

Noah & the Flood: The End of Noah (Genesis 9:18-9:29)

Expository Lessons from the Book of Genesis

I. Recap from the Previous Lesson

- a. Noah and his descendants were given all animals to eat. However, they were forbidden eat blood. That restriction still applies to us today, based on **Acts 15**.
- b. God made a covenant with Noah (with the sign of the rainbow) that he would never again destroy the world *by water*. Peter reminds us in **2 Peter 3** that the next time destruction will come *by fire* instead.
- c. Peter said in **1 Peter 3** that in the flood, a few people were saved *through water*. Peter then explains that the flood was a type that foreshadowed baptism “which now saves us”. Jesus and Paul also connected baptism with salvation, the forgiveness of sins and the new birth. This also was the understanding of early Christian writers who addressed baptism.

II. Conclusion of Noah’s Story and Life (read **Genesis 9:18-29**)

- a. The entire earth was to be repopulated from the descendants of Noah’s three sons.
- b. Noah planted a vineyard, drank of its wine and became drunk. Even a great spiritual hero like Noah fell to a common sin (as David did later, to adultery in **2 Samuel 11**).
 - i. My own experience with various churches and attitude on alcohol:
 1. Grew up Roman Catholic. Friends and relatives almost all drank alcohol. Many clearly drank too much. However, this was so widespread that it never occurred to me this was a serious spiritual problem. Virtually all adults I knew drank; it seemed that alcohol was a part of every social gathering.
 2. Later I attended a church in Boston where many of the leaders came from the South, where alcohol was strongly discouraged in Christian circles. To those from Catholic or European backgrounds (Irish, French, Italian) abstaining from alcohol seemed odd, coming more from Southern Protestant fundamentalist culture rather than being Biblically-based.
 3. That church over time relaxed its cultural opposition to alcohol. Drinking socially became more acceptable. Over time I noticed some drifting into excessive drinking, and drinking to

avoid emotional pain. Over time I noticed some drifting into excessive drinking, and drinking to avoid emotional pain. There was little or no preaching against drunkenness.

4. Later still, I came into contact with Christians from the conservative Anabaptist/Mennonite world. I learned that in many of those churches you could face stiff opposition for drinking wine, perhaps even to the point of being put out of the church. On the other hand, I was told by a former Amish man that the Amish would make their own wine and drink it!
- ii. Let's take a look at what the New Testament says regarding the sin of drunkenness. First, what Jesus said:
1. In **Matthew chapters 24 and 25** Jesus tells several parables to encourage us to be prepared for his return. In **Matthew 24:45-51** Jesus tells a parable of two servants who were set over their master's household. The wise one feeds and takes care of his fellow servants. In contrast, the evil one "begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with drunkards". Jesus says that when the master returns at an unexpected hour, "he...will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
 2. Jesus also issues a warning about his Second Coming in **Luke 21:34-36**: "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that the Day will come on you unexpectedly... Watch therefore and pray always..."
- iii. Second, let's consider what Peter and Paul said about drunkenness:
1. **1 Peter 4:3-5** "For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles – when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."
 2. **Galatians 5:19-21** (Paul was addressing Christians here) "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

3. Similarly, in **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** Paul warns the Christians, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you...”
- iv. Conclusions regarding drunkenness:
1. Drunkenness is a very serious sin. Jesus warned us not to become complacent and get ensnared with this.
 2. Throughout history, getting drunk has been associated with casting off all restraint and getting into even more sin: immorality, idolatry, pagan revelry, and violence.
 - a. In the story of the golden calf, while going down the mountain Joshua remarks to Moses, “It is...the noise of those that begin the banquet of wine that I hear.” Then they see the golden calf and the people dancing (**Exodus 32:18-19**).
 - b. Paul recounts this event when warning Christians not to fall into the same four sins that kept the Jews out of their ‘Promised Land’. In **1 Corinthians 10:7** he says, “Do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play””.
 - c. We see the same today. Getting intoxicated at college drinking parties, singles bars or in other contexts numbs people’s consciences and deadens their inhibitions. It is the classic prelude to sexual immorality and violence.
 3. Drunkenness is a sin, not a disease. Certainly some people are more susceptible to it than others (like many other sins). Peter and Paul were addressing Christians who had been involved in that and other worldly sins before they became Christians, who had repented.
- v. Are Christians permitted to drink any alcohol (such as wine) at all, if they do not drink to the point of ‘getting drunk’?
1. In **Luke 7:33-34** Jesus said, “For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say,

‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’”

- a. The term ‘winebibber’ (quoted from the NKJV, above) is an old fashioned word that means “one who drinks much wine” (as defined in Noah Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language*).
 - b. In his own day, Jesus was criticized by the religious authorities for drinking wine and for associating with others who did as well.
 - c. It says in **Luke 1:15** that John the Baptist was set apart from birth to “drink neither wine nor strong drink”. In contrast, Jesus did drink wine.
2. Jesus’ first miracle was at the wedding in Cana, when they ran out of wine. After tasting the wine, the master of the feast says to the groom in **John 2:10**, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!”
 - a. It seems pretty clear from context that this is referring to normal wine that contained alcohol, not unfermented grape juice.
 3. Paul teaches in **1 Corinthians 10** and **Romans 14** that all types of meat and drink are from God, and are acceptable for us provided we do not violate our consciences.
 4. In **Romans 14:21** Paul says, “It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.”
 - a. We need to respect the consciences of others; we should not use our freedom to put a stumbling block in front of others.
 5. One of the qualifications for a bishop/elder is that he is “not given to wine”. (**1 Timothy 3:3** and **Titus 1:7**)
 6. Paul also says of the older women who would teach the younger ones, that be “not given to much wine”. (**Titus 2:3**)
 7. Paul told Timothy to “No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities.” (**1 Timothy 5:23**)
- vi. Take-aways regarding Christian attitude toward alcohol

1. We must recognize drunkenness for the serious sin that it is (despite its popularity on campus or in the working world or different sub-cultures). Need to repent of it to become a Christian, and vigilant afterward. Those who go back to living that way will not inherit the kingdom of God; they will be lost in the end!
 2. Need to watch out for our brothers or sisters who may be slipping into this. Ask questions, and speak up. Be your brother's keeper on this. We have an enemy.
 3. Jesus drank wine, not grape juice. I realize that this point may offend many very religious people. However, Paul teaches that while *drunkenness* is a sin, there is nothing inherently wrong with drinking wine in moderation.
 4. Those Christians who choose to abstain from drinking alcohol should not look down on those who drink in moderation; and those who drink should not look down on those who abstain. We need to respect and be totally unified with each other.
 5. For those prone toward over-drinking and drunkenness, it's best not to drink at all.
 6. Best not to drink in an occasion where it could tempt someone else to stumble into drunkenness.
 7. The same principles apply toward other drugs which are or may become legal: whether available through prescription medication or otherwise. Don't get intoxicated.
 8. Even faithful, righteous Noah fell into this sin, so don't ever think we are above it!
- c. (Continuing with the story of Noah getting drunk) Ham sees his father's drunken and naked condition and tells his two brothers, outside. Shem and Japheth treat their father respectfully and cover him up.
- i. The two older brothers show great respect for their father in his time of spiritual weakness. They honor their father and protect him, turning their faces away to avoid seeing him naked.
 - ii. Shem and Japheth do not give way to curiosity nor a desire to see someone's exposed body. Curiosity for seeing naked flesh continues to get people into all kinds of trouble today!
- d. After Noah becomes sober he directs a curse upon Ham's descendant, Canaan, because of what Ham did.

- e. Noah lives 350 years after the flood and dies at the age of 950.

III. Looking Back: Did Noah Foreshadow Jesus?

a. Wisdom of Solomon 14 reference to water + wood

- i. Context: The book **Wisdom of Solomon**, by a Jewish author, is thought to be written shortly before the time of Christ. It was highly respected in the early church. It is found in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox bibles, as well as in the original (1611) King James Version.
- ii. **Wisdom of Solomon chapters 13-15** provides an extended discussion about the foolishness of idolatry, similar to **Isaiah 44** and **Habakkuk 2:18-20**. It talks about so-called 'gods' that people made out of metal, stone, wood and clay. Within that context, **Wisdom chapter 14** talks about various uses of *wood*. One craftsman can take wood and form into something useful and life-saving (a boat on the sea); while another man can turn it into something evil and destructive (an idol, a false god). In the midst of this chapter is a passage that many have connected to Christ. I find it fascinating; consider carefully what it says:
 - iii. (**Wisdom of Solomon 14:6-7**) "For even in the beginning, when arrogant giants perished, the hope of the world took refuge in a boat, and piloted by Your hand it left to the world the seed for a family. For the wood was blessed through which righteousness comes."
 - 1. This passage makes me think of Jesus, "the hope of the world" who "left to the world the seed for a family";
 - 2. Also, the statement, "the wood...blessed through which righteousness comes" makes me think of the cross of Christ.
- b. A comment by one early Christian writer also made me think of the **Wisdom 14** passage just discussed. Justin Martyr (c. 160 AD), in chapter 138 of *Dialogue with Trypho*, stated that Noah actually foreshadowed Jesus. Justin went on to say,
 - i. "For Christ, being the first-born over every creature, became again the chief of another race regenerated through himself by water, and faith, and wood, containing the mystery of the cross; even as Noah was saved by wood when he rode over the water with his household."
 - ii. (Justin later concludes) "But the whole earth, as the Scripture says, was inundated, and the water rose in height fifteen cubits above all the mountains; so that it is evident that it was not spoken to the land, but to the people who obeyed Him; for whom also He had before prepared a resting-place in Jerusalem, as was previously

demonstrated by all the symbols of the deluge; I mean by water, faith and wood, those who are afore-prepared, and who repent of their sins which they have committed, shall escape the impending judgment of God.” (ANF v.1, p.268)

- iii. Justin makes a connection that Noah foreshadowed Christ by one man saving the whole world through the combination of faith + wood + water. Just as today we are saved by the same three things:
 - 1. our faith in Jesus Christ;
 - 2. his crucifixion on the wooden cross for us; and
 - 3. the waters of baptism, where we are buried with Christ and born again.
- c. Early Christian writers commented on the significance of ‘Water + Wood’ throughout the OT as foreshadowing God’s plan to redeem us.
 - i. *Epistle of Barnabas* (c. 70-100 AD)
 - 1. Barnabas saw this foreshadowing in **Psalm 1:3**, where it says of the blessed man, “He shall be like a tree planted by streams of waters, that produces its fruit in its season; and its leaf shall not wither, and whatever it does shall prosper.”
 - 2. After quoting the passage, Barnabas comments, “Mark how He has described at once both the water and the cross. For these words imply, Blessed are they who, placing their trust in the cross, have gone down into the water; for, says He, they shall receive their reward in due time: then he declares, I will recompense them. But now he says, ‘Their leaves shall not fade.’ This means that every word which proceeds out of your mouth in faith and love shall tend to bring conversion and hope to many.” (ANF v.1, p.144)
 - 3. Whether or not you agree with the connection made by Barnabas, consider some others made by Justin, below.
 - ii. *Dialogue with Trypho* (c. 160 AD) by Justin Martyr provides multiple examples of water + wood foreshadowings in the Old Testament. (ANF v.1, p.242)
 - 1. Justin also points to the **Psalm 1:3** example, “tree planted by streams of waters”, mentioned earlier by Barnabas.
 - 2. Jacob placed peeled wood branches into water troughs. That changed the sheep; Jacob was able to build a new flock. (**Genesis 30:37-43**)

3. Moses raised his wooden staff and parted the waters of the Red Sea. (**Exodus 14:16-21**)
 4. Moses cast a piece of wood into the bitter waters of Marah, making them sweet and drinkable. (**Exodus 15:22-25**)
 5. Moses used his wooden staff to bring water from the rock. (**Exodus 17:5-7**)
 6. David wrote about “Your rod and your staff they comfort me”, in **Psalm 23:4**, which Justin connected to the cross of Christ. Right before that it says, “He leads me beside the still waters, he restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake”. (**Psalm 23:2-3**)
 7. Elisha cast a stick of wood into the Jordan River and made the lost iron axe float. (**2 Kings 6:5-7**)
- iii. Early Christian writers recognized plenty of examples where amazing, miraculous things happen when faith + water + wood come together, starting with the story of Noah’s ark. They saw this as foreshadowing how God was planning to save us, again through faith + wood + water!
- d. With this connection in mind, with Noah’s ark foreshadowing Jesus, let’s take one last look back at Noah before we leave his grave. What would you write on Noah’s tombstone to capture the significance of who he was, and what he did? Maybe, “Here lies the man who saved the whole world”; or, “If you are standing here, you are descended from this man”. And who would that make you think of? Consider the parallels between Noah and Jesus.
- i. Noah was the one man whom God used to save the entire human race.
 - ii. He became ‘the second Adam’, from whom we all are descended.
 - iii. He did everything exactly as God told him.
 - iv. He was a famous “preacher of righteousness”. (**2 Peter 2:5**)
 - v. Through him a remnant, a righteous few, would be saved; while most would be destroyed.
 - vi. He saved some of all kinds; from the clean and unclean (consider Jews + Gentiles; making disciples and saving men from all nations).
 - vii. He saved them by faith + water + wood.
 - viii. He was accused of drinking too much wine (consider Jesus in **Luke 7:33-34**)!
 - ix. He brought in a new covenant.

IV. Conclusions from This Lesson

- a. Even a hero of faith like Noah could fall into drunkenness; so don't think you are above it. We must be vigilant to the end. While the New Testament gives us freedom to drink wine in moderation, drunkenness will disqualify us from the kingdom of God. We also need to be our brother's keeper and help those who struggle with the sin of drunkenness.
- b. Consider the amazing things that happen throughout the Old Testament when faith + water + wood come together. Early Christian writers saw this as foreshadowing God's plan to save us.
- c. In many ways, Noah was a type or pattern of Christ, the one man through whom the world would be saved.

V. How Much We Can Learn from the Noah's Ark Story (Genesis 6-10)

- a. Why did it take us four lessons just to cover the simple story of Noah and the great flood? Because it touches on almost every area of the gospel!
- b. Things that the Noah story touches on, with significance for us today include:
 - i. A classic example for Christians to define true saving faith; it requires both belief + obedient action. (**Hebrews 11:1-2, 11:7**)
 - ii. An example of the kind of holy, reverent fear that God wants Christians to have (**Hebrews 11:7, 12:28-29**)
 - iii. Introduction to significant terms, 'righteousness' and the 'favor/grace' of God
 - iv. Foreshadowing of the final day of judgment: will come by surprise, with only a few saved
 - v. A type and foreshadowing of Christian baptism (**1 Peter 3:19-21**)
 - vi. Foreshadowing of our own salvation and the cross: we also will be saved by wood + water + faith.
 - vii. Noah's life foreshadows Jesus Christ himself: the one righteous man who would save the whole world.
- c. Lesson for all: from now on, whenever you are reading a 'familiar' story from the Old Testament, I hope that you will open your eyes to see all of the treasure that is in there, for the benefit of Christians today!