

Lesson 23

6. RACES AND NATIONS

6.1 Beginnings of races and nations

- Recalling the previous lesson, Noah came out of the ark and God immediately spoke to him, indicating that Noah would be God's channel, the vicegerent here on earth. We saw that God gave new orders. God changed man's relationship with animals, determining that from now on the human race could eat meat as well as herbs. We saw and studied that there was a reason for this determination.
- From the flood onwards, God was establishing a government, a kingdom on earth. He was giving laws and would appoint people to rule over men. Lastly, we saw that God made a covenant with the human race, a covenant that established that never again would all flesh be destroyed by the waters of the flood, that never again would there be a flood to destroy the earth.

⇒ **II Peter 3:5~7;** *'The heavens and the earth are now reserved for fire.'*

⇒ **Revelation 21:1;** *'A new heaven and a new earth.'*

- Whenever God establishes a covenant with man, God places a sign for that covenant; here God has placed the rainbow, His bow. The reason is that whenever the bow appears in the sky, man and God Himself will remember God's covenant with the earth.
- From the beginning with Adam, God gave man the duty to govern and control life here on earth and this order was not withdrawn with Noah and his sons. We will see that God begins a new phase; he was establishing a government, his kingdom here on earth run by men whom he would choose.
- Although Noah was chosen and the Bible tells us that he walked with God, we will see that the old sinful nature, the adamic nature, was still present in Noah. We need to be aware that this nature is in us, have total dependence on God and distrust everything that is of the flesh. We need God because we still have the old nature in us.

⇒ **Genesis 9:18~19**

- Reading **V.18**, we see something that seems to have nothing to do with the text; '*Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth*'; and then the verse says: '*And Ham was the father of Canaan*'. Isn't that a strange quotation in the sequence of the verse? We'll see later that Ham had many other sons, but here the text draws attention to Canaan. Whenever the Bible highlights someone in this way, we'll see it a lot when genealogies appear, we have to pay close attention to this character.
- Why did the text emphasize '*Ham is the father of Canaan*'? Why didn't it also mention a son of Shem or Japheth?

⇒ **Genesis 9:20~29**

We see in this text that Ham did a very serious thing (**V.22**), and who was cursed, who received the curse? (**V.24** and **V.25**), Canaan and not Ham.

- God is 'perfect justice', so everything he does and determines is perfectly just. We can only conclude from this text that this act by Ham was very serious. In Noah's time, and it should be the same for every age, nakedness was an extremely shameful thing. God uses the figure of nakedness, as we have already studied, as a symbol of total unprotection, a symbol of shame, of everything that is bad. It was extremely shameful to see someone's nakedness, much more so for a son to see his father's nakedness.
- Some interpret this text to mean that there was an attempt at an immoral act by Ham towards his father, but we have no biblical evidence to conclude this, there is even a theology that teaches this. But it was a very serious thing that Ham did. Perhaps he wanted to break his father's authority, as if it were a rebellion. Noah was God's channel, God's vicegerent on earth.
- But why did Noah curse Canaan and not Ham? When we study the events that took place in biblical history, we understand why. What Noah said: 'Cursed be Canaan', meant that Canaan would be for Ham, would shame Ham, would dishonor Ham, just as he had done to Noah. When we examine the history of the Canaanites, the Canaanites who were there in the land of Canaan, we see the dreadful practices they had and why God had them exterminated.
- Noah's curse on Canaan was not because he was 'angry' and said it out of spite. When a patriarch opened his mouth to bless or curse his sons, they were prophecies given by God. They were going to say it whether they wanted to or not. This is proven by many passages in the Bible.

⇒ **Genesis 27:38~40**; Isaac's harsh words to Esau who was his favorite son.

The patriarchs prophesied about their descendants, and that's what happened to Noah. What Noah prophesied happened to the Canaanites.

- **V.26** and **V.27**; God, through Noah's mouth, was prophesying the main characteristics that Noah's three sons and their descendants would have. Servant implies that there would be men ruling over men; it was the government being established on earth. We see here, with the prophecy given to Noah, that Shem and Japheth took the lead.

⇒ **Genesis 10:1~32**

- Genealogies are given in the Bible to lead us to Jesus Christ.
 - **Cam (or Ham) V.6 to V.20**; Ham means '**black or hot**'. We don't know if Ham was black, but the genes that gave rise to the black race were in Ham. Canaan were tribes that descended from Ham and inhabited Palestine; all those peoples who were expelled from the promised land came from Ham. Puth today is Libya; Mizraim is Egypt; Cush is Iraq. Ethiopia and many other tribes in Africa came from Ham.
 - **Sem (or Chem) V.21 to V.31**; Chem means '**name**'. From him came the Assyrians, the Arabs and the Hebrews; Abraham came from Shem. The son of Shem who gave birth to Israel was called Arphaxad. All of Abraham's descendants come from Sem, which is why the Israelites are called Semites.

➤ **Japheth V.2 to V.5**; Japheth means '**expansion**'. From him came most of the peoples of the earth. The Russians, Greeks, Italians, French, Spanish, Germans, Celts, Slavs, Scandinavians, Greeks, Centons, Belgians, Anglo-Saxons, Dutch, Swiss, Hindus, Persians, Bulgarians, Japanese and probably the Chinese.

- This is a very general picture of the formation of the peoples and descendants of Noah's sons; there we have the origin of the nation's we have in the world today; ⇒ **Genesis 9:19**. What we've seen is very simplified; if you look it up in an encyclopedia and start researching, such as the Encyclopedia Britannica, you'll get a deeper insight into the subject.

⇒ **Genesis 9:26**; 'Blessed be the Lord, The God of Shem'.

- Sem (*Chem*) means 'name' and Jehovah is the name of God. When Moses was about to take the people out of Egypt, he said to God: '*I'm going to tell the people, who told me to do this?*' God then introduces himself with the name Jehovah. This is the same name quoted here at ⇒ **Genesis 9:26**; 'Blessed be Jehovah God of Shem'. Jesus came to earth through Israel, who descended from Shem, which is why Shem is the name.

⇒ **Genesis 9:27**; '*and let Japheth dwell in the tents of Shem*'.

- God is showing here that Japheth would share in the blessings that would come upon Shem. Today, when we look at the nations, we see that the greatest extent, the greatest dominion, is actually with the Japhethite peoples. It is these peoples who spread God's Word the most on earth; that's why Japheth means expansion.
- Age of the patriarchs:

Adam lived	930 years	<u>Shem</u>	600
Seth	912	Arphaxad	438
Enos	905	Shelah	430
Kenan	910	Eber	464
Mahalalel	895	Peleg	239
Jared	962	Reu	239
Enoch	365 *	Serug	230
<u>Methuselah</u>	<u>969</u>	Nahor	148
Lamech	777	Terah	205
Noah	950	Abraham	175

* **Enoch** is no exception, as he was raptured by God.

⇒ **Genesis 10:25**; '*in the days of Peleg the earth was divided.*'

- It could be a reference to the punishment that came (*we'll see in the next lesson*) upon the city of Babel, the division of languages, or it could also be the famous division that took place between the coast of Africa and the coast of the Americas. Biblical names always have a meaning.
- Analyzing the genealogy above, we see that the age of the patriarchs gradually decreased and suddenly, after Peleg, the age drops from 400 to 200 years. There may have been a drastic climatic change on earth for this to happen due to the division of the continents. But what is more certain is that sin was (and is) deteriorating the human race and as a consequence lowering the average age of people.