

The account of Noah ends with an origin story of earth’s dispersed peoples. National destinies are forged when Noah renders judgment for each son’s response to his drinking wine and disrobing to lay in his tent. Enjoy rest and relief from our painful toil first won by Noah and finally by Christ our true Man of Rest.

Introduction – There’s a chapter in the OT (Dt 25) where Moses lists miscellaneous laws for Israel.

Background – In terms of the length of his story (four chapters), Noah is the first major character in Genesis after Adam. This last episode gathers together and concludes the themes of Noah’s life, while at the same time foreshadowing the full scope of Scripture’s unfolding drama of worldwide redemption.

I. Setting the Scene: The Man of the Soil

A. Noah’s fruitful family will be dispersed to fill the whole earth (vv. 18-19, 28-29; cf. Gen 10)

Having only three sons and no daughters is not many children to begin populating the earth. But Noah’s family proved prolifically fruitful as will become clear in the next chapter. In verses 28-29, Noah’s lifespan is recorded as 950 years! Only Methuselah and Jared lived longer—when Noah finally died he was old and full of fruitful years. In verses 18 and 19 before the last Noah story begins, the narrator inserts two hints that foreshadow key features of Israel’s OT history. First is the parenthetical comment that Ham was the father of an as-yet unknown biblical character: Canaan. Canaan will figure prominently in Noah’s pronouncement in verse 25, and the infamous Canaanites will settle in the land God will later promise to the patriarchs as their future inheritance. Second is the idea that all people will eventually be dispersed (scattered) over the whole earth. Genesis 11 will provide the backstory on the worldwide dispersion of humanity when God divided them into ethnic-geographic nations. Here are two tiny breadcrumbs that transition the reader to the patriarchal world.

B. Noah got drunk on wine from his fruitful vineyard and lay uncovered in his tent (vv. 20-21)

Noah began to be a farmer, a “man of the soil.” The Hebrew word for “soil” sounds like Adam. Noah is the new Adam who transitions from being a preacher of righteousness and an ark builder (Heb 11:7; 2 Pet 2:5), to a retired man quietly working his garden. Pay close attention. Many interpreters veer off track by jumping to the conclusion that righteous Noah sinned by getting drunk on wine. But to situate this scene in the larger Noah story is to find hard-working Noah finally able to get some rest and enjoy the fruit of his labors in the privacy of his personal quarters. Although the Bible certainly says drunkenness is a dangerous sin to both flesh and spirit (Ex 21:15; ; Pr 21:17; 23:20-21, 29-35; Isa 5:11-12, 20-24; 28:7; Lam 4:21; Hab 2:15; 1 Cor 6:10; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:18), it also portrays the fermented fruit of the vine as a blessing that makes the heart merry (Num 15:5-10; Dt 14:26; Jdg 9:13; Ps 104:15; Isa 55:1; Lk 22:14-20; Jn 2:1-11). Noah is simply feasting and resting which always entails eating and drinking under the blessing of our Creator God (cf. Gen 43:34; Ex 24:11; Jn 2:1-11). We should conclude, yes, that Noah found himself in an inebriated and compromised position partly of his own making. But no, the sin highlighted in this story is certainly not his.

II. Discerning the Sin: The Man with the Robe

A. Ham invaded father’s tent, saw him naked, then usurped his royal mantle-robe (vv. 22-23a)

Which brings us to the question of what *is* the sin highlighted in this passage. Clearly it is Ham’s sin. But what exactly did he do to Noah? Actually there is much debate on this because the story is a little strange and the punishment doesn’t appear to fit. Various theories focus on the OT euphemism that describes sexual immorality as “uncovering” someone’s nakedness (Lev 18). They all view Ham’s sin as sexual in nature, but as a means to exercise dominance over his father’s authority (cf. 2 Sam 16:21-

22). Read verses 21-22 carefully and you'll see it doesn't say Ham "uncovered his father's nakedness." Noah "uncovered himself" and Ham "saw the nakedness of this father." Without invitation, Ham invaded the private domain of his father, witnessed Noah naked in a drunken sleep, grabbed the patriarch's mantle-robe of authority, and went to Shem and Japheth to recruit them in his scheme. Where does it say Ham seized Noah's robe? It's only a subtle hint that surmises from Noah's office as the new Adam who serves his family as prophet (vv. 25-27), priest (Gen 8:20), and king (Gen 9:1-7, 20). The hint is in verse 23 that says the other brothers took "the robe" not just "a robe" (the Hebrew includes a definite article for "the") to re-cover Noah, strongly implying Ham completed his father's symbolic disrobing by grabbing the patriarch's mantle to usurp authority.

B. Shem and Japheth averted their eyes, covered father, then restored his mantle-robe (v. 23)

Why was it so urgent for Noah's righteous sons to take their turn invading father's tent? Noah's nakedness is already sufficiently "covered" by the tent. Surely Noah has other garments to clothe himself. Noah must have his sons immediately return his mantle-robe as covering to symbolically restore his authority. Also notice how it says they carried Noah's robe inside the tent. Why not carry it in hand? Why are two brothers necessary to return the robe? By draping it across their shoulders, the sons function as pillars supporting Noah's mantle of authority (cf. Ex 17:11-12). Walking backwards while supporting the robe is a key detail. One, Noah is uncovered, so they must avert their eyes so as not to bring father shame and dishonor. And two, carrying the robe on their shoulders both returns the robe to its rightful owner and displays loyal submission to their father. Shem and Japheth prove they are not party to Ham's usurpation and rebellion.

III. Interpreting the Symbolism: The Man of Our Rest

A. Bestowed blessing: the Man rendered judgment of enlarged dominion/servitude (vv. 24-27)

Some are troubled that Ham the father did the deed but Canaan the son suffered the punishment. But since the passage is an origin story of nations, Noah has in mind not 2 people (Ham and Canaan) but one people (the Canaanites as one particular nation that will descend from Ham). Ham overreached for authority to be master of his father and brothers, so Noah curses Ham's son with abject servitude to his brothers. Because the LORD is blessed above all, so the Shemites will be blessed above all nations. Noah also blessed Japheth's descendants with enlarged dominion, and yet Japheth will not overshadow Shem. In rendering right judgment Noah is a forerunner of Jesus Christ, the true Noah who bestows blessing to enlarge the inheritance of all those in his family by faith. The Lord Jesus also bestows the curse to enlarge the punishment on all those who would grasp at his mantle to disrobe and shame and usurp him. Kings and princes who raised their fists against God's anointed one shrink in fear and defeat (Ps 2). The only way out of Canaan's curse is to honor the True Noah.

B. Fulfilled prophecy: the Man brought rest/relief from painful toil (vv. 20-21; cf. Gen 5:29)

Remember Noah's father Lamech's prophecy (Gen 5:29). The man named Rest indeed brought rest and relief from our painful toil. Noah planted a vineyard and there is no hint of curse on his ground. He's the patron saint of the Sabbath feast. And his life trajectory promises rest and relief from the ravages of a fallen world. How restless the saints before the Flood must have felt living in a corrupt society. Again Jesus is the True Noah, whose vineyard yields Christians as his vine branches that bear much spiritual fruit. Jesus labored to save his people as a preacher of the gospel, was baptized on the cross as his trial by ordeal, and rose again to eternal life to enter his forever Sabbath Day rest. He invites us into his heavenly tent to eat bread and drink wine together. Taste a sample of firstfruits wine until the last day when we will feast on the harvest fruit at the table of the Lord.

Conclusion – Like Noah, we straddle two worlds. We work and rest and feast as rhythms of life with the new world on the horizon where Jesus our Savior awaits. Submit to his Lordship. Revere him for his mantle-robe dipped in his own blood. By his and our resurrections we'll get to the Promised Land. Amen.

1 Original Language, Personal Translation, and Textual Notes

Verse	Hebrew	Literal Translation
Gen 9:18	וַיְהִיוּ בְנֵי־נֹחַ הַיְצְאִים מִן־הַתֵּבָה שָׁם וְחָם וְיָפֶת וְחָם הוּא אָבִי כְנַעַן	The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Now Ham was the father of Canaan.)
Gen 9:19	שְׁלֹשָׁה אֵלֶּה בְנֵי־נֹחַ וּמֵאֵלֶּה נִפְצָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ	These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was dispersed.
	<p>NET tn <i>Heb</i> "was scattered." The verb פָּצָה (<i>patsah</i>, "to scatter" [Niphal, "to be scattered"]) figures prominently in story of the dispersion of humankind in chap. 11.</p> <p>HALOT qal: pf. נִפְצָה, נִפְצָה, נִפְצָה; to scatter (intransitive) (MHeb. to scatter, transitive), to be scattered 1S 13¹¹ (with מְעַל, cf. Stoebe KAT 8/1:245), Is 33⁸; to disperse Gn 9¹⁹ (Westermann BK 1:644f). †</p>	
Gen 9:20	וַיְחַל נֹחַ אִישׁ הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּטַּע כֶּרֶם	Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard.
	<p>NET tn Or "Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard"; <i>Heb</i> "and Noah, a man of the ground, began and he planted a vineyard."</p>	
Gen 9:21	וַיִּשְׂתֵּי מִן־הַיַּיִן וַיִּשְׁכַּר וַיִּתְגַּל בְּתוֹךְ אֹהֶלֶה	He drank from the wine and became drunk and uncovered himself inside his tent.
	<p>NET tn The Hebrew verb גָּלָה (<i>galah</i>) in the Hitpael verbal stem (וַיִּתְגַּל, <i>vayyitggal</i>) means "to uncover oneself" or "to be uncovered." Noah became overheated because of the wine and uncovered himself in the tent.</p>	
Gen 9:22	וַיֵּרָא חָם אָבִי כְנַעַן אֶת עֶרְוַת אָבִיו וַיַּגִּד לְשְׁנֵי־אָחָיו בַּחוּץ	And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.
	<p>NET tn Some would translate "had sexual relations with," arguing that Ham committed a homosexual act with his drunken father for which he was cursed. However, the expression "see nakedness" usually refers to observation of another's nakedness, not a sexual act (see Gen 42:9, 12 where "nakedness" is used metaphorically to convey the idea of "weakness" or "vulnerability"; Deut 23:14 where "nakedness" refers to excrement; Isa 47:3; Ezek 16:37; Lam 1:8). The following verse (v. 23) clearly indicates that visual observation, not a homosexual act, is in view here. In Lev 20:17 the expression "see nakedness" does appear to be a euphemism for sexual intercourse, but the context there, unlike that of Gen 9:22, clearly indicates that in that passage sexual contact is in view. The expression "see nakedness" does not in itself suggest a sexual connotation. Some relate Gen 9:22 to Lev 18:6–11, 15–19, where the expression "uncover [another's] nakedness" (the Piel form of גָּלָה, <i>galah</i>) refers euphemistically to sexual intercourse. However, Gen 9:22 does not say Ham "uncovered" the nakedness of his father. According to the text, Noah uncovered himself; Ham merely saw his father naked. The point of the text is that Ham had no respect</p>	

Verse	Hebrew	Literal Translation
		for his father. Rather than covering his father up, he told his brothers. Noah then gave an oracle that Ham's descendants, who would be characterized by the same moral abandonment, would be cursed. Leviticus 18 describes that greater evil of the Canaanites (see vv. 24–28).
Gen 9:23	וַיִּקַּח שֵׁם וַיִּפֹּת אֶת־הַשְּׂמֹלֶה וַיִּשִׂימוּ עַל־שִׁכְמוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרָנִית וַיִּכְסּוּ אֶת עֵרוֹת אֲבִיהֶם וּפְנֵיהֶם אַחֲרָנִית וְעֵרוֹת אֲבִיהֶם לֹא רָאוּ	Then Shem and Japheth took the cloak and put it on both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and the nakedness of their father they did not see.
		NET tn The word translated "garment" has the Hebrew definite article on it. The article may simply indicate that the garment is definite and vivid in the mind of the narrator, but it could refer instead to Noah's garment. Did Ham bring it out when he told his brothers? tn <i>Heb</i> "their faces [were turned] back."
Gen 9:24	וַיִּיקֶן נֹחַ מֵיֵינוֹ וַיֵּדַע אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה־לוֹ בְּנוֹ הַקָּטָן	When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him.
		NET tn <i>Heb</i> "his wine," used here by metonymy for the drunken stupor it produced. tn The Hebrew verb עָשָׂה (' <i>asah</i> , "to do") carries too general a sense to draw the conclusion that Ham had to have done more than look on his father's nakedness and tell his brothers.
Gen 9:25	וַיֹּאמֶר אֲרוּר כְּנָעַן עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים יִהְיֶה לְאַחֵיו	Then he said, "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers."
		NET tn <i>Heb</i> "a servant of servants" (עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים, ' <i>eved 'avadim</i>), an example of the superlative genitive. It means Canaan will become the most abject of slaves.
Gen 9:26	וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שֵׁם וַיְהִי כְנָעַן עֶבֶד לָמוֹ	And he said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.
		NET tn <i>Heb</i> "blessed be." tn <i>Heb</i> "a slave to him"; the referent (Shem) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
Gen 9:27	יִפֹּת אֱלֹהִים לְיִפֹּת וַיִּשְׁכֵּן בְּאַהֲלֵי־שֵׁם וַיְהִי כְנָעַן עֶבֶד לָמוֹ	May God make spacious Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant."
		NET tn <i>Heb</i> "may God enlarge Japheth." The words "territory and numbers" are supplied in the translation for clarity. tn In this context the prefixed verbal form is a jussive (note the distinct jussive forms both before and after this in vv. 26 and 27).
Gen 9:28	וַיְחִי־נֹחַ אַחֲרֵי הַמַּבּוּל שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה	Now Noah lived after the flood 350 years.
Gen 9:29	וַיְהִיו כָּל־יְמֵי־נֹחַ תְּשַׁע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה וַיָּמָת פ	All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

2 Exegetical Outline (verse summary)

V18. Noah's sons Shem, Ham (who was Canaan's father), and Japheth came forth from the ark.

V19. These three men were Noah's sons from whom the whole earth was dispersed.

V20. So Noah began to farm the soil and he planted a vineyard.

V21. When Noah drank his wine he got drunk then uncovered himself inside his tent.

V22. Then Ham (the father of Canaan) looked upon his father's nakedness and went outside to tell his two brothers.

V23. But Shem and Japheth took the cloak and putting it on both their shoulders, walked backward into the tent to cover up their naked father so that with their faces turned backward they would not see their father's nakedness.

V24. Once Noah woke up from being drunk, he found out what his youngest son had done to him.

V25. So Noah spoke a curse upon Ham's son Canaan, that he would be the lowest servant to his brothers.

V26. Noah also spoke a blessing upon the LORD (Shem's God) and that Canaan would be Shem's servant.

V27. Noah also blessed Japheth so his space would be enlarged, that he would live in Shem's tents, and that Canaan would be his servant too.

V28. Moses concluded the story of Noah's generation by noting Noah lived 350 years after the flood.

V29. Noah's total lifespan was 950 years when he died.

3 Exegetical Outline (full)

- I. Noah's sons who came forth from the ark (Shem, Ham, and Japheth) became the heads of the nations dispersed over the whole earth (vv. 18-19)
 - a. Noah's sons Shem, Ham (Canaan's father), and Japheth came forth from the ark (v. 18)
 - V18. Noah's sons Shem, Ham (who was Canaan's father), and Japheth came forth from the ark.
 - b. Noah's sons were the heads of nations that were dispersed over the whole earth (v. 19)
 - V19. These three men were Noah's sons from whom the whole earth was dispersed.
- II. The origin story of why the people of Canaan are cursed to serve the peoples of Noah's sons Shem and Japheth (vv. 20-27)
 - a. Noah became drunk with wine from his vineyard then lay naked in his tent (vv. 20-21)
 - i. V20. So Noah began to farm the soil and he planted a vineyard.
 - ii. V21. When Noah drank his wine he got drunk then uncovered himself inside his tent.
 - b. Ham sought to expose his father's nakedness, but Shem and Japheth covered their father while their faces turned backward to not see their father's nakedness (vv. 22-23)
 - i. V22. Then Ham (the father of Canaan) looked upon his father's nakedness and went outside to tell his two brothers.
 - ii. V23. But Shem and Japheth took the cloak and putting it on both their shoulders, walked backward into the tent to cover up their naked father so that with their faces turned backward they would not see their father's nakedness.
 - c. Noah awoke from his drunken sleep and declared a blessing and a curse when he learned what Ham did to him (vv. 24-27)
 - i. V24. Once Noah woke up from being drunk, he found out what his youngest son had done to him.

- ii. V25. So Noah spoke a curse upon Ham's son Canaan, that he would be the lowest servant to his brothers.
- iii. V26. Noah also spoke a blessing upon the LORD (Shem's God) and that Canaan would be Shem's servant.
- iv. V27. Noah also blessed Japheth so his space would be enlarged, that he would live in Shem's tents, and that Canaan would be his servant too.

III. Noah's lifespan and death (vv. 28-29)

- a. Noah lived 350 years after the flood (v. 28)
 - V28. Moses concluded the story of Noah's generation by noting Noah lived 350 years after the flood.
- b. Noah lived 950 years in total before he died (v. 29)
 - V29. Noah's total lifespan was 950 years when he died.

4 Exegetical Outline (abbreviated)

Exegetical Proposition: Before Noah finally died at 950 years old which was 350 years after the Flood, it came to pass when Noah's sons (Shem, Ham, and Japheth, from whom all the nations were dispersed over the whole earth) came out of the ark, Noah planted a vineyard and got so drunk on his wine that he passed out naked inside his tent, but when Ham looked upon his father's nakedness and told his brothers about it, Shem and Japheth took pains to cover their father with the cloak without themselves seeing him, and when Noah awoke and found out what happened, he cursed Ham's son Canaan to be the lowest servant of Shem and Japheth whom he blessed to dwell together.

- I. Noah's sons who came forth from the ark (Shem, Ham, and Japheth) became the heads of the nations dispersed over the whole earth (vv. 18-19)
 - a. Noah's sons Shem, Ham (Canaan's father), and Japheth came forth from the ark (v. 18)
 - b. Noah's sons were the heads of nations that were dispersed over the whole earth (v. 19)
- II. The origin story of why the people of Canaan are cursed to serve the peoples of Noah's sons Shem and Japheth (vv. 20-27)
 - a. Noah became drunk with wine from his vineyard then lay naked in his tent (vv. 20-21)
 - b. Ham sought to expose his father's nakedness, but Shem and Japheth covered their father while their faces turned backward to not see their father's nakedness (vv. 22-23)
 - c. Noah awoke from his drunken sleep and declared a blessing and a curse when he learned what Ham did to him (vv. 24-27)
- III. Noah's lifespan and death (vv. 28-29)
 - a. Noah lived 350 years after the flood (v. 28)
 - b. Noah lived 950 years in total before he died (v. 29)

5 Theological Outline

Theological Proposition: The account of the generations of Noah ends with an origin story of the dispersed nations from his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth in which Ham's son Canaan is cursed as the lowest servant of blessed sons Shem and Japheth, all because of how each son responded with either shame or honor regarding their father's nakedness while he was drunk with wine inside his own tent.

- I. Noah's sons, the heads of nations dispersed over the whole earth (vv. 18-19)
- II. Ham's son Canaan cursed as a people to serve the blessed peoples of Shem and Japheth for the sin of uncovering his father's nakedness (vv. 20-27)
- III. The generations of Noah ended at his death 350 after the Flood when Noah was 950 years old (vv. 28-29)

6 Notes & Commentary

1. Possible NT readings. Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 13:1-14; Galatians 6:1-10; Revelation 3:14-22
2. **Children's message.** What is your favorite part of the life of Noah? Was it the ark? Or the animals? Or the flood? Or the rainbow? There are lots of parts of Noah's life and most of them are pretty amazing. Noah lived an amazing life and lots of things that he did were very hard. Did you know that there's one story at the end of Noah's life that tells us what his life was all about? It says at the end that Noah gained rest and relief from all the hard things he had to do in his life. And that rest and relief he finally got to enjoy also brought his family rest and relief. In fact, the Bible tells us that is why Noah was born: to bring rest and relief from the hard things that God's people had to do since they had to leave the garden of Eden. The wonderful thing about Noah is that he reminds us of Jesus. Jesus had to do even harder things in his life. Things like living a perfect life according to God's law. Things like having to say hard things to people who didn't want to listen. Things like, having his friends turn away from him, because they were afraid of dying with him. The hardest thing that Jesus had to do was die on the cross. It was hard, because all of God's anger against sin and disobedience was poured out on him, even though he didn't deserve it. But when Jesus rose from the dead, he gained the rest and relief from all the hard work that he had done. And God blessed him, so that he enjoys that rest and relief forever. And just like Noah, but even more so Jesus' rest and relief brings us rest and relief too when we believe in him. So the story of Noah actually points us to Jesus. It's a Christian story that reminds us that we need someone to win rest and relief for us from our painful toil of struggling with sin. Jesus is the one who can give us rest by forgiving us and saving us. Believe in him, and he will be your true Noah.
3. Sermon Theme. The account of Noah ends with an origin story of earth's dispersed peoples. National destinies are forged when Noah renders judgment for each son's response to his drinking wine and disrobing to lay in his tent. Enjoy rest and relief from our painful toil first won by Noah and finally by Christ our true Man of Rest.
4. Here is a transitional section that links the story of righteous Noah who is still susceptible to the temptations of sin, and the covenant of preservation to the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. The passage focuses on Noah's three sons who are the seminal heads of all the world's emerging nations. Details of this narrative illustrate the future character of the nations that will descend from Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Shemites and Japhethites will be known for piety and virtue, while the Hamites will be known for moral degradation. Nations from Ham include the arch foes of Israel such as Egypt, Babylon, Canaan, Philistia, the Hittite kingdom, and the Amorites in Ammon. In the grand narrative of Genesis, the reader is reminded that the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent are both carried by Noah's sons.
5. **Quotation:** "By the end of Genesis 5, this is where we are:

- *'adam* was meant to be a *'abad/servant* of the *'adamah/soil*, but failed, and now the *'adamah* is *'arur/cursed* *'abur/because-of* *'adam*, yielding only thorns-and-thistles bread, not fruit, man's original food.
- In losing the garden full of fruit-trees, man lost access to the tree of life, and so every man now dies.
- Mankind, in spite of their knowledge of good and evil, have only disobeyed what God has commanded. They have not learned good judgment – the only judgment rendered has been from Lamech, a corrupt ruler.
- Man has become an *'ishshah/woman-taker*, with Lamech. Harkening back to *'ishshah's* curse, *'ish/man* is ruling harshly with *'ishshah*.
- Man has become an *'ish-killer*, first with Cain, and now with Lamech. The *'adamah* is full of the *dam/blood* of *'ish*.

At this point, the outlook is bleak. Man has not been a faithful ruler over creation. Instead, all aspects of creation have been breaking down, and the cursed soil is soaked with blood. And yet, we're introduced to Noah, the man who will reverse the curse of Adam and Cain on *'adamah*." ~ Donald Linnemeyer, "Noah: Man of the Soil"

6. Ross outlines the passage (pp. 211-212):
 - a. Prologue: The entire earth was populated by those who descended from Shem, Ham, and Japheth—Ham being the father of Canaan (vv. 18-19)
 - b. Event: In response to Noah's intoxication and nakedness, Ham acted with disrespect, but Shem and Japheth acted with reverence in covering their father (vv. 20-23)
 - c. Oracle: Upon learning what Ham had done, Noah pronounced an oracle, cursing Canaan with abject slavery and blessing Shem and Japheth (vv. 24-27)
 - d. Epilogue: Noah lived 350 years after the flood and died at the age of 950 years (vv. 28-29)
7. **Quotation:** "This wild story about Noah's latter career in agriculture and his drunken night is a narrative explanation for how the world became populated with varied and diverse peoples. As the first farmer, Noah fulfills the vocation of human beings as tillers of soil (Gen 3:23), and his sons are dispersed to multiply and fill the earth (Gen 1:28; 9:7). Varied peoples of neighboring lands find their origins in the story of creation, bridging the gap between prehistory and history." ~ NRSV Life With God Bible, 30
8. Vv18-19. These verses introduce the next two narrative unites. Verse 18 introduces the story of Canaan as a cursed people (vv. 20-29). Verse 19 introduces the Table of Nations that explains the whole earth's human population dispersed (Gen 10). Note the Shemites were a people related by language not necessarily by blood. The dispersion in Genesis 10 is broadly according to blood-related clans, but the catalyst is by common language which is a major factor henceforth.

9. V18. NET **sn** The concluding disjunctive clause is parenthetical. It anticipates the following story, which explains that the Canaanites, Ham's descendants through Canaan, were cursed because they shared the same moral abandonment that their ancestor displayed. See A. van Selms, "The Canaanites in the Book of Genesis," *OTS* 12 (1958): 182-213.
10. V18. By including a parenthetical comment about Ham being the father of Canaan, the reader is prepared for teaching on the important topic of the Canaanites. Ham's depraved sin sets the pattern and establishes the moral and spiritual grounds for Israel to later conquer the wicked Canaanites in the land of promise (cf. Gen 15:16-21; Dt 20:17).
11. V19. From all Noah's sons the earth's human population was scattered (shattered) in dispersion over the face of the earth.
12. Vv20-21. **Quotation**: "Why was Noah not blamed for falling into drunkenness? His falling was not due to intemperance but inexperience. For [perhaps] he was the first man to press the fruit of the vine and was ignorant not only of the power of the drink but also of the kind of change it had undergone. Because it ought to be mixed first before being drunk, he suffered drowsiness. There was nothing new about the fact that he was naked. For even now some people sleep naked, sleep having taken away their consciousness. The drunkenness, added to sleep, makes easier a defense of his nakedness." ~ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Questions on Genesis 56*, cited in CSB Ancient Faith Study Bible, 15
13. Vv20-21. **Quotation**: "Not only did the fruit of the vine alleviate the pain of the curse of the ground (cf. Gen 5:29), but it also formed the symbol of the coming bliss in the messianic age. Zechariah 8:12 and Isaiah 25:6 describe the future age with this motif (cf. the point of the turning of the water to wine in John 2 as a sign). Although wine alleviates to some degree the painful toil of this life, the Old Testament warned of the moral dangers attending this new step in human enterprise. Those who served the Lord in the temple (Lev 10:9), those taking vows (Num 6:2-4), and those making leadership decisions (Prov 31:4-5) were warned of its use. The story of Noah shows two degrading effects of this abuse of wine—drunkenness and nakedness. While no blame is attached to his planting the vineyard, it is difficult to ignore the prophetic oracles that use nakedness and drunkenness in their descriptions of chaotic tragedies (cf. Hab 2:15; Lam 4:21). The Old Testament may not have prohibited the use of wine for everyone, but it never excused drunkenness and nakedness." ~ Allen Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 213
14. Vv20-21. **Quotation**: "Noah fulfills his father's dream that his son would bring comfort from the painful toil of the earth by beginning the science of growing grapes and of making wine, which uniquely gives people joy. The same text, however, illustrates its grave dangers. The rest of Scripture likewise both looks favorably on wine and soberly warns of its dangers, especially moral laxity as displayed in self-exposure. The holy Nazirite, the officiating priests, and rulers making decisions abstain from it. John abstains from it; Jesus does not." ~ Bruce Waltke, *Genesis*, 159
15. Vv20-21. **Quotation**: "That Noah even was able to plant a vineyard that produced lush growth is testimony to the lifting of the curse on the ground (8:21). Noah is not pictured as eking out a miserable, hand-to-mouth existence as he works among thorns and thistles. Of course, in order for the vineyard to grow, there had to be rain. But the rain has been a life-

producing one, not like the earlier life-taking one.” ~ Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17*, NICOT, 321

16. V20. NET **sn** The epithet *a man of the soil* indicates that Noah was a farmer.
17. V20. In the Hebrew wording, Noah began to be “a man of the soil” meaning he enjoys a favorable relationship with the soil/ground as a farmer. Farming is a new not renewed activity for Noah. But it may be the case that Noah invented viticulture and viniculture since wine is first mentioned here in Genesis. This is significant because Noah’s father Lamech had prophesied at Noah’s birth that this one would give us relief from our painful toil, referring to the curse upon Adam with the ground (*adamah*) being resistant in yielding crops. The word for soil/ground (*adamah*) and the name Adam (who was formed from the dirt ground; cf. Gen 2:7) both connect with Noah. Noah’s farm has a vineyard, the first mention of such in Genesis. The vine plant originally came from Armenia where the ark rested in the mountains of Ararat (Gen 8:4).
18. V20. **Quotation**: “When men, by shameful abuse, profane this noble and most precious gift of God, He himself becomes the Avenger. And let us know, that Noah, by the judgement of Gods has been set forth as a spectacle to be a warning to others, that they should not become intoxicated by excessive drinking. Some excuse might certainly be made for the holy man; who, having completed his labor, and being exhilarated with wine, imagines that he is but taking his just reward. But God brands him with an eternal mark of disgrace. What then, do we suppose, will happen to those idle-bellies and insatiable gluttons whose sole object of contention is who shall consume the greatest quantity of wine? And although this kind of correction was severe, yet it was profitable to the servant of God; since he was recalled to sobriety, lest by proceeding in the indulgence of a vice to which he had once yielded, he should ruin himself; just as we see drunkards become at length brutalized by continued intemperance.” ~ John Calvin, *The Book of Genesis*
19. V20. **Quotation**: “In Genesis 9:20, Noah is called “a man of the soil”. This phrase is a bit of a shock in the Hebrew; though it’s made up of two very common words – ‘*ish*’ is “man” and ‘*adamah*’ is “soil” or “ground” – these two words are never used together before this verse, and this particular phrase never appears again in the Bible.¹ Three chapters earlier, in Genesis 6:9, Noah is also called a “righteous man” – ‘*ish tsadiq*’ – the first time *tsadiq* is used in the Bible. These two ‘*ish*’ phrases work as bookends to the story of Noah. Noah begins as ‘*ish tsadiq*’, and in the end, he is ‘*ish ha’adamah*’. Seen in this light, Genesis 9:18-28 is not an appendix, an odd story about what Noah went on to do after the flood. Instead, this is the climax of the flood narrative, and the phrase ‘*ish ha’adamah*’ serves as a new title, a promotion for Noah. This new title helps frame Noah as a new head of humanity, and it serves as a declaration that part of Adam’s curse has been reversed, as foretold by Lamech in Genesis 5:29.” ~ Donald Linnemeyer, “Noah: Man of the Soil”
20. V20. **Quotation**: “[Lamech] saw that Noah (Rest) would give comfort from the curse mediated through the ground, not in the sense that the literal curse of thorns would be lifted (for it wasn’t), but in the sense that the curse of the overwhelming presence of wicked and violent men would be dealt with. The righteous would receive rest from the ‘toil of our hands’ the toil of prophesying against and resisting the wicked. And so Noah labored in the

hope of rest. As he toiled to build the Ark, so he toiled to warn men—year after year, and without any success except with his sons and their families. Yet he believed God, and He believed the God-given prophecy concerning his name. God would give rest in due time—through the flood. And so it came to pass. The Flood washed away the wicked world and Noah rested in a new creation. No longer did he need to strive against the ungodly ‘thorns.’ Three dimensions of this resting faith stand out: Worship, relaxation and enthronement” ~ James Jordan, *Primeval Saints*, 46

21. V21. Cf. WLC 130. Probably at least two years passed between verses 20 and 21 since it takes several seasons for a planted vineyard to produce grapes, plus the time for grape juice to ferment into wine. Noah drank the wine of his vineyard—the fruit of his labor blessed by the LORD. After working, Noah is portrayed as partaking of his harvest and becoming drunk on the wine, laying uncovered in his own tent, exposing himself. In this text there is not really a hint of sin on Noah’s part, although his action is not commended either. The sin Moses highlights is Noah’s son Ham’s indiscretion. In the Bible wine is viewed with nuance. Wine is a blessing (Num 15:5-10; Dt 14:26; Jdg 9:13; Ps 104:15; Isa 55:1; Lk 22:14-20; Jn 2:1-11). Wine is also dangerous if abused (Pr 21:17; 23:20-21, 29-35; Isa 5:11-12, 20-24; 28:7; 1 Cor 6:10; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:18). When wine enables moral laxity, especially in becoming naked while drunk, it is dangerous (Ex 21:15; Lam 4:21; Hab 2:15). Leaders and those who make decisions are warned to abstain from wine (Pr 31:4-5). Also those ceremonially devoted to the LORD for religious purposes, such as Nazirites and officiating priests, must avoid wine while serving (Num 6:3-4; Lev 10:9). In this story, Noah became drunk. In comparison to the first head of humanity (Adam), the second head of humanity (Noah) fell through partaking of fruit in his garden. Adam ate the forbidden fruit; Noah drank and “fell.” Noah fell by becoming exposed through his own drunkenness. Scripture describes self-exposure as shameful and publicly demeaning (2 Sam 6:16), although Noah was self-exposed in the privacy of his own tent. Nakedness is also incongruent with living in God’s presence where we are expected to be clothed in garments of righteousness (Ex 20:26; Dt 23:12-14). Following this second “fall” is a son’s curse origin story (compare Cain in Gen 4 to Canaan in Gen 9:25).
22. V21. **Quotation:** “First the man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink, and then the drink takes the man.” ~ Japanese proverb, as quoted by Warren Wiersbe, *Gen-Deut*, BECOT, Vol. 1, 57
23. V21. **Quotation:** “To equate Noah’s sin with Adam’s in this way is a little harsh. Undoubtedly, though, Genesis views it as a fall from grace for one who was “blameless among his contemporaries and walked with God” (the highest accolade that Scripture gives to a man) to have become drunk and exposed himself.” ~ Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC, 199
24. V21. **Quotation:** “In the Bible, wine is for joy (Jdg 9:13; Ps 104:15). It is a picture of future blessings, when the curse mediated through the ground (thorns, brambles) is overcome and the vine and fig tree flourish. It this has a close tie to the sabbath, to the time when a man’s work is finished and he can relax in the presence of God. As a sign that he had completed the task set before him for the moment, Abram was given wine by Melchizedek (Gen 14:18). Similarly, at the annual Feast of Clouds (Booths; Tabernacles), Israel was encouraged to

drink wine and ‘strong drink’ (beer) and make merry in the presence of God (Dt 14:26). Indeed, it is wine as well as bread that is the very sign of the New Covenant! So after the flood, in sabbath rest, Noah planted a vineyard, and drank of the wine. He got ‘drunk,’ but all this means is that he became relaxed and went to sleep. Nothing in the least indicates that Noah was a habitual drunkard, since such a lifestyle is condemned in the Bible. Noah uncovered himself in the privacy of his tent, laying aside the robe of his office and duties. It was a time for sabbath relaxation. (Sadly, there was a serpent in his garden, Ham...). In the Lord’s Supper, God wants Christians to relax and drink wine in His presence. Such rest comes at the end of our duties, not during them of course, but it is the promise of rest and joy for every Christian toiler.” ~ James Jordan, *Primeval Saints*, 48-49

25. Vv22-24. **Quotation:** “Two difficult interpretive issues arise in the incident between Ham and Noah: understanding the nature of Ham’s offense and making sense of why Ham’s son, Canaan, was cursed instead of Ham (see note on v. 25). The text of v. 22 may be literally rendered as “Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father.” However, this could be an idiom—it may not be about Noah being nude, but an incident that greatly insults Noah. Ham’s offense could be explained as voyeurism, castration of Noah, sodomy, or incestuous rape of his mother. The voyeurism view is often defended by what Ham’s brothers, Shem and Japheth, do in the wake of the incident—they walk backward into the tent and cover their father’s nakedness. This act doesn’t explain the offense, though; it simply shows their respect for their father. There is no OT prohibition against seeing one’s father naked, so this interpretation would have likely been foreign to the original reader; likewise, no such prohibition appears elsewhere in ancient Near Eastern law. Against the idea that Ham’s offense was voyeurism, the Hebrew phrase which may be literally rendered “saw the nakedness” appears elsewhere in the OT referring to illicit sexual contact and intercourse. To “see [*ra’ah* in Hebrew] the nakedness [*erwah* in Hebrew]” of someone is used in the Law (Lev 18; 20) to prohibit certain sexual relations. This idiom suggests that Ham’s offense may have been of a sexual nature, perhaps homosexual rape of his father or paternal incest. However, no combination of the relevant Hebrew words—*ra’ah* (“see”), *galah* (“uncover”), and *erwah* (“nakedness”)—occurs in the OT in reference to homosexuality. The Hebrew phrase for “uncovering the nakedness of [a man]” actually refers to sexual intercourse with a man’s wife. For example, in a literal rendering of Lev 18:7, “the nakedness of your father” means “the nakedness of your mother”; in Lev 18:14, a literal rendering of “the nakedness of your father’s brother” is clarified as “his wife” and “your aunt” (see Lev 18:8; 20:11, 20, 21). Although the usual expression in Leviticus is to “uncover [*galah* in Hebrew] the nakedness,” both idioms are used in parallel in Lev 20:17. Therefore, Ham’s offense may have been maternal incest and the forcible rape of his mother. This explains the curse of Ham’s son that follows (see Gen 9:25–27; compare note on v. 25).” ~ LEB Faithlife Study Bible

26. V22. NET **sn** For the second time (see v. 18) the text informs the reader of the relationship between Ham and Canaan. [Genesis 10](#) will explain that Canaan was the ancestor of the Canaanite tribes living in the promised land. **sn** *Saw the nakedness*. It is hard for modern people to appreciate why seeing another’s nakedness was such an abomination, because nakedness is so prevalent today. In the ancient world, especially in a patriarchal society, seeing another’s nakedness was a major offense. (See the account in Herodotus, *Histories* 1.8-13, where a general saw the nakedness of his master’s wife, and one of the two had to be put to death.) Besides, Ham was not a little boy wandering into his father’s bedroom; he was over a hundred years old by this time. For fuller discussion see A. P. Ross, “The Curse of Canaan,” *BSac* 137 (1980): 223-40.

27. V22. Cf. WLC 145. What Ham did was wrong. Gazing at (in a searching way; cf. Song 1:6; 6:11) another's nakedness, especially one's kin, in lust or scorn, is reprehensible, a dereliction of filial duty (Ex 21:15, 17; Dt 21:18-21; Mk 7:10; cf. Gen 2:25; 3:7). Ham did not lust; he mocked his father's nakedness and sought to make the private humiliation more public to his brothers. By telling his brothers what he saw and thus publicizing his father's shame (sin?), Ham transgressed the command to honor one's father (Pr 10:12b; 17:9; Eph 6:1-3). Essentially Ham broadcasted rather than covered the father's immodest, drunken situation. A famous ancient Near East tale teaches the moral that a son is expected to come to his drunken father's aid (*Tale of Aqhat*; cf. Isa 51:17-18).
28. V22. The events in this passage and the corresponding verses are notoriously difficult to interpret. In order to start on solid interpretive ground, we must acknowledge that the text says Noah "uncovered himself" and Ham "saw" his father's nakedness. Whatever guessing and reading between the lines of what happened must recognize that the text does not use the biblical euphemism for sexual sin of someone (e.g., Ham) uncovering the nakedness of another (e.g., Noah). So what exactly happened in Noah's tent? Several interpretations of Ham's sin are offered. (1) Voyeurism, perhaps of a homosexual nature, and of his own father who ought to be honored above all others. That Shem and Japheth averted their eyes accords well with this reading. In this view Ham committed two sins against the requirement for bodily modesty and the rule to honor one's parents. This is probably the interpretation that sticks closest to the text and makes sense of how Shem and Japheth responded to rectify Ham's abuse of their father. (2) Homosexual sex with his father Noah by uncovering his nakedness, which is a common biblical euphemism for having sexual relations with a person (Lev 18:6-19; 20:11-12, 17-21). This view may explain Noah extreme outrage against his son and anticipate the licentiousness of Canaanites (Gen 19; Lev 18:3-4, 24-30). It also may offer anticipation of the way Lot and his daughters fare in the cave after Sodom is destroyed—Lot gets drunk and his daughters incestually sleep with their father to get pregnant (Gen 19:30-38). (3) In the Pentateuch to "uncover your father's nakedness" may also be identified with the father's wife (not necessarily a man's mother, but in Ham's case Noah's wife is his mother; cf. Lev 18:8; 20:11). In this view uncovering your father's nakedness is to have sexual relations with your father's wife (Ham's mother). The reason for this is to usurp the authority of the patriarch (cf. Reuben in Gen 35:22 and Absalom in 2 Sam 16:21-22), or to procreate additional children in a depopulated world (cf. Lot's daughters in Gen 19:30-38). (4) Castration of the father in an attempt to usurp position. Later rabbinic literature supports this interpretation from ancient mythology. Rabbis surmised poetic justice in Noah's curse of Canaan: just as Ham prevented by castration Noah from having a fourth son, so also will Ham's fourth son Canaan be cursed (*Gen. Rab.* 36.7).
29. V22. **Quotation**: "It is difficult for people living in the modern world to understand and appreciate the modesty and discretion of privacy called for in ancient morality. Nakedness in the Old Testament was from the beginning a thing of shame for fallen humankind. To Adam and Eve as sinners, the state of nakedness was both undignified and vulnerable. Their covering of their nakedness was a sound instinct, for it provided a boundary for fallen human relations. To be exposed meant to be unprotected; to see someone uncovered was to bring dishonor and to gain advantage for potential exploitation... By mentioning that Ham entered and saw his father's nakedness, the text emphasizes that this seeing was the disgusting thing. Ham's errant looking, a moral flaw, represented the first step in the abandonment of a moral

code. This violation of a boundary destroyed the honor of Noah... His going out to tell his brothers about it without covering the old man aggravated the act. Because of this breach of domestic and filial propriety (the expositor must keep in mind that these are not little boys), Ham could expect nothing less than the oracle against his own family's honor." ~ Allen Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 215

30. V22. **Quotation**: "Sometimes those who, with watchfulness and resolution, have, by the grace of God, kept their integrity in the midst of temptation, have, through security, and carelessness, and neglect of the grace of God, been surprised into sin, when the hour of temptation has been over. Noah, who had kept sober in drunken company, is now drunk in sober company. Let him that thinks he stands take heed." ~ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*
31. V22. **Quotation**: "The sin consisted of something more fundamental: rebellion against authority. This can be seen from the actions of Shem and Japheth. What they did was designed to undo what Him had done, and all they did was refuse to look upon their father's nakedness while upholding his office by robing him... The curse pronounced by Noah is phrased in terms of authority and submission. The sin here is rebellion, not some kind of sexual attack... Ham 'saw the nakedness of his father' (Gen 9:22). How could he? His father was inside a tent-not just some little teepee but a real, house-sized tent. Ham had to invade Noah's privacy without permission. Ham was seeking to uncover a fault in his superior so that he could tear down his authority. Then Ham 'told his two brothers outside' (Gen 9:22). Ham was not going to try to take down Noah by himself. O, he tried to enlist his brothers in the project, perhaps arguing: 'Father has laid aside his robe of office. We can take it and make ourselves rulers.' Back in the garden, Satan had said to Adam and Eve, 'You can make yourselves gods by taking the forbidden fruit.' Satan now said to the heart of Ham, who reported it to his brothers, 'You can make yourselves kings by stealing the robe of office. Shem and Japheth refused to join Ham's conspiracy. To dramatize their support for their father they 'took the garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father' (Gen 9:23). They did not have to do this. Noah was still covered by the tent itself. Nor did they have to go to the trouble of putting the garment on both their shoulders and walking backward. They did this for a symbolic reason. The shoulders are associated with pillars of support, and by putting the garment on their shoulders (instead of carrying it in their hands), they were symbolically upholding Noah's office. Since nakedness is associated with shame in fallen men (Gen 2:25; 3:7), they refused to look at their father. They refused to shame or embarrass him in any way. Respect for established order and authority is one of the cardinal keys to dominion. We find in the fifth commandment 'Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that Yahweh your God gives you.' Accordingly, Noah blessed Shem and Japheth with enlargement of dominion. The reverse is also true. Rebellion and revolution against established order and authority is the quickest road to slavery. 'When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his younger son had done to him. So he said, 'Cursed be Canaan: a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers' ' (Gen 9:24-25). Just as Noah's son had rebelled against him, so Ham's son would rebel against him. Like father, like son. Ham had three other sons, but it seems Noah discerned the tendency to rebellion in Canaan, and so he pronounced the curse upon that son. Rebellion leads to slavery, and as the generations go by the slavery worsens. The wars of Genesis 14 show that the Canaanites were already

dominated by Japhethites and Shemites by the time of Abram and were unable to shake off their yoke. As the centuries went by, the Canaanites' enslavement to sin became progressively worse until finally God destroyed them. We are told explicitly that Noah 'knew what his youngest son had done to him' (Gen 9:24). This ties in with the statement of Genesis 8:21 that 'the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth.' Here we see that God acts to prevent such youthful evil from maturing to full age. Ham's rebellion is blocked. God intervenes, through Noah, to spare His people from the kind of horrors that went on before the flood. The fall of Adam, repeated in the fall of Ham, will not be permitted to run its full course again. This is a promise to the righteous that over the long haul it will be the godly who inherit the earth, not the wicked." ~ James Jordan, *Primeval Saints*, 52-54

32. V23. God blessed both Shem and Japheth in covering the nakedness of their father because in doing so they had behaved like (imitated) God (Gen 3:22; cf. WLC 127). Twice it says that walked backward with "the" (definite article is significant) cloak to cover Noah's nakedness while averting their eyes. It seems Ham had brought Noah's cloak out of the tent to show his brothers, thus completely uncovering the father's partially exposed nakedness. They honored their father despite his foolish behavior by returning his cloak in such a way as to not see their father's nakedness (Ex 20:12).
33. V23. **Quotation** & **Application**: "The brothers stood together and held a garment behind them, backed into the tent with their eyes averted, and covered Noah's naked body. 'He who covers a transgression seeks love' (Pr 17:9), and 'a prudent man covers shame' (Pr 12:16). Love doesn't cleanse sin, for only the blood of Christ can do that (1 Jn 1:7); nor does love condone sin, for love wants God's very best for others. But love does cover sin and doesn't go around exposing sin and encouraging others to spread the bad news. When people sin and we know about it, our task is to help restore them in a spirit of meekness (Gal 6:1-2). It's been said that on the battlefield of life, Christians are prone to kick their wounded; and too often this is true. But before we condemn others, we'd better consider ourselves, for all of us are candidates for conduct unbecoming to a Christian." ~ Warren Wiersbe, *Gen-Deut*, BECOT, Vol. 1, 58
34. V23. **Quotation**: "In contrast to the terse brevity with which Ham's deed is described, the description of Shem and Japheth's response is distinctly repetitious and long-winded. The narrative is slowed down so that the listener can appreciate their meritorious deeds and their utter propriety. Notice how it is twice said that they went "backwards," and that they covered and did not see "their father's nakedness." This slower pace allows the listener not only to reflect on these sons' modesty, but to visualize the awkwardness of their task. Backing into a tent trying to cover their sleeping father without looking at him must have been quite a tricky operation!" ~ Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC, 200
35. Vv24-27. Here are the only words of Noah recorded in Scripture. Also these words are the first time in the Bible a man utters a curse. Since Noah's words pertain to the descendants of his three sons, they speak to all humanity and human history (cf. Gen 9:1-23). But do not discount the import of these words for the nation of Israel as the people followed Moses through the wilderness to the cusp of the promised land in preparation to conquer the cursed Canaanites. In the history of biblical interpretation in the Christian West, especially in the colonial era, this passage was used to justify African inferiority giving divine permission to

enslave. Interpretation matters, because this error resulted in untold suffering, abuse, injustice, and inhumanity to God's image bearers. Noah's curse was intended for the Canaanites to bear, not for Ham's other children who happened to settle in north Africa. The Bible has much to say about slavery in the ancient world (1 Cor 7:21; Eph 6:5; Col 3:22-25; 1 Tim 1:10).

36. Vv24-27. **Quotation**: "The oracle of Noah, far from being concerned solely with the fortunes of the immediate family, thus actually pertains to vast movements of ancient peoples. Portraying their tendencies as originating in individual ancestors, Genesis anticipates the expected destinies of these tribes and nations. On the basis of their actions, they would either share in the blessing or be cursed. Within the general oracle of Noah there seems to be an emphasis on the Canaanites, who are the antagonists in the Book of Genesis. What else would Israel think of when they read that Canaan had been cursed in antiquity?" ~ Allen Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 210
37. Vv24-27. **Quotation**: "In all probability the event and its oracle were recorded to remind the Israelites of the nature and origin of the Canaanites, to warn them about such abominations, and to justify their subjugation and dispossession through holy warfare. Israel received the blessing, but Canaan received the curse." ~ Allen Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 219-220
38. Vv24-27. **Quotation**: "Noah's prophecies to his sons, which foreshadow the future of God's covenant people and the future of history, find fulfillment in the New Testament. Apart from Canaan and his descendants, Noah blanks the future of Ham's other sons and their descendants. However, the narrator makes clear that they include the Egyptians (Pss 78:51; 105:23), who enslave Abraham's children at the beginning of Israel's history, and the Babylonians, who enslave them at the end. Politically, Noah's prayer for Shem's subjugation of Canaan to abject slavery is realized with respect to the Canaanites (Gen 15:18-21; 50:24-25; Ex 3:8; Dt 7:1-2; Josh 12; Jdg 1; 1 Chr 13:5). However, the biblical Shemites politically never subjugate Egypt and Babylon. God's victory through Shem over degraded moral practices is ultimately spiritual and fulfilled in the messianic age, which is inaugurated by the greatest of the Shemites, Jesus Christ. In that age, both Egypt and Babylon find new birth in Jerusalem and are numbered with the people of God (Ps 87; Isa 19:19-25; 66:19-20). Moreover, in the messianic kingdom, the Japhethites are enlarged and displace the Shemites as the victors over evil." ~ Bruce Waltke, *Genesis*, 152-153
39. V24. Noah found out what Ham had done to him only after awaking.
40. V25. NET **sn** For more on the curse, see H. C. Brichto, *The Problem of "Curse" in the Hebrew Bible* (JBLMS), and J. Scharbert, *TDOT* 1:405-18. **sn** *Cursed be Canaan*. The curse is pronounced on Canaan, not Ham. Noah sees a problem in Ham's character, and on the basis of that he delivers a prophecy about the future descendants who will live in slavery to such things and then be controlled by others. (For more on the idea of slavery in general, see E. M. Yamauchi, "Slaves of God," *BETS* 9 [1966]: 31-49). In a similar way Jacob pronounced oracles about his sons based on their revealed character (see [Gen 49](#)).
41. V25. God had already blessed Ham with his father and brothers (Gen 9:1). So it makes sense in this context that God would bless and curse the descendants involved in this episode because of the narrative's ethnographic import. The blessing and curse clearly have the

descendants in view. Ham is the youngest of his father, so Noah chose the youngest of Ham's sons (Canaan) to bear the curse (v. 24). An application of the *lex talionis*: the law of the talon, or an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, which is poetic justice. The curse is appropriate since Canaan shares in Ham's moral decadence (Lev 18:2-3, 6-30; Dt 9:1-5). Now the Canaanites bear the burden of the original curse of the Cainites—both are the cursed seed of the serpent (Gen 3:14-15; 4:11). In addition to the Canaanites (Gen 34, 38), Ham's descendants include some of Israel's most feared and wicked enemies: Egypt (Gen 12:10-20), Philistia, Assyria, and Babylon (Gen 10:6-13; cf. Lev 18:3, 24-26; Pss 105:23, 27; 106:22). So what is the curse on Canaan? Noah prophesies that the people of Canaan will become subjected to the people of Shem (particularly Israel) and Japheth (the coastland people; cf. Gen 10:2-5). Non-Israelite slaves need not be emancipated according to Mosaic law (Lev 25:39-46; Josh 9:27; 16:10; Jdg 1:28, 30, 33, 35; 1 Kgs 9:20-21). By the curse on Canaan God excludes the Canaanites from the covenant of grace during the OT era (Gen 10:15-19; Dt 7:1-6; Rom 9:12-13). In one sense the Canaanites become a symbol of cursed people under Joshua, David, and Solomon. God does elect some individuals even among the Canaanites (Josh 2:11-12). And when wicked Israelites behave like Canaanites, worshipping their gods and sacrificing their children in the fire, God treats them as Canaanites by rejecting them and exiling them from his holy presence in the land (2 Kgs 17:20).

42. V25. **Quotation:** “It is unlikely that Canaan was singled out for the curse because he was the youngest son of Ham (who was Noah's youngest son). On the contrary, the Torah, which shows that God deals justly with all people, suggests that Noah anticipated in him the evil traits that marked his father Ham. The text has prepared the reader for this conclusion by twice pointed out that Ham as the father of Canaan, a phrase that signifies more than lineage. Even though the oracle of cursing would weigh heavily on Ham as he saw his family marred, it was directed to his distant descendants, who retained his traits. In this regard it must be clarified that the Canaanite people, not the man, are in view for the fulfillment of the oracle... To the Hebrew mind, the Canaanites were the most natural embodiment of Ham. Everything the Canaanites did in their pagan existence was symbolized by the attitude of Ham. From the moment the patriarchs entered the land, these tribes were there with their corrupting influence (Gen 13:13; 15:16; 18:20-21; chaps. 19 and 38). The Torah warned the people of the exodus about the wickedness of the Canaanites in terms that call to mind the violation of Ham (Lev 18:2-6). There follows a lengthy listing of such vile practices of the Canaanites (vv. 7-23) that the text must employ euphemisms to represent their deeds (“nakedness” is used twenty-four times). Because of these sins the Canaanites were defiled and were to be driven out before the Israelites. The constant references to ‘nakedness’ and ‘uncovering’ in this passage in Leviticus, designating the people of Canaan as a people enslaved sexually, clearly reminds the reader of the action of Ham, the father of Canaan. No Israelite who knew the culture of the Canaanites could read the story of their ancestor without making the connection. But the descendants had advanced far beyond the sin of the ancestor. The attitude that led to the deed of Ham came to full fruition in the Canaanites. These descendants were not cursed because of what Ham did: they were cursed because they acted as their ancestor had. That moral abandonment was fully developed in the Canaanites, which hit took an oracle of the Lord to reveal and announce.” ~ Allen Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 217-218

43. V25. **Quotation:** “According to the adage, those who do not learn from the mistakes of history are doomed to repeat them. Judging by the impact of those who decry history as ‘bunk’ and of those who have simply had no opportunity to study its lessons, we must admit the truism’s accuracy. Power continues to corrupt leaders. Self-indulgence continues to bring decay in society. Greed continues to undermine economic growth. The sins of the fathers are visited on the children primarily because they repeat them. Recursion does not create such parallels; it highlights them in juxtaposition to one another.” ~ John Walton, *Genesis*, NIVAC, 359
44. V25. **Quotation:** “Noah pronounces a curse on Canaan, not on Ham. Noah does this because Ham likely raped his mother to gain further inheritance (see note on vv. 22–24). Ham’s crime of maternal incest would have been an attempt to usurp Noah’s position as leader of the family clan. This explains why Ham would announce what he had done to his brothers—he was asserting authority over them (v. 22). The fact that Canaan was cursed suggests that Canaan was the offspring of Ham’s sexual intercourse with Noah’s wife. The son bore the punishment for the crime of his father. The curse on Canaan forms the backdrop to the later antipathy between Israel and the Canaanites. There are several instances in the OT of sexual intercourse being used to usurp authority. For example, Absalom’s public intercourse with his father’s concubines (2 Sam 15:20–23) was intended to show ownership of the king’s harem (and hence the kingship). David did the same with Saul’s concubines (2 Sam 12:8) as part of the transfer of authority. When Adonijah tried to acquire Abishag (1 Kgs 1:3–15; 2:17–22), the request was taken by Solomon as an attempted usurpation of his position (1 Kgs 2:22). Adonijah may have presumed that Abishag had been David’s sexual partner in old age, so taking her as his own wife may have been a devious attempt to regain the succession he had lost. Solomon responded to this treasonous move by executing Adonijah (1 Kgs 2:23–25).” ~ LEB Faithlife Study Bible
45. V25. **Quotation:** “Primeval history has informed us that all flesh will suffer because of the sin of man. That same history tells us that man must bear the consequences of the illicit behavior of the “sons of God.” Thus we are already catching glimpses of the fact that God visits the iniquities of the fathers unto the third and fourth (and second!) generation. Canaan’s father has eaten sour grapes and therefore Canaan’s teeth are set on edge. Later, however, verses like Jer. 31:29 and Ezek. 18:2 rebut the idea of vicarious or deferred punishment. Perhaps Jeremiah and Ezekiel do so in order to stress to their audience (especially to Ezekiel’s audience, who are in captivity) that they are being punished because of their own sins, not those of their parents, and therefore they may repent and return to their Lord since their fate is not an inherited one.” ~ Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17*, NICOT, 325
46. V25. **Quotation:** “The blessings on Shem and Japhet (9:26–27) look beyond the horizon of Noah’s time to the subsequent interactions of their descendants, so it seems most likely that this is true of this curse on Canaan as well. In the post-flood stories there is thus a distinct change of perspective. The antediluvian chapters tell of events that affected all mankind: these post-flood narratives tell of happenings that molded the lives and characters of the peoples of the world.” ~ Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC, 201-202
47. V26. At first God blessed Noah (Gen 9:1). Now Noah blesses God. Noah’s prophetic blessing upon Shem (“blessed be the God of Shem”) further narrows the line of promise in

woman's seed. Now the messianic seed of promise is passed down through Shem's children (cf. Gen 3:15; 4:26). Sovereign electing grace is God's way of opening of a blessed future for the messianic age to come. Later in Genesis the promised seed is further narrowed through the line of Abraham not Nahor (Gen 12:1-3), Isaac not Ishmael (Gen 21:8-12), Jacob not Esau (Gen 25:23; 27:28-29), and Judah not Joseph (Gen 49:10). The rest of the Bible will show the line of the faithful, messianic Israelite narrowed down to one person: Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David. Once the Christ has come such that the covenant blessing belongs to him alone, he begins to share the blessings of the new covenant with all who believe in him (Acts 10:34-35; Gal 3:29). Thus the blessing upon Shem is for the purpose of ultimately sharing the blessing of salvation with all nations. In Christ God shows no racial or ethnic favoritism (Acts 10:34-35) though the gospel is always for the Jew first, then the Gentile. In the new covenant God counts all those who believe in Jesus as the seed of Abraham (Gal 3:29). In the book of Acts, the author takes pains to show how the descendants of Noah's three sons (Shem, Ham, and Japheth) are included as redeemed people from the nations. The Ethiopian treasurer is a descendant of Ham (Acts 8:26ff); Paul is a descendant of Shem (Acts 9); and Cornelius and his household are descendants of Japheth (Acts 10).

48. V27. NET **sn** There is a wordplay (paronomasia) on the name *Japheth*. The verb יָפַתְ (yaft, "may he enlarge") sounds like the name יָפֶתְ (yefet, "Japheth"). The name itself suggested the idea. The blessing for Japheth extends beyond the son to the descendants. Their numbers and their territories will be enlarged, so much so that they will share in Shem's territories. Again, in this oracle, Noah is looking beyond his immediate family to future generations. For a helpful study of this passage and the next chapter, see T. O. Figart, *A Biblical Perspective on the Race Problem*, 55–58.
49. V27. The name "Japheth" in Hebrew means to (cause to) open. Through his dispersed descendants the whole earth opens up in the sense that they are the people who settle in lands most distant from Israel (Gen 10:2-5). So the blessing for Japheth is clearly a play on words: "enlarge" and "Japheth" sound alike. Japheth is blessed by Noah to dwell in the tents of Shem (Gen 12:1-3). The idea is that he is a guest or outsider who is drawn to Shem and to Shem's God (Job 18:14-15). Japheth, blessed by God (Elohim) shares in the blessings bestowed on Shem whose God is the LORD (Yahweh). This Noahic promise finds typological anticipation in the tabernacle and temple, and final fulfillment in the NT in the incarnation of the Son of God (Acts 14:27; Rom 11:17-18; Eph 2:11-22; 3:6; cf. Gen 10:5). The offspring of Japheth would become the object of Christian mission (to the Gentiles; cf. Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).
50. V27. **Quotation**: "An unresolved issue is the meaning of Japheth's blessing that "he may dwell in the tents of Shem" (Gen 9:27). First, it is unclear who the subject "he" refers to. Jewish tradition (see Vanderkam 2001, 39), represented in the book of Jubilees, is that "he" is God, and God did dwell in the tents of Shem when the Israelites constructed the tabernacle. However, most scholars understand "he" to refer to Japheth. In this case, many scholars then try to identify historical events in which Shemites and Japhethites cooperated in some way and in which Canaanites are enslaved to both. Mathews contends with Reformers Calvin and Luther that Japheth's blessing was fulfilled in the Gentile church. Westermann and Skinner conclude that there is insufficient evidence to determine what the Japheth blessing meant to the original audience." ~ Douglas Mangum & Miles Custis, *Genesis 1-11*, LRC

51. V28. In this verse and the next, the genealogy introduced in Genesis 5:32 is completed following the genealogical pattern of Genesis 5. After the Flood Noah lived 350 more years. According to the literary structure of the entire account of Noah, the section Genesis 6:9-9:27 fits as a parenthesis within the whole Noah narrative of Genesis 5:1-9:29. Note the familiar formula of years lived then “and he had other sons and daughters” is omitted, as Moses stresses that all humanity descend from Noah and his three sons (cf. Gen 10).
52. V29. Counting his years before (600) and after (350) the Flood, Noah lived 950 years, and then he died bringing his story to an end. Thus Noah died the third oldest person in history, behind in longevity Methuselah (969) and Jared (962). Noah is the tenth and last member of Seth’s genealogy, thus closing the book on the primeval history of the world. His obituary ends like those of his worthy faithful ancestors who preceded him in death. The one who was born, according to his name and prophesied by his father Lamech, brought relief to man’s painful toil. How? Through the vineyard he planted and the wine he vented that makes man’s heart glad in his labor. And through the blessing and curse he delivered in righteous judgment that ordered life in the promised land for God’s people where the cursed ones served the blessed ones, and where blessing will be found for all the world by coming to the homeland of Shem.
53. **Quotation & Application:** “Beware of the danger of drunkenness. We personally need to be very careful with strong drink. It is a stumbling block to many. Alcoholic drink is not wrong per se, but the Bible does clearly teach that drunkenness is a sin. It shows that drunkenness makes one unaware of what is happening. We must not misuse our bodies. Drunkenness is often linked to immorality and unseemly behavior. Therefore, respect the civil laws limiting alcohol consumption, and guard yourself against even becoming intoxicated.” ~ KJV Reformation Heritage Study Bible, 22
54. **Quotation:** “The world seems all set for a new start. The slate has been wiped clean, and we hope that the mistakes of the antediluvians will not be repeated. But no sooner is the blessing pronounced and the eternal covenant confirmed than man lapses again. The righteous and blameless Noah, who had walked with God for six hundred and one years, falls victim to demon drink and disgraces himself in his tent. Worse still, his youngest son, instead of covering up his father physically and metaphorically, shows total lack of filial piety, prattling about the situation to his brothers. In this last tragicomic scene, the truth that the “ideas of man’s mind are evil from his youth” is starkly exhibited for all to see. Even the most righteous and their offspring may fall from grace in an unguarded moment. And such falls do have long-term consequences, as the curse on Ham’s descendants the Canaanites makes clear. Lack of filial piety and sexual indiscretion lead to bondage. But more important still, this last scene reminds us that were it not for the changed logic of God, in that he now cites man’s depravity as a ground for his mercy rather than for his judgment, the descendants of Noah would be heading for extinction in another deluge. However, even sinful man is now sustained by grace and can face the future not with complacency but with security. The world will indeed be filled and subdued by man.” ~ Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC, 206
55. **Quotation:** “Finally, in v. 20, Noah is called *‘ish ‘adamah*, a “man of the soil”, and he plants a vineyard.¹² Noah, the *‘ish tsadiq*, has restored the *‘adamah* and given mankind rest from the curse. Therefore he is now *‘ish ‘adamah*, who can plant a vineyard and expect *‘adamah*

to give fruit. Unlike Adam and Cain, Noah has obeyed all of God's commands. He has offered a good offering. They failed at being *'abad 'adamah*, and so the soil bore no fruit. But Noah has succeeded. He is *ish 'adamah*, and so the soil bears fruit for him. Not only that, but in contrast with Adam, who is simply taken and placed in an already-planted garden, Noah plants his own vineyard himself, the first time the word "plant" is used in reference to a man. Noah has planted a new Eden, full of fruit from the *'adamah/soil*, and he is *'ish* over this garden. Just as Lamech prophesied, Noah finds rest in this restored relationship with *'adamah*. He drinks his wine and rests. And just like Adam was tested in Eden, Noah is immediately tested. And just like Adam, a *'arur/curse* follows. This time, though, Noah is the judge. He "wakes from his wine", and he judges his sons, pronouncing an *'arur/curse* on Canaan, and a blessing on Shem and Japheth. Yet again, Noah is stepping in to do something God, not man, had done in the past.¹³ He even explicitly speaks for God: "God will enlarge Japheth" (v. 27). By the end of the story, Noah the *'ish tsadiq* has been promoted into three new roles. First, after saving the lives of all animals – and working with them to do so – he has become lord over the animals, and God has given him animals as his food. Second, for his obedience and offering to God, the curse is lifted from *'adamah*, and he has become *'ish 'adamah*, planting in *'adamah* and enjoying man's original food, the fruit of *'adamah*. Finally, he's been made judge over other men, pronouncing a *'arur/curse* and blessings. But there's one notable aspect to the curse Noah hasn't reversed: there is no tree of life in this garden. And though the new food – the flesh of animals – is from living things, man cannot eat flesh "with the life". The flesh is dead flesh, drained of all life (9:4-5). Chapter 9 also ends with Noah's death. In fact, Genesis 9:28-29 completes the genealogical structure from chapter 5 that was left hanging in 5:32... In spite of all of Noah's obedience, man is still under death. He still has no tree of life, and so the genealogy of death continues." ~ Donald Linnemeyer, "Noah: Man of the Soil"

56. **Quotation:** "*Jesus as a New Noah*. Jesus, like Noah, is an *'ish tsadiq*. He also obeys God and delivers mankind from the curse of *'adam*. Afterwards, just like Noah, Jesus gives mankind wine and flesh. But Jesus' food is different. In John 6, when a crowd finds Jesus the day after his feeding of the five thousand, they are looking for more bread. Jesus tells them "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life" (v. 27). He goes on to contrast his bread with the manna in the wilderness. Unlike the manna, Jesus is "true bread from heaven" who "gives life to the world" (v. 32-33). Those who ate the manna died, but not so with Jesus' living bread, His flesh: whoever eats of it will never die (v. 48-51). Jesus' contrast with manna applies to Noah's food from *'adamah*, too. Those who ate Noah's food still died. And even more, with Jesus' food, you drink the blood. Jesus doesn't offer lifeless, dead flesh of creatures formed from *'adamah*. Instead, Jesus says, "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" and "my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink" (v. 53-55). Jesus lives, and He lives because He is sent by the "living Father". Therefore, when we eat Jesus, we also live (v. 56-57). All this is from the Spirit, who gives life, while the "flesh is no help at all" (v. 63). Noah's food was earthly, fruit and flesh and bread all ultimately from *'adamah*, drained of any *ruach/spirit* that gave it life. Jesus' food, though, is spiritual, descended from the Father and still full of the Spirit. We see this same contrast in 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul explicitly refers back to Genesis. Paul says that *'adam* was a "living being", while the last *'adam*, Jesus, is a "life-giving spirit" (v. 45). The first man was "from the earth, a man of dust" but the second man, Jesus, "is from heaven" (v. 47). Noah is a son of *'adam*. He is an *'ish 'adamah*, a man of the earth, a man of

the dust. In spite of all he does to restore mankind's relationship to 'adamah, the food he gets from 'adamah only keeps mankind alive for a brief time. Noah is only a "living being" saving other living beings; he is not a "life-giving spirit". He still dies and "returns to the 'adamah/earth" (Psalm 146:4). Christ, though, is not a man of the earth. He is a man of heaven, an 'ish shamayim/heavens. He is not born by an 'ish; He is sent by a living Father. He is born when the ruach/spirit comes again to make a new 'adam, this time of Mary, with no seed from 'ish and no dust of 'adamah. When the curse was reversed after the flood, Noah planted a vineyard, and the 'adamah bore fruit. When Christ died, He planted Himself in the 'adamah. And being a 'ish shamayim/heavens, the 'adamah yielded him back as an imperishable fruit, the new food given to man by God. God tells man to eat this food, the new tree of life, and live forever. But when we eat this food, we don't just live forever; we also become fruitful ourselves. Just as the fruit trees bear fruit with seed after their kind, so this tree of life multiplies. We also bear fruit, the fruit of the Spirit. When Jesus sends the Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples become like Him, going about doing works like His. With the Spirit, we become like Jesus, not only living things but also sources of life to others, life-giving spirits." ~ Donald Linnemeyer, "Noah: Man of the Soil"

57. **Quotation & Application:** "The story of Noah is a comfort for Christians today. Faced with ungodliness on every side, we do not have rule or dominion. We live in a time of prophecy and Ark-building, warning the wicked and building the Church. In time, however, God will destroy the wicked, either through plague or conversion, and give rule to His people. The wine we drink in Holy Communion and the robes our church officers wear are our pledge that this is so. Like Noah, we must never shrink from our duty." ~ James Jordan, *Primeval Saints*, 50

7 Bibliography

Calvin, John. *The Book of Genesis*. Bibleworks ed.

CSB Ancient Faith Study Bible

CSB Study Bible. Logos ed.

ESV Reformation Study Bible

ESV Study Bible

Hamilton, Victor P. *The Book of Genesis 1-17*. NICOT. Logos ed.

Henry, Matthew. *Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Bibleworks ed.

Jewish Study Bible. 2nd ed.

Jordan, James B. *Primeval Saints*.

KJV Reformation Heritage Study Bible

LEB Faithlife Study Bible. Logos ed.

Linnemeyer, Donald. "Noah: Man of the Soil." Online: <https://theopolisinstitute.com/noah-man-of-the-soil/>. Accessed 16 April 2024.

Mangum, Douglas & Miles Custis. *Genesis 1-11*. LRC. Logos ed.

NET Bible. Bibleworks ed.

NIV Archaeological Study Bible

NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible

NIV Serendipity Bible for Groups

NIV Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible

NIV Study Bible

NIV Zondervan Study Bible

NKJV Life Application Bible

NLT Study Bible

NRSV Harper Collins Study Bible

NRSV Life With God Bible

Ross, Allen P. *Creation & Blessing*.

Waltke, Bruce K. *Genesis*.

Walton, John H. *Genesis*. NIVAC.

Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 1-15*. WBC. Logos ed.

Wiersbe, Warren W. *Genesis-Deuteronomy*. BECOT. Vol. 1.

8 Sermon References

[Quotation & Application by James Jordan] “The story of Noah is a comfort for Christians today. Faced with ungodliness on every side, we do not have rule or dominion. We live in a time of prophecy and Ark-building, warning the wicked and building the Church. In time, however, God will destroy the wicked, either through plague or conversion, and give rule to His people. The wine we drink in Holy Communion and the robes our church officers wear are our pledge that this is so. Like Noah, we must never shrink from our duty.”