

The Lord Saw the Disrespect of Ham

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why God placed the rainbow in the cloud. We also saw that we want to help our children explain why God said that mankind is different than any of the animals. In this topic, we will learn more about the rainbow and also see that Ham showed a lack of respect for his father.

God went on to explain to Noah more about the rainbow. Since it had not rained before the flood, Noah had never seen a rainbow before. Genesis 9:14-19 says, “It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which *is* between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth.’ And God said to Noah, ‘This *is* the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that *is* on the earth.’ Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham *was* the father of Canaan. These three *were* the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.” God told Noah what to expect when He brought a cloud over the earth.

The family of Noah had never seen it rain before the flood. As a result, it would have been easy for them to become fearful when they saw clouds come, since the flood was the only time that it had rained in the past. Then, God made a very important statement. He said that when He saw the rainbow in the cloud, He would remember His covenant. He would remember that He had promised Noah and all future descendants, as well as every living creature, that He would never destroy all living creatures with a flood again. God said He would remember that this was an everlasting covenant. The word translated “remember” is a key word because it tells us that when God remembers, we can know that He will also take action. Exodus 2:24 says, “So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.” Then, the following verses, in chapter 3, tell about God calling Moses to lead the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

Here, we see that God sees the rainbow in the cloud and it is a constant reminder to Him of His everlasting covenant not to destroy all flesh with another worldwide flood. In fact, God said twice in these verses that He will remember. Joseph explained to Pharaoh, in Genesis 41:32, the certainty of anything that God says twice. That verse says, “And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.” Anything that God establishes will be remembered and will certainly be carried out as He has said. Then, we see that Noah and his three sons and their wives went out of the ark. We are also told that Ham was the father of Canaan. That is important because we see that God will later place a curse on Canaan and his descendants. God also makes it very clear that the whole earth was populated through the three sons of Noah. This is one of the key things that those who reject God will try to deny because of their decision to reject God and His Word.

Genesis 9:20-23 goes on to tell us, “And Noah began *to be* a farmer, and he planted a

vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 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." We do not know what kind of work Noah had done before he began to build the ark. However, we see here that after he came off the ark, he became a farmer. One of the things that he planted was a vineyard.

We see that when Noah drank the wine that came from his vineyard, he became drunk. We do not know if wine caused fermentation and drunkenness before the flood, because it is not mentioned before the flood. He went into his tent and was uncovered in his tent either because of his drunkenness or because of the heat. The word translated "he was uncovered" is used many times in Leviticus 18:6-19 and 20:17-21. Two of those uses are in Leviticus 18:6-7, where we read, ""None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I *am* the LORD. The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She *is* your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness."" The word is used three times in those two verses.

While Noah was asleep because of the wine, we see that Ham, the father of Canaan, came into the tent and saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers who were outside. As the verses above show, Israel was told at a later time not to uncover the nakedness of a parent. We see that Ham showed a lack of respect to his father by going and telling his brothers about the nakedness of their father. Later, in the Ten Commandments, Israel was told, in Exodus 20:12, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you." We will see the impact that this lack of respect had in the following verses.

However, first, we see the response of the two brothers. Instead of joining their brother in his disrespect, Shem and Japheth laid a garment on both of their shoulders and went into the tent backward and covered the nakedness of their father. We see that they had their faces turned away, so they did not even see the nakedness of their father. Here, we see that they showed an attitude of respect for their father, which was very different than the attitude of their brother. Ephesians 6:2-3 says, "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." We will see in the following verses that their respect for their father caused him to give them a blessing that has had a continuing impact throughout history. God honored their respect throughout all their future generations.

We see that Noah recognized what had happened when he woke up. Genesis 9:24-29 says, "So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: 'Cursed *be* Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren.' And he said: 'Blessed *be* the Lord, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem; and may Canaan be his servant.' And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died." Here, we see that the Lord caused Noah to realize what had happened while he was asleep from his wine.

The word translated "awoke" usually means to awake from sleep. Genesis 28:16 says, "Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know *it*.'" Jacob had been asleep and God had spoken to him in a dream and reminded him of the covenant

given to Abraham and Isaac. That was why he woke up and realized God was with him. In contrast, when Noah awoke from his wine, he realized a very different thing. He realized that Ham had shown disrespect for him by what he had done to him. However, he did not choose to curse his son, but chose instead to curse one of the sons of Ham. Genesis 10:6 says, “The sons of Ham *were* Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.” Here, we see that Ham had four sons, but only one of the four was cursed. This meant it is possible that Canaan was with Ham and his attitude also showed disrespect for his grandfather.

In the curse, Noah said, “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren.” At the time Moses wrote the book of Genesis, Israel was traveling toward the land that God had promised to Abraham. That land was occupied by the descendants of Canaan. Between the time of Canaan and Abraham, the descendants of Canaan became very evil. The land where the descendants settled is described in Genesis 10:19, where we read, “And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.” The previous verses give us the names of all of the families of Canaan that settled in this land. Clay tablets reveal that the descendants of Canaan had no respect for human life. They offered part of their children as human sacrifices to their god, Molech. That was why God told Israel, in Leviticus 18:21, “““And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through *the fire* to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I *am* the Lord.””” They also practiced various forms of sexual perversion.

God gave the descendants of Canaan a long time to repent of their sins. In fact, God told Abraham, in Genesis 15:16, ““But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.”” The Amorites were the descendants of one of the children of Canaan. It was over six hundred years after God told Abraham these words in Genesis 15:16, that He brought Israel into their land and told Joshua to completely destroy the people of the land because of their sinfulness and disrespect for human life. As a result, we see that God showed great mercy to give them such a long time to repent even though they had already become very evil by the time of Abraham.

This chapter concludes by telling us that Noah lived for three hundred and fifty years after the flood. As a result, he was able to see several generations of his descendants before he died. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why God chose to show great mercy to the descendants of Canaan and gave them many years to repent, even though they became very evil. This is a reminder of the fact that the mercy of God is great, but that one day, judgment will come for all those who never repent and turn to Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.