

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2018 7:36 PM  
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Genesis 9:18-11:32

"And the Lord blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth!' And He established an everlasting "covenant" with Noah and his descendants--with a sign, a beautiful rainbow--promising that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood! The world seemed all set for a "new start," with the hope that mistakes made during the "antediluvian age"--the period before the flood--would not be repeated!  
That was how we left our study last week! But it was not to be!

How disappointing that in last nite's lesson the first thing that happened to Noah and his family after the flood--or at least the first thing that's recorded--was another "fall"! Genesis 9:21 tells how Noah was found drunk and naked and exposed to his youngest son, Ham--who "shared" (gleefully?) what he saw with his brothers, bringing great dishonor to his father!

"Shepherd's Notes" note how the story is reminiscent of what happened back in the Garden! In a sense, Noah "fell" in his own "garden" and ended up, like Adam, naked and "shamed"! Deja vu!

The brothers, Shem and Japheth, would have nothing of it and did the right thing by backing up into the tent and "covering" their father--imitating, in effect, the response of God in covering Adam's nakedness! (I Peter 4:8 says "love covers a multitude of sin"!)

Yet the die is cast! Though the sin of Noah appears to us perhaps marginal, to God sin is sin and must be dealt with! The writer of Genesis is maybe making the case, as suggested in last nite's session by Dave Brien, that this is how sin starts--seemingly, small! A little at a time! And then grows and soon explodes! And that's what happened with mankind after beginning the "second starting point" of human history!

So how did Noah respond? Genesis 9:25-27 says he "cursed" Canaan and "blessed" Shem and Japheth! Wait a minute! Canaan? Why him? Seems so unfair! What about Ham?

Ham was a "believer"! He was included on the Ark! He survived the flood! Saved by grace! And "blessed" by God, along with his brothers, in Genesis 9:1! Somehow it was all part of the sovereign plan of God to go this way, with Noah serving as a "prophet" in announcing the future of his grandson's descendants! (MacArthur notes that the shift from Ham to his son Canaan "established the historic legitimacy, and the theological basis, for Israel's later conquest," 600 or so years later, of the Canaanites, who, according to Arnold, had become notorious for their idolatry and illicit sexual practices!)

And, speaking of descendants, that's what we see in the rest of last nite's lesson! The "records of the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth"--in Genesis 10, and more of Shem only, in Genesis 11:10-26 (separated by the story of the Tower of Babel, in 11:1-9), and then more about the "records of the generations of a man named Terah," in 11:27-32! More "toledots"!

Genesis 10 tells how the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth propagated and (eventually!) "filled the earth," from the starting point in the Middle East (which is still the theater of redemptive history, and will be to the end)!

Basically, the descendants of Ham settled in the south, Africa to Asia, but some remained in the Middle East and occupied, for a few centuries, what became known as the Land of Canaan

(or the "promised land"). Japheth's descendants, on the other hand, settled to the north--Europe and into the northeast, Persia and India (and ultimately came to possess most of the world, thus fulfilling Noah's prophecy of how God would "enlarge" Japheth); while the line of Shem stayed in the Middle East, east of Canaan (but more of him in Genesis 11:10-26)!

But understand that Genesis 9:18-11:32 is not chronological! Ham, Japheth, and Shem didn't immediately "fill the earth" as they were commanded! It took the God's intervention in the Tower of Babel saga to get things going!

And that brings us to the story of a man named Nimrod! Just happened to be the grandson of "righteous" Ham, and great grandson of Noah--who, according to Gen. 9:8, "became a mighty one on the earth"! Turned out to be a "mighty warrior" and a "rebel" against God who built the city of Babel--and the Tower of Babel--and led an open rebellion against the true and living God! It was largely through him that "formal pagan religion"--connected with astrology and the "moon god"---was launched! (Nimrod also founded the city of Nineveh, which became the center for the worship of Ishtar, the fertility goddess!)

Interestingly, the "plain of Shinar," where the Tower of Babel was built was located in the Mesopotamian Valley, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, where the Garden of Eden is believed to have been (although this is not certain)! The city of Babylon is also where years later Daniel 4:30 records how King Nebuchadnezzar would "walk on the roof of his royal palace, look over the city and say: "Is this not Babylon the Great which I, myself, have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty'!

Dr. Constable writes that Babylon "forever afterward was the city most characterized by rebellion against God"! And it will be the capital of the Anti-Christ's empire during the coming Tribulation period--but eventually receive the special outpouring of the wrath of God, according to Revelation 17-18!

Well, back to Babel--and God's response to what was going on there! Genesis 11:7-8 (which just so happens to be our memory verse for this lesson) says: "Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city! Therefore its name was called Babel, because the Lord dispersed them abroad over the face of the earth!"

Acts 17:26 says, "He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each of us!"

And so, the Tower of Babel incident was one of the ways that God "helped" the descendants of Shem, Japheth, and Ham carry out His mandate to "fill the earth," as recorded in Genesis 10 and 11:11-26--and thereby bring the events of the "primeval period" to a climax! And, more importantly, pave the way for the transition to the emergence of "father" Abram (Abraham!) and the "patriarchal narratives"--all of which will play the next important role in God's redemption story!

Well, may all those who come behind us (that would be our descendants!) find us faithful!

Meanwhile, men, walk with the Lord this week and be a blessing!

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