

Genesis 9 and 10

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[0 : 00] If you know the book of Genesis at all, you know that the book of Genesis is here to show us where we came from. That's why it's called Genesis. Genesis means origins or beginnings. It shows us the origin of where we came from.

So we see the origin of the universe and humanity in chapter 1-2. We see the origin of sin in the fall and as we head out east of Eden.

We see the origin of salvation with God's promise in the garden to have a family for himself. And from that family, a serpent crusher will come to save the world.

All of this has been the origin of how we got here. And now in these chapters that Reuben read, we see the origin of the nations.

How and why the nations and countries and peoples and ethnicities and even how other religions got to where they are today.

[1 : 02] The conflict and clash of the nations is constantly in the news at the moment, isn't it? Peace deals are in the headlines. The clash of beliefs is so prominent in the world right now.

And these chapters are here to show us why that is. How it all began. It's the origin of the nations. But in all these names and nations that Reuben did very well reading earlier, in all of that, these chapters are here to show us how God's blessing and salvation is at the centre of it all.

When we think of the nations of the world, Ukraine and Gaza and peace deals often feel like the centre of it all, don't they? That's what is key on the world stage.

That's often what we think. But actually, when we go back to the origin of the nations, this shows us that actually God's people are at the centre of it all.

And so I want us to hit rewind on the history books this evening. So I want us to rewind before the millennium, before the First World War, before the Industrial Revolution, before the Reformation, before the Middle Ages, before Christ, before the Roman Empire, before Ancient Egypt, before the Bronze Age, before the nations and different peoples even existed.

[2 : 32] Keep rewinding world history, and we see all the nations began with one family. Noah's family.

Because after the floods, how many families are left? Just one. One family left in that arc, and so this is the origin of the nations.

So yes, Adam is the starting point of all humanity, but humanity has been reset. Noah emerges as the head of a new creation, and so this is the new starting point.

The single point of the family tree where we all come from. So if we all got a massive bit of paper, and we all started to draw our family trees, beginning at the bottom, and everyone else in the world joined in on that big bit of paper, and we kind of kept building our family trees, going up and up and up, eventually all the family trees would begin to merge, and it would all end up at this one point here, Noah.

And so if we want to know how the nations came to be, we must look at Noah after the flood and see how we get from that one family to the nations.

[3 : 52] And so as we rewind world history, we see the nations haven't randomly got here. No, we see the nations have all got to where they are because of God.

We see in this, God is sovereign over the nations. That's my first point today. Got one big point at the beginning and a smaller point at the end. First point, God is sovereign over the nations.

So do you remember God's command to Noah's family as they left the ark? Be fruitful and multiply. God wants this one family to boom and fill this world with life.

And with that in mind, this passage starts well because we focus on the next generation, Noah's sons, verse 18. The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these people, and from these, the people of the whole earth were dispersed. We're looking for life, looking for families, looking for a son, and here we have three.

[5 : 00] And from these three sons, the whole earth comes from them. And so as Noah and his family leave the ark, life gets going again, including work, verse 20.

Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. Now, Noah really is like a new Adam here, isn't he? Adam was meant to work the ground, but here is Noah fulfilling that again. It's a new start. And what's his speciality? He makes a vineyard. He's a wine merchant. He makes Malbec. But not all is well in the house of Noah.

Look what Noah does with the wine. Verse 21. He drank of the wine and became drunk, and they uncovered in his tent. So yes, wine is good.

It's a good gift from God. But too much wine, an abuse of that gift, it can so often lead to shameful things that we say or do.

[6 : 06] Things that we so badly regret the next day. Because look how it affects Noah. He lay uncovered in his tent. He's laying naked, unconscious, steaming drunk on the sofa.

We don't know all the details of what happened, but all this drinking, it's clearly led to this shameful, indecent state. And so as the family begins to grow again, this is a troubling start.

But the future doesn't hinge on Noah in this moment. It hinges on how his sons respond to this.

And that's the case with any family, isn't it? We are all born to sinful parents, but the next generation hinges on, well, how are we going to respond to that sin?

Well, look what Ham, his youngest son, does. Verse 22. Ham sees the shame of his father, and he doesn't help him.

[7 : 17] And he doesn't look away either. No, he watches, and then goes to his brothers, and says, come and have a look as well.

Now what's going on here? What's so bad here? Well, not only does he dishonor his father by watching his humiliation, and adding to it, but by getting others to watch.

But here also, there seems to be something a bit more deviant going on. He's wanting to look, and he's getting others to join in.

It's the equivalent of filming it and sending it out. The sin of watching shameful things, it hasn't started with the internet. It's been here since the beginning. But Ham's response is contrasted with his brothers.

Because Shem and Japheth hear what's going on, but they do something about it. Verse 23. Do you see? They get a blanket, they hang it between them, across their shoulders, they face it away from Noah, behind them, and they walk backwards, and they lay the blanket on Noah, and they cover him up.

[8 : 33] And this is the right response. Not only do they not look for themselves, but they honour their father by not looking, not adding to that shame.

And not only that, they don't just leave him, they cover him, they help him. Actually, it's just like what God did for Adam and Eve, isn't it?

He clothed them in their shame. And so we see here two contrasting ways we can respond to sin. Indulge in it and add to it, or shield yourself from it and cover it and help it.

And when Noah finds out what's happened, he responds. And his response shapes the future of the nations. Noah dishes out blessing and curse on his sons.

And we need to realise what this is. Noah is a prophet. That's how the New Testament talks about him. It calls him a herald of righteousness. Noah, he's a prophet.

[9 : 42] And so as a prophet, God is speaking through him in this moment. And so what comes next is God pronouncing something upon the future of the nations.

God is pronouncing curse and blessing. Verse 24, when Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, curse be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers.

Noah turns to Ham and says, curse be your son, Canaan. And notice, he doesn't curse Ham directly, does he?

He curses his son. God is pronouncing something about all the sons and all the bloodline that will come from Ham. And remember, sons and bloodlines have been key in all of Genesis so far.

Where does God promise salvation will come from? It's through a bloodline, a family, and from that family will come a serpent crusher son. And so if salvation is coming through a son, what's going on here?

[10:57] This isn't Noah just saying, Ham, you're not my favourite child anymore. No. This is God cutting off Ham's family from salvation itself.

In fact, all the people that come from Ham will be servants to the people from the other brothers. This is God saying, from now on, the world is going to be fractured. There are going to be three branches that will come from Noah. And this branch, Ham's branch, the nations from Ham, are going to be cursed, shut off from salvation.

Basically, you aren't going to be the promised family. And in chapter 10, you can see that is what Ham's family becomes. Chapter 10, it's often called the table of nations.

And it's kind of like a quick fast forward from these three brothers to all the nations that come from them. And there's 70 in total here. That's the number of completeness in the Bible.

[12:01] It's kind of a complete world map of where the nations come from. And look who comes from Ham. See if you recognize any names. Chapter 10, verse 1. The sons of Ham, Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan.

Some big names there. Egypt and Canaan. But also, look at verses 10 and 11. Babel, Assyria, Nineveh.

Verse 14, the Philistines. All these come from Ham. And who are all these nations? These are all the bad guys of the Old Testament. These are all Israel's enemies.

It's like saying, oh, and you need to know who the sons of Ham were. They're Voldemort, Sauron, and Darth Vader. Okay? You read that, like, alarm bells are going off.

And so, we're seeing here why Israel's enemies became their enemies. Why Pharaoh and Moses? Why David and Goliath?

[13:06] Why Israel and Assyria? Well, it's all because God has cursed them, shut them off from the promise. And so, whose side are they going to be on?

They're not going to be on God's side. They're going to be on Satan's. God promised enmity with God's people, and here it is. And so, as we rewind and look back to the root of the family tree, this is how and why God's people have enemies.

It's from this curse. And also, this is how and why other religions have developed in this world. So, think about it.

Originally, everyone, these three sons, they all knew the one God. One family, one God, one knowledge. But as humanity divided here and God's curse came, knowledge of God began to fade and warp down the generations.

And other distorted versions of God began to appear. And that's why some religions and some writings, they can have similarities to the God of the Bible, but at the same time, they're horrible distortions of him.

[14:25] it's because of this. We all began here with the same knowledge. Ham knew God, but the nations grew and turned God into something else.

But the focus isn't on Ham, though. There's a real focus on Canaan, isn't there? Verse 18, Ham was the father of Canaan. Verse 22, Ham the father of Canaan.

Verse 25, cursed be Canaan. Verse 26, let Canaan be his servant. 1015, we see all of Canaan's family. And why is this?

Well, where are Israel when they first read Genesis? Where is the law given? It's just before they enter Canaan. And so as God rewinds world history for Israel to read, God is saying these nations before you, however intimidating they look, whatever you think may happen to you when you cross the River Jordan, you need to know all these nations, they come from a curse.

I'm not on their side. I'm not for them and they're not there by accident. I have placed them exactly where they are meant to be.

[15:50] And that's why God can say to Joshua as he enters Canaan, be strong and courageous. Don't be scared as you enter the land where all these nations are against you because I'm not on their side, I'm on yours.

And so as we rewind and we see where the nations came from out and we get to the root of the family tree, we really see God's sovereignty here.

Even today, when nations rebel against him, when unbelief is everywhere you look, when states turn their back on their God given duty, when the secular becomes the norm, we need to know that unbelief isn't God losing control.

no, even a cursed nation like Canaan is there under God's sovereignty. And so, and so is ours. The earth is his and the fullness thereof.

God has set the boundaries and the lifespans of every single nation. Kings and prime ministers and parliaments, they all rise and fall at the will of God.

[17:07] what is going on in Ukraine and Gaza, God knows it all. He's controlling all these events right now.

It's all in his plan. God set the destiny of Canaan and he set the destiny of every single nation on this planet. Now, it needs to be said, we can't separate the current world into cursed or not cursed nations anymore.

In many ways, the curse on Canaan was fulfilled when Israel took it over. Canaan became the servant of God's people. But this does still show us God's sovereignty over the nations, including his enemies.

I read this week about what the church in China is going through. And they're in desperate need of our prayers. I'll tell you please pray for them.

And a newsletter I read said this, since October the 9th, 2025, nearly 30 pastors and staff members of Zion Church across China have been detained or have lost contact.

[18:23] Basically, their homes have been raided, these Christians have been arrested and no one knows where they've been taken to. It is horrific persecution going on this very week.

But we need to know, when we think of a nation like that, we need to know, even then, God is in control. The Communist Party of China is only able to exist because the Lord says so.

God is sovereign even over his enemies. And that goes not just for the world stage, but that means in the lives of his people too.

The opposition you face in your life because of your faith, the friction you get at work or at school, the difficult conversations you have around the dinner table, we need to realise God is in control of all of that.

God knows every single family, he set every nation and household in place and he knows you and for everyone in Christ he says I am on your side.

[19:40] So this world is full of unbelief. Satan is out to get us in so many ways but we can go into this world fearlessly. Whatever you are worried about in this coming week you can go into it boldly and courageously because God is sovereign over the nations.

That's what we see here with Ham. But as we look at the other brothers we also see God is doing something else with the nations. Yes he's sovereign and in his sovereignty God is bringing blessing to the nations.

It's my second and final and shorter point. God is bringing blessing to the nations. So Noah after speaking to Ham turns to his eldest son Shem blessed be the Lord the God of Shem and let Canaan be his servant.

Now just look at these words. This is the first time in the Bible we see two things about God. Firstly this is the first time God is called the Lord Yahweh.

This is God's covenant name. The name God is called with by his people that he loves and he knows and he saves. And also this is the first time God is called the God of someone the God of Shem.

[21:07] as Noah prophesies here God sets the destiny of this one family. I am going to be your God and I will be your Yahweh and you and your family you're going to be my special people the people that I love and I save and all my blessing is going to belong to you.

Canaan will be your servant. And with a promise like that you might have thought the name Shem might be more familiar or as family tree in 1021 you might have thought it might ring more bells. Well actually you most likely already do know these names two in particular because this family tree the line of Shemites this is where Israel comes from.

The family tree in chapter 10 it isn't complete here it actually continues in chapter 11 and from Shem eventually comes Abraham and then Isaac and Jacob and all Israel they're all Shemites which is which is why we have the word anti Semitic or anti Shemitic it means anti the line of Shem Jews are Shemites which is why you'll also know another name here 1021 and 25 Shem's great

grandson Eber and everyone from Eber are called not the Eberites but the Eberus the Hebrews and so God is beginning something very special here he pronounces here to Shem it is with you Shem it is with your family this is how

I'm going to save the world and so the promise back in Genesis 3 to send the serpent crusher through a family well now it's confirmed this is the family God is going to bring blessing to this world and it's going to be through Shem through this one family this is where all of God's blessings are going to be stored which is why Israel becomes so central to God's plan of salvation which is why Israel does make Canaan their servant which is why following Israel's genealogy is so important to following the story of salvation just like Ruth and Boaz this morning because if we keep following the line of Shem and Eber and Abraham and Boaz and we keep going and going and going eventually we get to Joseph the husband of Mary the mother of Jesus and so as the nations expand and the family tree grows from

[24 : 12] Noah God is narrowing down the blood lines to bring salvation to the world not Ham but Shem not Ishmael but Isaac not Esau but Jacob and it keeps getting more and more and more narrow until we are left with just one man one little baby there in Bethlehem in the manger the serpent crusher God in all his sovereignty has been building and shaping the nations crafting all these blood lines making kingdoms rise and fall all in order to bring his chosen people through it all and from them bring blessing to the world through his son and so if humanity is one big family tree on that paper God's people are like the trunk of that tree the central spine holding it all together we saw last week

God is upholding the universe in order to bring salvation well we see here God is upholding the nations to bring salvation and it's coming through Shem but if all this is just happening in one family how does that blessing reach the world well look at what Noah says to Japheth 927 may God enlarge Japheth and let him dwell in the tents of Shem and let Canaan be his servant God promises that Japheth's family will grow and they're going to share in the blessing of Shem dwell in the tents of Shem now you may not recognize the names of Japheth's sons in verse 2 of chapter 10 but Japheth eventually becomes the people of Turkey and Greece and eventually Italy and Rome the coastlands think of those nations that's the Gentile world of the New Testament isn't it and so just have a think when Jesus as soon as Jesus ascends into heaven what happens he sends out the gospel from Israel and where does the apostle Paul go and preach Turkey Greece and he ends up in Rome the gospel goes out it explodes to the nations and we see as soon as it does Japheth comes and dwells in the tents of Shem the gospel is the fulfillment of this blessing here in Genesis 9 the blessing comes to the Shemites Christ is born and brings salvation to Israel and then salvation explodes out across the world to the nations and so just think about it every non-Jew here in effect we are all

Japhethites dwelling in the tents of Shem this is what happens when you hear and believe the gospel we are like a stray branch in the family tree and God takes you and snaps you off and grafts you into the trunk of salvation so that you can say the Lord is now my God through Shem through the Shemite the true Hebrew blessing has come to the world and God in all his sovereignty has shaped the nations shaped your life to bring you here today so that you can hear this gospel we were lost but now we have found our home in the tents of Shem but I don't want us to miss how all this began how curse and blessing came to these families it all hinged on how these three sons treated the saviour of the world so

Noah sinned here we can't escape that but we can't miss Noah's significance in all of this even in his sin Noah is still the man at the centre of God's promises the head of the covenant the new Adam the saviour who brought a people through the flood and how each of these three sons treated this saviour that determined whether blessing or curse came to them whether they belonged to a dead branch of the family tree or to the living trunk at the centre of it all and that goes for us too but it's not about how we treat Noah it's about how we treat his descendant the greater Noah Christ Christ now Christ never sinned but he did become sin for us and he never did anything shameful but he did experience the humiliation of the cross and how you respond to that how you respond to that crucified saviour whether you trust and honour him or you don't that is the difference between curse and blessing in this world but if you trust him like

[30 : 06] Shem and Japheth if you honour him there is unending blessing in the tents of Shem and that goes for the Jews too you might be wondering what about the Jews what about the Shemites now if this is the promise has God rejected his people well no but many have rejected God you

could say they've left their own tents because the Messiah the promised son is finally here but so many haven't believed and so for the descendants of Shem today that they need to trust in the Messiah otherwise God will break branches off the trunk but for those who believe those who hear the gospel and trust in the Saviour we can say blessed be the Lord the God of us our God our Yahweh and so as we look to the origin of the nations it's really the origin of the church we are at the centre of God's plan for the nations we are the trunk of that tree so this is why the world is as it is it has all come from this one family and this is why the world isn't hopeless God in all his grace has brought blessing to this world God has brought blessing through one family and that blessing has reached the nations it's reached us and so this blessing is for you believe in the promised son and come and dwell in the tents of Shem let's pray