

Text: Genesis 9.18-10.32

Today we will finish up our discussion of Noah's story.

We know that despite the wickedness of the human race, and God's decision to destroy man from the face of the earth, "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord." (Gen 6.8)

We know that Noah is listed as one of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11.

That is all to the good.

Our title today adds a sober tinge to the memory we have of Noah:

Noah's Failings

The problem was that God took Noah out of the wicked world, but he didn't take the wicked world out of Noah or his sons.

I want to talk about Noah and then how things played out in his family, which will take us all the way through chapter 10.

Read Gen 9.18-29

Proposition: Mankind cannot escape sin; it follows him wherever he goes. The only way out is faith in a redeemer.

I. Noah's overall place in human history (9.18-19, 10.32)

A. The source of all men: Noah and his sons (9.18-19)

1. A "header" statement, the beginning of a genealogy
2. A universal outlook, "from these the whole earth was populated"
3. A beginning of the Israelite focus: the mention of Canaan, the eventual holders of the Promised land, driven out for wickedness

Even in the opening of the family record there is a connection with what will come.

B. Summary statement: emphasis on separation (10.32)

1. The Noahic covenant called man to "fill the earth" — implying voluntary out-migration
2. We know, of course, that men decided to go their own way and they had to be "separated" by God to fulfill God's plan

God's plans can never be thwarted, but the undercurrent in this part of Genesis is the persistent theme of human disobedience and rebellion to God.

- This speaks to the source of most of our troubles: look inside, you have the potential to disobey God as well [if not the reality]

II. Noah's immediate failing (9.20-29)

A. Noah's loss of control (20-21)

B. Ham's sin: lack of respect (22-23)

1. Many speculations that include all kinds of immoral suggestions
2. The text says
 - a. Ham saw the nakedness
 - b. Shem and Japheth discretely covered their father, so they did NOT see the nakedness
3. The actions of Shem and Japheth were the opposite of Ham
 - a. Shem and Japheth respected their father
 - b. Ham disrespected his father

Noah probably should have known the effect of alcohol and should have exercised self-control, but the sin in the passage is Ham's, not Noah's

- When we do wrong, it only makes the wrong worse to blame it on someone else

C. Noah's prophecy (24-27)

1. Noah cursed Canaan (not Ham)
2. Noah blessed Shem and Japheth (and continued to speak against Canaan)
3. Why the curse of Canaan as opposed to Ham?
 - a. Canaan's failure would bring shame to Ham, just as Ham brought shame to Noah

- b. God is preparing this family story for the great conflict that would ultimately give the Promised Land to Abraham's children
 - 1) Canaan the focus here
 - 2) Eber and Peleg the focus of the end of Shem's line (10.24-25)
[ancestors of the Israelites]

Regardless of Noah's failings, his sons were not excused from respecting their father. We can't justify sin because someone else is a sinner.

III. Noah's family's failing (10.1-31)

A. Some parts of this genealogy come about after Babel (see v. 5)

B. The family is divided, naturally between Noah's three sons

"Seventy descendants of Noah's sons are listed, including 14 from Japheth, 30 from Ham, and 26 from Shem. And these are cleverly arranged into patterns."¹

C. The table of names is "horizontal" not "vertical" — meant to show distribution of nations, not ancestry

1. The sons and tribes of Japheth — 14 (10.2-5)

2. The sons and tribes of Ham — 30 (10.6-20)

a. The names in this list represent many enemies of Israel

b. Nimrod and his successors: Babylon, Accad, Nineveh, others

c. Mizraim [Egypt] and his successors: including Philistines

d. Heavy focus on Canaan and his successors (15-20)

The Canaanites disappeared from history when Alexander destroyed Tyre and the Romans later destroyed Carthage.

3. The sons and tribes of Shem — 26 (10.21-31)

a. Despite kinship, many of these became enemies of Israel as well

¹ Allen P. Ross, "Genesis," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 42.

- b. From Eber we get the term “Hebrew”
- c. Peleg’s lifetime seems connected to the time of the dispersion at Babel (25)

Much of what we know of these nations comes from subsequent history and Bible revelation.

Despite God giving grace to Noah and his sons, their descendants largely turned away from God in very short order. Noah and his sons could not maintain a pure faith in their descendants, though Noah himself lived 350 years after the flood.

Conclusion:

Noah’s Failings remind us that we can’t presume on the grace of God.

Proposition: Mankind cannot escape sin; it follows him wherever he goes. The only way out is faith in a redeemer.