

Tell Me the Stories – Noah

Week 4, Genesis Chapter 9 Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells the Story

Noah Recap: We learned the genealogy from Adam to Noah, 10 generations later. Of all generations, through Adam's sons Cain & Seth, there were only 2 people who found favor with God Enoch & Noah. In chapter 6-7 we learned that Noah followed all of God's instructions to build, fill and live on the ark until it was safe to disembark. We learn in chapter 8 of God's change of heart. God moved from being heart broken & grieved to being committed to doing something new because cursing, punishment & destruction did not bring the change God longed for in creation.

All Age Question: What is 1 thing that you learned in the story of Noah that surprised you?

Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells the Story? – Chapter 9 Who Lives

God lives and extends a covenant relationship with all of creation. Noah becomes the second "Adam" and is given the same command. Genesis 1:28 "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.'" and Genesis 9:1 "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.'" Next God commands Noah saying not to eat meat that still has it's blood in it, as well as not to shed blood of another human (aka murder). Here is another instance of God changing. God learned that he had to be very specific with humans. From commanding God moves to setting up the covenant that was promised, namely that God would never again destroy the earth with water. God also sets the bow in the sky to serve as a reminder, not for us but for God to remember the covenant.

Question: How will God live with us?

Kid Question: What does a rainbow mean to you?

God's Covenant

We use covenants regularly. Most students will create a class covenant or contract at the beginning of each year. They work together to decide what will be good for those in the classroom. The people of God in the Old Testament are often called the People of the Covenant. In fact that is the title of an Old Testament text book. The covenant with Noah is the first one. The more famous one comes with the next patriarch of our faith in Abraham. There is another one with Moses and so on. In this covenant God promises not to destroy and to remain with us. God initiates, establishes and remembers it. We traditionally think of covenants to be 2 sided, you do this and I do that. This 1st covenant is not traditional. It is what God promises to us. In the promise to be with us God gives us hope because God will not let us go. God is hoping with us that things may be different. In our shared hope God is working in us and through us.

Question: Does God did ask anything of humans in the covenant?

Kid questions: What do you want in a covenant with people around you?

All age question: What do you hope for now?

Who Dies?

In the 2nd part of chapter 9 we learn that Noah dies. But before he dies, we get a strange story. Before we dig into the story itself a couple of things to note. After getting a detailed account of time we do not know when this story takes place. Unlike previous chapters that gives us the age of individuals or the months in which events we only have a couple of clues as to when this story happens. We have to dig a little. We know that it is long enough to plant, grow and harvest

grapes and then ferment wine. We also know that it is long enough that Ham has a son named Canaan. This part of the story is complicated unlike the straightforward stories in previous chapters. Additionally previous chapters focused the whole story about what God was doing in a cohesive narrative. It seems like after reading this part we have more questions than answers:

1. What's going on?
2. Isn't it Noah's fault for getting drunk and passing out?
3. What did Ham do wrong?
4. Why is Canaan, son of Ham, cursed for something he didn't do?
5. Wasn't the birth order: Shem, Ham, Jepheth? (verse 24 calls Ham the youngest son).

Noah has planted, grown, harvested & fermented grapes into wine. In other stories dated to this time, the making of wine was a godly action. Noah isn't simply growing & eating items from the ground but transforming them into something else. Noah is also living into the work that his Great (times 10) Uncle Cain started. Later the art of winemaking was an important part of economic blessing for the nation of Israel.

As modern readers we see Noah's actions as sinful. Abuse of the wine. But nowhere in this story do we hear a rebuke of Noah's actions. The issue lies with Ham though we may miss the problem. It's not explicit. If Noah was drunk, naked and laying in public what should have Ham done? Exactly what his brothers did, cover Noah up without looking AND not telling anyone. Noah did not know what he was doing when we passed out and Ham did not protect his father. We can infer from the text that Ham did not just tell his brothers about it but others new it as well. In this story we hear Noah's first public words and they are not kind towards Ham. Scholars question if there was originally a longer text for this story because of the cursing of Canaan and not Ham. The assertion is that perhaps Ham & Canaan spread the word about Noah had done bring disgrace & dishonor upon him. We do not get a full explanation or understanding of the reasons for this occurring. Finally, we do not get an answer as to either a reordering of birth right when Ham being called the youngest brother or if this is simply the correct order.

After reading this passage we are left with a blessing and a curse living into what had happened before. Remember God said that the flood did not change the heart of humanity, Noah is continuing to do make the same choices as Adam. Adam ate the fruit, realized he was naked and the conflict began ending with a curse. Noah drank the fruit, became naked offered a curse and then a blessing. How Ham treats his father affected them all. It also has a negative effect on his individual

family, primarily the curse & enslavement to others. Shem & Japheth on the other hand protect their father which brings blessings for theirs.

Question: What does this tell us about God? What does this tell us about each other?

Kid Question: How do we decide what kind of story is okay to share?

Who Tells the Story

With the death of Noah we are left with his sons who were on the ark and their children. The next stories in Genesis are tracing the family tree from Noah to Abram. We do this through Noah's son Shem. While we are not studying these chapters what is essential for us to know is the father of Abram is Terah who is a descendant of Shem, son of Noah. A brief overview of the chapters 10-11. If you read through the chapters you may find some familiar names that later become places. A key take away is that Noah's descendants were indeed fruitful & multiplied. We traced Noah's lines all the way back to Adam and can trace Abram's line all the way to Noah. The same structure is present as we had with Noah's family tree:

Name of Father who was XX years old when son was born; lived X more years and had other sons & daughters.

When looking at who tells the rest of the story we trace from Noah to Shem and his son Arpachshad all the way to Abram who takes over in Genesis chapter 12.

1. **Noah** father of
2. **Shem** father of
3. **Arpachshad** father of
4. **Shelah** father of
5. **Eber** father of
6. **Peleg** father of
7. **Reu** father of
8. **Serug** father of
9. **Nahor** father of
10. **Terah** father of
 - a. **Abram** who married Sarai
 - b. **Nahor** who married Milcah
 - c. **Haran**
 1. Lot
 2. Milcah

3. Iscah

Question: What do family trees tell us and why is it important that we know the descendants in scripture?

Kid Question: How many generations are between Adam & Abram?

Prayer: God use what've learned about Noah to remember who you and what you call us to do. Amen.