to, "be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it."
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?
 - a. ANSWER: God commands that they and their descendants are to have dominion over all of the animals, birds, etc., including the fish in the sea. We inherit that command as well. We are to have dominion over—to manage if you will—all of the creatures that God has created. This includes caring for them, protecting them if necessary, and in general ensuring their survival. It also means that we are to manage them in order to keep everything in balance; this could, for example, include thinning over-populated herds, etc., as well as avoiding doing harmful things to them such as over-fishing certain species. Accordingly, we are to protect their environment. All of these instructions DO NOT mean worshipping any or all of these animals—nor the rest of God's creation for that matter. But this is a subject for another lesson down the road. The important thing to note here is that God made it clear that mankind was to have dominion over the other creatures that live on the earth. As such, we are to be good stewards of God's creation, and Noah and his sons also now understood this.
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?
 - a. ANSWER 1: We can clearly infer from this instruction that prior to the great flood, God intended for mankind to eat a plant-based diet—vegetables, fruit, nuts, and so on. Now, in the post-flood world, God instructs them to begin also eating meat, specifically, "everything that lives and moves about will be food for you." As time goes by, when God leads the Jews out of Egypt, He will give them very specific instruction on what they can and cannot eat, but in the beginning of the post-flood world mankind can eat meat, fish, poultry and so on, without restriction. I wonder what their reaction was the first time they actually ate a piece of fish, chicken, or beef—not to mention wild game like deer, pheasant, peacock and so on.
 - b. ANSWER 2: God's newly-prescribed diet comes with one very important restriction: "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being." God goes on to emphasize how important this instruction is, "Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind."
 - c. ANSWER 3: We are to regard human life as valuable. Every life was created in God's image, and every life is important to God. By recognizing the value of lifeblood, we can also recognize the great sacrifice that Jesus made for us—shedding his lifeblood for us so that through his death and resurrection we can have eternal life. He died for all of us, so for us to take another human life is so horrible a sin that God tells us he will "demand an accounting." He further stipulates that "whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed."
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.
 - a. ANSWER 1: In verse 7, God repeats his command, "be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it."
 - b. ANSWER 2: In Genesis Chapter 11, we encounter the Tower of Babel, and we see that mankind had indeed begun to multiply. However, they had not spread out across the earth—so the Lord took care of that for them.

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.
- ANSWER 1: God promises to never to kill every living thing with a flood.
 - ANSWER 2: God makes this covenant between Himself and "all life on earth." He created a sign that we see even today—the rainbow—and He intends it to be a sign between God and all of the earth that He will never bring a world-wide flood again.
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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?
- ANSWER: In Genesis 9:18, Ham is referred to as the father of Canaan. As we will discover in the next chapter when we study the Table of Nations, Ham was not only the father of Canaan but also the father of Cush, Egypt, and Put. We also learn from verse 19 that everyone on the earth today is a descendant of one of these three sons. When people ask me about tracing my genealogy, I tell them I have actually tracked my family all the way back to Biblical times and discovered that I am a direct descendant of Noah! You should see the reactions I get.
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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?
- ANSWER 1: Actually, the scripture (NIV) is clear that Noah was a man of the soil prior to the flood. He already knew how to grow things and most likely would have stored tools and equipment on the ark for growing food once the flood was over.
 - ANSWER 2: While the KJV of these verses refers to Noah's actions as a man who "began to be husbandman" and planted a vineyard, even here it is clear that Noah knew what he was doing in planting a vineyard.
8. Can you research how long it takes to get a fruit-producing vineyard from the time of the first planting of a vine?
- ANSWER: It takes between four and eight years to get wine from a new vineyard.
9. What are the best soil and temperature conditions for planting and growing a vineyard?
- ANSWER: Typically, vineyards are planted on southern-facing slopes, in soil with good drainage. This provides the longest period of sunshine where average temperatures last the longest. You also do not want to plant them too high in elevation, as the danger of frost or a freeze increases with how high up the side of a hill or mountain that you plant them. In general, you want a sunnier, drier, climate that provides a long growing season.
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.)
- ANSWER: As we determined above, this would clearly not have been the case. Based on our findings, it would be at least a few years after leaving the ark before Noah would have wine that was mature enough to get him drunk.
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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?
 - a. ANSWER: This is not about the evils of alcohol—or any substance abuse for that matter. It is about sin and, specifically, the sin of Ham.
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?
 - a. What happened here reflects Ham's total lack of respect for his father, as he uses the incident to denigrate his father in front of his two older brothers. By doing this, Ham is acting like a god in the way that his pride is ruling his actions. He is placing himself well above his father, whom he now portrays as just a drunken old man. He has forgotten that, first of all, Noah had walked a righteous life and raised his sons to do likewise. Secondly, he ignores the reality that none of us are perfect. We all fail. To conclude his sinful actions, he in effect celebrated the fact that his father had fallen asleep drunk and naked—rather than simply covering him up and not saying anything to anyone, his brothers included. But no, Ham wanted to make a spectacle of his father. He displayed a total lack of respect for Noah. It was comforting to see that at least the other two brothers do the right thing and treat their father with the respect any father deserves. And they did this humbly by walking backward into the tent so as not to see their naked father. Contrasting behaviors of both pride and humility are displayed in this story.

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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