

Beginnings: Study and Discussion Questions

Lesson Ten: The Beginning of the Dispersion of Nations – Genesis 9:18-11:9

Read Genesis 9:18-11:9 carefully and answer Questions 1-3 from 9:18-29.

- 1) List Noah's three sons. **Shem, Ham and Japheth**
- 2) What particular talent did Noah have and how did this strength play a part in a weakness (9:20-21)? **Noah was apparently talented in working the soil, but he became drunk on the produce of his vineyard.**
- 3) What strength do you have that at times becomes a weakness (you will not be asked to share this in your discussion unless you volunteer)? Have you thought to make this a specific matter of prayer? **Personal sharing**

From Genesis 9:18-29:

- 4) According to the following verses, which well-known Bible characters were descendants of Shem? Genesis 11:10-26 (in verse 26), 25:19-20 and 24-26, 35:22 (see with 32:28 and 49:28), Luke 3:23-38 (compare verses 23 and 36) **Abram, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve tribes of Israel, and Jesus**
- 5) Consider Ham's actions. What was the general nature of his sin and how seriously does God take this? See Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:2-3. **At the very least, Ham disrespected his father. God commands us to honor our parents. It is the only one of the Ten Commandments with a promise attached: "that it may go well with you and that you may live long upon the earth."**
- 6) Noah cursed the descendants of Ham (Canaan was one of Ham's descendants [10:6]) and blessed Shem and Japheth and their descendants.
 - a) How have the words of others had a lasting impact on you (good or ill)? Give examples. **Personal sharing**
 - b) Each person is responsible before God for his or her own choices. Noah's curse on Canaan did not excuse the perverse behavior for which some of Canaan's descendants were known. Is there a wrong attitude or destructive behavior that has been passed down to you for which you need to take responsibility and correct? If so, what is it? **Personal sharing**
 - c) Read Ephesians 4:29. Write the names of family members, close friends, or work associates you will you make a special effort this week to build up with affirming words. **Personal sharing**

From Genesis 10:1-32:

- 7) Reread chapter 10 and list the names of people or cities that are familiar to you. **Individual sharing of discoveries**
- 8) "Shinar" is the plain on which the city of Babylon was located. Quickly skim Revelation 18, noting that in Revelation, "Babylon" symbolizes all that opposes God. According to Genesis 10:6-11, who founded Babylon, which of Noah's sons was his ancestor, and what other empire (that later became Israel's enemy) did he found (compare 10:11 with 2 Kings 17:6)? **Nimrod, the descendant of Ham, established kingdoms in Babylon and Assyria.**
- 9) Based on the ways you have recently used your time and resources, what would you say you are "building into"? Make a *specific* (and honest) list below. **Personal sharing**

From Genesis 10:1-32:

- 10)** Canaan is mentioned in Genesis 9:18, 22, and 25-27. What do you learn from the following passages about his descendants? Genesis 10:15-19, together with Genesis 15:16 (where the Canaanites are collectively called “Amorites”), Genesis 15:18-21, Genesis 18:20-21, Numbers 13:1-2, Joshua 11:1-8, 20, and 1 Kings 16:29-33 (note the identity of Jezebel’s father, compare with Genesis 10:15)? **Canaan was a descendant (possibly a son) of Ham and closely associated with Ham’s sin against Noah (either because he was involved, was the result of the sin [if it was committed with Noah’s wife], or had a nature like his forefather Ham’s [but perhaps more degraded]). The Canaanites built the notorious cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which God judged and destroyed because of their extreme wickedness. The Canaanites were so thoroughly offensive to God that, 400 years later, He sent Abraham’s descendants to destroy them (at the time when their sin had “reached the full measure”). Even though Joshua’s campaign against the Canaanites was successful, pockets of Canaanites remained. Jezebel (wife of King Ahab of Israel) was the daughter of the king of a Canaanite city (Sidon). She encouraged Ahab to lead Israel into idolatry.**
- 11)** Why do you think God included the information in Genesis chapter 10? **Genesis 10 sets the stage for the remainder of the story of the Bible. It describes a people group chosen by God, a second group that became aligned with God through the first, and a third group that was opposed to God.**
- 12)** What kind of an example would you like to set for your descendants? Be specific. **Personal sharing**

From Genesis 11:1-9:

- 13)** Compare Genesis 11:1 with Genesis 10:5 and 20. What information, contained in these verses, indicates that the events of Genesis 11:1-9 must have preceded or occurred early in the range of history covered by Genesis 10? **The verses in Genesis 10 indicate each people group had its own language, while 11:1 says the entire world had a common language. Genesis 11:1-9 either precedes Genesis 10 chronologically or falls within it.**
- 14)** According to Genesis 11:2 and 4, what was the underlying sin of the men who were building the city and the tower? Which words show their determination to break the command God had repeatedly given (see Genesis 1:28 and 9:1 and 7)? **The men were guilty of prideful rebellion against God. They wanted to build a name for themselves and stubbornly refused God’s command to multiply and fill the earth. The phrases “settled there” and “so that we may not be scattered over the face of the whole earth” show their determination to disobey.**
- 15)** In the end, God’s purposes always prevail.
- Which of the verses makes this point? **Verse 8: “So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth.”**
 - With regard to which present circumstance in your own life do you need assurance that God’s purposes will prevail? **Personal sharing**