

SESSION 44: CORRUPTION!

Genesis 6:9-13

September 29, 2024

PREFACE

Read Genesis 6:9-13.

v9

Before moving on to v10 I would like to add a few more thoughts on v9.

These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among those in his generations; Noah walked with God.

Our common versions employ various synonyms for two words which in the LSB are translated “generations.” There is no basis for quarrel with the other English words used; I bring this up to point out that these are two different words, and hence mean two different things.

*These are the **generations** of Noah.*

The first word is *toledot*, which clearly refers to genealogy, i.e., descendants, parentage, order of birth—generations. That is, it refers to *people*.

*blameless among those in his **generations**;*

Here the word is *dorotay*, which refers to a cycle, a lifetime; more specifically here, to **a** generation or period; as Wilson puts it, “a generation of men; *a race of men contemporary*.” The word is indeed plural, but the reference is to those people who were Noah’s *contemporaries*—not descendants.

v10

And Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

In a moment I will suggest that there is more reason for this verse to be here besides simply repeating the names of Noah’s sons.

But first, let’s take this opportunity to outline the respective descendencies of the three sons. We will look deeper into this in Chapter Ten, but for now let’s just itemize the peoples or races that will grow out of these three men, so we can see the broad picture.

Let's consider them in the order they are presented in Chapter Ten. Turn there, please.

Japheth (v2)

The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras.

It is commonly agreed that Japheth was the ancestor of a number of tribes and peoples associated with the regions to the north and west of the Middle East—especially Anatolia (parts of Turkey) and the Aegean Sea. That is, the upper NW of the Middle East, bleeding into the Caucasus and even into Eastern Europe. This makes perfect sense, since this region is immediately west of Mt. Ararat, which is located in far eastern Turkey, but right next to the borders of Iran and Armenia.

Ham (v6)

The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan.

I previously pointed out the connection between Mizraim and the nation of Egypt today—called in Arabic, “Misr.” Ham was the father of *many* peoples and tongues; some names which stand out in just this passage: Canaan, Nimrod, Babel (i.e., Babylon), Accad, Ninevah, Philistines, Jebusite (early dwellers in what would become Jerusalem), Gaza. Right off we see mentioned not just references within Israel, but many that will become *enemies* of Israel—and of God.

Shem (v22)

The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram.

I think Shem, Noah's firstborn, is here listed last, since, for the purpose of the biblical narrative, he is the most important. He is not just the father of all “Semites” (including the Hebrews), but Luke 3:36 confirms that Jesus the Messiah was born through Noah, Shem, and Arphaxad (i.e., Arpachshad).

This is just a thumbnail sketch of the descendants of these three men. When we get to Chapter Ten we will examine them more closely.

But let's consider the flow of this passage and, aside from the details within each verse, the picture being presented by the extended whole.

For some time now the author Moses has been contrasting one group with another, the righteous versus the evil, or at least those with a worldly bent in contrast to those with a spiritual bent.

- At the end of Chapter Four, Seth, the third son of Adam and the one who initiated a time “when men began to call upon the name of Yahweh” (4:26), is contrasted with the arrogant and worldly Lamech, descendant of the murderer Cain.
- Near the end of Chapter Five we have a slightly veiled description of this new character, Noah, who, his father Lamech (different from the Lamech in Chapter Four) prophesies “will give us rest from our work and from the pain of our hands arising from the ground which Yahweh has cursed.”
- When we get to Chapter Six the comparisons increase. In the chapter's first four verses Moses paints a picture of the beginnings of the moral descent of man: the two groups—the righteous and the ungodly—are now commingling. The result? “Then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (v5).
- The first seven verses describe the darkness overwhelming the earth and Yahweh's response to it, but then in v8 all this is contrasted to the righteous Noah: “But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh.”
- Verse 9 contrasts Noah's righteousness with “those in his generations,” or contemporaries—in other words, good against evil. And in this light, a case can be made for Moses repeating the names of Noah's sons in v10 to associate them with Noah's righteousness, with the package of vv9-10 expressing the rightness of the Noah family as a whole.
- Then, finally, a last contrast is drawn as God condemns “all flesh” but Noah's in vv11-13.

So for a couple of chapters Moses has made a point of comparing and contrasting the Yahweh followers with the evil in the world.

vv11-12

Now the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

In these two short verses there is a word that is used *three* times, so we had better understand what it means; though the *tenses* are different, the root word is identical. That word is *sht* (shee-HIT), or I have also seen it pronounced *shacath*. The word is universally, in all our versions, translated “corrupt” or “corrupted.”

The word means to go to ruin, to be polluted, depraved, decayed, rotten.

I don’t know about you, but it is frustrating—and infuriating—to me that this is built into our flesh, this bent toward evil. See how this sickening cycle is repeated throughout God’s word, throughout the *generations* of man. First, from the words of Moses himself near the time of his death:

Read Deuteronomy 31:28-29.

Then we have that nauseating cycle repeated in the book of Judges.

Read Judges 2:18-19.

Alexander MacLaren: Notice the universal apostasy. Two points are brought out in the sombre description. The first is moral corruption; the second, violence. Bad men are cruel men. When the bonds which knit society to God are relaxed, selfishness soon becomes furious, and forcibly seizes what it lusts after, regardless of others’ rights. Sin saps the very foundations of social life, and makes men into tigers, more destructive to each other than wild beasts. All our grand modern schemes for the reformation of society will fail unless they begin with the reformation of the individual. To walk with God is the true way to make men gentle and pitying.

MacLaren draws the connection between corruption and violence, which is seen in v11. It refers to physical, malicious wrong. And guess what the Hebrew word is: *hamas*.

But back to the beginning of v11.

Although all of our versions (except the KJVs) begin the verse with “Now,” the first word in the Hebrew is the same as the first in v12, translated, more often than not, “And.” This, as is often the case, connects it to the previous verse. In 30,160 instances of this word it is translated “and”; however, it can also be translated “but” (instead of parallel, in opposition), as it is 2,373 times. This is how Leupold interprets the verse, beginning it with “But” to show the contrast—the opposition—of “the earth” to the righteousness of Noah and his family. Even using the “Now” of our versions it is easy enough to hear the opposition: “*Noah* walked with God... Now the *earth* was corrupt...”

and the earth was filled with violence.

Here is another clue showing the pervasiveness of this evil: The Hebrew *ma-le* means accomplished, completed. With the sole exception of Noah and his family, the earth was *completely* corrupt and violent.

And God saw the earth,

Verse 11 describes what the earth had become. Verse 12 reveals what God (*Elohim*) saw when He looked at it, and the “behold” is included to express the unexpected. Of course, this is all anthropomorphic; God is not surprised, nor does He see as we see. He has been aware of the gathering wickedness all along the way.

and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

“But,” as Leupold concludes, “the verse does indicate that in the esteem of God, the perfect and righteous Judge, the measure of the world’s iniquity was full.” Note how this is worded: “All flesh” in other settings can refer as well to the beasts, but here the verse is specifically worded in such a way to refer only to man, with “all flesh had corrupted **their way** upon the earth” (emphasis added).

And speaking of contrasts, turn back to the end of Chapter One.

Read Genesis 1:31.

Now, sadly, in v12 we have the darkened mirror image of the wonder and beauty—and goodness—of the sixth day of Creation. Now, using the identical sentence structure, it is, “And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.”

v13

Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.”

Verse 13 does begin a new paragraph, and does serve as an introduction of sorts to what follows: God’s detailed command to build the ark. But it also serves to wrap up what has preceded. We will take an initial look at it now, but will also return to it in our next session.

We have listened in as God has observed what is going on on earth and has formed His conclusions. Now, in v13, Elohim communicates His conclusion—and future actions—to His faithful servant Noah. And H. C. Leupold puts it well.

Leupold: There come times in the events of this world when God’s gracious dealings with men are definitely terminated. Such times come only when grace has been offered in richest measure. But when the end is resolved upon, there is no recall. Such a case is marked by the “end” that God here determines.

We have chronicled time and again God’s longsuffering grace shown to man. But here we have one of God’s “ends”—when He at last says, *That’s it!* Once He does this, all bets are off; all second chances are shut down. We saw it in our previous class, in the Last Things; we saw it when Israel and Judah had tried Yahweh’s patience for the last time, and He destroyed Jerusalem and sent His people into exile; and we see it here, as He is about to destroy and remake His Creation and its people.

God has just said, *That’s it!*

SESSION 44

Corruption!
Genesis 6:9-13

Generations

“These are the generations of Noah.”

The first word is *toledot*, which clearly refers to genealogy, i.e., descendants, parentage, order of birth—generations. That is, it refers to people.

“...blameless among those in his generations;”

Here the word is *dorotay*, which refers to a cycle, a lifetime; more specifically here, to a generation or period; “a generation of men; a race of men contemporary.” The word is indeed plural, but the reference is to those people who were Noah’s contemporaries—not descendants.

The Sons’ Descendancies (from Chapter Ten)

Japheth (v2)

The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras.

It is commonly agreed that Japheth was the ancestor of a number of tribes and peoples associated with the regions to the north and west of the Middle East—especially Anatolia (parts of Turkey) and the Aegean Sea. That is, the upper NW of the Middle East, bleeding into the Caucasus and even into Eastern Europe.

Ham (v6)

The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan.

I previously pointed out the connection between Mizraim and the nation of Egypt today—called in Arabic, “Misr.” Ham was the father of many peoples and tongues; some names which stand out in just this passage: Canaan, Nimrod, Babel (i.e., Babylon), Accad, Ninevah, Philistines, Jebusite (early dwellers in what would become Jerusalem), Gaza.

Shem (v22)

The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram.

I think Shem, probably Noah’s firstborn, is here listed last, since, for the purpose of the biblical narrative, he is the most important. He is not just the father of all “Semites” (including the Hebrews), but Luke 3:36 confirms that Jesus the Messiah was born through Noah, Shem, and Arphaxad (i.e., Arpachshad).

vv11-12: Corrupt

In these two verse there is a word that is used *three* times; though the *tenses* are different, the root word is identical. That word is *shat* (shee-HIT), or I have also seen it pronounced *shacath*. The word is universally, in all our versions, translated “corrupt” or “corrupted.” The word means to go to ruin, to be polluted, depraved, decayed, rotten.

For complete notes and audios for each session, go to DLAMPEL.COM/BIBLE-STUDIES/



Alexander MacLaren: Notice the universal apostasy. Two points are brought out in the somber description. The first is moral corruption; the second, violence. Bad men are cruel men. When the bonds which knit society to God are relaxed, selfishness soon becomes furious, and forcibly seizes what it lusts after, regardless of others' rights. Sin saps the very foundations of social life, and makes men into tigers, more destructive to each other than wild beasts. All our grand modern schemes for the reformation of society will fail unless they begin with the reformation of the individual. To walk with God is the true way to make men gentle and pitying.

“...and the earth was filled with violence.”

Here is another clue showing the pervasiveness of this evil: The Hebrew *ma-le* means accomplished, completed. With the sole exception of Noah and his family, the earth was *completely* corrupt and violent.

Leupold: There come times in the events of this world when God's gracious dealings with men are definitely terminated. Such times come only when grace has been offered in richest measure. But when the end is resolved upon, there is no recall. Such a case is marked by the “end” that God here determines.

God has just said, *That's it!*

For complete notes and audios for each session, go to DLAMPEL.COM/BIBLE-STUDIES/

