

When God's People Fall

(Genesis 9:18-29)

“The Bible in general is unlike most ancient books –it doesn’t hide the faults of even its greatest heroes (Jesus of course really was perfectly sinless). For example, Moses disobeyed God once and was denied entry into the Promised Land (**Numbers 20:1-12**); God rebuked the righteous and blameless Job (**Job 1:1**) who then repented (**Job 42**); David, the author of most of the Psalms and a man the Bible declares to be after YHWH’s own heart (**1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22**), committed adultery with Bathsheba then had her husband Uriah placed in lethal danger (**2 Samuel 12**); Jesus is rightly frustrated with the foolishness of His disciples (**Luke 24:25**), and rebukes even Peter (**Matthew 16:22-23**).”¹

1. Noah's Three Sons (9:18-19)

Genesis 9:18–19 - ¹⁸ Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, 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 populated.

- **“Shem** means name or honor. These are the Semitic races of the earth, who lived primarily in the Middle East. They are the subject of most of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Israelites fall into the category of the sons of Shem.
- **“Ham** means hot, from whom came the nations of Africa and Egypt and Babylon.
- **“Japheth** means enlarged or expansion. From him came the Gentile nations - the Greeks, the Romans, the Europeans and the nations primarily of North America. These are the Anglo-Saxon races.”²

Read Acts 17:24–27 - ... ²⁶And **He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings...**

Acts 10:34, KJV – “God is no respecter of persons.” – literally, “God does not see the face.” (see James 2:1ff)

2. Noah's Moral Failure (9:20-21)

Genesis 9:20–21 - ²⁰ And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent.

¹ Jonathan Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (Powder Springs, GA: Creation Book Publishers, 2015), 617.

² Adapted from Jerry Vines material.

The sins of Noah were two-fold: 1) He became drunk, and drunkenness is a violation of Scripture. 2) He got naked in an immodest way. Noah disgraces himself in his drunkenness.

2 Peter 2:5 - and did not spare the ancient world, but saved **Noah**, one of eight people, **a preacher of righteousness**, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;

3. The Response of Noah's Sons (9:22-23)

Genesis 9:22-23 - ²² And 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, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

"saw" in v. 22 - the Hebrew *wayyar* in this case means that he "looked at", but in the sense of *violating a boundary*. The same word is used in 1 Samuel 6:19, when God killed 70 people "because they looked upon the ark of the Lord." Another commentator has defined this word "saw" as Ham "gazed with satisfaction." This would imply that Ham reveled in the shame of his father.³ "told" in v. 22 - in Hebrew means "told with delight".

4. The Curse and the Blessing (9:24-27)

Genesis 9:24-27 - ²⁴ So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. ²⁵ Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren." ²⁶ And he said: "Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem, And may Canaan be his servant. ²⁷ May God enlarge Japheth, And may he dwell in the tents of Shem; And may Canaan be his servant."

Noah knew Ham had mocked him and he makes a prophetic curse; that is, he is saying what will happen. He is saying, "I perceive by revelation that this will be your future." This curse is not upon "Ham" but "Canaan" - Ham had other sons who were not cursed. Read Genesis 10:15-19 (descendants of Canaan). This IS a prediction that Canaan will be cursed through enslavement. Judges 1:28 states, "And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out." The Canaanites were placed as servants to the Israelites. This curse/prediction went away when the Canaanites were wiped out.

Japheth (the Gentile world) will dwell (or "fellowship") in the tents of Shem (the Jewish world). How, the Messiah will come through Shem. Acts 8 - the Ethiopian eunuch is saved (Ham); Acts 9 - Paul is saved (Shem); Acts 10 - Cornelius is saved (Japheth). At the crucifixion - The Jews ordered the cross (Shem); Simeon carried the cross (Ham); The Romans drove in the nails (Japheth).

Application:

1) **You never get too old that you are immune to sin.** There are seasons in which certain sins appear more tempting than in other seasons, but every person is tempted to sin (1 Cor. 10:12-13; Romans 6:11-14; 1 John 2:15-17; James 1:13-15).

2) **There is a real danger and a visible warning attached to alcohol.** Here is the first mention of wine that could intoxicate. The damage from this intoxicating wine is irreparable. Today's alcoholic content is far more intoxicating and damaging. These drinks should be avoided (Ephesians 5:18; Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 23:29-35; Proverbs 31:4-5; Romans 14:21; Romans 13:13; 1 Peter 4:3).

3) **Your sin impacts others.** Ham's sin impacted Canaan. Never hold the idea that your sin is only impacting you. Just as a godly man or woman will impact the next generation for good, so will your sin impact others who are influenced by you. Someone wrote, "Sin is like a pebble thrown into a pond of water. Although the pebble strikes only one place, the ripples from its force stretch outward."

³ Adapted from Sarfati, 618.