

98-08-09a

As we continue our worship this morning, turn with me to Psalm 82. Psalm 82. We don't often come to this psalm because it has been a puzzlement over the years.

There's been a lot of head scratching over this psalm. We're going to see the way that it fits into our Genesis study. And it is a reminder, not only does it shed some light and make an application from what we have seen in the first few chapters of Genesis, especially chapter 6, but it is also a reminder to us that there is application in our lives of these truths.

It's interesting to study the history that's recorded in Genesis, but it is more important that not only do we understand it, but that we see that it should mean something. It ought to make a difference in our lives. Psalm 82.

This is a psalm of Asaph. Asaph is one of the people I'm looking forward to meeting and getting to know in the eternal future because he had an incredible amount of wisdom as far as the plan of God and understanding the purposes of God. The psalms of Asaph are some of the deepest and most doctrinally rich.

They're right up there in quality with the psalms of David. They reflect a deep insight and a very close relationship with God. And this is one of Asaph's psalms.

It is labeled in the New King James, a plea for justice. God stands in the congregation of the mighty. He judges among the gods.

How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah. Defend the poor and fatherless. Do justice to the afflicted and needy.

Deliver the poor and needy. Free them from the hand of the wicked. They do not know nor do they understand.

They walk about in darkness. All the foundations of the earth are unstable. I said you are gods and all of you are children of the Most High.

But you shall die like men and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth. For you shall inherit all nations.

Now, if that all lays down and makes perfect sense in your mind, you're ahead of where I was when I first began studying this particular psalm. We are, first of all, interested in what the congregation of the mighty is and who the gods are in verse 1 and in verse 6. Who are the poor and the fatherless, afflicted and needy, who are being victimized by the wicked. This is perhaps the only place in the Old Testament, other than Genesis chapter 6, where you find the Bnei HaElohim specifically mentioned, the sons of God.

That phrase gives us an immediate link. I think Asaph was a very astute scholar and student of the Bible that then existed, which would have been the books of Moses. He was intimately familiar with Genesis, including Genesis chapter 6, and it is not an accident that he uses the same phrase and the same language because he is, in fact, making an application in his day of what we have just seen in the fall of the angels who were entrusted with oversight of the human race, who perished in the flood, and there is a shift in the responsibility for justice that we have seen in Genesis chapter 9 when God tells Noah, you are now responsible for judgment.

And as we have seen, the divine mandate for human government begins with the mandate to Noah and his sons when he says, I will require the blood of man at your hands. You must now judge. This is the mandate for human government.

There has to be a structure in place to adjudicate, to determine the fate of those who commit crimes, to deal with those who violate the laws that protect one man from another. Prior to the flood, this was not the case. There was not a mandate for human government.

God judged directly. God judged through the agency of angels as we have seen in Genesis 6, the sons of God. However, they kept not their first estate.

They saw the daughters of men. They intermarried. And this perverted justice.

This is what Asaph is talking about in Psalm 82. God stands in the congregation of the mighty. This is actually the congregation of Elohim.

The word mighty there is Elohim. So it literally says, Elohim stands in the congregation of Elohim. He judges among the Elohim.

This is all with reference, and that's why you have gods with a little g, but this is an interpretive translation because what else could it mean? How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Defend the poor and fatherless. Do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy.

Free them from the hand of the wicked. They do not know nor do they understand. They walk about in darkness.

All the foundations of the earth are unstable. Most of this central portion of this psalm is generally put in quotes and ascribed to God. God stands in the congregation of God.

God judges amongst the gods, judges amongst the Elohim, and then this is thought to be what God says as he stands in the congregation. However, this is in reality the narrator or Asaph himself speaking because he is speaking to his contemporaries. He is speaking to those who, in the image of God, have now been entrusted with responsibility for justice.

Like the pre-flood civilization that was administered by angels, there is a perversion of justice, and like those pre-flood judges, the poor, the needy, the fatherless, those who are not in a position to defend themselves are not being upheld by those who are in a position and who have the responsibility to see that justice is done. And so Asaph draws this parallel. He is reminding the rulers and the judges of his day of what God did in a prominent place in their Bible to those judges that did not execute justice.

How long will you judge unjustly? God stands in the congregation of God. And God judges among the gods, those Elohim, those sons of God who were entrusted with judgment prior to the flood. Defend the poor and fatherless.

Do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy. Free them from the hand of the wicked.

What was the prevailing situation that brought about the flood? Every thought in the hearts of men was only evil continually. There was great abuse. There was great oppression.

And one man taking advantage of another. And those who were entrusted with judgment by God perverted that justice. They intermarried and therefore favored the families with whom they had become connected through these marriages.

The exchange of the bride price and so forth, the ascent of the fathers for their daughters to be married to these angelic overseers implied covenant, an implied relationship that then perverted justice in the land. The people of the earth do not know or understand. They walk about in darkness.

All the foundations of the earth, in verse 5, are unstable, literally shaken. And of course, this is what happens at the spiritual level. The foundations of the earth, the whole divine design is upset by this injustice.

And this spiritual shaking of the foundations is then reflected in the literal shaking of the foundations when God breaks up the fountains of the deep, shifts the whole physical structure of the earth in the flood. And so that which is invisible becomes visible in God's judgment. And in verse 6 when he says, You are Elohim and all of you are children of the Most High.

This is literally sons of the Most High. You are the Bene, the sons of the Most High. You shall die like men and fall like one of the princes.

This seems somewhat cryptic. The common interpretation of this psalm is that this is addressed to human judges, human rulers. But this statement doesn't make much sense.

Had God elevated human judges to eternal life and to the status of divine, and now

they've lost that and they're going to die like men, the change in their future wouldn't make any sense if he's addressing human judges directly here. You shall die like men and fall like one of the princes. Well, that's going to happen to every man anyway.

What sort of a threat, what sort of a statement is that? You shall die like men. Well, who thought any different if you're talking to human judges? But this is the statement that is reflected in Genesis chapter 6. My spirit, my ruach, in the form of the angels who are ministers, who are judges in the earth, they will not judge forever and deal with man in the flesh. Their days are 120 years.

There's that period where God says judgment is coming and they will be removed. And they, in fact, die like men. They have partaken of flesh.

They've been married with men. And so now they're going to suffer the fate of men. And they perish, they die in the flood like men and fall like one of the princes.

Well, who are the princes that fell? Who is one of the princes that fell? And what sort of a fall is it? Well, this is a reference back to the fall of Satan. And the reason you have the term princes used here is the same reason that in the New Testament you have the fallen angels referred to as principalities, powers, rulers, and so forth. The fall in the angelic realm that Satan instigated was a fall participated in by the ruling angels that were a part of that economy.

And the principalities and powers and rulers and thrones are not just your hoi polloi lowest rank angels. These were intermediate and high level angels who went in league with Lucifer and followed him in rebellion against God. And these princes who fell have been separated from God and judged by God.

And this is stated to be the fate of these judging angels who in a separate disobedience to God have lost their first estate as well. You shall die like men. You shall fall like one of the princes.

And of course, these angels as we have already seen are imprisoned in the pit until the day of judgment. So, what starts out being extremely cryptic and difficult to understand if you try to relate it directly to human judges or human rulers starts to fall in place when we realize that this is a direct reference to the angels of Genesis 6 and then is being applied. Asaph brings this story forward and he says that's a real interesting story, but there's also an application.

You judges, you princes in Israel who are responsible for justice. If God did not spare the angels who sinned and this is echoing Peter's words in the New Testament, God who did not spare the angels who sinned, Peter's application is he's not going to spare these that are abusing you either. He's not going to overlook human rulers and human judges who abuse their authority.

And Asaph makes the same application in the Old Testament. God stands in the congregation of God and God judges at the highest levels of the angelic creation. If he is willing to judge the angels, how much more so is he going to judge among men and among those who now bear divine authority and divine responsibility for judgment.

What we have seen at the beginning of Genesis chapter 9 is God delegating authority for justice to the human race. Why is it that Cain and Lamech and others were not avenged by human hands in the pre-flood civilization? Because God retained to himself and delegated to angelic judges authority for punishment and the retribution that is a part of justice where crime is committed. And God executes that judgment in the worldwide flood when he judges the earth.

But after the flood he says, I will never again destroy the earth with a flood. Now I will require the blood of man at your hand. You now are responsible.

You now hold divinely delegated authority and it's your responsibility to execute justice. You are made in the image of God. He doesn't say you are sons of God.

He says you're in the image of God. And there's a subtle difference there in the language that is used to refer to the angels as bene ha Elohim, a term that is never used of man. Man is in the image of God and God reminds Noah and his sons of that when he says you are now charged with the dispensation of justice and I will require you to inflict capital punishment on those who take human life.

Even if they're animals. I will require your blood at their hand. So it gives us great insight as we look at Psalm 82 that Asaph brings up this example from his scriptures when he says, How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? You need to be defending the poor and the fatherless.

You need to be doing justice to the afflicted and the needy. You need to deliver the poor and needy and free them from the hand of the wicked. They walk about in darkness.

They do not know nor do they understand. And the perversion of justice is something that shakes the foundations of the earth. It shakes the foundations of what God has established.

The divine design is upset when the structure of authority, the structure of justice is perverted. The fate that overtook the sons of God when they perverted justice, how much more so will it take place on the earth? And this is why in verse 8 he concludes by saying, Arise, O God, judge the earth, for you shall inherit all nations. And this is literally for the nations are your inheritance or the nations are your possession.

The nations, the human race, belongs to God. And God is jealous of the oversight and the custodian or stewardship responsibility that he has delegated. When he delegated it to angels and they messed it up, he judged them severely.

Now that rests in human hands. And anyone who bears authority, delegated by God, whether it is a husband or a father or a ruler or a judge or a parent, has responsibility in that exercise of authority. If it is abused, you have God to answer to.

God judges the angels. How much more so will he judge us? So it is important to observe and to keep in line with the divine design in the human race. Let's resume now our study back in Genesis chapter 9 where after the affirmation of the covenant, and once again we saw that the terminology here is not karat in Hebrew, which means to cut a covenant or to initiate a covenant.

It is instead the language of affirmation, of causing to stand, of affirming, establishing a covenant that already exists. God affirms his covenant with Noah and with his sons. And the sign of that covenant is the rainbow, which is a reminder to both God and man that God has delegated authority for justice to the human race.

He is never again going to dispense justice on a worldwide level. That is now man's responsibility. We've seen the actual physical reasons for why there's a rainbow now where there was not before.

We've seen the wonderful symbolism because the rainbow is formed when light, which is an invisible energy, strikes and interacts with the visible, the water droplets in the air, a point source of light, a single source of light, namely the sun, is required and there is the refraction of that light, the spreading of it into its component parts after the flood with the collapse of the canopy and the reorganization of the physical earth. And it is a reminder that that judgment is a one-time permanent thing. And it is the sign in verse 17 of the covenant.

God says He has established between me and all flesh that is on the earth. Then, beginning in verse 18, we have the sons of Noah who went out of the ark, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan.

In the enumeration of the sons of Noah, here in verse 18, we have the mention of Canaan. And that's significant. Based on what we saw last week, someone might treat Canaan as one of the sons of Noah because of his origin.

But it is clarified for us in verse 18 that Ham is the father of Canaan, not Noah. These three were the sons of Noah and from these the whole earth was populated. Noah was a farmer.

He planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and was drunk, became uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father.

We've seen that this is euphemistic language echoed in the later scriptures. And that this, in Leviticus 18, several times uncovering the nakedness is a euphemism for having sexual relationship. This is not uncovering, but rather seeing the nakedness of his father

and telling his two brothers outside.

And we see in this the strong suggestion that this is a euphemism for incest. Ham apparently took advantage of the uncovering of his father's nakedness, which would be in an inebriated state. One or both of the parents are in an inebriated state.

And Ham carries on some sort of physical affair with his mother. It's a crime not only as a sexual sin, but also as a subversion of the very authority that God has just affirmed in the covenant. It is a subversion of his father's authority.

It is a subversion of the divine design in the propagation of the human race. That's why the consequences are so severe. That's why this episode is so outstanding in the Genesis account.

Because it is more than just someone glimpsing their father without their clothes on. It is far more severe. And the curse, the severity of the curse, and the number of generations that it affects is indicative of how gross this sin is.

Not only does he commit this act of incest with his mother, but he apparently is proud enough of it to communicate it to his two brothers outside. In verse 23, Shem and Japheth take a garment, lay it on both their shoulders, and walk backward and cover the nakedness of their father. This is apparently actually the nakedness of Mrs. Noah.

Apparently Noah is not conscious at this point. But they go in and use literally the cloak. They pick up the cloak and carry it on their shoulders backward until they see feet and so forth.

And then they lay it backward so that they do not view this status. Their faces are turned away. They did not see their father's nakedness.

Then in verse 4, it's very interesting the way this construction is significant. So Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done to him. Period.

When Noah awoke, he knew what literally his little son... Remember the greater light by day and the lesser light by night? It's the same adjective here. His lesser son had done to him. Then between verse 24 and verse 25, I believe we have a period of time elapse.

And I wanted to explore that just a little bit before we go forward to chapter 10. These things are very suggestive and it is not the common interpretation, although it has been suggested by many, many people before me that that's what happened here in chapter 9, is incest between Ham and Mrs. Noah. It is not an idea original to me, although at the time that it occurred to me in studying this passage, I wasn't aware that it had been thought of and put forward in writing elsewhere.

But subsequently, it's always gratifying if you come up with a weird idea and then you

find others who have had the same weird idea. It makes you feel like you're not quite so bizarre in your thinking. But many reputable scholars, not just me, have drawn this same conclusion based on the language of Leviticus 18 and other passages.

And I'm going to show you a couple more reasons why this seems to be what is being suggested here. But you'll note that Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done to him. So on the day, or the next day, or whenever it is that Noah comes back and is aware of what has happened, he knows that this has taken place.

It is not necessarily at that point that verse 25 takes place. And I'm going to suggest to you that this verse 25 through 27 is in fact quite a bit later in time. The Hebrew conjunction waw or vav is a single letter.

It's a W. It's just a stroke. It looks like a shepherd's crook in the Aramaic alphabet that we now use to record Hebrew. But this conjunction is multi-purpose.

When you look through the Hebrew Scriptures, especially here in Genesis, anytime you see the word now, the word but, the word then, at the beginning of a verse, it's always this same little one-stroke letter. And this conjunction has many different uses. That's why the big gap theory took shape for Genesis 1, 1, and 2. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

And then in verse 2, you have, and the earth was without form and void. The reason people have suggested that there can be a big gap of time between Genesis 1, 1, and 1, 2 is that Genesis 1, 2 begins with that same conjunction waw or vav. If you use the German, Germans can't say W. That's why they say Volkswagen instead of Volkswagen.

Because they can't say W, so they say V instead. A German scholar would say jaw-veh or Jehovah looking at the Tetragrammaton. And that's why we got the word Jehovah instead of jaw-veh.

It's based on the same set of consonants. But the vav or the waw starts Genesis 1, 2. And or now the earth was without form. And it doesn't always imply that what you're now talking about follows hard on the heels of what preceded.

Why would we think that there might be a period of time between 24 and 25? Is it just so that we can shoehorn our theory of what happened into this passage? Not at all. It is in fact very well grounded because this section here, verses 25 through 27, the blessings, the prophecy of the fate of the sons of Noah is a pattern that has followed down through the generations. When do fathers pronounce the blessings and the fate of their sons? Well, they do it at the point of their death or at least when they think they're going to die.

Turn with me, for example, forward in Genesis to Genesis chapter 49. Right at the very end of Genesis. By this time, Jacob is living in the land of Egypt with his son Joseph who

is the vizier or the second in command.

And in chapter 49, Jacob called his sons and said, Gather together that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days. Jacob is on his deathbed, basically. And on his deathbed, he blesses or pronounces the prophecy and the fate of each of his sons.

Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, and listen to Israel, your father. Now, is this just a peculiarity and it only happened with Jacob? Turn back to Genesis chapter 35. We find that the same thing occurred with Isaac.

The thing that's interesting here is Isaac dies after the death of Rachel. When you look at the end of Genesis chapter 35, Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre or Kiriath Arba, that is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt. The days of Isaac were 180 years.

So, Isaac breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him. You say, well, my goodness, seems to me like the blessing of Isaac.

Remember, the whole thing with Jacob and Esau was a lot earlier. So, it looks like Isaac breaks the pattern. Well, we need to turn back in Genesis to the whole Jacob and Esau episode, which takes place back in chapter 27 of Genesis.

Look at the beginning of chapter 27. Why does Isaac do this blessing of Jacob instead of Esau and the whole deception and departure of Jacob and so forth take place? It came to pass, 27.1 of Genesis, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, My son. And he answered him, Here am I. He said, Behold, now I am old.

I do not know the day of my death. Now, therefore, let's go and do the blessing thing. Isaac thinks that he's about to die.

He is old and infirm. He is about 100 years old at this point. And so, he figures that he's on his deathbed.

It's very ironic when you see that he in fact is going to live another 80 years. When you look at the chronology, and we'll see this as we go forward in Genesis, that Isaac was 60 when his two sons, the twins, Jacob and Esau, are born. He's 40 when he meets and marries Rebekah.

Rebekah is barren for 20 years. Isaac beseeches the Lord on her behalf and then she bears the twins. And Isaac is 60.

So, 40 years later, when Esau is 40, this is when the blessing thing takes place. So, Isaac is 100 years old. But we know he doesn't die until he's 180.

But he thinks he's going to. And that's why the blessing takes place here. So, this is a

consistent pattern that it is at the point of death that the Father will make his deathbed blessing and prophecy concerning his sons.

You find the same thing taking place in Genesis chapter 49. An additional interesting feature in Genesis 49 is the fact that we have something of a parallel because we know that Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob, went up and slept with Bilhah, his father's concubine. You find this back in the earlier account in Genesis.

You find it back in Genesis. I've shuffled my notes in amongst one another here. You can find that where Reuben goes and lays with Bilhah, his father's concubine.

There are two differences between what Reuben does and what Ham apparently does. First of all, Bilhah is not Reuben's mother. Leah is Reuben's mother.

Bilhah is a concubine, although she takes on the status of a wife because she has some of the sons that become the tribes of Israel. But Reuben is not committing incest with his own mother. He is instead sleeping with another of his father's wives.

Secondly, there is no offspring from this episode. Bilhah does not bear a son that is fathered by Reuben. However, there is a parallel in the fact that Jacob on his deathbed when he comes to Reuben mentions this episode and there is a consequence to Reuben as a result of it.

And what is the consequence? It's very interesting. He says, Reuben in Genesis 49, You are my firstborn, my might and the beginning of my strength, the excellence of dignity and the excellence of power. Unstable as water, you shall not excel, you shall not rise up and dominate.

You will not have authority, in other words. You're not going to rule because you went up to your father's bed and you defiled it. He went up to my couch.

He loses the ruling authority that belongs to the firstborn. That is going to devolve all the way down to Judah, the fourthborn son. Reuben disqualifies himself.

Simeon and Levi who are mentioned next, Simeon and Levi, the second and third sons, instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. Remember the rape of Dinah? And they go and hamstring the animals and commit this great bloodshed in revenge because of the defiling of their sister Dinah. Because they do this in rage and in bitterness and anger and not as unto the Lord, he says the instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place.

They use this as an excuse to shed blood which is in their nature. This is one of the reasons the Levites become the priests. God says you enjoy shedding blood so much, this will be your vocation.

You'll be the ones to slaughter the sacrifice. You will get your fill of blood. But he says, Simeon and Levi are brothers, instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place.

Let not my soul enter their council. Let not my honor be united to their assembly. For in their anger they slew a man.

And in their self-will, they hamstrung an ox. And this, of course, wasn't just one ox, it was many. It wasn't just one man, it was many.

Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce. Cursed be their wrath, for it is cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.

Of course, you know, the Levites had no inheritance. And of course, God turns this curse to blessing because they're the priests. But this is the curse portion.

So Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise. Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies. Your father's children shall bow down before you.

Judah is a lion's whelp. From the prey of my son you've gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion, and so forth.

The scepter shall not depart from Judah. So the rulership that belonged to Reuben devolves down to the fourthborn son. The priesthood that should have been Reuben's goes to Levi.

The double portion that should have been Reuben's goes all the way down to Joseph, the eleventh son. But you have here the defiling of the father's couch and it's mentioned at the end of life. It's mentioned in the blessing and the deathbed prophecy that is the pattern followed by all the patriarchs.

So this is a pattern. Isaac does it. Jacob does it.

You get the idea here that Noah does it as well. So, in verse 25 of chapter 9, we might translate, for this reason, he said. He knows what happens to him when he awakes from his wine.

And for this reason, and of course you have the record of Noah's life and death in verses 28 and 29, and so we would more closely link 25 through 27 with what follows than what precedes as far as chronology goes. And when it comes time to talk about the sons, what does he say? And it's doubly significant because who are the sons that he mentions here? Ham is not mentioned. There is no deathbed mention of Ham at all.

It is as though in this incestuous relationship and in the birth that follows of Canaan, Noah says, okay, fine. Canaan, rather, is the one that is going to stand in the stead of Ham. And Ham's sin is so grievous that he's not even mentioned.

The worst thing you can do is totally ignore someone. He doesn't even get a curse. Instead, it is Canaan. But look at what is said about Canaan in verse 25.

If we take the suggestion here that this is now the deathbed pronouncement of Noah, he mentions Shem, Japheth, and Canaan, who is now the representative. Ham loses even the privilege of being mentioned by his father. And he says, Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants he shall be, To whom? To his brethren.

Who are the brethren of Canaan? Who are Canaan's brothers? Well, if you go down in chapter 10 and look at the sons of Ham in verse 6, they are Cush, Mitzrayim, and Put. So, when Noah says, Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants, or the lowest of servants, shall he be to his brethren, we would think, well, Canaan is going to be a servant to Cush, Mitzrayim, and Put. And his offspring would be descendants of their offspring.

But that's obviously not what is implied here and not what is explicitly stated. Because what does it say in verse 26? Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, may Canaan be his servant. Verse 27, May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant.

So, the brethren that are spoken of in verse 25, strongly implied here, the brethren of Canaan are Shem and Japheth. Well, how can Canaan, the grandson of Noah, be a brother to Shem and Japheth? Well, our understanding of this passage gives the explanation for that. There is a sense in which Canaan is the brother, he's the half-brother of Shem and Japheth, because he is a child of incest.

So, once again, we see that this language of euphemism we have the clues here that tell us this is a euphemism. Every time you have in verse 18, the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan.

When you're talking about the sons of Noah, you have to clarify Canaan's status because he is the half-brother of these sons of Noah. But he's not Noah's son. That has to be explained.

So, Ham is the father of Canaan. That has to be explained. And it's mentioned again in verse 22.

And it is once again explained in the statement of Noah, I believe, at the end of his life on the pattern of the patriarchs. He gives his prophecy of Shem, of Japheth, and of Canaan. It doesn't say anything about Ham.

Canaan is cursed. A servant of servants or the lowest of servants shall he be to his brethren. And he is standing in for his father Ham here in the list of brethren.

Then he goes on to say, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem. May Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth.

May he dwell in the tents of Shem. What an interesting thing to say. Because the Japhethites, the Goyim, the nations, include the bulk of the Gentiles.

Especially the early Gentiles who come into relationship with God under the ministry of the Apostle Paul and so forth. Here you have the tents of Shem, the heritage of Israel. And when you look at it from a New Testament perspective, you have the church dwelling in the tents of Shem.

You have the nations coming in and dwelling in the tents of Shem. But it is an ironic prophecy because what is the mechanism by which you come to dwell in someone's tents? Well, you can either be adopted into the fold in a friendly fashion, or you can conquer and seize the spoil and dwell in the tents. And it is ultimately the Japhethites who are going to come in and run Israel off of their heritage.

The Assyrians and the Babylonians who bring Israel into captivity in the later Old Testament are Japhethites. Some of them are indeed Shemites. But the Assyrians and so forth are said to be descendants of Shem.

But the overtaking and plundering of Israel can also be ironically foreshadowed when it says may he dwell in the tents of Shem. You can dwell in someone's tents because you've conquered and run them out. So it's sort of a mixed blessing there.

And yet, it is through that conquest, it is through the dwelling in the tents of Shem that ultimately Shem is blessed. The Semites, the Israelites are blessed because all things work together for good and cursing is turned to blessing. You see in Hebrews 11 and you see in Romans where the cursing of Israel, the plundering of Israel by the Goyim ultimately is turned to advantage and is turned to blessing.

And the fulfillment of the promises to Israel cannot be completed until God fulfills and brings into the fold the Gentiles. And when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, there is a mixture of cursing and blessing that brings about the perfect fulfillment and unfolding of God's plan. And you see the early tension between blessing and cursing even in this pronouncement of Noah.

Noah lived after the flood 350 years. All the days of Noah were 950 years and he died. And this of course links him back to the genealogy of his forebears that we found in chapter 5 of Genesis.

This is a good place to pause and take our break. When we come back we'll look at the table of nations that we find in Genesis chapter 10.