

It's a Small World After All

Genesis 9:18-29

(preached Pine Grove 1/20/18; Sunday PM)

Introduction

In December of 2018, the world population hit 7.7 billion.

By 2050, the world population is expected to be a little over 9 billion people.

Needless to say the world is growing in number, but it is also growing in diversity..

There are 1000s of ethnic groups in the world...

Some are joined by a common religion.

Some are joined by a common skin color.

Some are joined by a common culture.

Some are joined by a political alliance.

Some are joined simply because they live close to one another..

But needless to say, the world is a diverse place.

Take New York City for instance..

It is home to nearly every ethnic group in the world..

There is little Italy, Koreatown, China Town, Little Guyana, Little India, Little Australia, Little Poland..

Not to mention Caribbean ethnicities, Asian ethnicities, European groups, Pakistani cultures, Russians, Africans, and on and on and on..

In fact, there are more Puerto Ricans living in New York City than in Puerto Rico..

At last count, there are over 200 languages spoken in New York City on any given day.

If New York City is anything, it is a cross section of all the ethnic groups of the world..

Yet, with all that diversity seen in that city and in the world today, every person has much more in common than they think...

Tonight, we plan to finish up Genesis 9, and we are going to be reminded of how much people have in common from the lives of 8 people who step off the ark.

Tonight, we sit in a world of over 7.7 billion people, but we are going back to a time when the world just had 8 people in it..

And those 8 people are going to remind us of how much people have in common even though there are almost 8 billion of us now..

So, let's review just a bit to set the stage for the verses before us tonight..

The book of Genesis records the beginning of the world, the beginning of the universe, the beginning of the human existence..

God tells us that he made the heavens and the earth in 6 literal days and rested on day 7.

Yet, it was not long before his creation was stained with disobedience and sin.

And though that rebellion was bad, God did not erase it all and start over.

Instead, He laid out consequences for that sin while also promising a coming cure for sin.

Sadly, such grace was not rewarded.

The world fell deeper and deeper into sin.

The third person on earth named Cain killed the 4th person on earth his brother Abel.

However, things got even worse as people sank further and further into sin..

So much so that God decided to send a cleansing on the earth through a worldwide flood..

The only survivors of the flood were going to be Noah, his wife and their three sons and wives..

And in Genesis 7 and 8, we studied this global flood that destroyed the world and the people in it.

However, in Genesis 9, the flood water recede and Noah and his family depart the ark.

Once they left the ark, Noah offered a sacrifice to God thanking him for sparing their lives and then God gives instruction to Noah..

The first command is to have children and begin to repopulate the earth.

Though this may seem obvious, I am sure that Noah and his sons were nervous about bringing children into a world filled with death and the threat of God's judgment.

But God tells him to be fruitful and multiply.

God also reminds Noah that He is the ruler of the world.

Like Adam before him, Noah will rule the world for God.

He is over the animals.

They serve him and even feed him now in post-flood world.

And God also told Noah to protect life in the new world by taking the life of anyone who killed another person..

Then last week, we saw as God made a promise to Noah in chapter 9.

Not only did Noah need direction in the new world, he needed assurance that God was with Him.

So God established his covenant with Noah to never flood the world again.

In other words, Noah and his sons could have children knowing that God would not one day destroy those kids in a worldwide flood...

So the Noahic Covenant was established and God puts the rainbow in the clouds to remind Noah that his bow had been hung up.

God was no longer in the clouds with his bow drawn ready to wipe out the world's population..

No, God's bow was hung on the clouds, so that Noah could get to work with our fear of worldwide judgment.

And we left off last week in this brave new world after the flood.

Now let's look at the last part of this chapter tonight..

I want to read all theses verses and then we will take them in 3 parts..

So Genesis 9:18..

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. 19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was [i]populated.

20 Then Noah began [j]farming and planted a vineyard. 21 He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. 22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 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 [k]turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness. 24 When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. 25 So he said,

"Cursed be Canaan;

[l]A servant of servants

He shall be to his brothers."

26 He also said,

"Blessed be the Lord,

The God of Shem;

And let Canaan be [m]his servant.

27

"May God enlarge Japheth,

And let him dwell in the tents of Shem;

And let Canaan be [n]his servant."

28 Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. 29 So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.

As I said before, chapter 9 gives us so many foundational truths about Noah's world but also about our world as well..

So, let's pull 3 realities about the current world from the world of Noah.

Even in a world of almost 8 billion people, this world of 8 people has much in common with us..

I. A Common Ancestry (18-19)

The first thing we see is a common ancestry..

Look back at verses 18 and 19..

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. 19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was [i]populated.

In a world filled with talk of races and cultures and tribes at war, it is good to be reminded that everyone one of the nearly 8 billion people on earth today are from the sons of Noah.

The term race is not a proper biblical perspective...

There is but one race of people.

The human race.

We talked about this in terms of Adam and Eve, and it is true.

All humanity of all time can be traced back to Adam and Eve..

But even their line was narrowed down in the flood and Noah and his sons become a funnel of sorts in that every person has a common ancestor in Noah as well..

As Noah and his sons got off the ark, they got to work obeying the command of God to multiply and fill the earth..

And today, you see the fruit of their obedience in a world population pushing 8 billion.

Regardless of what historians say..

Regardless of what politicians say...

Regardless of what anthropologists and scientists say..

There is one blood line that unites all people..

There is but one race of people..

The human race..

The reason racism is sinful is that it views one race as superior to another, but that stands contrary to the word of God.

God did not create races, he created Adam and Eve and all flow from them and from the line of Noah.

I can't tell you how many supposed Christian websites I visited the use Genesis 9 to justify racism.

Most see the curse of Ham as justification for the elevation of their particular race.

It is literally sickening to see supposed Christians justifying racist attitudes and actions based on a chapter in the Bible that teaches that there are no races in the world..

Yet, much racism in the world has come from supposed Christian teachers and even pastors..

And the majority of racism is not based on a language or a geographic region, it is based on the amount of melanin in a person's skin.

Most racism is a result of how a person looks on the outside based solely on the color of their skin...

The real irony of that is that Noah and his sons were neither white nor black by current standards...

They probably had a distinct Middle Eastern skin tone..

Yet, the reality is that all the skin tones of the world and all of the other physical variations among people find a single source in Noah and his sons and wives here..

It is really incredible to imagine the DNA of these 8 people have led to so much physical variety over the years since the flood..

Though it won't ever happen, all [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) searches would eventually take you Noah and then to Adam.

Because each of those men are in the line of every person ever born..

Let's move from a common ancestry to a common problem in verses 20-24..

II. A Common Problem (20-23)

Verse 20..

20 Then Noah began [j]farming and planted a vineyard. 21 He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. 22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 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 [k]turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness.

Part of ruling the earth and providing for his family is producing food from the ground..

So Noah like Adam begins to till the soil, and here we see that he planted a vineyard..

Yet that vineyard became a source of sin for Noah as he allowed his grapes to ferment and produce alcoholic wine, which he uses to get drunk and sin.

A couple to make here..

#1 - Anything good in the world can become bad.

There is noting sinful about farming, vineyards, and grapes..

Noah wasn't disobeying God when he planted the vineyard...

He wasn't disobeying when he allowed the grapes to ferment.

Wine was not sinful.

The sinfulness came in the excess consumption of wine.

You see, God has created all sorts of good things in the world, yet the corruption of man's heart leads to the corruption of good things..

Marriage is good but it can be corrupted by sinful people.

Family is good but it can be corrupted by sinful people.

Foods are good but they can be corrupted by sinful people.

Music is good, writing is good, reading is good, but all sorts of entertaining activities can be corrupted by sinful hearts..

Grapes and vineyards are good but can be corrupted by sinful people..

The second note to make is this..

#2 - Any sin can lead to more sin.

As the sin of drunkenness takes its toll on Noah, he loses his sense of self control and uncovers himself in his tent.

Look, sin has a slippery slope.

Greed can lead to lying.

Impatience can lead to anger.

Anxiety can lead to unbelief..

Sin has a snowball effect, so be careful not to let sin get rolling in your life..

The third note I want to make here is this..

#3 - Any sin is too big.

When we think about drunkenness and Noah uncovering himself, we probably aren't thinking of those as the worst of sins..

It would seem that a curse on an entire group of people would lie founded on worst sins than these, but the reality is that God

In fact, the smallest of sins here seems to be Ham's sin of seeing his father without clothes..

We may even ask is that even a sin at all?

But the answer is clearly yes since Ham is going to be cursed for it..

It is also clearly yes because his brothers going in backwards just to cover their father..

So what was the sin?

Well, seems to be an enjoyment of his father's failure...

Instead of covering up his father, he tells his brothers about it.

You see, Ham didn't honor his father here.

He didn't feel sorrow over sin, he felt happy about it.

I caution us all to not let our heart delight in the sins of others.

God is not honored by that..

When you watch a talk show describing the pain of sin in someone's else's life and are entertained by it, you may have become like Ham here..

The same would be true for other forms of entertainment..

Our hearts should should break over the sins of others, not rejoice in them..

No sin is too small to be ignored by God..

The final note I want to make here is this..

#4 - Sin is common to all.

As I look at this scene, I ask myself how could Noah fall into sin after seeing the worldwide devastation that sin brought..

But as soon I think that, I am reminded how can any of us sin when we have an entire Bible that describes the devastation of sin in the world..

The reality is that the flood didn't wash away the sin found in the hearts of Noah and his sons and their wives.

Sin got on the ark with those 8 people, and sin left the ark with those 8 people.

Because sin is prevalent among all the descendants of Adam.

Though the world has 7.7 billion people that all look different, they all carry a disease that is killing them..

The disease of sin and corruption that they inherited from Adam.

Noah was an incredibly faithful and righteous preacher, but he was also a sinner..

And that sinful heart rose up even after the flood waters went down..

I would urge you and encourage you to stay humble as believers..

There is much sin in the world, but there is also much sin in your heart.

That is not permission to sin, but it is permission to grieve of the fallen human condition rather than gossip about it.

A final commonality we see in Genesis 9 is this..

III. A Common Division (25-28)

We won't spend a lot of time here because we will take about this some in chapter 10, but let's read verses 24-29 again..

24 When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. 25 So he said,

“Cursed be Canaan;

[l]A servant of servants

He shall be to his brothers.”

26 He also said,

“Blessed be the Lord,

The God of Shem;

And let Canaan be [m]his servant.

27

“May God enlarge Japheth,

And let him dwell in the tents of Shem;

And let Canaan be [n]his servant.”

28 Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. 29 So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.

We have been with Noah since chapter 6, but this is the first time, we hear his voice in verse 25 of chapter 9.

And the first word out of his mouth is a curse on his grandson...

Many people refer to this section as the curse on Ham, but it is best seen as the curse on Canaan, the son of Ham, the grandson of Noah..

And the reason Canaan is cursed is because of Ham's sin we just witnessed in verse 22..

After Noah recovered from his alcoholic stupor, he goes to find his son.

And he places a curse on Ham's son.

Now there are lots of questions about this curse?

The most common is why was Canaan cursed and not Ham?

Well, it seems that Ham was a righteous man.

He wouldn't have entered the ark simply based on him being the son of righteous man.

So it follows that he was a believer in God.

And believers aren't cursed in the Bible.

Curses are sent upon unbelief..

So the primary reason Ham's son was cursed is that Ham couldn't be cursed as a believer in God.

The second question often asked is why were Ham's other children cursed.

WE will find out next week in Genesis 10 that Ham also has other children..

Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan were the children of Ham, so why is Canaan singled out?

Couple options for us to consider

#1 - Maybe Canaan is the only unbeliever among Ham's children.

If so, he is the only one capable of being cursed since the others are believers...

But #2, and I think this is really the point of this final section...

#2 - Canaan is the father of the people who inhabit the promised land as Israel prepares to enter..

We will review this next week, but I want you to consider this..

Moses is writing the book of Genesis in 1400 BC.

He is writing it under the inspiration of God.

God is breathing out every word of it since Moses wasn't around to be an eyewitness of these events..

But understand this..

Moses is leading a group of Israelites out of Egypt as he writes this..

And where are they going?

Well, they are headed to land flowing with milk and honey that was promised to Abraham in Genesis 12..

WE have gotten to that part in Genesis yet, but God makes a promise to give him a very specific piece of land in the Middle east..

A land that lay on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea..

And Israel is headed there under Moses to take that land..

But as they wander in the wilderness, God is giving them the history of the world and their nation through what He is inspiring Moses to write..

And as Moses reads that history to them, they get to chapter 9 and read about this curse on Canaan, a grandson of Noah.

Well, that is quite important for this simple reason.

When they get to the Promised Land, they are going to find that the land is called Canaan and it is inhabited by the descendants of Canaan.

In fact, the land is overrun with Canaanites, but God is going to send Israel into the land and tell them to rid it of the Canaanites who lived there.

Well look, this is hard to take.

Here are some people who live in the land, yet God has given us this land and they have to go, but we are not too sure about waging war and removing them from the land..

But now as Moses reads chapter 9 to them, they discover that Canaan is cursed..

He is cursed because of sins against his father Noah..

And when that truth comes into their ears, it is much easier to fight against them and remove them from the land..

And this gets to the idea that Canaan was not a believer, and it is seen in the lives of his descendants who weren't believers in God either..

This is also why they had no problem fighting against God and his people...

To get back to Genesis 9 and finish it up..

The curse on Canaan was a curse that meant his life and his descendants would bow to the lives of his uncles and their descendants...

Sadly, this is where so many preachers justified slavery..

But nothing could be further from the truth..

Owning another human being is never endorsed in the Bible..

It stands opposed to the image of God on every person.

It devalues life instead of elevating it.

This curse is not a reason to enslave people.

It is simply an explanation of how Israel was given the land from the descendants of Canaan..

Anyone who finds more than that here is simply looking for something to justify their sinful attitudes..

Yes, Canaan will serve his father's brothers but that is not a sentence to slavery or a sentence of inferiority.

Canaan is cursed but he and his descendants still bear the image of God, even in their unbelief..

The picture here is not of enslavement but of division.

The world today still reflects the division between belief and unbelief.

WE have already seen this in Genesis a couple times.

Abel is a believer. Cain is an unbeliever.

Seth is a believer. Enoch is an unbeliever.

Some of the grandchildren of Noah are believers. Some of his grandchildren like Canaan are unbelievers.

And this is still common in the world today..

The end of the chapter simply closes the life of Noah..

He lived to be 950 years old..

A man of righteous, a man of obedience, but also a man of sin.

Yet, ultimately, a man who found salvation by believing the word of God and getting inside his ark.

And in the end, a man who was faithful to obey God's instruction to multiply and fill the post-flood earth..

Because of his obedience, we sit her tonight as his descendants..

Conclusion

Chapter 9 ends with 8 people on earth, but we leave tonight and go into a world of 8 billion..

Yet all that diversity..

All that variation.

All those blue eyes and green eyes and blond hair and black and red hair and white skin and black skin and brown skin..

All those languages and customs and cultures...

Yet, we are reminded tonight of a common ancestry, a common problem, and a common division among all 8 billion of us..

Yet, the good news is that there is also a common solution in the world as well..

Christ Jesus is the only one to turn to tonight to deal with our common sin and corruption..

I want you to take your Bible and turn to the book of ***Acts 17:22..***

22 So Paul stood in the midst of the [s]Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. 23 For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; 26 and 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, 27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and [t]exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' 29 Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. 30 Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge [u]the world in righteousness [v]through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men [w]by raising Him from the dead."

LET US PRAY.