

GENESIS: Where Grace Begins

Genesis 9:18-29 – Sin Floats

²¹ He (Noah) drank some of the wine, became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.

²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside.

Genesis 9:21-22 (ESV)

Why does Noah come off so badly?

What did Ham do?

Who is Canaan, and why is he cursed?

How do we apply this? (Romans 15:4)

Some (Biblically-Informed) Presuppositions:

God always does what is _____. (Gen. 18:25, Deut. 32:4, Daniel 4:37, etc.) That means his judgments are _____, even if we don't _____.

God's Word is _____ and meant for us (even if not written _____ us). Even the seemingly obscure passages _____.

_____ sin is _____. Sins differ in effect and consequence, but God treats _____ sin seriously.

What we do – in ways we can't fully _____ or _____ – effect our families after us. All too often, _____ sins becomes _____ sins.

Context:

God has hit the great _____ on humanity, post-flood. All God-rejecting sinners have been destroyed and there is a new beginning – reminiscent of Adam and Eve – as Noah and 7 others begin to _____ and _____.

These 8 people had every possible _____ and _____ to live righteously. They saw the devastating consequences of evil, were spared God's judgment, and were related to one another.

But more than Noah and his family survived the Flood. _____ also survived. Romans 5:12 is proven to be true. _____ still reigns in the hearts of men and will soon display its effects.

R. Kent Hughes writes,

Sin was alive and well in the new world. Graeme Goldsworthy comments, "The flood did not purge the earth of wickedness and we cannot suppose that such was its purpose." Indeed, if God wanted to eradicate evil, he would have had to eradicate the entire human race. But this God would not do — because he had promised that the offspring of Eve would one day crush the head of Satan (cf. 3:15).

Let's Start with **Noah**:

²⁰ Noah, as a man of the soil, began by planting a vineyard. ²¹ He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. (Genesis 9:20-21)

With the opportunity to start an ideal society, Noah was found drunk in his tent.

The story of Noah shows two degrading effects of the abuse of wine – _____ and _____. The language here seems to convey something _____ and _____, not merely _____.

The implication here is that what Noah did was _____.

He was a seasoned man of the soil, and he knew what wine could do. He was no helpless victim. He passed out because his drinking had gone out of control. Noah had wrought his own degradation. The Hebrew "lay uncovered" is reflexive, which emphasizes that he "uncovered himself." He was so utterly inebriated that he stripped himself naked and passed out. Having uncovered himself, he therefore had covered himself with shame and disgrace (cf. Habakkuk 2:15; Lamentations 4:21).

- R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, 150.

What more was involved here, we do not know. We cannot go farther than the _____ takes us. Anything beyond what we have written is speculation. We do know this: Every sort of sexual sin listed in Leviticus 18 includes the phrase "uncover their nakedness".

Now let's consider **Ham**:

²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. (Genesis 9:22)

Again, we cannot go farther than Scripture takes us. That being said, we might consider that ...

Ham was _____ his father. The Hebrew word used in Genesis 9:22 (the root is *ra'ah*) which means "to see" but frequently has the connotation of regarding or perceiving. The same word is also used as a noun for birds of prey that use sight to hunt (*Deuteronomy 14:13*).

Ham _____ in his father's downfall. Ham _____ his father. Ham _____ his father (to his brothers).

Rather than being something overtly sexual (even homosexual) in nature, Henry Morris writes,

A much more probable interpretation of Ham's actions here is that they expressed a long-hidden resentment of his father's authority and moral rectitude. There was apparently a carnal and rebellious bent to Ham's nature, thus far restrained by the spiritual strength and patriarchal authority of his father.

Now, however, beholding the evidence of his father's human weakness before his very eyes, he rejoiced, no doubt feeling a sense of release from all the inhibitions which had until now suppressed his own desires and ambitions. Thinking his brothers would share his satisfaction, he hastened to find them and tell them the savory news. Literally, the text means "he told with delight."

Again however, what happened here was not _____ or _____. Ham _____ something:

²⁴ When Noah awoke from his drinking and learned what his youngest son had done to him ... (Gen. 9:23)

Now let's consider Shem and Japheth:

²³ Then Shem and Japheth took a cloak and placed it over both their shoulders, and walking backward, they covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father naked. (Genesis 9:23)

So apparently Ham completes the shaming of Noah by bringing the garment out to his brothers. Their response is to _____ with that garment.

The passage makes clear that the brothers did not see their father's nakedness. Keeping their backs turned to Noah, they spread the garment across both their shoulders, then slowly backed into the tent and laid it upon him without looking. Thus they "covered the nakedness of their father."

Their response was _____, _____, and ultimately _____. Truly, "love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).

Here we must take careful note that the sons' covering of Noah's nakedness bears monumental spiritual implications, because their actions unwittingly imitated God. Remember that when Adam and Eve sinned, "The Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them" (3:21). Noah's sons now covered his sin and nakedness.

The sons of Noah—Ham on the one hand, and Shem and Japheth on the other—are representative of two groups of mankind: those like Adam and Eve who with God's help have their nakedness covered, and those like Ham who make no attempt to cover their nakedness, even shamelessly exposing it. To one group, the line of Shem, there will be blessing; but to the others, the Canaanites, there will only be a curse.

- Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, 152.

Noah's Response: **Malediction and Benediction**

²⁴ When Noah awoke from his drinking and learned what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said: Canaan is cursed. He will be the lowest of slaves to his brothers. ²⁶ He also said: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; Let Canaan be Shem's slave. ²⁷ Let God extend Japheth; let Japheth dwell in the tents of Shem; let Canaan be Shem's slave. (Genesis 9:24-27)

The _____ comes first, then the _____. The curse fell not on Ham, the perpetrator, but on the youngest of his four sons, who in order were, "Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan" (10:6).

Note: What Noah did was not the same as a curse from _____. It was a _____.

Noah, through the Spirit and power of that God with whom he walked, discerned in the moral nature of his sons, and the different tendencies which they already displayed, the germinal commencement of the future course of their posterity, and uttered words of blessing and of curse, which were prophetic of the history of the tribes that descended from them.

- Keil and Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, p. 157.

Why Canaan and not Ham?

Some Other (Not Insignificant) Lessons to Consider:

This passage is another vote for the _____ of the _____. Our heroes in the bible are faithfully depicted. You don't include this sort of thing if you're creating legends and perpetuating myths.

Even the _____ (and mankind at his best) are prone to _____. In the words of 1 Cor. 10:12: "let anyone who thinks that he _____ take heed lest he _____".

Do you see why the Bible _____ us about _____ and _____ us from _____?
_____ is a bigger deal than you thought, right?

_____ is no guarantee against sin.

_____. Maybe it's instructive to us that these are the last words we hear about Noah, though he lived another 300 years. What will the last words written or spoken about you say?

Marcus Dods writes,

"Noah is not the only man who has walked uprightly and kept his garment unspotted from the world so long as the eye of man was on him, but who has lain uncovered on his own tent floor."

Next week: **The Curse of Canaan**