



5/3/2020
Genesis 9:18-10

BIG IDEA

We are united in identity and responsibility but divided by sin.

LOOKING BACK

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Invite members to share any questions or points that came up in their family discussions regarding last week's study. Invite them to share ways God continued to speak to them as they sought to apply those truths throughout the week.

- When was a time you observed the sin of another person and removed yourself from the situation to not become involved?
- When was a time you observed the sin of another person but did not remove yourself and became involved and were guilty of further sin yourself?

The latter was the case in today's passage, and it shows us that we are united in identity and responsibility but divided by sin.

LOOKING IN

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| *Have two volunteers read Genesis 9:18-29.*

- Recall last week's passages. Generally speaking, what are some of the lessons you imagine God wanted to teach Noah and his sons during their year-long "quarantine" on the ark?
- How did Noah miss the mark in learning that lesson? Ham?
- In terms of our current crisis and the accompanying spiritual lessons, what caution is there for us that they fell into sin so quickly?

Noah had sinned before God by drinking too much wine and had passed out in his vineyard. Not only had Noah become drunk on wine, but he also passed out without any clothes on. To say he was experiencing the shame of his sin is putting it lightly. Following these events, one of Noah's sons, Ham, saw what had happened with Noah. Ham went and told his brothers, who then sought to honor their father by covering him up and looking away from him as they did so. After Noah awoke, he pronounced a curse on Ham and his family.

- Does it seem to you that Noah overreacted here? Explain.

Noah's response may seem harsh or unnecessary to us, but the indication here is that Ham did not simply observe his father and then report to his brothers out of concern. Rather, it seems that

he reported to his brothers possibly by means of mockery regarding his father. Ham was guilty of dishonoring his father, which was sin in and of itself.

- How does dependence on God change the way we respond to sin compared to when we depend on ourselves? How have you seen this truth play out in your own life?

We should be careful to stay on guard, that we don't multiply sin. Sin spreads quickly like a deadly virus. Apart from continual dependence on the Spirit of God and assessment of our own hearts, we will easily fall into the trap of committing further sin. Ham was an example of this multiplication of sin, while his brothers were an example of the kindness of God, who did not leave Adam and Eve in their deserved shame, but covered their nakedness and shame.

- Reread Genesis 9:7. What was God's instruction for Noah and his sons upon exiting the ark? In your own words, what does it mean to multiply spiritual fruitfulness? What does it mean to multiply sin? Do these types of multiplication simply happen to you, or do you have some choice and responsibility in the matter? Explain.

| *Have a few volunteers read Genesis 10:1,6,15-19,32.*

- What did all of Noah's descendants share in common?
- What was different for them, and what caused those differences?
- In this week's message, we learned that we are united in identity and responsibility, but divided by sin. Where have you seen united identity and responsibility during this pandemic? How does the story of Noah and his sons help you understand why there is division among us and that division may be greater than ever before?

LOOKING FORWARD

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

- Where do you need to seek renewed dependence on God and the ability to fight sin this week?
- It has been said often during this pandemic, "We're all in this together." In what sense is that true? In what sense is it not true? How might this be a springboard for sharing the gospel with people who are grappling with those issues?

FAMILIES

Use the following questions and truths to disciple your children throughout the week.

- Do you usually sin just one time, or would you say that most of the time one sin leads to another? Why do you think it happens that way? What are some things you can do to avoid the multiplication of sin in your life?

PRAYER

Thank God that He has not left us in our shame, but has covered our sins by the blood of Jesus. Invite Him to multiply spiritual fruitfulness in His Church and make Her a light in the darkness.

COMMENTARY

| *Genesis 9:18-10:32*

9:18-19 Beginning with repeated material (5:32; 6:10), the writer launches into a new narrative designed to prepare readers for God's judgment on the nation of Canaan. The familiar genealogy is extended with the note that Ham was the father of Canaan. At the same time v.19 prepares readers for chap.10.

9:20 The parallels continue between Noah and Adam as Noah is now shown to be a farmer (lit man of the soil [Hb 'adamah]) in the new world prepared for him by God.

9:21 As Adam had sinned through the consumption of fruit (3:6), so Noah drank some of the wine and became drunk. After sin entered the world, shattering innocence, nakedness was associated with shame (cp. 2:25; 3:10). In this case Noah brought the shame on himself through his sinful drunkenness. A minimum of two years likely elapsed between vv. 20 and 21 since grapevines must grow that long before they can produce grapes.

9:22 Noah "uncovered himself," and Ham saw Noah naked. This passage does not say that Ham "uncovered the nakedness of Noah," which would be a euphemism for perverted sexual activity (Lv 18:6-19). A parent's sin often becomes a child's stumbling block (Ex 34:7). In this case, Ham dishonored his father and thus sinned (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16) in two ways: First, he dishonored his father by staring at his nakedness (Hab 2:15). Second, he increased both his sin and his father's shame by reporting his father's condition to others. Later, the law stipulated curses for dishonoring a parent (Ex 21:17; Dt 27:16).

9:23 Shem and Japheth demonstrated their nobler natures by reacting to their father's condition far differently from Ham. First, they did not look upon their father's shameful condition. Second, they covered their father's nakedness, thus ending his shame. Their action parallels God's clothing of Adam following Adam's sin (3:21).

9:24-27 When Noah learned what his youngest son had done, he placed the curse on Ham's son, Canaan, who would be the lowest of slaves to his brothers, that is, the slave of the descendants of Shem and Japheth. This curse on Canaan had prophetic implications. In later centuries the Canaanites, the descendants of Canaan, were pressed into slavery by the Israelites (Jos 17:13; Jdg 1:28-35; 1Kg 9:20-21). This curse does not refer to the descendants of Ham who settled in Africa.

9:28-29 Noah's 950 years mark him as the third-oldest human in biblical history, behind Methuselah (969 years) and Jared (962 years).

10:1 The family records of Noah's sons are the fourth of eleven (Hb) toledoth sections in Genesis (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2). The purpose of this section is twofold: to show that Noah's sons fulfilled the command to be fruitful, multiply, and spread out over the earth (9:7), and to distinguish the "unchosen" lines of Noah's descendants (the Japhethites and Hamites) from the line that would be both the recipient and the agent of God's special blessing to the rest of humanity (the Shemites). Gn 10:1-32 lists a total of seventy descendants in the family lines of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Seventy, a multiple of two numbers that suggest completeness (seven, the number of days of creation week; ten, the number of fingers), would have suggested to ancient Israelites a satisfying completeness to the quantity of persons and nations that came into being after the flood. This is labeled a list of clans, languages, nations, and lands (vv. 5,20,31; cp. Rv 14:6). Thus some of the names refer to the regions where that person's descendants settled; some refer to people groups.

10:2-5 Fourteen of Japheth's descendants are listed here. Peoples of the coasts and islands refers to people living in areas reachable by ship, especially in the Mediterranean basin. The fact that each group had its own language suggests that this listing refers to the situation after the Tower of Babylon event (11:1-9).

10:6-7 Thirty of Ham's descendants are included in this list. The geographic or ethnic identifications of most of the names have been lost in history, but they are associated with regions in Africa and Arabia. Mizraim is the Hebrew word for Egypt. Havilah probably refers to a different geographic region than the Havilah of 2:11. Two different persons by the name of Sheba are listed in Genesis genealogies (v. 28; 25:3); Dedan is also found in 25:3. It is best to understand each of these as different persons, and the founders of different people groups.

10:8-12 Nimrod . . . began to be powerful in the land, that is, he was successful as an aggressive empire builder. Like many other ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian kings, he was also famous as a powerful hunter. Nimrod's origins are from Cush, that is, Africa; his empire was Asian, stretching across the Tigris-Euphrates river basin. The order of place names suggests that Nimrod's empire expanded from south

to north, and included Babylon and Nineveh, the capital cities of two of Israel's most formidable future enemies. Shinar corresponds to the ancient regions of Sumer and Accad; Erech to ancient Uruk; Calah to Nimrod; Rehoboth-ir may be ancient Asshur.

10:15-20 The most complex portion of the Hamite list is the Canaan branch, with eleven named descendants or people groups. The relative size and detail reinforce the significance of the Canaanites for later Israelite history. This genealogical section indicates that many of the earliest inhabitants of Canaan were non-Semitic peoples.

10:21-31 The genealogy of Shem, portions of which will be repeated in 11:10-17, represents the "chosen" line of Noah's descendants. From Shem's line will come Abraham, the Israelites, and ultimately Jesus. Larger and more complex than the Shemite genealogy in chap. 11 (26 vs. 12 names) this presentation differs from the other mainly in that it includes the "unchosen" branches of Shem's lineage, especially that of Joktan with his thirteen sons. The mention of all the sons of Eber brings attention to the point in Shem's line where the "chosen" branch splits from the rest of the family. The word Hebrew is often understood to be derived from Eber's name.

Names in the Shemite genealogy that scholars have linked to various people groups or locations include Elam, modern southwest Iran; Asshur, along the Tigris river in Iraq; Aram, eastern Iraq near the Iranian border; Uz, the Arabian peninsula or Edom; and Mash, central Asia Minor. All of the thirteen sons of Joktan that can be confidently connected to a location are associated with locations in the Arabian peninsula.

The name Ophir may not be connected with the Ophir mentioned elsewhere in Scripture (1Kg 9:28; Jb 22:24; Ps 45:9) since the latter name appears to be a distant location, possibly in Africa or India. Joktan's Havilah should not be equated with Cush's Havilah, though the two share the same name.

10:21 The phrase Japheth's older brother is difficult in the Hebrew: several other versions (KJV, NKJV, NIV) understand it to mean that Japheth was the older brother.

10:25 A wordplay exists between the name Peleg and the verbal phrase "was divided." Both are based on the Hebrew sound sequence p-l-g. Exactly what is meant by the earth was divided is uncertain. It may be a reference to the tower of Babylon event (11:9), a devastating earthquake, a large Mesopotamian canal project, or a political division.