

GENESIS 6-9  
THE GREAT FOOD

I. Remote Background

A. *6:1 When men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose. 3 Then the LORD said, "My spirit shall not abide in man for ever, for he is flesh, but his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown*

B. These verses often seem fanciful and many commentators see it as merely an incorporation of ancient myth into the text. Yet such opinions seem to emphasize too much the human origin of the text. Other explanations can be advanced that make the text more understandable.

C. The two phrases that are most critical are: "Sons of God" and Nephilim. How they are interpreted will be critical to whether we merely dismiss it as incorporated myth or a real description about real events.

1. 1. Sons of God can refer to angels<sup>1</sup> but it can also refer to human beings. We shall presume that it refers to human beings.
2. The Nephilim, it is widely assumed refer to a race of giants in the physical sense. But the Hebrew word<sup>2</sup> can also refer merely to a bully or powerful man. We shall assume the later.

D. Hence a less exotic and mythical explanation of this text is supportable:

1. Population increased significantly. Vv. 102a
2. Marriage, God's institution suffered in some way. It is likely that polygamy<sup>3</sup> became problematic since verse 2b suggests that men took whatever wives they pleased. Perhaps this refers to numbers though it may also refers to "improper" matches in some sense.
3. God punishes the human family by: (verse 3)
  - a. Either shortening human life span to 120 years

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<sup>1</sup>Angels have no bodies and cannot therefore have intercourse with human women so as to have children with them. Further, the Bible attests they do not enter into marriage: (Matt 22:30)

<sup>2</sup>nephiyl, - a bully or tyrant:—giant.

<sup>3</sup>Notice how Lamech's polygamy was described alongside his treachery: Gen 4:19 And Lamech took two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah....<sup>23</sup> Lamech said to his wives: "*Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, hearken to what I say: I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold.*" The implicit problem of polygamy is thus not directly commented upon but indirectly condemned since it is the climate for treachery and social unrest.

- b. Or setting a date for destruction (flood) 120 years hence.
- 4. The breakdown of marriage leads to an increase of arrogant and tyrannical men who multiply their influence and numbers. Wickedness and arrogance spreads. Man exults his own might and becomes wicked. - Verse 4

## II. Regret

- A. ***5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 7 So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."***
- B. The situation is so bad that God regrets he ever made anything. He resolves to do away with all.
- C. We see his resolve is not absolutely sweeping, he will save a remnant.
- D. The translation here is pretty good since it captures what the Hebrew word *nhm* means. Some translations suggest that God repented or changed his mind about what he had done. But the Hebrew word *nhm* more directly means to breathe or sigh deeply. It suggest a physical display of one's feelings of sorrow. Thus God is deeply grieved and resolves the purify the whole situation. Thus it is wrong to conclude that God somehow changed his mind or reversed his course.<sup>4</sup>

## III. Remnant

- A. ***8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. 9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.***
- B. Noah is described as a righteous man. Not as though he is perfect however for we shall discover later that Noah had his own issues.
- C. But he follows God and is blameless in his generation. That is he stands out as an exception to the general wickedness around him. He unlike others walks with God. The main point here is contrast with the others not absolute perfection or righteousness for Noah.

## IV. Resolve

- A. ***11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. 13 And God said to Noah, "I have***

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<sup>4</sup>Mal 3:6 "For I the LORD do not change

*determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14 Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. 15 This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 16 Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above; and set the door of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks. 17 For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall die. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.*

- B. Corruption and violence seem to be the main problem.
- C. God resolves to scour the earth clean. It is a sock plan and we can discuss it more in class.
- D. The Ark is a symbol and foreshadowing of
  1. The Cross - for through the wood of the ark they are brought to safety. Likewise the ark is covered inside and outside with pitch. But the Hebrew word, *kopher*<sup>5</sup> also means satisfaction or atonement, ransom or payment. Hence the wood is covered with ransom, atonement.
  2. Christ - for only through the ark was there salvation and only in Jesus is there salvation.<sup>6</sup>
  3. The Church - For Noah and his family are a community of the rescued and the set apart. In the shelter of the ark there is safety<sup>7</sup>
  4. Baptism - for in Baptism we go through the waters that make an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness.<sup>8</sup>
- E. We need to consider that the announcement of the flood may have been and unknown phenomenon up to this point. Indeed, rain itself may have been unknown since the only reference we have up to this point is that a mist watered

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<sup>5</sup>kopher, a cover, i.e. bitumen (as used for coating), and the henna plant (as used for dyeing); also a redemption-price: -, ransom, satisfaction, sum of money,

<sup>6</sup>Acts 4:12 *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*"

<sup>7</sup>For Christ promises: Mat 16:18 *I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it.* Or again from: 1 Tim 3:15...*in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.*

<sup>8</sup>1 Peter 3:20...*in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

the earth.<sup>9</sup> Thus the announcement of a flood may thus have required great faith<sup>10</sup> on Noah's part and helps explain why the rest disregarded Noah's prophetic action.<sup>11</sup>

V. Reserve

A. ***19 And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you, to keep them alive. 21 Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them." 22 Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.***

B. God has Noah set aside or reserve every species of animal. Later we read that seven pairs of clean animals are to be set aside.

C. Notice the paradox. It is mankind who has brought condemnation on the word due to sin. Yet it is only in relation to mankind that the animals will be saved. Noah is told he will keep them alive with him.

D. It is necessary to employ imagination as to how Noah accomplished this formidable task of gathering pairs of all living creatures. Perhaps God miraculously brought them to the ark?

E. Further he is instructed to lay up stores of food for the journey

F. There is a summary of Noah's Character in verse 22: Noah...did all that God commanded him. In his obedience, Noah displays the obedience of faith. Faith is more than an acceptance of information. It is a heeding and stepping out on that word.

VI. Recapitulation -

A. ***7:1 Then the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. 2 Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate; 3 and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive upon the***

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*9Gen 2:5...for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground—See also the next quote from Hebrews which speaks of the flood as an even yet unseen*

*10Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark for the saving of his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which comes by faith.*

*11Mat 24:37 As we were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man.*

*face of all the earth. 4 For in seven days I will send rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." 5 And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.*

- B. Here again note that there is a repetition of material with some new details. Note also the change in reference from "God" to "The LORD" This hints at the weaving together of two separate accounts.
- C. There must be seven pairs of clean animals. This is probably for sacrifice. (Later we shall see Noah offer sacrifice.<sup>12</sup>) It was NOT however for food since up to this point God had not permitted man to eat animals for food. Only after emerging from the Ark did God include animals in the diet of man.<sup>13</sup>
- D. In this version, it is further indicated it will rain forty days and nights. (Verse 4)
- E. Verse 5 recapitulates Noah's fidelity. He did all the Lord commanded him.

## VII. Realization

- A. *6 Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. 7 And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark, to escape the waters of the flood. 8 Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, 9 two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. 10 And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth. 11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. 12 And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. 13 On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, 14 they and every beast according to its kind, and all the cattle according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its kind, and every bird according to its kind, every bird of every sort. 15 They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. 16 And they that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in. 17 The flood continued forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The*

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12Gen 8:20 *Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.*

13Gen 9:2 *The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. 3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I have you the green plants, I give you everything. 4 Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Before this the diet was vegetarian: Gen 1:29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. (Is this way man lived into his 900's? ●*

*waters prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters.*

- B. We seem to be back and forth between the two accounts here. 6-11 Seem to be the J account. 11 and following seem to be the P account. Notice the transition from the “God” to “the LORD”
- C. We learn that Noah was 600 when he entered the ark along with his wife, three sons and their wives. There were eight in all.<sup>14</sup>
- D. There seems to be some difference between the two accounts. The first account (P) says that seven days after entering the Ark the rain began (*cf* verse 10) But Verse 13 suggests that it started raining the very same day they entered the ark.
- E. According to verse 11 It stated raining on Nov 17 in the 600<sup>th</sup> year of Noah’s life.
- F. The flood according to verse 11 resulted not only from the rain but also from subterranean waters which burst forth.
- G. The flood would last 5 months or 150 days (*cf* 7:24 & 8:3) The ark would finally land on Ararat on April 17<sup>th</sup> However it would take more time for the waters to fully subside and Noah would not emerge from the Ark until Nov 27<sup>th</sup> of the 601<sup>st</sup> year of his life. Thus the Ark is to be their home for just over a year.
- H. Notice too that verse 16 says God shut them in. Notions that they could have rescued people crying out as the floods rose are thus false. Recall too what scripture says of the door: Re 3:7 “*And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens.*”

VIII. Ruin -

- A. ***19 And the waters prevailed so mightily upon the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered; 20 the waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. 21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, birds, cattle, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm upon the earth, and every man; 22 everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. 23 He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the air; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark. 24 And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.***
- B. In effect even the highest mountains were covered more than 30 feet. - verse 19-20
- C. Every living animal died other than those on the ark.

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<sup>14</sup> Peter 3:20 ...*a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water.*

IX. Rescue -

A. **8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided; 2 the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, 3 and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters had abated; 4 and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat. 5 And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. 6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made, 7 and sent forth a raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. 8 Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; 9 but the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put forth his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. 10 He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; 11 and the dove came back to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. 12 Then he waited another seven days, and sent forth the dove; and she did not return to him any more. 13 In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. 14 In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.**

- B. The rescue is accomplished by a wind that blows the flood waters away. This is not unlike the original creation wherein *the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters*. (Gen 1:2) Thus God seems to be recreating in a certain way.
- C. Verses 1-5 speak of the gradual abating of the waters. But verse 6 seems to jump back and give more details of the 150 days spoken of already. Here too we seem to be experiencing a going back and forth between the two accounts.
- D. Why did Noah have to send forth birds? Could he not see if the waters had subsided? Notice that God had shut Noah and his family into the Ark. There was a door which God had mentioned but no windows when he instructed Noah. But there was at least this one window which he could open. But evidently it afforded little or no view. Why else would he send the birds? It seems Noah could only look up (to God) not down toward the earth. Another indication that Noah was told to trust God.

X. Restoration -

A. *15 Then God said to Noah, 16 "Go forth from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring forth with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh -- birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth -- that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth." 18 So Noah went forth, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. 19 And every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves upon the earth, went forth by families out of the ark.*

XI. Reversal -

A. *20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 And when the LORD smelled the pleasing odor, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done. 22 While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.*

XII. Repeat -

- A. ***" 9:1 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. 2 The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered.***
- B. This whole passage is a repetition of the instructions given to Adam and Eve.<sup>15</sup>
- C. But notice an importance difference. Before Adam and Eve, though they had sovereignty, exercised their dominion in peace. That was before sin. Now, after sin Noah et al. Exercise their sovereignty with fear. Dread of them is in every living creature and in the next verses we see how now animals may be slaughtered for food.

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<sup>15</sup>Gen 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

XIII. Recipe and requirements

- A. **3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. 4 Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. 5 For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man. 6 Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image. 7 And you, be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it."**
- B. The slaughter and eating of animals is now commended to the human race. Previously only a vegetarian diet had been prescribed.
1. Genesis 1:29 *And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.*
  2. Gen 3:2 *And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden;*
  3. The animals too ate only plants: Gen 1:30 *And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food."*
  4. Even after Sin God still prescribed only plants for food: Gen 3:18...*and you shall eat the plants of the field.*
- C. It is true that previous to the flood Abel had been a Shepherd. Does this mean that Lamb was eaten? Perhaps not since sheep are also valuable for wool and milk. But note that Abel did kill an animal in sacrifice. Thus animal killing was not unknown from the start. Further recall that God killed an animal and clothed them in its skins.<sup>16</sup>
- D. But note that the blood had to be carefully drained from the meat before eating. This is because life was in the blood and life belonged to God alone. Even the New Testament affirmed that blood was not to be consumed.<sup>17</sup> What is puzzling is what happened to this requirement in later New Testament times. Most Christians have no moral problems with consuming red meat. What happened. Are we in possible violation of Biblical norms? Later in Romans Paul seems to indicate some impatience about people's hangups about food but counsels patience.<sup>18</sup> Had a change

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<sup>16</sup>Gen 3:21 *And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them.*

<sup>17</sup>Acts 15:29 *You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.*

<sup>18</sup>Rom 14:19 *Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.*

already taken place in regard to red meat or is some other issue at work here? There are no simple answers.

- E. Clearly too if animal blood is sacred, even more so that of man. God shall require a reckoning from everyone as to their respect for life and that it belongs to God and God alone. Further he prescribed the death penalty to anyone who kills a human person. This is the first such pronouncement of such a penalty and contrasts wit how God handled the matter with regards to Cain. Recall that God put a mark on Cain, in effect pronouncing a ban on anyone taking his life for the murder he had committed.<sup>19</sup> Here too is further evidence that we are under a new regime here.

#### IV. Relationships -

- A. ***8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 9 "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, 10 and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. 11 I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." 12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: 13 I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." 17 God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."***
- B. God enters into a covenant with Noah and all creation swearing that he will never again destroy all things by the waters of flood. This promise do not mean that God will never again assault all creation, just not wit ha flood. At the end of time God judge all things by fire. St. Peter compares this to the flood: 2 Peter 3:6...*the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been sores up for fire, being kept until the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men...10 But the day the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud notice, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sore of person ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

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<sup>19</sup>Gen 4:15 Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If any one slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him.

- C. The bow (rainbow) is a powerfully visual image. IN the ancient world gods were often seen to afflict the world by their bows and arrows, inflicting harm on the world in their wrathful moments. Here God hangs up his bow. Thus the “rainbow” After the storm has passed over, the sun begins to shine. God has hung up his bow, the wrath is passed.

XV. Rejoinders and reactions

A. *18 The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. 19 These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was peopled. 20 Noah was the first tiller of the soil. He planted a vineyard; 21 and he drank of the wine, and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. 24 When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, 25 he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers." 26 He also said, "Blessed by the LORD my God be Shem; and let Canaan be his slave." 27 God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave." 28 After the flood Noah lived three hundred and fifty years. 29 All the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.*

B. When we see the individuals come off the Ark we must remember that they are not merely individuals but also the fathers of Nations. Chapter 10 will show us how the earth is repopled. Thus Shem, Ham, and Japheth through their descendants become nations and cities. Consider the following example Europe became the father of Britain, France, and Spain. Britain became the father of America and Canada. To Spain also children were born: California, Mexico. These are the descendants of America: Virginia, Georgia, Carolina...Georgia became the father of Atlanta, Augusta, Savannah,...Thus, while the sons of Noah are real people they also become nations, states, and peoples. The descendants of Shem settled in the area of Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and the modern day Holy Land. The descendants of Japheth settled in the regions to the north, Asia Minor, and Southern Europe. The descendants of Ham settled in the regions of Egypt, and Africa. Chapter 10 will discuss more of their descendants.

C. One of the saddest moments in this history of interpretation was when advocates of slavery decided to use this text as a justification for their inhuman treatment of dark-skinned people. It was asserted that this divine prophecy given by Noah after the flood legitimized slavery for a group of people (descendants of Ham) who had been cursed perpetually. Supporters of slavery argued that the Arabic version of Genesis 9:25 reads. “Cursed by the father of Canaan” instead of “Cursed be Canaan.” A vehement allegiance to the misapplication of this text has continued among some groups to the present day. But the oppression of blacks by white cannot be justified from this story. What happened is that Noah, a righteous

an blameless man, had been drinking wine (Gen 9:21). That in itself was not the issue here, for a Scripture wine is viewed as one of God's gifts to humankind (Ps 104:15). Every burnt offering and peace offering was accompanied by a libation of wine (Num 15:5-10), and the drinking wine at festivals was acknowledged (Deu 14:26). One of the symbols for Israel was the vine (Is 5:107; Mk 12:1-11). But the Bible also warns about the dangers of wine. Nazirites were to abstain from all alcohol and wine (Num 6:3-4), and priests were forbidden to drink prior to officiating in the sanctuary lest they die (Lev 10:9). The laity were also warned that drinking too much wine was dangerous to people and offensive to God (Prov 21:17; 23:20-21, 29-35; Is 5:22). Drunkenness was especially reprehensible when it led to self-exposure (Hab 2:15; Lam 4:21). The exposure of one's nakedness was not only publicly demeaning but also incompatible with the presence of the living God (Ex 20:26; Deu 23:12-14). Because Noah drank to excess, he became drunk. The heat generated by the alcohol in his bloodstream led the patriarch to thrust off his covering involuntarily as he lay in his tent. The reflexive form of the verb makes it clear that he uncovered himself (Gen 9:21). Noah's youngest son, Ham, entered the tent, and there he was confronted with the situation we have just described (Gen 9:22). Apparently his gaze was not a mere harmless notice of an accidental glance. The verb used here has such force that some commentators say it means "he gazed with satisfaction." What exactly Ham did has been the subject of much speculation. The most bizarre of all suggestions is that Ham castrated his father in a struggle for family power. But there is no evidence to support this idea other than the precedent of some Greek and Semitic stories with the motif of paternal castration. A second suggestion is that the expression "to see a man's nakedness" is an idiomatic phrase of sexual intercourse with that man's wife. But this expression is quite different from the idiom "to uncover the nakedness" of Leviticus 18 and 20. Leviticus 20:17 is the only place where the verb "to see" is used, but it is not a parallel construction with "uncover." The view that Ham had an incestuous relationship with his mother is an implausible explanation. Even if Ham had committed incest with his mother, he would hardly have told his brothers! Thus, Ham could be faulted simply for this: he failed to cover up his father's nakedness and chose rather to make fun of his father to his brothers. Such an act was serious enough to prompt Noah to utter his curse on Ham's descendants, who would be guilty of the kinds of sexual perversions that many suspected Ham of carrying out. To lie exposed meant that one was unprotected, dishonored and at risk of exploitation. Ham had transgressed a natural and sacred barrier. His disgusting ridicule of his father before his brothers aggravated the act and perhaps betrayed a moral weakness that had established itself in his personality.

- D. Who, then, was Canaan? And why was he cursed if Ham was the culprit? Since the law of God insists that God deals with all people justly, this curse of Canaan is all the more puzzling. Genesis 10:6 lists the sons of Ham as Cush (basically Ethiopia), Mizraim (Egypt), Put generally taken to be one of the North African countries) and Canaan (of the country of Palestine/Canaan). We are not talking about Africans or blacks here, but the Canaanite peoples who inhabited ancient Palestine. Canaan was not singled out for the curse because he was the youngest son of Ham, nor was it a random selection. Apparently Noah saw the youngest son of Ham the same tendencies and perversions that have been evidenced in Ham.

When Noah has fully recovered from the effects of his drunkenness, he uttered this curse against Canaan. Further, it is arguable that Noah could not have cursed his son, for he and his brothers, along with Noah, has been the objects of a blessing in Genesis 9:1. Neither Noah nor anyone else could reverse such a blessing with a curse. Still, there may well have been an element of “mirroring” punishment here, especially if Canaan was to exhibit the outworking of the tendencies already present in Ham’s failure to cover Noah’s nakedness. Finally, it is a matter of historical record that the Canaanites were notoriously deviant in their sexual behavior. Almost everywhere the archaeologist’s spade has dug in that part of the world there has been fertility symbols accompanying text explicit enough to make many a modern pornographic deals seem a mere beginner in the trade of deviant sexuality. Sodom left its name for the vice these people practiced. Even the Romans, so depraved in their own practices, were shocked by the behavior of the Phoenicians at the colony of Carthage (the last vestige of the Canaanite race).

- E. Why was this story included in the biblical narrative? It tells the reader that unless there was some moral change in the Canaanites, they were slated for removal from their land. That God is longsuffering and slow to anger is attested by the fact that this judgment did not fall on that group of descendants until the time of Joshua’s conquest of Canaan. It is impossible to date Noah’s times, but it is known that Joshua living around 1400 B.C. At a minimum this would mean that the grace of God was extended to the Canaanites for several millennia. Surely God was most generous with these people, giving more than adequate time for sinners to repent.

## **A Classic: NOAH AND THE ARK 2002.**

The Lord spoke to Noah and told him, “I am going to make it rain and it shall not stop until it submerges the whole earth and all living flesh is destroyed. Because of this I want you to save the righteous people and two of every living species on earth. Therefore I am commanding you to build an Ark.” Noah agreed to build the Ark and the Lord said, “you must complete the Ark and fill it on one year’s time.”

One year later Noah asked the Lord to forgive him saying, “I did my best but there were big problems.” First, I needed a construction permit and your plans did not meet code so I had to hire an engineering firm to draw new plans. Then I got into a fight with OSHA over whether the Ark needed a sprinkler system and approved flotation devices. Then a neighbor objected to having the Ark in my front yard so I had to get approval from the planning commission. I didn’t know about there being a ban on cutting trees to protect the Spotted Owl. I finally convinced the Forest Service that I really needed the wood to save the owls. However, the Fish and Wildlife Service won’t let me take the two owls. The carpenters formed a union and went on a strike. I had to negotiate with the National Labor Relations Board before anyone would pick up a saw or hammer. Now I have 16 carpenters working on the Ark, but still no owls. An animal rights group is suing me. They object to me taking only two of each kind aboard. Meanwhile, the EPA notified me that I could not complete the Ark without filing an environmental impact statement on your proposed flood. They didn’t take kindly to the idea that they had no jurisdiction over the conduct of the Creator of the Universe. Then the Army Corps of Engineers demanded a map of the proposed flood plain. I sent them a globe. Right now I am trying to resolve a complaint filed with the Equal Employment Commission that I am practicing discrimination by not taking atheists aboard. The IRS has seized my assets, claiming I am building the Ark in preparation to flee the country to avoid paying taxes. I just got a notice from the state that I owe them some kind of user tax and failed to register the Ark as a “recreational water craft.” And finally, the ACLU got the courts to issue an injunction against further construction of the Ark, saying that since God is flooding the earth, it’s a religious event, and, therefore, unconstitutional. I really don’t think I can finish the Ark for another five or six years.”

Noah waited. The sky began to clear, the sun began to shine, and the seas became calm. A rainbow was visible across the sky. Noah looked up hopefully. “You mean you’re not going to destroy the earth, Lord?” “No,” He said sadly. “I don’t have to. The government already has.” ☺