**Lesson 11**

**16, 17 August 2021**

**Genesis 9:20-29**

**Jen Wilkin, *God of Creation* video #9, “God’s Covenant with Noah”, part 2**

**Review** – Last week we saw how God established an unconditional covenant with Noah and his descendants and all living creatures on earth. He promised that He would never again destroy the earth and its inhabitants with a flood. We also saw that the first thing Noah did when he left the ark was to build an altar and worship the Lord with a sin sacrifice. God renewed the cultural mandate with Noah and gave him rules to guide him and his descendants in a prototype government. God also told Noah that he could now eat meat (which would be a visual reminder of the value of blood each time he killed an animal and prepared it to eat). And God gave the rainbow as a visual reminder of His promise.

**Noah’s Vineyard and Its “Fruit”** – Noah plants a vineyard, gets drunk and is caught in a state of undress by his sons. Verse 21 of chapter nine is the first mention of wine in scripture, and notice that it is immediately linked to drunkenness. But remember that it takes time for a vineyard to begin to produce fruit, so Noah was committed to gardening.

There are many parallels in this account to what happened in Genesis 3. The Hebrew word for “vineyard” can also be translated “garden”. So Noah is *tending a garden*, but the fruit of this garden will lead him into *sin* and a *fall*. His sin will *expose his nakedness*. His nakedness is going to be *covered by another*. The father’s sin will *lead to sin in his son*, and this will result in a *curse on posterity*. So we have a second Fall narrative in this account of Noah and his son’s sin.

**The Reaction of Noah’s Sons to His Sin** – Genesis 9:22 says that Ham “told his two brothers outside” about his father’s nakedness. The implication is that Ham was *mocking* his father. But Shem and Japheth do not join in his mockery. Instead they very respectfully and carefully try to *restore his dignity*. They enter his tent shielding themselves from seeing his nakedness, and they cover him up.

Remember that Ham’s sin was a result of Noah’s sin. If Noah had not gotten drunk, this unseemly incident would not have occurred. That doesn’t excuse Ham from blame, but it does serve as a good reminder that our sin *always* affects others. We tell ourselves that it will only affect us, but that is never the case. Scripture—and our own experience—show that sin always follows the pattern of “I see it, I want it, I take it, I share it.”

**Ham’s Sin** – To sin ourselves is bad enough, but to celebrate the sin of a righteous man is despicable. But we tend to do this. When someone such as a church leader falls into sin, we can either say, “There but for the grace of God go I,” or we can arrogantly assume, “I saw that coming a mile away.” We “celebrate” a chink in someone else’s armor because we don’t want to be judged by their righteousness, and we use the chink to excuse all of our own shortcomings and insecurities.

Consider Noah’s track record. He walked with God blamelessly for 600 years prior to the Flood, faithfully proclaiming God’s coming judgment to those around him. When he came out of the ark, his first act was to worship and repent of his own sin. And he was fulfilling the cultural mandate God had given him to tend the earth. He had one bad day of drunkenness and folly, and Ham used that as a reason for writing his father off to his brothers. It was no wonder that Noah felt so scorned.

**Noah’s Curse on Canaan** – Notice in verse 25 that Noah says, “Cursed be Canaan,” NOT “cursed be Ham,” as we might expect. Why is that? If we think about it, we see that a father (Noah), shamed by his son (Ham), pronounces a curse that will cause a father (Ham) to be shamed by *his* son. In effect, Noah says, “You shamed me? Guess what? Canaan is going to shame you.”

**But the curse also establishes the right of the future Israelite people—the ones to whom Moses originally wrote this account—to the land they are about to inherit, the land of Canaan.** Canaan’s name was mentioned three times in the curse pronounced by Noah. Noah blessed Shem, the ancestor of the Israelites, and made Shem’s descendants the ruler of Canaan’s descendants.

In Noah’s curse, we also see **mercy**. He doesn’t curse every son of Ham’s, just the youngest one, Canaan.

**End of the Genealogy** – The last verse of chapter nine ends with the phrase, “and he died,” the familiar death knell that ended the record of each man’s life listed in the genealogy found in chapter five. But notice that we are not told much about the final 350 years of Noah’s life. Did he continue on in obedience or did he begin to coast or even drift away? Scripture doesn’t say. That is a challenge to us to consider our own lives.

**A Long Obedience in the Same Direction** – God calls us to “a long obedience in the same direction”. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 says, *“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly. I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”*

Jen’s pastor defined sanctification as “an ever shrinking hypocrisy”. The longer we grow in holiness, the more continuity there is between what we say and what we do.

**Have No Fear** – We should not fear the wrath of God as the unbeliever must. Certainly there will be storm clouds on our horizon and rain will fall into our lives. But when that happens, we shouldn’t wonder, “Is God judging me?” No! *No* judgment remains for the children of God. Song of Solomon 8:7a says, “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.”

**TAKE AWAYS:**

*Once again I found some “quotable quotes” in Bible Study Fellowship’s lesson on this passage. The following thoughts are taken from their Lesson 7, pages 1 and 2.*

* Last week we considered the doctrine of faith. We need to remember that “faith never matures us past our need to depend on God’s mercy and to stay on guard against sin. **The spiritually mature maintain a healthy distrust of their sinful desires.”** BSF, page 1
* “The sins of others can make us feel smug and superior if we do not honestly assess our own weakness. **Only God’s grace keeps you from sin.”** BSF, page 2
* “Noah used ‘cursed’ as a prophetic word, not an indication that God endorses hatred, harm or persecution. **Canaan rejected God and placed those who came after him in the path of disaster.** Centuries later, the godlessness of the Canaanites reached its peak. Their defiant sin and perversion of God’s ways led to their conquest by Israel, descendants of Shem. **The path of this nation did not prevent God’s grace from saving RAHAB, a Canaanite woman who trusted God.** She became a part of God’s covenant people, interwoven into the family line of the Lord Jesus Christ. God’s grace permeates even the damage sin inflicts.” BSF, page 2