

May 21, 2006 AM

**DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN
GENESIS 9:18-29**

1. THE RE-ESTABLISHED FAMILY IN THE NEW WORLD (18-19)

Noah and his sons: Sons are prominent feature in the story (cf. 5:32; 6:9-10, 18; 8:15-16; 9:1, 8, 11)

The covenant that establishes in the new world is made with Noah and his sons (9:1, 8, 11). Connection with 9:18: This is the same family that has gone through the flood in the ark and with whom God established the covenant.

Note the connection with the promise to Abraham: The families or nations that will be blessed through Abraham's seed are the ones with whom God made covenant when they exited the ark. Cf. v. 19: "and from these the people of the whole earth were scattered." As will be made even more clear in chapter 10, the "nations of the earth" all come from these three sons of Noah.

Ham, the father of Canaan: foreshadowing of what is to come.

The Canaanites in Moses' and Joshua's day were the arch-enemies of the people of God. But as we see here, they become so as they betray God.

Moses is writing here in retrospect. He says this because he knows what will happen in the story. But before Ham actually committed the sin that he committed, it might not have been so obvious. (Cf. Judas e.g., in Mt 10:4; Mk 3:19; Jn 6:71; Before he actually betrayed Jesus, none of the disciples suspected him.)

2. CONDUCT CONCERNING AUTHORITY (20-23)

Noah and ground-work (20): the new Adam in the new world.

"began" - This word has been used several times to indicate the change of a situation (cf. Gen 4:26; 6:1). Even though "farming" was as old as creation itself, there is a newness about what Noah is doing. Noah is beginning again, planting a vineyard.

"Noah began to be a farmer" - more lit. "Noah began to be a man of the ground." While farming, or more specifically viticulture (i.e., the cultivation of vines), is obvious from the context, a connection is being made between Noah and the original man, Adam.

"ground" = *'adamah*. 2:7, *'adam* is formed from the dust of the *'adamah*. His mandate is then to work the ground and cause it to bear fruit. But, as we learned when Adam sinned, the ground became the agent of curse. That is, man would realize the pain of the curse through the ground (cf. 3:17-19).

Nevertheless, man was to work the ground with the promise that God would overcome the curse. When Noah was born he was named Noah because, Lamech, his father, said, ^{ESV} **Genesis 5:29** ... "Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands."

Noah takes up his eschatological task (that is, the bringing to fulfilment of God's purposes). Noah's purpose, as his name indicates, is to bring the world to a place of rest. And this is exactly what he is doing in working the ground. Noah, like his God in original creation, is planting a garden for a place of rest. (Cp. 2:15—God "*noahs*" man in the Garden).

Now Noah is making a place of rest. He is acting in his office of vice-regent of God and bringing the ground to a place of rest. And in this place of rest he will enjoy rest. Once faithful labor is completed, man will rest from the work of his hands.

Eschatological rest (21): rest shown in (1) planting of the vineyard and (2) the drinking of the wine from the fruit.

Specifically a "vineyard." The vineyard, it will suffice to say, represents the rest of the people of God. Cp. the wilderness wanderings to dwelling in the Promised Land. Vineyards are only in the place of rest.

Rest is also embodied in Noah's drinking of the wine and resting in his tent. Note: the text never mentions or even alludes to the fact that Noah sinned in what he did. The "fall" in the new world is committed by Ham, not Noah. Noah was drinking wine and he relaxed in his tent. His becoming "drunk" could be understood in a number of ways. Could have bad connotations. But it also has the connotation of relaxation and sometimes even being "merry" (cf. Gen 43:34 where "merry" translates the same word).

This is a picture of eschatological rest. First, there is the wine and its association with rest. As we come into the new creation we

are promised rest in a banquet that includes wine on the lees (cf. Isa 25).

Noah being “uncovered”: Cp. Adam and Eve after they sinned. There we learned that clothing their nakedness has to do with their having an office or authority. They had seized that authority prematurely by eating from the Tree of Judgment. But God honored that decision and clothed them with the skins of animals. Clothing and office go together in Scripture.

Noah had recently been vested with the robe of authority (cf. 9:1ff.). He had been working in his office, but now was the time to rest. It was appropriate for him to remove the robe for a time of rest and relax. Note: it is not appropriate to drink wine while executing the duties of office (cf. Lev 10:9; Prov 31:1ff.). Wine will cloud judgment.

But Noah is shown to be taking his rest. Therefore the robe was laid aside and he drank wine so that he could rest from his labor. Wine is a stress reliever, you might say. God gave us wine to cheer our hearts as much as it cheers his own (cf. Psa 104.15; Judg 9:13; note that God’s heart was cheered with wine when it was poured out as an offering in the sacrificial worship of his people).

Ham’s sin (22): While Noah was in his tent uncovered, Ham goes into the tent and *sees* his father uncovered. “Sees” assoc. with judgment (as “knowing” has and will be also). (E.g., God sees and pronounces judgment upon creation; Adam and Eve’s eyes were opened and they “know” that they are naked.) Ham goes into the tent of his father, sees his nakedness and passes judgment on his father. This is borne out by the fact that he goes outside the tent and tells his brothers.

What is the nature of the sin? The sin of Ham has something to do with an illegitimate grasp for authority. As we will see in the curse pronounced upon Ham’s son, his grasping for authority turns out to be the curse of servitude.

Jim Jordan: (a) Ham discloses the indiscretion (real or supposed) of an authority. Or (b) by telling his brothers, Ham is advocating taking up the robe his father had removed.

The essence of what Ham does is to seek to tear down authority so that he himself may take the position in one form or another. Later biblical revelation gives evidence for this interpretation. (Cf. later biblical examples concerning robes: David dancing before the ark, 2 Sam 6; Judgment against the Babylonians, Hab 2:15-16; David and the robe of Saul; 1 Sam 24:3ff.)

Ham, like Adam and Eve before him, wanted authority. He wanted the robe of his father in one way or another. He despised God’s authority. Instead of covering up what he might of thought was an indiscretion, Ham exploits it by telling his brothers. In this act he is demonstrating his disdain for Noah’s authority. He is dishonoring his father. And, as God will say later, those who dishonor their fathers (i.e., authorities) will not dwell in the land (note: the opposite of the promise attached to the 5th commandment).

Proper respect for authority (23): Shem and Japheth upon hearing from Ham respond by taking a garment, laying it on both of their shoulders, walk backwards so as not to look upon their father’s nakedness and they cover him up. They upheld their father’s office or his glory. They refused to look upon his nakedness.

3. THE JUDICIAL DECLARATIONS OF NOAH (24-27)

Noah awakes and knows: The language of “knowing” has to do with judicial knowledge in these contexts. Noah is making a judgment about what has transpired. This is evident from the words that follow.

Noah pronounces curse and blessing. What is going on here? What right did Noah have to do such a thing? Noah is using the authority given to him to pronounce judgment upon his sons, for good and for ill. God had committed this judgment to man. Man will now make judgments of life and death as an ambassador for God. Noah is exercising that authority here.

Canaan is cursed: Why Canaan and not Ham? Canaan has the characteristics of his father. But other descendants of Ham will be a part of the future blessing of God (cp. 10:6ff. with Isa 19:23-25).

The blessing upon Shem: Shem becomes the line of promise, the place where God will be worshiped.

The blessing of Japheth: head of Gentile nations; will come into Shem’s “tents” and become part of God’s people.

4. THE END OF AN ERA (28-29)

Application: (1) Dominion is the reward of humility not hubris.

Application: (2) We always need to exhibit a proper respect for authority.