

## **November 20, 2016 - Gen. 9:18 – 10:32 - Noah's sons, Table of Nations**

Torah Readings - Gen. 9:18 – 10:32 - Shem, Ham & Japheth, Table of Nations

Psalm 7

Haftarah - Isaiah 49:9-17 + 23

Micah 7:9-17 + 20

### **Noah's drunkenness**

When Noah was about to plant a vineyard, Satan offered him his help, for which he was to have a share in the produce. Noah consented. Satan then successively slaughtered a sheep, a lion, an ape, and a hog, fertilizing the ground with their blood. Satan thereby indicated to Noah that after drinking the first cup of wine, one is mild like a sheep; after the second, courageous like a lion; after the third, like an ape; and after the fourth, like a hog who wallows in mud (Midrash Agadah on Gen. ix. 21; Midrash Abkir, in Yal?., Gen. 61; comp. Genesis Rabba 36.7).

Because of his intemperance, many of the rabbis said Noah lost most of his former merit. He was ranked as one of the three worthless men that were eager for agricultural pursuits (Genesis Rabba xxxvi. 5); he was the first to plant, to become drunken, to curse, and to introduce slavery by his prophesy of Canaan's servitude (Tan., Noah, 20; comp. Gen. I.c.).

On the other hand, this was the solitary failure and stain on the character of a man God called righteous.

### **Ham's sin**

Some rabbis interpret Ham's sin as not simply seeing Noah's nakedness, but abusing him, which would make the curse make more sense. "Uncovering" someone's nakedness usually refers to a sexual transgression in later portions of the scripture. Ham "told his two brethren," which probably included a mocking of the old man.

One rabbinical source in the Babylonian Talmud claims that Ham raped his father. Another claims that he castrated his father.

Greek myth might mirror this story. Uranos, like Noah, is a patriarch responsible for populating the world. Uranos's youngest son Kronos performs a shameless act against him (castration), like Noah's youngest son does to him in an attempt to depose him (also reflected in Canaanite myth - Baal castrates El). Uranos has another son named Iapetus, the Greek equivalent to Noah's son Japheth (Yapet). The third Sibylline Oracle, a Jewish work dated roughly to the 2nd century BC, directly links this story with Noah's. — See <http://buff.ly/2gobq18>

A few scholars take the view that Ham actually had incestuous relations with his mother,

which could also be described as “uncovering the nakedness” of Noah (see Leviticus 18:7-8), with Canaan as the offspring of the union, and he is thus cursed.

But this is a lot of speculation. From the action of the other two brothers in covering Noah, it would seem that Ham’s looking on his nakedness and then mocking him publicly would be enough to bring a rebuke and a curse.

Genesis 9:24 - “And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.”

The blessings and cursings could have come later, at the end of Noah’s life, like that of Jacob and his sons (Genesis 49) and would explain why Ham’s offspring was cursed rather than Ham himself. The father-son trust and respect had been violated: Noah’s son Ham had abused him, so Ham’s own son would be cursed. (But Ham’s other sons Cush, Mizraim and Phut apparently are not cursed).

Genesis 9:26 - “Blessed of Jehovah, my God, be Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.”

An intimation that the descendants of Shem (Semites) should be peculiarly honored in the service of the true God, His Church being for ages established among them (the Jews), and of them, concerning the flesh, Christ came. They got possession of Canaan, the people of that land being made their "servants" either by conquest, or, like the Gibeonites, by submission [Joshua 9:25].

—Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary

An early explanation derives “Canaan” from the Semitic root *knʿ* "to be low, humble, subjugated.”

Genesis 9:29 - “And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.”

Noah should have lived 1,000 years; but he gave Moses fifty years, which, together with the seventy taken from Adam's life, constituted Moses' hundred and twenty years ("Yalkut Hadash," "Noah," No. 42).

## **Generations of the Sons of Noah**

**Genesis 10:5** - “every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.”

This section assumes a post-Tower of Babel viewpoint, drawing historical lines from this genealogy to nations existing in the time of Moses like Assyria, Nineveh and the Philistines.

The sons of Ham emigrated southward, and their settlements were: Cush in Arabia, Canaan in the country known by his name, and Mizraim in Egypt, Upper and Lower.

According to the Book of Jubilees, the Israelite conquest of Canaan is attributed to Canaan's steadfast refusal to join his elder brothers in Ham's allotment beyond the Nile, and instead "squatting" on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, within the inheritance delineated for Shem. Canaan thus incurs a further curse from Noah for disobeying the agreed apportionment of land.

## **Nimrod**

**Genesis 10:8** - And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. Nimrod = "rebellion" or "the valiant" or "we shall rebel."

**Genesis 10:9** - "He was a mighty hunter before the LORD." The Hebrew word for "hunter" is also used for hunting men.

"Before the Lord" meaning "in the face of" God, which can have an element of "boldly, impudently, in opposition to." The Septuagint renders it, "against the Lord." Nimrod traditionally had reputation as a cruel tyrant.

The Targum of Jonathan says, "he began to be mighty in sin, and to rebel before the Lord in the earth."

"Out of that land went forth Asshur"— or "He [Nimrod] at the head of his army went forth into Assyria," that is, he pushed his conquests into that country. He built (or rebuilt) Nineveh--opposite the town of Mosul, on the Tigris. This raid into Assyria was an invasion of the territories of Shem, and hence the name "Nimrod," signifying "rebel," is supposed to have been conferred on him from his daring revolt against the divine distribution.

[See the separate note - Who was Nimrod.]

**Genesis 10:21** - "...Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber" Eber is the ancestor of Abraham and the Hebrews. "Eber" means "the region beyond; the opposite side" indicating believers' true dwelling place outside of time, in the New Jerusalem.

**Genesis 10:25** - "And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided."

Perhaps this refers to the confusion of languages depicted in Genesis 11. (The Hebrew "palag" - separate, divide, is used in Psalm 55:9 for a confusion of languages.)