

**Pray**

Read **Gen. 9:18-29**.

What a strange little story.

Now, stories in the Bible serve to illustrate Biblical teaching that often shows up elsewhere.

Parables, letters, and prophets usually tell us truth. Stories show us the truth.

And, stories in the Bible are not just sitting there all by themselves. They are part of a larger story, the Bible story.

When they happen, where they fit into this greater story is of immense importance.

So, this little story is not just about a man getting drunk and his son doing something dishonorable, then being cursed.

This story is about all this happening right after the flood, in which God has wiped out sin and all the sinners on earth.

This story is about all this happening within the first family in the recreation after the flood.

Out of this family will come all the peoples on earth, and this little story is telling us something about those peoples.

It is important to understand that at this point these sons of Noah are not little children, they are married adults.

They are probably each more than 100 years old. **Gen. 11:10** They are not young men.

And they probably have had all their children, Canaan being the youngest of Ham.

So, Noah has grandchildren running about, and the tent that he was in was probably an open structure.

And, this story is about sin, that rebellion against God that began with Adam and got so bad that God destroyed it in the flood.

But now we see that sin cannot be washed away with just water, no matter how much.

Sin cannot be got rid of by just getting rid of bad people. Sin persists as long as there are any people.

And, sin is destructive, and never stops at just destroying the life of the sinner.

**Sin wrecks families.**

And, sin wrecks even the best families. That is why this story is so very strange. Thus far Noah has been exemplary.

Now, he lets us down. This is the first lesson about the destructiveness of sin that we are shown.

**I. In the families of the righteous, sin persists. vss. 18-24**

Everyone lets us down. Everyone lets God down. There is not one person who is not infected by the disease called sin.

Think about Noah. **Gen. 6:8-9** And, he obeyed God... in a world where no one else was.

He obeyed God through one hundred years of building the Ark and through that terrible year of flood.

He worshipped God and God blessed him and made a promise to him.

And, Noah was no doddering doofus. His father was a farmer.

He became a preacher. Then he was a carpenter, then a mariner, and finally a farmer. He had done it all.

The vineyard that he planted was a sign of prosperity.

But, his drunkenness is sin, as is all drunkenness.

We live in a culture where drunkenness is dealt with most irresponsibly.

It is cool to be drunk... as most sins are made to look cool in this world.

But then, when drunk people do horrible things, which they usually do, to their children, dates, wives, with their cars...

We are horrified by those things.

This is how we respond to most sins. We do not want to condemn the sin... homosexuality, abortion, cheating, stealing...

...until we see the results of the sin. Then we are indignant. How can people do such things!

Well, that is what rebellion against God does.

*I remember a young man in Elk Point, South Dakota...*

*Nancy and I had just gotten married and I was leading a Bible Study of young high school boys in the community.*

*I was teaching them about the Holy Spirit and we came to **Eph. 5:18**. After reading it we began to discuss.*

*This young guy stopped the discussion, "Wait a minute! You mean that getting drunk is sin?"*

*You see, this guy had grown up in a home where drunkenness was the norm.*

*His dad was often drunk. His mother was often drunk. His brothers drank as well, as did he. His family was a mess.*

*He thought that was just how things were. But, now the lights began coming on.*

*He realized why things were so bad. Sin was destroying his family.*

So, in Noah, this righteous man, we see sin. He is not perfect.

In fact, of all the great men and women in the Bible... not one is perfect, all disappoint us, some greatly.

Abraham is not a particularly good father or husband at times.

Moses disobeys God in the wilderness and is not allowed into the promised land.

David is guilty of adultery and murder.

Elijah runs away in fear and depression and self-pity after God has given him great victory.

Not one person is perfect... well, there is one. Jesus. And maybe that is the point.

So, sin has not been eliminated by the flood. Furthermore, it is passed on to Noah's children.

This is the second lesson we are shown.

## II. The effects of sin are passed on.

vss. 22-25

Your sin never stops with you.

This is important to realize because one of the lies running about today is that you can do something wrong... as long as no one else gets hurt... it is OK.

But, there is not such sin... where you do wrong and no one else gets hurt. Sin hurts you and through you, others. You might not see it right away, but in time it will be apparent.

Here, Noah's drunkenness brings out his son's indiscretion and disrespect.

When Ham "told his two brothers outside" it was not just news. He was not wondering what to do.

Ham was doing something wrong. We know this from vs. 23 when his brothers do what was right..

He was trying to use his father's sin as entertainment. He was dishonoring his father.

Which, you might think is no big deal... but later in the Bible we find that it is.

In fact one of the ten commandments is this. "You shall honor your father and your mother."

We don't think this sin is very bad today either. In fact young people often think that dishonoring, disobeying parents is cool. But it is not cool to God, and the results are disastrous, even thought they might not show up for 10 years.

There are a number of questions that arise from this story.

Why is nakedness so bad in this situation?

There is grandpa Noah lying out in the tent for all to see... I suppose it would be embarrassing.

Well, it has to do with shame.

In Gen. 3:7 Adam and Eve cover themselves with fig leaves because "they knew that they were naked."

Previously they had been naked and not ashamed (Gen. 2:25), but now they had sinned and were ashamed.

In Gen. 3:21 God Himself makes clothing of skin for Adam and Eve to cover their shame.

Eventually, our sin will be covered by the blood of Jesus and we will be robed in His righteousness.

There is another question in Gen. 9.

Why is Canaan such a part of this story?

vs. 22 He is the only grandson mentioned... strange, as he is Ham's youngest. (Gen. 10:6)

vs. 25 He receives the curse... rather than Ham. Why? We do not know.

Realize that this book, Genesis, was originally written to the people of Israel in the wilderness.

They were the descendants of Shem

and in the land that God had promised them were the idol worshipping descendants of Canaan.

So, this account helps them to understand God's commands to take the land.

But, that does not explain the curse in the first place.

However, it is enough to see that Ham's sin resulted in a curse on his children.

And, the rightness of what Shem and Japheth did brought a blessing.

This gets to the third lesson shown to us in this story.

## III. Sin brings a curse. Obedience brings a blessing. vss. 25-29

This principle runs throughout the whole Bible. It is unavoidable, absolute, built into the universe that God has made.

There are times when you cannot see that this is so for a very long time.

There are times when it seems not to be true.

But, God sees all. God controls all. God rewards obedience and condemns sin. Always.

Moses' last encouragement to the people of Israel in the wilderness... **Deut. 30:15-20**

Notice what the blessing is for Shem. (Gen 9:26)

Actually, Noah doesn't say that Shem is blessed. He says "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem."

So, Noah is giving worship to the Lord, who is... or will be... the God of Shem and his descendants.

Already, God is picking out a people for Himself, to be in relationship with... so that they will know Him.

The blessing on Shem's descendants is that God will be their God. No blessing is greater than that.

And, they will be blessed (to Abraham) ultimately to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth.

The blessing on Japheth is that he (his descendants) will dwell in Shem's tents.

At first glance, this might appear to be a lesser blessing, and it is... but what is it saying?

It is a look to the distant future... we are helped by Moses and the prophets, and Jesus and the Apostles...

At the children of Abraham, the people of the promise, Israel, God's chosen people.

God is their God. They are His people... but it is not only them.

Others dwell with them in their tents. Others have been blessed by God's blessing.

Other sheep have been gathered. Other branches have been grafted in.

There is Ruth, Rahab... there is Luke, Timothy... there are Haitians, Indians, Americans...

Jesus gathers them... in spite of sin's pervasive destruction, Jesus cleanses people, all kinds of people and covers our shame.

The flood did not cleanse the world of sin. It takes the blood of Jesus to do that.

*Pray*