

Noah's Final Chapter

Text: Gen. 9:1-24

Introduction:

1. In this chapter we have the post flood account of Noah and his three sons beginning with God's covenant and ending with Noah's compromise. It provides us with the conclusion to the life of this man of God who apart from one serious fall at the end, stands as an inspiring example of truth and righteousness. This chapter reminds us of the faithfulness of God on the one hand and the weakness of man on the other. It presents a sobering lesson that our testimony can be tarnished at the end of a life that was otherwise lived for God's glory.
2. Concerning the first part of this chapter, Henry Morris writes, "The first seventeen verses of this chapter contain a detailed quotation of God's own words, given to Noah in response to his believing sacrifice after leaving the Ark. These verses contain the basic provision for human governments among men, exercised on behalf of God. They also contain the great Noahic covenant with post-Flood man, which is still in effect as far as God is concerned, though thousands of years have passed since it was made."
3. We will consider the text under three headings as follows:
 - The Commission to Noah (Vs. 1-7)
 - The Covenant with Noah (Vs. 8-17)
 - The Compromise of Noah (Vs. 18-24)

I. THE COMMISSION TO NOAH (VS. 1-7)

God outline three rules for Noah and his descendants in this commission:

A. The Multiply Rule (Vs. 1, 7)

These verses contain a similar mandate to that found in Gen. 1:26-28. After the flood it was God's will for:

1. The Multiplication of animal life (Gen. 8:17).
2. The Multiplication of human life (Vs. 1, 7).
 - a. The word 'replenish' means "to fill". The phrase "bring forth abundantly" (Vs. 7) literally means "bring forth in swarms" (Morris). It is translated "breed abundantly" in Genesis 8:17.
 - b. The command is repeated in verse 7 for emphasis.
 - c. These commands reveal God's heart and will for His earth. God is the giver of life and it is His will that His world be filled with both human and animal life in abundance. This is opposite to the message of the radical environmental lobby with its constant scaremongering about the world being "overpopulated".
 - d. Illustration: John Reid, an atheistic neuroscientist from Melbourne Australia, advocated in 2006: "The population of the world must be very quickly reduced to 5 billion. And then, as the average level of affluence rises, fairly quickly reduced further to, say, 2 to 3 billion." Earlier that year, evolutionary ecologist Eric Pianka presented a chilling talk to the Texas Academy of Science at Lamar University in Beaumont, advocating a similar reduction of humanity. He received a standing ovation. Amongst

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other things, he expressed that his hope was that the Ebola virus which attacks humans currently (but only through blood transmission) will mutate with the Ebola virus that attacks monkeys airborne to create an airborne Ebola virus that attacks humans. He was basically advocating for the death of all but 10% of the current population.¹

- e. **Question: Why don't the advocates of such radical policies lead by example?**

B. The Meat Rule (Vs. 2-4)

Man's relationship with the animal kingdom would take on some new aspects after the flood. There would be:

1. A new fear in the animal kingdom (Vs. 2). This fear would be in part because man would now become a hunter of animals for meat. It may also be that God placed this fear in the animal kingdom for the preservation of human life. Animals generally multiply more rapidly than humans and with predatory behavior now a part of the post-fall world, humans could have been wiped out if God hadn't placed this inhibition in the animal kingdom.
2. A new fare from the animal kingdom (Vs. 3-4)
 - a. The scope (Vs. 3). Every living thing in the animal kingdom was now a potential part of man's diet. Dietary laws for the Jewish people would come later. The Bible is very clear that meat eating is permitted and those teach otherwise are actually promoting doctrines of devils (1 Tim. 4:1-5). Meat eating is not commanded but it is permitted.
 - b. The restriction (Vs. 4). The blood was to be respected, even in an animal being used for meat. The blood speaks of life and therefore has value. The blood played a central role in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament that ultimately pointed forward to Christ who would shed His perfect, sinless blood for our redemption. Lev. 17:11 "For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul."

C. The Murder Rule (Vs. 5-6)

Warren Wiersbe writes, "From instructing Noah about the shedding of animal blood, the Lord proceeded to discuss an even more important topic: the shedding of human blood...God had put the fear of humans into the animals, but now He had to put the fear of God into the humans lest they destroy one another!"

1. The application of the law to animal kind (Vs. 5a).
 - a. Henry Morris writes, "Man's blood, representing his life, was even more sacred than that of animals for "in the image of God made he man." Though animals share the possession of a soul and body with man, it was only man who had an eternal spirit, the image of God. Neither beast nor man was therefore permitted to spill man's blood. The death penalty would therefore apply to any animal or man who shed human blood."

¹ J Sarfati, *The Genesis Account*, p. 264.

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- b. If a beast took a man's life, it was to lose its life. We are reminded that in God's Divine order, human life is of far greater value than animal life. When an animal dies, it ceases to exist but when a human created in God's image dies, he lives for eternity in heaven or hell.
 - c. If a shark kills a swimmer, if possible, the shark should be hunted down and killed! Animal activists get the priority round the wrong way. An animal that attacks and kills a human being, if allowed to continue roaming free, presents a great risk to others.
 - d. The Mosaic law outlines a similar truth in Exodus 21:28-29. "If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox *shall be* quit. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death."
 - e. Illustration: A pair of man-eating lions called "the man eaters of Tsavo" terrorised railway workers in Tsavo, Kenya in 1898 eating at least 28 people during a 10-month period. Finally, the pair was shot and killed by a British officer called Lt. Col. John H. Patterson.
2. The application of the law to mankind (Vs. 6).
 - a. The legal precedent of the law (Vs. 6a). "This simple instruction to Noah is the fundamental basis for all human legal and governmental institutions." (Morris) God's Word is clear that the death penalty applies for murder. If you take another's life, you pay for it with your own life. Three times the word 'require' appears. God requires capital punishment for murder. Capital punishment is a function of government as taught in Romans 13:1-7 (the 'sword' is an instrument of death). This law has never been revoked and there would be far less murders if governments upheld Divine law on this point.
 - b. Remember: Capital punishment is a function of government, not the church. The church wields the sword of the Spirit (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17), not the sword of justice (Rom. 13:4; John 18:36).
 - c. Illustration: Singapore has the death penalty for murder and other serious offences such as rape. The result? It is one of the safest countries in the world for people to visit.
 - d. The logic of the law (Vs. 6b). The reason for the law is given – "for in the image of God made he man". This verse reinforces the Christian view of the sanctity of human life and that only God has the right to take life.

II. THE COVENANT WITH NOAH (VS. 8-17)

God fulfills the promise He made to Noah in Genesis 6:18 that He would establish His covenant with him.

A. The Source of the Covenant (Vs. 8-9a)

1. "And **God spake**...And **I**, behold, **I establish my** covenant with you" = this covenant came from the heart of God (See Gen. 8:21-22) and was initiated by Him.

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2. 'covenant' = the word is used 8 times in relation to the Noahic covenant (See Gen. 6:18; 9:9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17).
3. "God's covenant was unconditional meaning that whether mankind adhered to his responsibilities or not, God would still uphold His end of the agreement and not destroy the world again with a world-wide flood." (Morris)

B. The Subjects of the Covenant (Vs. 9b-10)

In these verses we note the beneficiaries of the Noahic covenant:

1. The people of the earth (Vs. 8-9). The covenant was intended for:
 - a. Noah. The promise was made to Noah as an individual.
 - b. Noah's seed. This includes us as we are descendants of Noah and his sons.
2. The beasts of the earth (Vs. 10). God's tender care extended to the animal kingdom. The animal kingdom, with the exception of those on the ark, had been destroyed as a consequence of man's sin. However, they would not be destroyed again in the same way.

C. The Specifics of the Covenant (Vs. 11)

1. What the covenant did promise.
 - a. All flesh would not be destroyed by a world-wide flood again.
 - b. The whole earth would not be destroyed by a world-wide flood again.
2. What the covenant did not promise. This covenant did not promise that there would never again be floods or natural disasters. Only that there would not be another world-wide, universal flood like that of Noah's day. The covenant also did not promise no more judgment on sin, just that sin would not be judged in this way again on the earth.

D. The Sign of the Covenant (Vs. 12-17)

1. The Revelation of the Sign (Vs. 12-13). God reveals the sign of the rainbow to Noah. The word 'token' means 'sign' and is translated 'sign' in Genesis 1:14.
 - a. The permanence of the sign (Vs. 12). It would be for "perpetual generations" (Vs. 12), an "everlasting covenant" (Vs. 16) meaning it would be a continuing sign throughout human history from this point in time.
 - b. The picture of the sign (Vs. 13)
 - i. The rainbow is a reminder of the manifold (multicolored, multifaceted) grace of God in salvation (See 1 Pet. 4:10). A 'bow' is an instrument of war but God turns it into a picture of his grace. "God could certainly turn the bow of judgment upon us, because we've broken His law and deserve judgment. But He has turned the bow toward heaven and taken the punishment for us Himself." (Wiersbe)
 - ii. The rainbow is a reminder of the mercy of God in our trials. In the storms of life, God gives us tokens of His grace and kindness. John Butler writes, "A rainbow is a product of storm and sunshine. God's people have a lot of storms and clouds in their lives on earth, but in them God sends the sunshine of His love and grace and

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produces a beautiful experience from the clouds of trials and troubles in lives. To have the beauty of the rainbow, the beauty of God's handiwork in our lives, it will require something besides sunshine. It will also require the stormy clouds of trials and troubles. Some blessings can only come via trials and troubles. So, when clouds come into your life, look for the beauty God gives them."

- iii. "Since the rainbow comes from the sun shining forth through the dark clouds, this symbolizes the heavenly pervading the earthly. And as it spans the horizon, it reminds man that God's covenant is universal, as was the Flood that will never recur." (Keil & Delitzsch)
2. The Remembrance of the Sign (Vs. 14-16).
 - a. A reminder to man of the covenant (Vs. 14).
 - b. A reminder to God of the covenant (Vs. 15-16). This does not imply that God will forget and need reminding as we do as human beings. It is simply teaching us that God will always remember the promise He has made with His creatures. God would remain faithful to the covenant He had made.
3. The Reiteration of the Sign (Vs. 17). There is repetition in these verses as God goes to great lengths to assure Noah and his descendants of the trustworthiness of the covenant He is making. What a comfort it is to have God assure and reassure that we can trust His promises to us.

III. THE COMPROMISE OF NOAH (VS. 18-24)

These verses record the sad account of Noah's drunkenness and the pain and damage it brought into his family. God's Word does not whitewash the heroes of the faith or conceal their failures. This is a mark of inspiration. When men write an account of their heroes' lives, they are usually more inclined to gloss over any errors or failures. God's Word deals plainly with both the successes and failures of God's men that we might be admonished and warned.

A. Noah's Drunkenness (Vs. 18-21a)

1. The Context of his Drunkenness (Vs. 18-19)
 - a. Noah was in the sunset years of his life. In many ways the major battles of his life and ministry were behind him. Such a position comes with unique dangers.
 - b. By God's grace we need to start well but by God's grace we also need to finish well. Senior saints need to beware of a spirit of complacency in their sunset years as if the devil is finished with them now that they are "retired". The devil is all too aware of the kind of damage that can be done to the testimony of Christ if he can trip up an older saint with a lifetime of godly testimony behind him. Satan's traps come in many forms for older saints.
 - i. The lusts of the flesh and eyes. This was Noah's downfall. Old age is not a time to crack out the wine glasses or turn on a dirty T.V. show or movie! Remember, the flesh doesn't improve with age!

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- ii. The pride of life. Young believers aren't the only ones compromising in our day. The doctrinal drift is on amongst the gray heads also! Don't leave the paths of truth and "discover" some new doctrine in your old age!
 - c. John Butler writes, "One of the important lessons of warning in this incident of Noah is that this sin of Noah's occurred in Noah's life not when he was young and inexperienced but when he was over six hundred years old and had demonstrated, before the flood, exceptional faithfulness and godliness in a world gone crazy with sin...All of this warns us that no achievement in the past guarantees victory in the future. That as long as we are on the earth we need to be on our guard against temptation...There are warning shipwrecks all around us of veteran preachers and veteran saints who have fallen into great sin after they have for many years lived gallant lives for Jesus Christ and have stood strong amidst great temptation and evil. Their fall warns us that the battle is not over until we are home with the Lord, and we should never let down our guard until we have reached the golden shores of eternity."
2. The Cause of his Drunkenness (Vs. 20-21a).
- a. The classification of this wine.
 - i. This is the first time the word 'wine' appears in the Bible. It is most instructive that the danger of fermented wine is highlighted by the Holy Spirit in the first mention of the word in the Bible. This is not by accident. The Word of God is warning us early in the canon of Scripture about the destructiveness of alcoholic beverages.
 - ii. The word 'wine' is a generic term in the Bible and can refer to either good wine (pure grape juice) or bad wine (fermented, alcoholic wine). The context is the key to determining which wine is being discussed as well as comparing Scripture with Scripture.
 - iii. It was fermented wine that brought about Noah's state of drunkenness. Drunkenness starts with just one drink. This is the way sin works. It starts with one downward step. Don't be so foolish as to think you can control how far you slide after you have taken that first step. The Japanese have an appropriate proverb: "First the man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink, and then the drink takes the man." (Cited by Wiersbe)
 - b. The denunciation of this wine. The Bible is not ambiguous in its warnings of alcoholic wine:
 - i. Prov. 20:1 "**Wine** is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
 - ii. Prov. 23:31-33 "Look not thou upon the **wine** when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things."

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- iii. Eph. 5:18 “And **be not drunk with wine**, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”
- 3. The Consequences of his Drunkenness (Vs. 21b)
 - a. Noah’s drunkenness led to his nakedness. The sequence in the text is clear. Noah drank, got drunk and disrobed. Drinking leads to drunkenness and drunkenness leads to depravity. Alcohol is one of the most destructive influences in our world today and is linked to just about every crime you can imagine.
 - b. Noah’s drunkenness bore bitter fruit in Ham and Ham’s son Canaan.

B. Ham’s Depravity (Vs. 22)

- 1. Ham Delighted in his father’s Nakedness (Vs. 22a)
 - a. Ham “saw” his father’s nakedness. Clearly this was not a quick, accidental glance followed by a respectful approach to his drunken father. The word ‘saw’ implies “gazed at” (Morris). “The Hebrew in this case means that he “looked at”, but in the sense of violating a boundary.” (Sarfati) Ham’s brothers stand in clear contrast to Ham’s behavior.
 - b. Noah had a measure of responsibility in this. His behavior had a damaging effect upon Ham. However, there is also the aspect that this incident served to simply reveal where Ham’s heart was already at.
 - c. The corrupt sin nature has given mankind an inordinate fascination with nakedness. Our hearts, even as believers, can easily be drawn in the wrong direction by the sight of nakedness in its various forms.
 - d. Let’s remember God’s mind on nakedness as revealed in the Bible. One of the first things God did after Adam and Eve sinned was make them coats of skins to cover their nakedness. Clothing to cover one’s nakedness was God’s idea. On a very basic level, to be modestly dressed is to be covered. Remember, God’s definition of nakedness is much higher than society’s. Uncovering the thigh equals nakedness in God’s perspective (Is. 47:2-3) Sadly, most 21st century churches have become almost indistinguishable from the world with its immodest, sensual fashions.
- 2. Ham Discussed his father’s Nakedness (Vs. 22b). It appears Ham share the news in the spirit of reporting a delightful scandal. Perhaps he hoped to induce his brothers to also make a mockery of their father.

C. Shem & Japheth’s Decency (Vs. 23-24)

- 1. Shem and Japheth’s actions stand in sharp contrast to that of Ham’s. They took deliberate and careful steps to not only ensure they weren’t defiled themselves but also make sure their father’s shame was covered.
- 2. Note: While families don’t have to be stiff and formal, it is important that basic rules of decency be followed in a home, even amongst family members (e.g., parents and children).

Conclusion: Make sure by God’s grace you stay faithful and finish well!