

SAVED BUT LOST

October 19, 2014

Genesis 9:1-24

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.”

Hebrews 6:4-6a

Noah's shame and Ham's shameful response are recorded for our instruction. God presents spiritual heroes as they really were: sinners, not fictional innocents. Everyone God uses to build His kingdom is flawed. Biblical heroes were “subject to like passions as we are” (Jas. 5:17), yet God used them, giving us hope.

Noah's drunkenness illustrates that “wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Prov. 20:1). It shows the dangers of alcoholic beverage, how it can loosen inhibitions, impair sensibility, excite sensuality and bring shame. Noah was “king” of humanity. Scripture admonishes, “It is not for kings to drink wine . . . lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted” (Prov. 31:4-7). His drunkenness shows the “ripple effects” of this sin, for by it his son fell and his descendents were impacted.

Ham sinned, at the least, by dishonoring his father. He should have pitied and covered him. But he left him in shameful exposure to be seen by others. He then announced Noah's condition, thus inviting viewers. What did he say to his brothers when informing of his father's nakedness? Why this indignity? Was it ridicule? Depraved curiosity? Moral perversion? Might Habakkuk's woe be upon Ham? “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness” (Hab. 2:15).

The response of Noah and his sons shows that they knew Ham's deed was a great sin. If they knew, Ham too knew that his actions were evil. Shem and Japheth promptly and appropriately covered Noah. Ham and his descendents were judged. “The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation” (Num. 14:18).

What should we learn from this incident?

1. The depravity of humanity, that sin is rooted in the heart.

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mar. 7:21-23).

2. Corruption of heart remains, even within those who have been delivered from judgment.

Ham passed safely through the flood, delivered by God, yet was cursed for his sin. The very thing destroyed by the flood, was preserved in Ham's heart in the ark.

(over)

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Romans 7:18, 19).

3. The necessity of continually fighting our spirit-contamination.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:17). “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Romans 8:13). “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, which is idolatry: for which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience” (Colossians 3:5).

4. Take seriously and personally the biblical warnings against apostasy. Ham was saved from the judgment of sin in the flood, yet fell under a curse that was judgment for his sin.

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (I Corinthians 10:12). “Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:7-12). “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance” (Hebrews 6:4-6a).