

Introduction (Gen 9:18-29)

On August 25, 1819, Allan Pinkerton was born in Glasgow, Scotland. Allan immigrated to the United States in 1842 and moved to Dundee, Illinois, which is about fifty miles outside of Chicago. He was a cooper by trade, which meant that he made barrels. While searching for wood to make barrels, he accidentally came across some counterfeiters. After monitoring their activities, he reported them to the police, and they were arrested. The Dundee Police Department was so impressed that they hired him to become a detective for them. He was the first detective in the Chicago Police Department. Pinkerton became the most famous detective in America, and eventually started his own agency, the Pinkerton National Detective Agency.

This week, I felt like I was working for the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. There are lots of questions and clues in our passage today, but the answers are not clearly spelled out. Some of the things that I will share today are my interpretations of what happened. For example, what was the crime of Ham? What was the crime of Canaan? Why is Canaan mentioned six times in the passage? Why is Canaan the only grandson of Noah that is mentioned. Ham had four sons, Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. Canaan was the youngest son of Ham. Why did Noah curse Canaan, and why did he not curse the other sons of Ham. How do all of these clues fit together? I felt like a detective this week trying to solve a crime. What was the crime? Who committed the crime? How does all this fit together?

(Gen 10:6) “The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan.”

Our passage has three sections. In the first section, we find out who repopulated the whole earth. In the second section, there are at least two sins, and two different approaches to handling the sins of others. We also see the results of the two different responses to sin. In the third section, we have the epitaph of Noah.

It would have been easy to divide our passage up into several different messages. I could have talked about the use of alcoholic beverages. The Bible has a lot to say about the use of alcohol, and that has great application today. We could spend a whole message just on how to handle sin. Finally, we could devote a message to the legacy of Noah. As I prayed about the passage, I sensed a need to focus on the main thrust of the passage, which is dealing with the sins of others. So, we will briefly cover the other points, making a few observations, but we will spend the bulk of our time on the handling of sins.

1. Repopulation
2. Dealing With the Sins of Others
3. Legacy of Noah

I. Repopulation (Gen 9:18-19)

(Gen 9:18-19) “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 populated.”

It would seem like this verse is a no brainer. Who repopulated the earth? The only people that survived the flood were Noah and his family. So, naturally it was Noah's family that repopulated the earth. But, more specifically, it was Noah's sons that repopulated the earth.

Two things stand out in this verse. First, Noah did not have any more children. We find out in verse twenty-eight that Noah lived another 350 years, so he could have easily had more children. When we go back to Genesis 5 and look at the ancestral records of all the men, it said that they lived X amount of years and had other sons and daughters. Adam Noah did not have any other sons and daughters. In our next section of scripture, Noah got drunk and was discovered by his sons. Where was Noah's wife? Why did she not cover him? My theory is that Noah's wife died shortly after they got off the ark. There were no other women in the world for Noah to marry, and so he spent nearly 350 years of his life as a widower.

(Gen 5:4-5) "Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters. {5} So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died."

(Gen 5:7-8) "Then Seth lived eight hundred and seven years after he became the father of Enosh, and he had other sons and daughters. {8} So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died."

The second thing that stands out to me in the first section is the mention of Canaan. He is mentioned five more times in the remainder of our passage, for a total of six times, more than any other person. In Genesis 10, we find out that Shem had five sons. Ham had four sons, and Japheth had seven sons. In all, Noah had sixteen grandsons. Why is Canaan the only grandson mentioned here? There are lots of theories about the mention of Canaan.

One theologian said that when Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible Israel was getting ready to invade and destroy the Canaanites. So, since they were about to invade and destroy the Canaanites, Moses gave the background history in our passage today about why they were to be destroyed. All of this is true, but I don't think that this was the primary reason for mentioning Canaan. I think that Canaan did something that is not included in our passage.

In verse twenty-four, "*when Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him.*" Noah's sons were Shem, Ham and Japheth, with Japheth being the youngest. This verse is not talking about Japheth, for he had only done what was right. This clue is about Canaan. At that particular time, I believe that Canaan was Noah's youngest grandson. In the Scriptures, grandsons were considered as sons to their grandfathers. So, Noah's youngest son is Canaan, although we would refer to him as the youngest grandson. I believe that Noah was single and he and his grandson had a special thing going. I believe that Canaan followed Noah everywhere he went. I believe that they spent a lot of time together. And, even though the text does not mention anything specific, Canaan had obviously done something to Noah while he was in a drunken state. I believe that Canaan is introduced in the first section because he is the one that did something to Noah.

(Gen 9:24) "When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him."

The main point of these first few verses is who repopulated the earth. It was Noah's sons that repopulated the earth. Noah and his wife did not have any other children. We will discover more details about where Noah's sons in Genesis 10.

II. **Dealing With the Sins of Others** (Gen 9:20-27)

(Gen 9:20-27) "Then Noah began 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 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; 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 his servant. {27} May God enlarge Japheth, And let him dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant."

I believe there are three sins committed in this passage. The first sin belongs to Noah. He drank too much wine and became drunk. The second sin belongs to Ham, the father of Canaan. He saw the nakedness of his father, and told his brothers outside. The third sin is that of Canaan. When Noah woke up from his wine, he knew what his youngest son, Canaan, had done to him. You and I don't know exactly what he did, but we know that he did something.

There are also three responses in the passage. The first response is that of Ham discovering his father's nakedness. The second response is that of Shem and Japheth when they heard of their father's nakedness. The third response is that of Noah when he woke up from the wine.

Before I get into the sins and responses, let me add some thoughts to the timing of this. Noah and his family just got off the ark. They made an altar and worshipped the Lord with burnt offerings. The Lord makes a covenant with them. We pick it up in verse eighteen where the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Then, in verse twenty, Noah began farming and planted a vineyard, and became drunk. There is a huge jump in time in this verse. It takes time to plant a vineyard. It would take several years of growing, pruning and shaping to get a grape vine established and productive. So, this did not happen in a day, month, season, or year. This took place over several years.

Second, we see that Canaan is part of the story. Canaan was the youngest grandson, and the fourth child of Ham. If Ham and his wife were on an ambitious family growth plan, it may have been eight to ten years before Canaan was born. If Canaan is old enough to walk around, we can add a few more years. I believe this account took place a minimum of ten years after they got off the ark and started their new life. Sometimes we read a verse and don't realize that it took place over many years.

In the book of Acts, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church. It took months to travel to the various cities. It took time to identify those who were gifted and called to lead. It took time to train and raise them up. The verse did not take place in a day or week, but over months and possibly years. That is similar to what we have in our account today.

A. Three Sins

1. Sin of Noah (Gen 9:20-21)

The first sin was that of Noah. It says that he drank wine and became drunk. There are many that would say drinking is sin. My view is that it was not the drinking of wine that was sin, but the fact that he drank too much wine and became drunk. Jesus made the water into wine (John 4:46), so I don't think He encouraged people to sin. Wine makes the heart merry (Eccl 10:19), and the wedding in Cana was a festive occasion. Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach and frequent ailments (1 Timothy 5:23). There were some medicinal purposes for wine. Paul would not have encouraged Timothy to sin. Noah's drinking of the wine was not wrong. It was the drinking to excess that was sin. In Ephesians 5:18, Paul wrote that we are not to be drunk with wine for that is dissipation. It was being drunk with wine that was wrong.

When you drink wine or other alcoholic beverages, you have to be aware of the risks and you have to set boundaries. One of the boundaries is found in Proverbs 23:20. We are not to associate with heavy drinkers of wine. We can pick up the bad habits of others, so we need to avoid hanging around with an alcoholic. Another boundary is not to linger long over wine (Proverbs 23:30). You might set a limit on the time or the number of drinks. Failing to do that increases your likelihood of becoming an alcoholic. Some statistics say that as many as 40% of social drinkers become alcoholics. If alcoholism runs in your family, it would probably be better to stay away from it, for your sake and the sake of other family members.

Another risk is the loss of inhibitions. Noah took his clothes off and became naked. That is a common thing that accompanies drinking. Habakkuk warned about giving drink to your neighbors so that you could look on their nakedness. This happens on school and college campuses everywhere. It happens at bars and night clubs. Drinking and nakedness run hand in hand, and it is a dangerous risk.

(Hab 2:15-16) "Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, who mix in your venom even to make them drunk so as to look on their nakedness! {16} You will be filled with disgrace rather than honor. Now you yourself drink and expose your own nakedness. The cup in the LORD'S right hand will come around to you, and utter disgrace will come upon your glory."

Another risk associated with drinking is to lose alertness. Bathsheba rebuked King Solomon in Proverb 31:5 about drinking. She said he would forget what he had decreed and pervert the rights of the afflicted. Personally, I do not drink alcoholic beverages. I have been called to lead, and I need to be alert. I have enough problems remembering as it is without using alcohol. I have also been called to be an example, and also to be careful about causing my brother to stumble.

Noah's sin was not drinking wine. It could have helped his stomach and frequent ailments. It could have gladdened his heart. But, he drank too much and then he took all his clothes off. Before moving on, I want to say something about Noah. Noah was a righteous man, and a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 7:20 that "there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins." Righteous people sometimes sin, but their lives are not to be characterized by sin. Noah sinned, but he is in Hebrews 11, the hall of faith. Noah was a righteous man, an example for us all, and a man of faith.

2. Sins of Ham (Gen 9:22)

Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father. I believe that Ham heard that his father was drunk and naked, and that he went into his father's tent and looked for himself, and saw the nakedness of his father.

The second sin of Ham was to go tell his brothers outside. He exposed the sin of his father to his brothers. Ham could have taken care of the situation himself and not have told his brothers about it. We need to be careful about exposing the sins of others. Men will tell other men what their wife did, and expose her. Women often tell other women what their husbands did, and they expose them. Many times they do it in a "spiritual" way, by asking others to pray for their husband because he is doing this or that. We should not be sharing these things without our spouse's permission, or to someone who is not involved, or not an authority over you. We need to learn to cover others, not to expose them. Ham's sins were to look up at his father's nakedness and to expose his father to his brothers.

(Gen 9:22) "Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside."

Children can often become tattler tales of their siblings. "Mommy, Johnny did this!" or "Mommy, Susie did this!" We should get in the habit of asking our children, "Did you go talk to Johnny about this? Did Johnny apologize?" If the child says they talked to their brother or sister and they did apologize, the case is closed. The next question should be, "Did you forgive Johnny?" If they did forgive, then we should encourage them not to bring it up again. If the child has not talked to their brother or sister, we should encourage them to go to them and confront them. We can teach our children the proper ways of confronting sins. These are teachable moments.

3. Sin of Canaan (Gen 9:24)

In verse twenty-four, when Noah awoke from the wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. His youngest son was obviously Canaan, and it is Canaan who is cursed by Noah. My opinion about what Canaan did is the same as what Ham did. I believe that Canaan looked upon the nakedness of his grandfather, and then went and told his father. He exposed the nakedness of his grandfather to others.

B. Three Responses

1. Response of Ham (Gen 9:22) (Exposed)

The response of Ham when he heard that his father was drunk and naked, was to go see. We can all fall into that desire to hear or see the sins of others. I have at times asked people not to share anything else about a situation. If I am not an authority, or not involved in the matter, and have no need to know, then I have asked people to stop sharing anything else. Our flesh may want to hear all the juicy details, but we do not need to hear gossip, slander, or bad reports.

The second response that Ham had was to tell his brothers. We need to be very careful who we talk to about the sins of others. We should talk to the person about their sins. Matthew 18:15 teaches us that when we see our brother sin, we should go and confront our brother about his sin

in private. We don't like to do that. We like to talk about our brother instead of going to our brother. If our brother does not listen, then we are to take one or two with us to confront our brother. There is a process of confrontation that we should follow. Ham talked about his father instead of talking to his father.

2. Response of Shem and Japheth (Gen 9:23) (Covered)

The response of Shem and Japheth was to cover their father. They did not look themselves. They walked backwards so that they would not see the nakedness of their father. Their hearts were right before the Lord. They did not want to see the nakedness of their father. They wanted to see their father clothed, covered, and restored, and unashamed. Not only did they walk backwards, but they took a garment and laid it on their shoulders and covered the nakedness of their father.

(Gen 9:23) "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 turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness."

There is some misunderstanding about what it means to cover the sins of others. Some people think that we just ignore the sins. Some think we just sweep them under the carpet and go on. That is not what the Scriptures say about covering the sins of others. I have found that there are ten keys in Scripture to covering sins.

Seven Keys For Covering Sins

1. **Follow Biblical principles.** (Matt 18:15-17, Gal 6:1-2, Pr 25:8-10) The first key in restoring people is to be committed to the Biblical model of confrontation and restoration found in Galatians 6:1-2, Matthew 18:15-18 and Proverbs 25:8-10. We are to confirm all facts before confronting. We should confront privately and minimize the involvement of others. If a private confrontation does not bring results, go to the second step of taking one or two witnesses with you, preferably those in leadership of the church. If that is not effective, go to the final step of confrontation. God has given us a Biblical model for confrontation and the instructions are clear. We just need to be committed to following them.

(Matt 18:15-17) ""And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. {16} "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.** {17} "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer."

(Pr 25:8-10) "Do not go out hastily to argue your case; Otherwise, what will you do in the end, When your neighbor humiliates you? {9} Argue your case with your neighbor, And do not reveal the secret of another, {10} Or he who hears it will reproach you, And the evil report about you will not pass away."

2. **Have the right attitude.** (1 Pet 4:8, Pr 10:12, 17:9, Gal 6:1-2) We are to have the right attitude when we seek to cover others. The first attitude is love. We should do all things out of love. Love covers a multitude of sin. We should confront in a spirit of humility, gentleness, and contrition. Humility is recognizing that we too can be tempted. Contrition is

looking at the log in our own eye before we remove the splinter in our neighbor's eye. Gentleness helps us get the message across in a way that is acceptable and well received.

(1 Pet 4:8) "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."

(Pr 10:12) "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions."

(Pr 17:9) "He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends."

(Gal 6:1-2) "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted."

3. **Have the right goal.** Seek restoration. (Gal 6:1-2) Paul says in Galatians 6:2 that we are to restore a man who is caught in a trespass. Our goal should be restoration. Ham's goal should have been restoration, not exposure.
4. **Do it prayerfully.** We are to bear one another's burdens. It is in prayer that we can develop the right attitude. It is in prayer that God will help us have the right goal. It is in prayer that God will speak to us about Scriptures, and the proper approach. It is through prayer that God will work in the other person's heart. It is in prayer that God will give us the right timing.

(Gal 6:2) "Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ."

5. **Use wisdom.** Pick the right time and place. Proverbs tells us that we need to speak the word in the right circumstance. That includes both timing and setting. We need to be patient and ask God for the right timing and setting. A word spoken at the right time will be far more receptive and fruitful than a word spoken out of season. The right timing will include other circumstantial elements like privacy and setting.

(Pr 25:11-12) "Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances. {12} Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise reprove to a listening ear."

(Ec 3:1,7b) "There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven....{7b} A time to be silent, and a time to speak."

6. **Develop a plan.** (Pr 16:1) Another important key in turning back a sinner is to give careful thought to creating a plan of action. Sin is not always easy to deal with; oftentimes it is very complicated and requires a well thought out plan of action. The entanglements and ramifications of sin are not usually simple. We helped a young man turn away from homosexuality. Our plan of action included removing him from every provision of the flesh. It required him changing jobs and work environments. His previous employment was with a company where homosexuality was rampant. The plan included counseling. It included accountability and getting involved in a support group. It involved Scripture memory and renewing the mind. The plan was complete, comprehensive and successful. The man is now happily married with children.

7. **Forgive.** (Ps 32:1, 85:2, 103:12, Pr 17:9, Rom 4:7-8) Forgiveness is a key in restoration. It is a key for those who have been sinned against. It is a key for those who have sinned. A quick word search of cover* and sin highlights the fact that when a sin is forgiven, it is covered. The two thoughts are frequently mentioned together. You cannot cover a sin without forgiving. You cannot forgive a sin without covering it. When you forgive a sin, you are covering the sin. When a sin has been forgiven, it should be forgotten. It should not be brought up again.

(Ps 32:1) “(A Psalm of David. A Maskil.) How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!”

(Ps 85:2) “Thou didst forgive the iniquity of Thy people; Thou didst cover all their sin. Selah.”

(Rom 4:7-8) “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. {8} Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”

(Pr 17:9) “He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.”

(Ps 103:12) “As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

3. Response of Noah (Gen 9:24-27) (Cursed Canaan and blessed Shem and Japheth)

When Noah awoke from the wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. He knew that he had been exposed. He immediately said, “*Cursed by Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers.*” The word Canaan means to bend the knee, be humiliated, to be brought down into subjection. The curse that Noah gave Canaan was exactly what happened to Canaan. The Canaanites were brought into subjection by the Israelites, who were the descendants of Shem. When Israel entered the Promised Land, the Lord said to Moses in Exodus 23:23-28, “*For My angel will go before you and bring you in to the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them. {24} You shall not worship their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their sacred pillars in pieces....{28} I will send hornets ahead of you so that they will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites before you.*”

(Gen 9:24-25) “When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. {25} So he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers.’”

Noah’s second response was to bless Shem and Japheth. He said, “*Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem....May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem.*” In the Old Covenant, obedience brought blessings and disobedience brought curses. In the New Covenant that we have in Christ, Jesus became a curse on our behalf and through Him we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Galatians 3:13, Ephesians 1:3). There are still consequences for our actions, but there is not a curse upon us for our sins.

(Gen 9:26-27) “He also said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. {27} May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.’”

III. **Legacy of Noah** (Gen 9:28-29)

(Gen 9:28-29) “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.”

The legacy of Noah began in Genesis 5:32. That legacy went up until the time of the flood. The second part of Noah’s legacy is found here and takes up where Genesis 10:32 left off.

(Gen 5:32) “Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”

We saw a pattern established in Genesis 5. It gave the name of the man, how long he lived until his first son was born, how many years he lived after that first son was born, that he had other sons and daughters, the total years of his life, and that he died. For example, “*Seth lived one hundred and five years, and became the father of Enosh. Then Seth lived eight hundred and seven years after he became the father of Enosh and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.*” (Gen 5:6-8) With Noah, it tells how many years he lived after the flood, his total years, and that he died. We know that the flood was a distinguishing event and that may be why it was used. And we saw that in his last 350 years after the flood that he had no children. As I mentioned earlier, I believe that his wife died and this was the reason that he did not have any more children. It could be that his wife was barren and did remain alive, but with all the other clues I believe she was no longer around when our passage today took place.

Noah was around for the tower of Babel in Genesis 11. He is not mentioned in the account, but he was there. He was there for the confusion of the languages and the scattering of his children. Can you imagine not being able to communicate with your children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, etc.” Can you imagine being scattered all over the earth and no longer seeing your descendants? There is much that has been left out of our accounts on the life of Noah. We just know that he was a righteous man, a preacher of righteousness, a man of faith, a worshipper of God, and who God used to preserve mankind and all life here on earth.

Let’s pray.