

(Genesis) 19 - the Prophecy of Noah and the Race Question

by S. Lewis Johnson

The sermon explores the significance of the Noahic covenant and the prophecy of Noah, highlighting the effects of Adam's sin on humanity and the importance of understanding the one race of men.

Duration: 53:54

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, Genesis 9:18-29, Exodus 19:5, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 26:28

Topics: "Noah"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the parallels between the stories of Adam, Noah, and Canaan in relation to the fall of humanity and the promise of salvation. The prophecy is divided into three parts, with the first part focusing on Canaan, the youngest son of Noah. The speaker emphasizes the exercise of grace by God as a greater problem than the revelation of sin and anger against sin. The second part of the prophecy highlights the defiance of man, specifically Ham dishonoring his father Noah, breaking the principle of honoring one's parents. The sermon emphasizes the importance of honoring authority and the consequences of sin.

Transcript

Scripture reading for this morning is in the ninth chapter of the book of Genesis, and we are reading verses 18 through 29. Genesis chapter 9, verse 18 through verse 29. Remember, in the context, we have just had the account of the establishment of the Noahic covenant.

And Moses continues in the 18th verse, writing, Now the sons of Noah came out of the ark, who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard.

That verse in the Hebrew text may be rendered slightly differently, and if you have a different version, you might have noticed some difference. Literally, the Hebrew text says that Noah was a man of the earth, and that he began planting a vineyard. And so we could render it, then Noah, a man of the earth, a husbandman or a farmer, began planting a vineyard.

And he drank of the wine and became drunk and uncovered himself inside his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father, and their faces were turned away so that they did not see their father's nakedness.

When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. So he said, cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants, he shall be to his brothers. He also said, blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.

It is important, as we've been trying to point out reading through the book of Genesis and expounding the text, to notice the names for God as they occur. And this verse particularly is important. Blessed be Yahweh, the Elohim of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.

May Elohim enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant. And Noah lived 350 years after the flood. So all the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. The questions of race and nationalism, that is nationalism versus internationalism, have gained serious attention from 20th century thinkers. But in spite of the onslaughts of the sociologists and the politicians, the barriers have still survived.

Are there many races among humans? The only reliable account of the origin, characteristics, and history of human society is found in the Bible. And unfortunately that account has been greatly neglected in the 20th century. We generally tend to categorize people by their color.

We speak of white people, yellow people, brown people, and black people. And depending upon the person whom we are reading, we generally say they are, there are from three to six major races. Or if we classify by languages, we know that there are thousands of languages.

Every time the Wycliffe Bible Translation Society gives a count of the languages of the earth, the figures tend to rise. But there are many thousands of languages, many of which have not yet been committed to writing. The Bible, however, affirms that there is one race of men.

Not many races, one race, but nevertheless that there are three families of men. The descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. It is rather striking, I think, in connection with this that the Apostle Paul, in the words that he spoke in Athens, would appear to agree with this.

Because he says, and he made from one every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. You'll notice he says that there is, that all have come from one, every nation of mankind, that God has determined their appointed times, he has determined their habitation, and he has also determined that they should seek after God. That is his purpose for the providential dealing of God with nations.

Well, in Genesis chapter 9, we have just been reading about the Noahic covenant made with Noah and the sons of Noah and the family, and in verses 18 and 19, we read of their emerging from the ark, and evidently from the standpoint of the providence of God, they turn now to the seeking after God. And of course we see a quite different thing emerging from that which is expressed by the Apostle Paul as ideally our purpose upon the earth. One of the very important things about this section that we're going to look at is the further development of the messianic prophetic program.

And there is some indication of a covenant that already exists between the redeemed and the Lord in the words that God speaks through Noah. In verse 26, when we read, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem. And there is a relationship that evidently has been established between the Lord and Shem, so that Shem is the people of God, and God is the God of Shem.

So evidently, if I may add this, the seed of the woman is to come from the Semitic family of the families of the earth. Well, let's look now at our passage, and we look first at verses 18 and 19, where Moses writes of the sons of Noah and the populating of the earth. We read in verse 18, Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Ham was the father of Canaan.

These were the three sons of Noah, and from them the earth, the whole earth, was populated. The Noahic covenant has been established. The rainbow has been established as the sign of that covenant, which suggested, among other things, the willingness of God in the heavens to penetrate the earthly sphere.

Even in the very activity of providing a sign for men, we have evidence of the initiative of God in things. For just like the sun's rays shine from heaven upon the droplets that are in the skies and the rainbows produced, so God from heaven determines to give man blessing and a part of his blessing is the unconditional Noahic covenant. So there is suggested by the rainbow the willingness of God to have a measure of fellowship with those who are upon the earth, and he promises them that he will no longer destroy the earth by a flood.

There is no redemptive promise specifically bound up in that, but it is an evidence of that initiative that proceeds from God determining to bless man. The rainbow, in addition to the things that we suggested last week, suggests to that extent that there is a measure of peace between God and man. Evidently, it is based upon the atoning work that the Lord Jesus should accomplish, and this common grace that is ours of a promise of never being destroyed again by a flood is one of the byproducts of our Lord's ministry of sacrifice upon the cross at Calvary to be accomplished centuries after this.

The fact that the rainbow embraces the circle of a man's vision suggests also again the universality of the Noahic covenant. It is a covenant that is made by God unconditionally with all of men. Now, in verses 18 and 19, there is a formal mention of these emerging sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

And verse 19 suggests that Noah had only three sons. How many daughters he had, the scriptures does not, does, the scriptures do not say, but evidently his progeny male-wise was limited to Shem and Ham and Japheth. Now, before we pass on, let me just make this comment.

It is evident from the account in general that though the flood has been used by God to destroy all but eight sinners from the face of the earth, sin has not been destroyed. And the things that Noah and his family bring into the new age are the things that resulted from the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden. When Adam sinned, remember, all men became guilty of Adam's sin.

The imputation of sin took place immediately so that every man is born guilty of Adam's sin. Not only that, but the scriptures affirm that we also by the process of generation give to our descendants a sin nature. That's the second effect of the sin of Adam.

Furthermore, we also by virtue of the guilt that we possess of Adam's sin and the sin nature that is communicated to us by generation, we therefore now have inability to turn to the Lord apart from divine enablement. The scriptures make that very plain. The Lord Jesus himself saying, No man can come to me

except the Father which hath sent me draw him.

So that no man is able to come to God apart from divine enablement. We are unable. Human inability is the third effect of the fall in the Garden of Eden.

And the scriptures also reveal that if there is no redemptive experience, then all of the full penalty of death shall be ours. The spiritual death in which we all live will be prolonged into an eternal spiritual death. So those four great effects flow from Adam's sin.

It is evident then that Noah and the members of his family, the eight souls that were saved, bring with them the curse of Adam's sin. And while everything begins with a new kind of glory about it, sinners are still there. And the future therefore is not good from that standpoint.

Now we look secondly at the defiance of man in verses 20 through 23. It's rather, I think, it's a very touching thing to realize what has happened to this great man, Noah. Let me describe to you how he must have seemed to those who lived with him.

He was a very prominent figure in the first place. He was well over 600 years of age because he was 600 years of age when the flood came to pass. Furthermore, now time has elapsed so that he has been able to plant a vineyard.

The vineyard has been able to grow. He has been able to harvest grapes. And so there must have been a half a dozen years or more.

These grapes have been gathered. All of the processes for making wine have taken place. And the fermentation and perhaps some aging, if he knew anything about the processes.

There is a question about that, of course. But at least it's some time now after the occurrence of the flood. And so he's a man of 620 years or more of age.

Old men, old Christian men, old believing men are always an object of interest because they are men who have passed through the vicissitudes of life. I know one of the great experiences that I had as a young Christian was having an opportunity to talk to some of the greatest of the Bible teachers that I was able to have contact with. And I used to always try to find some time to get with them and ask them about the study of the Word of God.

How to study the Word. And any hints that they might give to the preaching of the text. And it always seemed to me that old men who had passed through the experience of Christian living and had been successful to that point were men from which we could learn a great deal.

Nor was a man that was worthy of peculiar honor. Distinguished for the elevation of his piety, he is one of the men who is said to have walked with God just like Enoch. He had long maintained his fidelity to God in the midst of very evil times.

For the days before the flood were very evil days. In addition, he had experienced the special deliverance from the hand of God. He had passed through the experience of the catastrophe of the flood.

And in addition, he had not brought any stain upon his piety nor cloud upon his name. He was, in a sense, the second head of the human family. Adam was the first and he is the second.

He is also, in one sense, the second head of the believing family of God. Because he comes through and if his family were believers, as we may surmise, he was the second head of that company. He was an old disciple who had probably seen Seth by virtue of his age.

The son of Adam. He had also walked with Enoch. He had spoken with Methuselah.

And since he lived to be 950 years of age, he lived on into the days of Abraham and was over 50 years of age when Abraham, when Abraham, or rather he had about 50 years of opportunity to converse with Abraham. So he is a remarkable man. One of, clearly one of the most distinguished figures in all of Holy Scripture.

And if we were to paint a picture of the famous men of the Bible, Noah would surely be one of them. But now, in spite of the high regard with which Scripture speaks of Noah, and with which the people of Noah's day must have regarded him, we read here of his drunkenness. Listen again.

Noah, a man of the soil, began planting a vineyard. And he drank of the wine and became drunk and uncovered himself inside his tent. This event, we say, was much later than the leaving of the ark.

What happened? Well, we are not sure whether Noah began to drink because of inexperience with the alcoholic beverage. The chances are that he knew, he well knew, the consequences of this act. The chances are, if we may judge by the intelligence of the people who lived before the flood, the chances are that he understood all that we understand about the making of wine, perhaps even more.

So it's probably to be regarded as an act of self-indulgence on Noah's part. The Bible says that we are to beware of Satan who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. And that is what happened.

He devoured Noah, the patriarch. Now, let me hasten to say that the picture that we give here is a picture, then, of a man who is disobedient to the word of God. But he is, nevertheless, Noah the patriarch.

I guess I should also mention that when we read here that Noah drank of the wine, we are not saying that Noah's sin rested in the fact that he drank of the wine. As far as the Bible is concerned, to indulge in the drinking of wine is a perfectly legitimate gratification. There's nothing wrong, so far as we can tell, in Noah's drinking of the product of the vine.

The sinfulness of making fermented liquors cannot be established from the Bible. As a matter of fact, the Bible speaks of the beneficial effects of the drinking of wine. For example, in Judges, in the Psalms, in the Proverbs, even in the New Testament, when Paul tells Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake, it is clear that the use of wine has certain beneficial influences upon man's physical system.

God himself, in Holy Scripture, employs wine as a symbol of the highest and choicest blessings, both temporal and spiritual. The Lord Jesus Christ made wine at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. Now, of course, we must temper all of this by pointing out that the New Testament tells us that if there are weaker brethren who do feel that the drinking of wine is a sin, for the sake of the conscience of the weaker brethren, the stronger brethren, who know that Scripture teaches that to drink wine is all right, should refrain from drinking for the sake of the conscience of the weaker brethren.

But it is the weaker brethren who have the scruples, the Scripture says. There are other reasons for total abstinence, which may exist in certain circumstances, and the Bible speaks about them. This is not a

message on this subject, and so I'll leave it at that.

I want to say this, however. The Bible speaks most strongly about the effects of drunkenness. And so while we say that the Scriptures do not say anything about the drinking of a glass of wine, the Bible speaks most strongly about the overuse of alcoholic beverages.

And furthermore, the Bible reveals that there are terrible consequences for the overuse of the alcoholic beverages. Characteristic from the standpoint of the Bible is that intoxication tends to the sins that go along with sensuality, frequently of sexual abuse. And we have illustrations in the Bible that plainly teach that.

We have one in the book of Genesis that comes to mind immediately of the experience of Lot when he became drunken himself, or Ahasuerus, or Belshazzar. And there are many others in Scripture of the effects of overuse of that which is permissible according to Scripture teaching. So it teaches us the lesson that just as is the case in so many things, all things are lawful, all things, however, may not be expedient.

So Noah's sin was not in the fact that he drank the wine. Noah's sin lay in the fact that he drank it and became drunk. And you can see the terrible picture of this godly man drinking the wine, becoming more and more under the influence of it.

Finally, as the wine begins to inflame his being, he's warm, he throws off his outer garment, has nothing on but his underwear, and then, as we say, he passed out, fell on the floor. Quite a picture for a man who had walked with God. Now him, enters the tent at this moment, sees his father lying upon the floor, obviously passed out from some overuse of the liquors.

He probably could smell the odors of the tent. Instead of acting as a child under the influence of a father's authority, he acts the reverse. Incidentally, modern biblical criticism demonstrates its failure to understand humanity by suggesting that because we have this beautiful picture of Noah being a righteous man in the first part of the life of Noah, as it is recorded here, and now have this picture of Noah's great sin, that obviously, according to them, the accounts of the first part must have come from one source, whereas the story of Noah's drunkenness must come from another source, as if it would be impossible for the same writer to write of Noah's walk with God and then to write of Noah's sin.

Modern criticism not only does not know its criticism too well, but it certainly does not know human nature. This is very true to human nature. Noah was a great man, but he was a man, and because he was a man, he can sin and he can sin in the most degrading way.

Some interpreters have suggested that what Ham did was not simply to make fun of his father, but that he actually performed a homosexual act upon his father. Now we read in verse 22 that Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father. In Leviticus chapter 18 and verse 6 through verse 19, the expression, see the nakedness of, occurs a number of times.

And that expression in that chapter is related generally to sexual types of sins, but not simply to homosexuality, I might add. So it is the opinion of some that when Ham saw the nakedness of his father, that is a reference to a homosexual act that he performed upon his father. And that is supported, they say, by the fact that in verse 24 we read, when Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him.

Now I must say that we must give attention to this interpretation of the event. It would not certainly be beyond the range of possibility, and it surely would be in accordance with the curse that is pronounced upon Ham's family. Because from the beginning homosexuality is looked upon as rebellion against the authority of God, and it still is rebellion against the authority of God.

That is why the Bible speaks of homosexuality as sin. It is rebellion against the natural constitution and against the authority of God. But nevertheless, in spite of that, it is difficult to prove that interpretation.

So I am inclined to be a little more modest in interpreting the expression and refer it rather to salacious, scornful ridicule on Ham's part. He saw the nakedness of his father and he rejoiced in it, evidently. He relished it.

He evidently had some grudge against his father, or at least he did not want to abide under the parental authority. And as a result of it, he told with relish and pleasure what had happened to Shem and Japheth. And so it was salacious, scornful ridicule, I believe.

It was an act of rebellion against the father's authority. It was the very opposite of what came to be regarded in the Ten Commandments, under the Fifth Commandment, as the requirement to honor one's father and mother in order that our days might be long upon the earth. So long before the Fifth Commandment was broken, it is Ham who breaks the principle that lies behind it.

He dishonored his father. Now the characteristic, by the way, that is repeated in the New Testament in Ephesians chapter 6, and it is something that children should remember, and young people. The father does have a measure of authority that is spoken of in Holy Scripture, and to dishonor one's father is a sin.

This very commandment is used as an exhortation in Ephesians chapter 6, verses 2 and 3. And we are expected to honor our fathers and our mothers, that our days may be long upon the earth. That's a word for the children in the audience. It's a word for young people, and a very necessary word in these days, the authority that God has given to the head of a family, or heads of a family.

The response of Shem and Japheth is so different. They were grieved evidently. They were full of respect.

They picked up a cloak, or perhaps even the cloak of the father, which Noah had thrown aside. They turned their backs. They put the cloak over their back.

They backed over against Noah and covered his nakedness in order that they might look upon, not look upon it. What a beautiful illustration of the difference between children in the same family, incidentally. Here were three children with the same father and mother, the same privileges, the same opportunities, but oh how different one of them was from the other.

We've often seen that illustrated in the children of individuals in this life. It also illustrates that a son may have very pious parents and experience many providential mercies because of the six, because of the parents and yet be at heart a child of the devil. It also illustrates the fact that in the final analysis, it often is the sovereign grace of God that determines what results from the same situation.

Now of course the Bible specifically blames him, he is responsible for his sin, but it does illustrate that the reason that Shem and Japheth have their blessing is not because of anything in them, for they all three were equally wicked. But it was the grace of God that was manifested in the case of the other two. People often point to, Jacob have I loved and Esau have I, have I, Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated, and

they have said, how could God hate Esau? Now that is a problem, I would grant, but nevertheless it's in scripture.

But the biggest problem is how God could love Jacob, that's the biggest problem. In other words, the exercise of grace on God's part is an even greater problem than the revelation of his sin, of his anger against sin. Well now we look at the prophecy of Noah.

Eventually, Noah awakened from his drunk condition. As he sobered up, he reflected upon the fact that he was lying in a place that he was not accustomed to lying, and perhaps the cloak had been put over him in a way that he did not normally do. And so he recognized that something had happened to him, and that also someone had been involved, someone had seen.

And so he inquired, and he learned, that's the meaning of the expression he knew in verse 24, he learned what his youngest son had done to him. He was told by either Shem or Japheth that Ham had seen his nakedness and had told them about it. Now what follows is a remarkable thing.

It's one of the great messianic promises of the Old Testament. It's rather startling that it should come at a time when Noah has committed this great sin too. Did you notice as you were reading this, the remarkable parallel between this prophecy and the first messianic prophecy in Genesis 3:15 that we studied a few weeks back.

There remember it was said that the seed of the woman should crush the head of the serpent, a mortal wound, so that someone from the line of Eve would be responsible for a victory over the serpent. Now I want you to notice the parallel. The first prophecy of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, for he is the seed of the woman, was given after the fall of Adam.

This one is given after the fall of Noah. Both Adam and Noah had been commanded to fill the earth. Each of them was an ancestor of all men in their present world.

Adam was the ancestor of those that followed. Noah was the head of those that followed him in the new conditions after the flood. Each sinned by partaking of a fruit, Adam of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, Noah of the fruit of the vine.

As a result of their sin, each became naked. When Adam and Eve sinned, they saw that they were naked. They had evidently been that before, but they saw their naked condition.

And now we read of Noah's nakedness. Each was provided with a covering by someone else. And finally, following the fall of each, a tremendous messianic promise is given, and in the messianic promise there is not only promise, but also curse.

It's striking, the parallel. I don't want to make too much of it, and I don't intend to do it by pointing out these parallels, but it is a rather striking thing. So along with the curse, there were blessing and anticipations of ultimate salvation given as well.

Now let's look at the three divisions of the prophecy. It's a very symmetrical prophecy. There is a prophecy concerning Canaan, the youngest son of Ham.

There is one concerning Shem, and there is one concerning Japheth. And first, concerning Canaan, we read in verse 25, Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants, he shall be to his brethren. Several questions

are raised here immediately, and the first is, why was Canaan blessed instead of Ham? Canaan was the youngest son of Ham.

Why did he not say, cursed be Ham? Well, the fact that that has proved a problem to people is evidenced by the fact that the Arabic version of this has inserted Ham. And so it reads, cursed be Ham, the father of Canaan. Because not only does that seem logical, but we have had this in the preceding context.

Verse 18, Ham was the father of Canaan. Verse 22, and Ham the father of Canaan. So some scribe, thinking surely something has been left out here, inserted, cursed be Ham, the father of Canaan.

That would make excellent sense. But unfortunately, in the manuscripts of the Old Testament, and in the versions of the Old Testament, it has no other support. So we must go with the text as we have it.

Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants. And ask, why should Canaan be cursed rather than Ham? Now some who have interpreted the sin of Ham as being of homosexual perversion have suggested that, nor given insight by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, perceived the perversion of Ham being found in his youngest son. And because of that, Canaan is cursed.

Since the sin of the father, he is unable to see, will reappear in the son. Now the principle, of course, is true. We do know that that often happens.

But so far again, as the text is concerned, there does not seem to be any real exegetical basis for it. So I'm inclined to go with another interpretation. And when I say I'm inclined to go, you'll understand I'm not trying to be dogmatic, as is my custom.

Because I do think there are lots of things in the Bible that I don't know. And then I know there are lots of things you think that I don't know that I think I do know as well. So the resulting things that I don't think I know, plus the ones that you know I don't know, make a great deal of biblical knowledge, I know.

But I'm inclined to think that the thing that lies behind the cursing of Canaan instead of Ham may be this. After all, Canaan was the youngest son of Ham. And of course, the sin of Ham was a breaching of the proper family relationship.

That is, children should honor their parents, their father and mother. And so the curse pronounced upon Canaan is really an indirect curse upon Ham in this sense. Since Ham has breached the family relationship, he himself will suffer a breach of his own family relationship in the cursing of Canaan.

So Ham's family suffers since he breached his own family relationship with Noah. Now, that doesn't completely satisfy me, but it seems to be suggested by what follows. Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants, he shall be to his brethren.

But now that raises another question, and one that has been on the lips of biblical students for about 25 years now. Does this curse justify the practice of segregation? After all, we read, Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants, he shall be to his brethren. Canaan is the son of Ham.

The Hamitic peoples are supposedly the black peoples. That's wrong, incidentally. The Hamitic peoples are much broader than black people.

They are the Hamitic peoples, and therefore the black Africans are included, and God has pronounced a curse upon them, and therefore segregation is justified. There isn't anything in the Bible really to support

this, but it has had wide appeal among those who go through the Bible and do not give it the careful attention that it should have. In the first place, the curse falls upon Canaan, and not upon Ham.

Now, we know from the biblical record that the Canaanites dwelt in the land of Palestine in the days of Joshua, and on into the days of David and Solomon. And when we read the Old Testament accounts, we can turn to the book of Joshua in chapter 9, verse 23, where Joshua brought the Canaanites, the sons of Canaan, under their dominion and made them hewers of wood and drawers of water, that is, servant of servants to the Semites. And there were some that were left, and they later also were subjugated by Solomon in his day, and in 1 Kings chapter 9, verse 20 and 21, it is specifically stated that that is what took place.

Then, in the case of the wider group of the Canaanites, such as the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians and others who belong to the family of Canaan, they were subjected to the Japhetic Persians, the Macedonians, and the Romans later, and so the prophecy concerning Canaan has been fulfilled in Scripture as it is set forth here. In other words, there isn't anything in the Bible, so far as I can tell, that justifies the practice of segregating black peoples from whites. We are all members of one family.

God has made of one all nations upon the earth. Now, the second of these prophecies, and it has to do with Shem, and this is, of course, the more important one. He also said, blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.

Now, here is a place where we need to study the Bible carefully, carefully, looking at each word. Oh, I wish people in the twentieth century would study the Bible as if it were God's word. People don't do this because basically they don't really believe that the Bible is God's word.

If an angel were to stand here and say, this is God's word, study it, we think we would probably be better students. But we wouldn't, but we ought to be. Now, he says, not blessed be Shem, incidentally, he says, blessed be the Lord, Yahweh.

Now, we have said over and over again that this name for God is the name for God that suggests that he is a God who makes a covenant and keeps it with his people. Yahweh, the Lord, the God of Shem. Now, he is blessed.

Now, Shem is going to be blessed only because of his relationship to him, and so he says, blessed be the Lord, Yahweh, the covenant-making and keeping God. He is the God, the Elohim, the mighty, powerful, creator God of Genesis 1-1. He is the God of Shem.

But now notice that little preposition of. He is the God of Shem. He is Shem's God.

In other words, Shem possesses this God. That's a possessive relationship. Now, the possessive relationship suggests then that Shem is God's people, using the collective sense.

And furthermore, not only is Shem related to God and his people, but God is the God of the Semites. Now, what is there in the scriptures that has suggested that there is this relationship? Now, that relationship to be their God and they to be his people is spelled out in the covenants of the Old Testament. You'll find it in all the unconditional covenants.

It is expressed. They will be my people, I will be their God. He enters into an unconditional, gracious relationship with his people, climaxed in the New Covenant, when the Lord Jesus speaks about how in the

New Covenant his people are to be redeemed through the blood that he shed.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem. Well, you can see from this that it is clear that Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15 has implicitly involved a covenantal relationship between the seed of the woman and a certain succession of individuals. Now, we're right at the fountainhead of Messianic prophecy and we should expect things to be rather general.

The details will be filled in as the biblical record proceeds. But you can see right here that Shem has a covenant relationship with God which will be spelled out later on. It's rather striking too that Shem, that name incidentally means name.

And one of the things characteristic of the God of the Old Testament is his name. He is, that term name suggests all that he is in his attributes and powers. And Shem is given the name of name.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of name. For he is the great name of the Old Testament. He's identified himself with Shem and those who are related to Shem.

And incidentally, he does it by grace. There is nothing that Shem has done to justify that relationship. It is unconditional blessing on the part of God.

Now, this is spiritual preeminence. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem. Now, later on as the Bible unfolds, added to the spiritual preeminence will be an ultimate political preeminence in the kingdom of God upon the earth.

It will always be primarily spiritual, but it will also be political in the kingdom of God upon the earth. Now, let me make an application. Carolyn Custis is the person who is supplying the right-hand side of the bulletin with quotations from Mr. Spurgeon and others.

And a few weeks ago, she had put in our bulletin some words that Mr. Spurgeon wrote concerning Psalm 56, verse 9. When I cry, then my enemies will be turned back. This I know, for God is for me. Now, Mr. Spurgeon goes on to talk about God being for us.

He says it's impossible for any human speech to express the full meaning of this delightful phrase, God is for me. He was for us before the worlds were made. He was for us, or He would not have given His well-beloved Son.

He was for us when He smothered the Only Begotten and laid the full weight of His wrath upon Him. He was for us, though He was against Him. He was for us when we were ruined in the fall.

He loved us, notwithstanding all. He was for us, or He would not have brought us humbly to seek His face. He has been for us in many struggles, in many temptations.

And then Mr. Spurgeon went on to speak about how He was with us and how He is for us in the infinity of His being, with all the omnipotence of His love, with all of the infallibility of His wisdom. He is eternally and immutably with us, for us throughout eternity. And because He is for us, He always hears the voice of prayer and will always give His help.

When I cry unto you, then shall my enemies be turned back, the psalmist said. It is tremendous to have God for us. And that is what He is by virtue of the covenant, the new covenant, which He has made with His people.

Isn't it great to be in the new covenant? Isn't it tremendous to have the salvation that comes from Jesus Christ and know that God is for us, even in all of the experiences of life, which may seem so bad? I want you to know that there is nothing that will take you through the deepest trials of life more than to know that He is for you in the experiences of life. Blessed be the Lord God of Shem. I'm not prophesying, I'm praising.

Blessed be the Lord God of Shem. And let Canaan be His servant. Now the third of the divisions of the prophecy has to do with Japheth.

May God enlarge Japheth. There is a blessing for Japheth though. He is not in the covenant, but there is a blessing for him.

Japheth comes from the Hebrew word pathah, which means to give ample space. And so the Japhethic peoples are the peoples that have spread over the western hemisphere. And you'll notice there are two blessings given.

May God enlarge Japheth. That is, He has given territory and also it would appear faculties, certain faculties, certain enlargement in His faculties. And the second blessing is let him dwell in the tents of Shem.

Ah, He does have a part. He does have a part in the covenant, but it's secondary to Shem. And it's through Shem.

Let him dwell in the tents of Shem. It's by virtue of union with Shem that Japheth has his blessing. Now the, we don't have in the Old Testament the full revelation of all that is involved here.

We have to come to the New Testament. But what do we read in the New Testament? Well, we read in the New Testament of how God has, in Matthew chapter 21, how He has, for example, taken away the stewardship of the Kingdom of God from the generation of Jewish people who rejected our Lord Jesus and given it to a nation that will bring forth the fruits, a nation that Peter identifies as Gentiles. The Apostle Paul tells the story of the olive tree and the cutting off of the natural branches and the grafting in of the unnatural branches who partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree.

And so the Gentiles enter into the blessing of the covenant made with Abraham. They enter into the blessing of God of Shem by virtue of the grace of God later on. And so we are told here beforehand of the blessing that shall come upon the Gentiles as they are united with the Abrahamic promises through Israelitish disobedience in the time of our Lord.

Now the Bible also goes on to say all Israel shall be saved in the future and the natural branches shall be grafted in again into their own olive tree, as the Apostle puts it. But here you see we have almost an outline of the religious history of the world. It's remarkable, exceedingly remarkable that here in the earliest stages of the revelation of God we have what the Bible goes on to speak about in many, many chapters and pages.

The expansive power of Japheth refers not only to the territory and the multitude of them but to other intellectual and active faculties. For example, the Japhethic peoples include the Indians and it includes also all who are to be classified as Indo-European nations. The metaphysics that we know is traceable to the Hindus.

The philosophy of the Greeks who invented their particular kind of philosophy, they are Japhethic peoples. The military prowess of the Romans, they are Japhethic peoples. The spread of the western, of the world toward the west is the result of the influence of the Japhethic peoples.

We are largely Japhethic peoples and the blessing that is pronounced upon them is that God will give them ample territory, which he has done. The Hamatic peoples are most interesting of all, I think, because we're inclined to think that Americans are the great inventors of mankind, but we're not. It is the Hindus who founded, and the Greeks who founded philosophy, and they are truly two great philosophical races.

And we, I say, tend to think of ourselves as the inventors, but that is not true. Almost every basic invention can be traced to the Hamites, the Chinese Hamites, and others, such as the Egyptians. For example, incidentally all we do is kind of develop the philosophy of science and applied technology.

The actual discoveries are made by the Hamatic peoples. The original explorers and settlers of the world were Hamites. They were the first cultivators of the most basic food staples, potatoes.

Baked potato, traceable to the Hamites, I guess. Corn, beans. They were developers of the basic types of structural forms and building tools.

They were developers of the usual fabrics for clothing, and also for the tools of sewing and weaving. Sing a sewing machine company. Hamitic.

Discoverers of a wide variety of medicines, inventors of most of the practical mathematics, surveying navigation, the machinery of trade and commerce, money, banks, postal systems, developers of paper, ink, block printing, movable type. All of these things traceable to the Hamites. They were the inventors of humanity.

And then the great religious peoples. The three great religions of the earth, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Christianity, all Semitic. They were given spiritual promise, and that they have had.

Isn't it striking? Right here in Genesis chapter 9, we have an overview of human history. Oh that our sociologists, you see I got it right, oh that our sociologists and our politicians and others would pay attention to the biblical revelation. How much better off we should be.

Well let me conclude, time is up. There is one race of men, but there are three families, all descendants of one man, Noah. And the great hope of God, from the standpoint of his preceptive will, is that the nations of the earth would seek after God.

That of course they have not done. There is only one place of safety, and that place of safety is in the tents of Shem. There is only one place of safety, it is found in trust in the seed of the woman, and in the seed of Shem.

Biblical revelation lets us know of course that that is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only hope of safety among men. And as the apostle writes in John chapter 3 and verse 36, he who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

May God speak to your heart. May you sense your own need, your own guilt and condemnation, the fact that you are heading to spiritual death. May the Holy Spirit reverse your path by bringing conviction and conversion.

May you come to the Son to receive the life that is life indeed. Come to Christ. Put your trust in Him.

The only place of safety is in the seed of the woman, in the seed of Shem. The invitation goes out to Japhetic peoples to dwell in the tents of Shem. Come to Christ.

Don't leave this auditorium not having made that decision. May we stand for the benediction. We are so thankful to thee, Lord, that we are able to read in Holy Scripture of the great plans and purposes that our eternal God has for men.

We do not doubt for one moment, Lord, that the word of God shall be fulfilled in the most minute detail. Not one jot nor tittle shall pass from the Lord till all be fulfilled. O God, if there are some in this audience who have not yet come, may they hasten to Him whom to know is life eternal, who offered the atoning sacrifice, whose blood covers our sin.

Now may grace, mercy, and peace go with us for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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