

Genesis 040

Unforeseen Consequences

Genesis 9:22-26

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Good morning, everybody. If you could take your Bibles this morning and open them to Genesis 9:22. The title of our message this morning is 'Unforeseen Consequences.'

When we sin, we usually think it is just going to affect us and our relationship with God, but that is not how sin works. The effects of sin often affect other people whom we do not even realize are being affected. We certainly see that this morning in our account, the historical account of the sin of Ham against his father, Noah.

We are dealing with the Book of Genesis. Genesis 1-11 is part one of the book, featuring four events: Creation, what the world was like before sin entered the picture in Genesis 1-2; then the Fall in Genesis 3-5—what went wrong? Why is our world not the way God designed it? You have no explanation of it unless you have Genesis 3 and the subsequent chapters in our Bible.

Fortunately, there is hope in the midst of it, because there is coming Jesus Christ who is going to make all things right. That is predicted as early as Genesis 3:15, and the Book of Genesis is going to trace that promise. That is going to become very important today, because we are going to learn through which of Noah's three sons this Messiah is going to come into the world.

Keep Genesis 3:15 in the back of your minds, because our passage today is going to make a big contribution to that Messiah, identifying Him in advance.

Then we moved into Genesis 6-9, which is the third major event in the Book of Genesis, the Flood. We have seen events before the Flood in Genesis 6; the Flood itself in Genesis 7; the receding of the waters in Genesis 8; and we find ourselves today, as we have during the last few weeks, in Genesis 9, the events following the Flood.

The Bible highlights two things: number one, God's covenant with Noah. That covenant starts to get unfolded in Genesis 8:20, and goes all the way through Genesis 9:17. That is the origin of human government.

Then there is something else that takes place in that post-Flood world, and that is post-Flood sin (Genesis 9:18-29): number one, Noah's sin (Genesis 9:18-21); number two, Ham's sin (Genesis 9:22-27); number three, Noah's death (Genesis 9:28-29).

Last week we studied Genesis 9:18-21, and we saw the sin of Noah in the post-Flood world: his drunkenness in his tent. You read that and say, "That is a very strange occurrence. Why would the Lord include that story for us?"

We talked about a lot of different reasons that it is there. One reason it is there is to show that the Flood fixed the world on the outside, but it never fixed man completely on the inside.

"...the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth;..." (Genesis 8:21).

Thus we have a continuing need for the Messiah to come to fix humanity on the inside. The promise of a coming Messiah is alive and well, even though the external world has been cleansed.

The truth of the matter is that you can fix someone on the outside—you can put a person in a fresh set of clothes; you could give them a shower; you could give them an education; you could put money in their bank; and you could actually get them to go through some sort of 12-step program or some sort of moral reformation—but the truth of the matter is that they are still a sinner, dead in their trespasses and sins, if they do not have Jesus. Fixing someone on the outside only gets you so far. There has to be a transformation on the inside.

The sin of Noah also reveals that Noah is not the Messiah. Noah's obedience and his walk of faith are so exemplary that you might mistake him for the Messiah. You might mistake him for the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15. In fact, back in Genesis 5:28-29, his own parents had a very high opinion of him, and they thought that potentially he could be the Messiah. They said, "This is the man who is going to eradicate the curse." I will say a few more words about Genesis 5 a little bit later.

It says in Genesis 5:28,

"Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. Now he called his name Noah, saying, 'This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed'" (Genesis 5:28-29).

Noah's own father thought that Noah could be the one that was predicted in Genesis 3:15 to eradicate the curse. But Noah's performance in the post-Flood world—his drunkenness—obviously would disqualify Noah as the Messiah. There must be somebody else coming. That someone else, of course, is Jesus Christ. That would be another reason that the drunkenness of Noah is revealed here in Genesis 9.

Genesis 9:18-21 also refutes something that we talked a lot about last week called the 'Perseverance of the Saints.' The Perseverance of the Saints is a doctrine that you find floating around in many circles today. It is this idea that if you do not endure in good works until the end of your life, you are not a Christian.

John Murray, an advocate of the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints, says,

"...the perseverance of the saints...that we may entertain the faith of our security in Christ only as we persevere in faith and holiness to the end..."¹

¹ John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2015 edition), p. 152, 154-55, 165. pp. 152, 154-55, 165.

Many, many people think this way, and consequently they have almost no assurance of their salvation because their thinking is, "Have I done enough? Have I resisted temptation enough? Have I persevered enough? And if I haven't, maybe I lost my salvation, or maybe I was never one of the elect to begin with."

And yet, as you go through the Bible, you see many, many examples, in both Old Testament and New Testament, of people that were clearly blood-bought saints who did not end well. We went through many of those examples last time. This may be the first one in the Bible—this man named Noah.

There is no doubt that Noah was saved. His name is mentioned in the Hall of Faith, in Hebrews 11:7. Yet the end of his life did not seem to go very well. Yet he clearly died and went to heaven.

We at Sugar Land Bible Church do not teach the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints. We teach the preservation of the saints. It places the onus not on ourselves, but on God (1 Peter 1:5). Look at the author there: Peter. He was a man who knew all about this. He denied the Lord three times, and yet he never questioned whether he was one of the elect. He never lost his salvation. What he writes in his epistle is 1 Peter 1:4-5,

"to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you," (1 Peter 1:4).

Peter talked about an inheritance in heaven that he would receive—that we would receive. How do we know we are going to receive it? Because we persevere enough? No.

Peter says,

"who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).

Your entrance into heaven does not depend upon your ability to persevere. If that were true, you would be your own Savior. Your entrance into heaven is completely predicated upon God's promise to protect and keep you as His child the moment you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Now, do not get me wrong. We should live lives of holiness and consecrated obedience, but we do not do that for fear that somehow the carpet is going to get ripped out from under us. Many people think they are on probation with God—"Gee, if I do not perform well, I am not His child."

We should persevere. We should be holy. We should be consecrated unto God. But it has nothing to do with your arrival into heaven. That is already a done deal. In fact, as I speak today, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are already on a fast track to glory which cannot be reversed.

The reason it cannot be reversed is that it is God, as Peter says, who protects and keeps us. It is not so much us hanging on to God that is the issue; it is the fact that God

is hanging onto us. Amen? That makes a world of difference, because now when we serve Him, we are doing it out of worship and praise and gratitude. We are not doing it out of perpetual fear.

When you start reading the Bible, you start to see that this Perseverance of the Saints idea that many people advocate and teach cannot be correct.

Now we move into new material and we have a second sin that takes place in the post-Flood world. We had Noah's sin in Genesis 9:18-21, and now we have the sin of Noah's son Ham, and the fact that it put Ham's fourth son, Canaan, under a curse.

These are verses, unfortunately, that have been wrenched from their context to support racism. We are going to learn today that these verses have nothing to do with what people use them and twist them to mean.

Notice, if you will, Genesis 9:22. It says,

"Ham, the father of Canaan,..." (Genesis 9:22).

Now that becomes very important because of what Ham is going to do here. Ham is going to do something that will have a negative effect—watch this very carefully: not on the Hamites in general, but on his fourth son. Canaan was the fourth son of Ham. You see that in Genesis 10:6, which says,

"The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan" (Genesis 10:6).

These would be the people that settled in the land of Canaan eventually, which would become the land of Israel. The curse is not on all of the Hamites, but is limited to the descendants of Ham's fourth son, a man named Canaan. He is going to be the subject in what follows.

This idea that Ham is the father of Canaan is repeated. If you go back to Genesis 9:18, you will see it stated there as we entered this paragraph, and now it is stated a second time in Genesis 9:22.

What did Ham do that was wrong? (Ham is the middle son of Noah. The birth order is Shem, Ham, and Japheth.) What does it say there in Genesis 9:22?

"Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside" (Genesis 9:22).

The first major issue here is "What was Ham's sin?" Noah was drunk in his tent and Ham, Noah's middle son, did something to Noah. What exactly happened here?

Many, many people teach that this was some kind of sexual sin, that it was incestuous; some even argue that it was rape or homosexual incest or something of that nature went on. They believe that because it talks here about how he saw the nakedness of his father.

They go to another book that Moses wrote, the Book of Leviticus, where uncovering nakedness is used to describe sexual sin. In fact, as you go through Leviticus 18 and you go through Leviticus 20, you will see this phrase used over and over again: 'uncovering nakedness.' It is used as a euphemism, if you will, for all kinds of sexual misbehavior.

For example, in Leviticus 18:18 it says,

"You shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as a rival while she is alive, to uncover her nakedness" (Leviticus 18:18).

So, you will notice that in the Book of Leviticus, sexual sin is analogized to uncovering one's nakedness. People say, "Well, obviously, then, what happened here was something sexual."

However, I think that is to read too much into the passage. I do not have to travel all the way to the Book of Leviticus to figure out what was happening here in the Book of Genesis. I think it suffices to say, without mentioning the exact sin, that whatever happened here was disrespectful. That is the issue. Ham disrespected his father.

Notice the words of Hebrew Christian scholar Arnold Fruchtenbaum on this verse. He says,

*"The sin of Ham was that he saw the nakedness of his father. For Ham this was an attack on Noah's privacy. Ham perhaps showed his disrespect, for he saw the nakedness with glee, and so the moral rectitude of the father was now destroyed. The 'seeing' involved a violation of a boundary; the looking was a negative looking. It will be used again in Genesis 19:26, with Lot's wife looking back; in Exodus 33:20, in that no one can look at God and live; in Judges 13:22, when Manoah said, *We shall surely die, because we have seen [or looked upon] God*, and in 1 Samuel 6:19, where those who looked into the ark died....However, it does imply that he looked upon the *nakedness* of his father with glee; not necessarily to derive sexual pleasure from it, but certainly in a mocking tone, making fun of his father, and so he *told his two brethren*. The sin of *Ham* will cause the cursing of his fourth son, and the sin lay in three things: seeing but failing to cover the father himself, as he could have; telling others about it, further shaming him; and deriding his father."²*

The answer to this is probably a lot simpler than most people make it. Noah was in a vulnerable position: he was drunk in his tent and his drunkenness was inappropriate. So his son Ham, rather than covering his father in a respectful sense, made sport of this sin—scandalized it, publicized it, and wanted to make sure that his brothers understood exactly what his father had done.

It is more the sin of disrespect than anything else, and if the Bible teaches anything, it teaches that children should be respectful to their parents.

² Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, 197-98.

Exodus 21:17 says,

*"He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death"
(Exodus 21:17).*

Now, that was under the Old Testament law. I am glad that is not in effect today. We would not have any youth anymore. It shows you the heart of God, as children are supposed to be respectful and in submission to their parents. Now, parents, of course, have no right to abuse their children. It is a two-way street.

This is part of the relationships that God Himself has set up, and it expresses the heart of God. Apparently, that boundary was traversed here concerning what Ham did concerning Noah.

You will notice that Ham uncovered, not covered. You see the contrasting mindset in the other brothers, Shem and Japheth, who did the exact opposite. Notice what their attitude is in Genesis 9:23.

"But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness" (Genesis 9:23).

The brothers are not looking with glee on what Noah had done. They were trying to actually not look at him, and they were trying to cover him. Ham was doing the exact opposite. He was taking his father in a vulnerable place and scandalizing it and publicizing it, and in the process traversing a boundary line with God. Different attitudes are contrasted there: the sinful attitude is contrasted there in Genesis 9:22 with the proper attitude that is given there in Genesis 9:23.

Noah knew exactly what had happened to him (we are not told exactly how he knew). When you look at Genesis 9:24, it says,

"When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him" (Genesis 9:24).

The language there, *"had done to him,"* implies that Ham had committed a sin, and violated Noah in some way—disrespected Noah in some way. How Noah knew, we do not know.

Now, there is something going on here in the Hebrew when it says,

"When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him" (Genesis 9:24).

A lot of commentators, including Arnold Fruchtenbaum, will tell you that 'youngest' could easily be translated 'younger'—not 'youngest,' but 'younger.' If that is true—and I think it is—that maintains the proper birth order. The proper birth order is number one, Shem; number two, Ham; and number three, Japheth.

Then you come to Genesis 9:25, and this is very interesting because of everything we know about Noah in the Book of Genesis—and in the whole Bible for that matter. We do not have any recorded words of Noah. Nowhere do we have in the Book of Genesis what Noah said. We have a lot of information about what he did, but nothing about what he said.

So, Genesis 9:25-27 is very interesting because, as far as I can tell, these are the only recorded words of Noah found in the Book of Genesis. If you look at Genesis 9:25, it says,

"So he said,..." (Genesis 9:25).

If you look at the beginning of Genesis 9:26, it says,

"He also said,..." (Genesis 9:26).

So Noah is starting to talk. Of course, he had been talking all of the time, but now we are actually getting an actual quotation of something he said. He is reacting to this situation with him, and in the process, he is giving predictive prophecies about the course of human history emanating from Noah's three sons.

If you want to understand why history has gone the direction it has gone, it is just a matter of studying these few verses, Genesis 9:25, 26, and 27, which are a record of Noah's actual words—and not just words, but predictions or prophecies.

Jesus said something very interesting in the Upper Room in John 13:19 to His hand-picked disciples. He said,

"From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so when it does occur, you may believe that I am He..." (John 13:19).

Then, in the next chapter, in John 14:29, Jesus says the same thing.

"Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe" (John 14:29).

You will notice that God does not require people to blindly believe in Him, but He gives them evidence. Our faith is not a leap into a dark chasm, but it is a faith built on solid evidences.

One of the things that you have in Christianity, in the Bible, that you have in no other alleged holy book on the earth today is predictive prophecy. One of the unique features of this Book is that it predicts the future. For many of the prophecies, like the ones that are given here in Genesis 9:25-27, you can show in history how they were very literally fulfilled.

Jesus, in the Upper Room, told the disciples, "Look, we are coming up on Passion Week. This is Passion Week. I am going to die. I am going to resurrect. I am going to ascend to heaven, and I am going to start making a series of short-term predictions. And as these short predictions come to pass, you will know who I am. You will know that

I am He [that is another way of saying, "I am God."] with the purpose [John 14:29] of believing."

So this becomes the value of studying Genesis 9:25-27, seeing how these prophecies have come to pass in history, which gives us great confidence that the Bible must be from God because only God can know the end from the beginning and is able here, through Noah, to reveal history in advance.

What exactly did Noah say as he awoke from his drunken slumber?

"So he said, 'Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers'" (Genesis 9:25).

Now notice that first expression there: *"Cursed be Canaan"* (Genesis 9:25). A curse came upon not the Hamites as a whole, but one of Ham's sons. This is the air of the racist viewpoint that the black race coming from Ham is under some sort of curse. That is not what it says here in the Bible. This is a curse that is narrowly tailored just to the descendants of Ham's fourth son that settled in the land of Canaan.

One question that comes up is, "Why in the world would God curse his fourth son because of what Ham had done?" Many people argue that there is some sort of genetic curse in the Canaanites, but that would be contrary to God's nature.

Ezekiel 18:20 says this:

"The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself" (Ezekiel 18:20).

When God brings judgment, He does not do it because of something someone else did in one's family tree. He holds everybody accountable for their own sin. If that is true—and I think it is a true principle of God, a fair principle, an equitable principle, articulated in Ezekiel 18:20 as I just read—why in the world would Noah, as God is giving Noah an oracle, pronounce a curse on Ham's fourth son for something his father did?

I think there is a simple answer to that. And the answer goes something like this: the apple does not fall too far from the tree. When children see sinful behavior in their parents, they will likely go into their lives imitating that same sinful behavior. Ham's fourth son imitated the disrespect that was involved here, as evidenced in their father because Ham disrespected Noah. The Canaanites had no real respect for God's boundaries as they settled into the land of Canaan. They were a people that became lawless.

When I was just starting out in ministry, I was under a pastor, and he said to me, "I want you to watch something very, very carefully." He said, "There are parents that will come to this church, and they will treat it like a babysitting service." In other words, they will bring their kids to church, but they themselves will not come to church. They look at it as

a break from their kids. They go out and read the paper or check up on the sporting events, and then they will come back and pick up their kids when the services are over. The church to them is nothing more than a babysitting service.

This pastor said, "I want you to watch what happens to the children of those parents as the children get older and start to make their own decisions. Once they reach the age of, let's say, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, or nineteen, and they are on their own, and they start making their decisions," he said, "it almost works out, down to a person, that children of such a family will stop attending church themselves."

Why? Because it was really never role-modeled by their parents. It was never treated as something that was sanctified, special, holy. This is not so much in what their parents said, but what their parents did. "Mom and Dad do not think church is a big deal, so now that I am on my own and can make my own decisions, I do not think church is a big deal."

As these kids began to make their own decisions, they would leave the church. And this pastor said, "I want you to compare that to the parents who not only bring their kids to church, but they actually come into the church themselves and they come into the church service. They do not treat it like a babysitting service. They want to be a part of the church. Watch what happens to those kids as they get older. They will stick with the church, unlike the other children, because church attendance was something that was not just verbally taught to them, it was role-modeled."

This is the power of parents over children. Your best sermons to your children and your grandchildren are going to come not so much from what we say, but what we do—what we role-model. If we are not role-modeling authentic Christianity in our behavior, we can tell our kids to go to church all we want, but they are not going to take it seriously because they see no example in their parents.

See, it is one thing in a family to tell your kids, "You need to pray." It is a totally different situation when Mom and Dad say, "Okay, let's get together and let's all get down on our knees before the Lord. A circumstance has come up, and let's pray about this." Now a child is seeing what is important role-modeled by way of priorities to those parents.

This is what happened with the fourth son of Ham. He developed a lot of bad tendencies, and that followed him into his settlement in Canaan. The Canaanites themselves continued on with those bad tendencies. It is not a situation where God is cursing Canaan because of what his father had done. It is a situation where the apple does not fall too far from the tree.

I can guarantee you that when Ham did this to Noah, he was not even thinking about his descendants. He was not thinking about his children. He was not thinking about his great grandchildren. He probably saw it as some kind of private sin between him and the Lord, between him and his father. But that is not how sin works. Sin has unforeseen consequences moving sometimes into the role-modeling of the behavior of the next generation or generations that we cannot even see. That is why I have entitled this message 'Unforeseen Consequences.'

Romans 6:23 says,

"For the wages of sin is death,..." (Romans 6:23).

What is a wage? A wage is a price; it is a cost. Sometimes the costs and the wages are unforeseen. We cannot even see them. Sometimes we are saying things and doing things which are going to affect the next generation, or maybe we are just not doing things that we should be doing that are going to affect the next generation. We do not even consider what it is we are doing.

See, this is the situation here with Ham, and that is why a curse, I believe, fell upon his fourth son. His fourth son Canaan picked up a lot of bad cues from Dad; and Canaan's children picked up a lot of bad cues from Canaan. That is why the Canaanites moved into this godless society, ultimately, in the land of Canaan, that ultimately had to be physically eradicated by Joshua.

You have to put yourself in the position of those that we are affecting when we sin, because a lot of people that we may affect we cannot even see. Do you remember the turning point in the book of 2 Samuel? What turns everything in the book of 2 Samuel is David's adultery, and ultimately murder to cover up his adultery. He committed adultery with Bathsheba. He killed Uriah the Hittite to cover up what he had done. Then David is confronted by the prophet Nathan about this, you recall.

Look very carefully at Nathan's words there in 2 Samuel 12:10. It says,

""Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house,..." (2 Samuel 12:10).

What is his house? It is his family.

""...the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife"" (2 Samuel 12:10).

Well, David probably thought, "This is just between me and Uriah. This is just between me and Bathsheba. This is just between me and God."

But God says through Nathan, "No, this is going to affect your house, your household, your descendants. There is going to be a situation where the sword is not going to depart from your house, who are innocent bystanders, because of what you have done."

Unforeseen consequences. We do not think of sin this way. "Oh, at worst, I am just hurting myself," we think. No, you are not. You are hurting everybody that is taking their cues from you, especially those living in your own household, because as a man, you are the high priest of the house. That is what the Bible says about you.

You may not want the job, but God never asked you whether you want the job or not. It is yours. You have incredible power and influence in that house as the leader of that house. I am speaking now to the men. What you do or do not do is going to have an

effect on your wife; it is going to have an effect on your children; it is going to have an effect on your grandchildren. The unforeseen consequences of sin.

This becomes the apologetic for the eradication of the Canaanites. When Moses penned this book, the Book of Genesis, you have to ask yourself, who was the original audience? Who was this written for originally? Well, the original audience would be the Hebrews that had just come out of the Exodus, had received the law of Moses at Mount Sinai, and were now en route to Canaan, who, under Joshua, will be told to eradicate the Canaanites.

Now, that seems like a harsh command. Why would God command that? Because there had been centuries and centuries and centuries and centuries and centuries of disrespect for the law of God. It was like a snowball effect. It got so wicked and evil that God had no choice but to eradicate the Canaanites as the nation of Israel entered the Promised Land.

How bad did it get? It is in your Bible. Read Leviticus 18 and read Leviticus 20, where it describes levels of sexual sin that are so grotesque it would be difficult for me to read those passages publicly, even in the church world. All of the archeological remnants that we have of that time period depict the sexualized imagery—the disgusting things that were happening.

God said, "Sin has finally reached full bloom, and what you need to do is you need to go into Canaan and you need to eradicate the Canaanites." Israel did it. They got about a C- as they did it, because they left some Canaanites alive, as recorded in the Book of Joshua and as recorded in the Book of Judges.

For 800 years, those living Canaanites in the land that should have been eradicated became a source of consternation for Israel, leading Israel ultimately back into the same sin—leading to the Babylonian captivity, a time of discipline 800 years later.

If you are under Joshua's watch and you are one of his soldiers and you want to know, "Why is it that God has issued this command to eradicate the Canaanites?" you have the story of the Book of Genesis right in front of you, because you are the original audience. You could see where all of this Canaanite debauchery came from.

It started with what Ham did to Noah by way of disrespect—and somebody was watching, and that someone watching was Ham's fourth son, who learned similar detestable practices, and he passed them on to his children and his children passed them on to their children, and their children passed them on to their children.

So, finally, you reach Genesis 15:16, where God says this,

"Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite..." (Genesis 15:16).

The Amorites were a people group within Canaan.

"Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete" (Genesis 15:16).

God just let the snowball roll and roll and roll and roll until finally He got to a point where He says, "That is enough. I want you to go in there, and I want you to execute every single one of them—man, woman, and child. I want you to even kill their animals."

How different the history of Israel would have been if they had done exactly what God said—but they did not; they let a few live. Sounds like us, does it not? We have a sinful habit in our life, and the Holy Spirit says, "Deal with this right now."

"Well, Lord, I am a slave to it. I do not have the power to deal with it."

And God says, "I have taken care of that—it is the power of the Holy Spirit. You need to deal with this. You need to cut it off. You need to fix this now under My power."

Then we just let it fester and let it live. Eventually, what happens is the tail starts to wag the dog. Eventually the Canaanites, the living few left, started wagging the dog, to the point where the whole nation of Israel went into corruption.

That is the nature of sin. It spreads like yeast through the lump of dough (Galatians 5:9). We do not deal with things when God says, "Deal with them," and we suffer consequences down the road.

But where did it all start? It started right here. It started right here with what Ham did to Noah and what Canaan picked up and learned from this lack of respect towards Ham's father.

You will notice Genesis 9:25 as we continue on.

"So he said, 'Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants...'" (Genesis 9:25).

This is what you call a superlative in Hebrew. It is like saying 'the ultimate.' It is like saying the 'Holy of Holies.' When you say the 'Holy of Holies,' you are not talking about a holy place—you are talking about the ultimate holy place. That is what a superlative is.

When Noah says prophetically, "'Cursed be Canaan'" (Genesis 9:25), he is talking about how Canaan is going to be in abject slavery. Then Noah says who Ham is going to be enslaved to, Genesis 9:25.

"...He shall be to his brothers" (Genesis 9:25).

Canaan is going to be a slave to the two other brothers of Noah, Shem and Japheth. Exactly how all of that is unpacked is given in more specific prophecies, in Genesis 9:26-27. Look very carefully at the language. This is a curse not on all the Hamites, as racists teach; this is a curse that fell only upon Ham's fourth son and was limited to the land of Canaan.

We move now into Genesis 9:26, where there is actually some good news in this. God, in the worst of circumstances, can take lemons and turn them into lemonade. We actually have some good news here as Noah starts dealing with Shem.

Look at what Noah says there in Genesis 9:26:

"He also said, 'Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant'" (Genesis 9:26).

Now we have a blessing pronounced on Shem, the oldest son, who was not involved with Ham's sin. Here we are starting to get a focus, or a picture, of the sovereignty of God. No matter how bad it gets, no matter how dark it gets, no matter how difficult it gets, no matter how adverse it gets, God is still in control. Amen?

God is actually going to use negative circumstances to bring about His positive results. He does something spectacular here in Genesis 9:26, where He narrows the focus onto the coming Messiah.

Look, if you will, at Genesis 9:26 again.

"He also said, 'Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem;...'" (Genesis 9:26).

There is a Messiah that is coming. We know that from Genesis 3:15. Here we learn that this Messiah is coming from the descendants not of Ham, not of Japheth, but of Shem.

Let me back up just for a minute, if I could. Generally speaking, the descendants of Ham settled in Africa; the descendants of his fourth son settled in the land of Canaan. The descendants of Japheth settled in Asia; ultimately, Europe and North America. From the descendants of Shem—from the word 'Shem' we get the word 'Semite'—came the Semitic people groups of the earth: the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Persians, and ultimately the Hebrews would be born from the descendants of Shem.

Now we have a very specific prophecy concerning what would happen to Shem's line. Arnold Fruchtenbaum describes it as follows,

"Genesis 9:26 focuses on Shem, combining a blessing and cursing. The blessing is: Blessed be Jehovah the God of Shem. It is the God of Shem and not Shem himself who was blessed. Shem will uniquely possess the knowledge of God. Therefore, the Seed of the Woman will come through Shem and not through Ham or Japheth."³

Now, when we started this study today, I told you to keep an eye on Genesis 3:15. Genesis 3:15 is the first prophecy of a coming Messiah. It was announced immediately after the Fall of man in Eden. God said, at that time,

³ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, 199.

"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel" (Genesis 3:15).

Hey, there is coming One who is going to make things right! There is coming One from the seed of the woman, Eve, who will reverse the consequences of the fall. All the Book of Genesis is doing is tracing that coming One. It starts with Adam and Eve, and then it is traced through Seth, and then it is traced through Noah.

Genesis 5 has a long genealogy linking Adam to Noah. That is probably why Noah's father thought Noah was the Messiah. (Sounds like a typical parent, does it not? "My child is so great, he must be the Messiah." No, he is not the Messiah because he got drunk in the post-Flood world; we must be looking for someone else.)

You will notice what just happened here is that the lineage got narrowed through Shem, because we really do not know through which of these three sons the Messiah is going to come. Is the Messiah going to be a Japhethite? No, he is going to come through the line of Shem. He is going to come through the Semitic people groups of the earth. We just do not know yet that he will come through the Hebrew nation.

When we get to the story of Adam, Isaac, and Jacob, that is where we learn that the Messiah is going to be Jewish. Genesis 12:3: He is coming through Abraham's line. Genesis 21:12: He is coming through Isaac's line within Abraham's line. Genesis 25:23: He is coming through, of all of Isaac's descendants, Jacob.

Now, this gets complicated because Jacob had a lot of kids. We call them the twelve tribes of Israel, "Jacob's Dozen." Through which of these tribes within the land of Israel is the Messiah going to come from? By the time you leave the Book of Genesis you know exactly which tribe He is coming from. It is in Genesis 49:10: He is coming from the tribe of Judah.

This was why, when Herod wanted to kill the firstborn in Bethlehem, he asked his religious leaders, "Through which of these areas is the Messiah going to come from—from which city?" They knew that he was coming from Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah. How did they know that? Were they prophets? No, they were good readers. They were good students of the prophets. They were good students of the Book of Genesis.

So this is just a wonderful thing that is being unfolded now by way of good news, as we know that the Messiah is going to be a Semitic, ultimately Jewish. I can get myself stoned to death in Texas for saying this, but I am going to say it anyway. Jesus was not a Southern Baptist, nor was He a Presbyterian, nor was He a Methodist.

Jesus was not even a member of a Bible church, for goodness' sake. He was as Jewish as they come. That is why when you get into the New Testament, you see Christ, over and over again, traveling to Jerusalem to honor the feasts of Israel, because that is what Jews did.

This is all starting to develop here in Genesis 9:26. Notice the second part of the verse. This is very interesting; there is also a curse. It says,

"...And let Canaan..." (Genesis 9:26).

Canaan was the fourth son of Ham.

"...And let Canaan be his servant..." (Genesis 9:26).

So, interestingly, the Messiah is coming from the lineage of Shem, but Canaan, Ham's fourth son, is going to serve Shem. As you go through the Bible, you start to see how this actually got fulfilled in real history.

For example, notice Genesis 14:1-4. Genesis 14:1 talks about a king, the king of Elam. Elam is modern-day Iran, which used to be called 'Persia' until about 1935. This is talking about a descendant of Shem.

Then when you look at Genesis 14:3, it talks about those living in Sodom, in Canaan. (This was before Joshua eradicated the Canaanites.) It says there,

"All these..." (Genesis 14:3).

What kings? The kings in Sodom, in Canaan—Canaanites—descendants, ultimately, of Ham.

"All these came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer..." (Genesis 14:3-4).

You move from Genesis 9 into Genesis 14 and you see, "Oh my goodness, this prophecy is starting to be fulfilled, that the descendants of Canaan would become subservient to the descendants of Shem."

Then, when you go to 1 Kings 9:20-21, it says this,

"As for all the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites..." (1 Kings 9:20).

Who are all these '-ites'? These are the descendants of Ham, and, ultimately, Canaan. What does it say there in 1 Kings 9:20-21? It says that the sons of Israel conscripted them as forced laborers. They became servants, or slaves—these Canaanites—of the Shemites, just like Noah said would happen.

It is just a fascinating thing to me that when God speaks something, you had better pay attention to what He says, because it may seem impossible that such a prophecy could ever come to pass, but eventually history is going to catch up to God's prophetic word, because God, who is not limited by time, can see tomorrow as if it is today. He is outside of time. This becomes one of the great proofs of the Bible that the Bible must be from God, because only the Bible does this.

You find nothing like this in the Quran or any alleged holy book upon the earth. This matter of predictive prophecy is unique to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I say to that, "Praise the Lord."

What about Japheth? What is going to happen to him? Well, we know that Canaan, Ham's fourth son, is going to be put under a curse because of his behavior that he learned from his father. We know that the Messiah is going to come from the line of Shem, the Semitic people groups of the earth. Well, doesn't the Bible have anything to say about Japheth? You had better believe it does. You just have to come back next week to learn about it, because we are out of time.

We were talking about the fourth son coming under a curse, and here is the reality of the situation: the whole human race is under a curse. Not necessarily because of what our fathers did or our grandfathers did, but what our ultimate great-great-great-great-great grandfather Adam did. In Adam's sin, we sinned all.

The truth of the matter is that when Adam committed that transgression in Eden, you were there committing the same sin. God could have put every single one of us in Eden, and we would have done the exact same thing. All of us are guilty in that sense.

But the good news of it is that there is a last Adam. He is not the second Adam. Do not misquote the Scripture. The Bible never calls Jesus the 'second Adam,' because if there was a second Adam, you could have a third one and a fourth one and a fifth one.

No, Jesus is the last Adam. He is the final act. And He came into the world to reverse what the first Adam did. He came into the world to reverse our guilt through His sinless life and then death on a cross and payment of the full penalty for our sins.

He has given us now what we call the gospel: good news, something free, something that you can only receive from God as a gift. You can only receive this from God as a gift by fulfilling a single condition, which is to believe. That is a synonym for saying 'to trust' or 'to rely upon' what Jesus did. Only Jesus, as the last Adam, could reverse the negative consequences of the first Adam.

The moment a lost sinner, a rebel in Adam's race, places their trust in Jesus, their whole identity changes. They are no longer under the judgment of God, the wrath of God, hurtling towards a Christless eternity. Now they are under the benefits of the last Adam, who absorbed the wrath of a holy God in our place. That is what we trust in.

Christianity is not about us trying harder to get better. It is about trusting in the One who did everything in our place: this Man, Jesus Christ. We like to conclude all of our services here with an invitation for people in the building, or outside the building, or listening online, or listening on the archive after the fact, to go ahead and exercise that faith in Jesus.

It is not a situation where we ask people to join the church, walk an aisle, or give money. It is a matter of privacy between them and the Lord, where the Spirit convicts them of their need to do this. We place our trust in the last Adam. And that is the gospel.

This is not twelve steps to God; this is a single step. If it is something that you want to do or something that the Holy Spirit has been bothering you to do, then do it because God loves you too much to see you go into a Christless eternity. That is why He is annoying you. He wants you to trust in Him.

It is at that point of trusting that you find your security in Him. That is the gospel as best I can explain it. If it is something that anybody here needs more explanation on, I am available after the service to talk.