

CHAPTER 9

Both the world and the church were now again reduced to a family, the family of Noah, of the affairs of which this chapter gives us an account, of which we are the more concerned to take cognizance because from this family we are all descendants. Here is,

I. The covenant of providence settled with Noah and his sons (v. 1-11). In this covenant,

- 1.** God promises them to take care of their lives, so that,
 - (1.)** They should replenish the earth (v. 1, 7).
 - (2.)** They should be safe from the insults of the brute-creatures, which should stand in awe of them (v. 2).
 - (3.)** They should be allowed to eat flesh for the support of their lives; only they must not eat blood (v. 3, 4).
 - (4.)** The world should never be drowned again (v. 8-11).
- 2.** God requires of them to take care of one another's lives, and of their own (v. 5, 6).

II. The seal of that covenant, namely, the rainbow (v. 12-17).

III. A particular passage of story concerning Noah and his sons, which occasioned some prophecies that related to after-times,

- 1.** Noah's sin and shame (v. 20, 21).
- 2.** Ham's impudence and impiety (v. 22).
- 3.** The pious modesty of Shem and Japheth (v. 23).
- 4.** The curse of Canaan, and the blessing of Shem and Japheth (v. 21-27).

IV. The age and death of Noah (v. 28, 29).

GENESIS 9:1-7

BLESSING OF NOAH AND HIS SONS

We read, in the close of the foregoing chapter, the very kind things which God said in his heart, concerning the remnant of mankind which was now left to be the seed of a new world. Now here we have these kind things

spoken to them. In general, *God blessed Noah and his sons* (v. 1), that is, he assured them of his good-will to them and his gracious intentions concerning them. This follows from what he said in his heart. Note, All God's promises of good flow from his purposes of love and the counsels of his own will. See ^{<4011>}Ephesians 1:11, 3:11, and compare ^{<2911>}Jeremiah 29:11. *I know the thoughts that I think towards you.* We read (^{<1080>}Genesis 8:20) how *Noah blessed God*, by his altar and sacrifice. Now here we find God blessing Noah. Note, God will graciously bless (that is, do well for) those who sincerely bless (that is, speak well of) him. Those that are truly thankful for the mercies they have received take the readiest way to have them confirmed and continued to them.

Now here we have the *Magna Charta* — *the great charter* of this new kingdom of nature which was now to be erected, and incorporated, the former charter having been forfeited and seized.

I. The grants of this charter are kind and gracious to men. Here is,

1. A grant of lands of vast extent, and a promise of a great increase of men to occupy and enjoy them,. The first blessing is here renewed: *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth* (v. 1), and repeated (v. 7), for the race of mankind was, as it were, to begin again. Now,

(1.) God sets the whole earth before them, tells them it is all their own, *while it remains*, to them and their heirs. Note, The earth God has given to the children of men, for a possession and habitation, ^{<41516>}Psalm 115:16. Though it is not a paradise, but a wilderness rather; yet it is better than we deserve. Blessed be God, it is not hell.

(2.) He gives them a blessing, by the force and virtue of which mankind should be both multiplied and perpetuated upon earth, so that in a little time all the habitable parts of the earth should be more or less inhabited; and, though one generation should pass away, yet another generation should come, while the world stands, so that the stream of the human race should be supplied with a constant succession, and run parallel with the current of time, till both should be delivered up together into the ocean of eternity. Though death should still reign, and the Lord would still be known by his judgments, yet the earth should never again be dispeopled as now it was, but still replenished, ^{<44724>}Acts 17:24-26.

2. A grant of power over the inferior creatures, v. 2. He grants,

(1.) A title to them: *Into your hands they are delivered*, for your use and benefit.

(2.) A dominion over them, without which the title would avail little: *The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast*. This revives a former grant (^{<003>}Genesis 1:28), only with this difference, that man in innocence ruled by love, fallen man rules by fear. Now this grant remains in force, and thus far we have still the benefit of it,

[1.] That those creatures which are any way useful to us are reclaimed, and we use them either for service or food, or both, as they are capable. The horse and ox patiently submit to the bridle and yoke, and the sheep is dumb both before the shearer and before the butcher; for the fear and dread of man are upon them.

[2.] Those creatures that are any way hurtful to us are restrained, so that, though now and then man may be hurt by some of them, they do not combine together to rise up in rebellion against man, else God could by these destroy the world as effectually as he did by a deluge; it is one of God's sore judgments, ^{<041>}Ezekiel 14:21. What is it that keeps wolves out of our towns, and lions out of our streets, and confines them to the wilderness, but this fear and dread? Nay, some have been tamed, ^{<007>}James 3:7.

3. A grant of maintenance and subsistence: *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you*, v. 3. Hitherto, most think, man had been confined to feed only upon the products of the earth, fruits, herbs, and roots, and all sorts of corn and milk; so was the first grant, ^{<009>}Genesis 1:29. But the flood having perhaps washed away much of the virtue of the earth, and so rendered its fruits less pleasing and less nourishing, God now enlarged the grant, and allowed man to eat flesh, which perhaps man himself never thought of, till now that God directed him to it, nor had any more desire to than a sheep has to suck blood like a wolf. But now man is allowed to feed upon flesh, as freely and safely as upon the green herb. Now here see,

(1.) That God is a good master, and provides, not only that we may live, but that we may live comfortably, in his service; not for necessity only, but for delight.

(2.) That every *creature of God is good*, and nothing to be refused, ^{<004>}1 Timothy 4:4. Afterwards some meats that were proper enough for food

were prohibited by the ceremonial law; but from the beginning, it seems, it was not so, and therefore is not so under the gospel.

II. The precepts and provisos of this character are no less kind and gracious, and instances of God's good-will to man. The Jewish doctors speak so often of the seven precepts of Noah, or of the sons of Noah, which they say were to be observed by all nations, that it may not be amiss to set them down. The first against the worship of idols. The second against blasphemy, and requiring to bless the name of God. The third against murder. The fourth against incest and all uncleanness. The fifth against theft and rapine. The sixth requiring the administration of justice. The seventh against eating of flesh with the life. These the Jews required the observance of from the *proselytes of the gate*. But the precepts here given all concern the life of man.

1. Man must not prejudice his own life by eating that food which is unwholesome and prejudicial to his health (v. 4): "*Flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof* (that is, raw flesh), shall you not eat, as the beasts of prey do." It was necessary to add this limitation to the grant of liberty to eat flesh, lest, instead of nourishing their bodies by it, they should destroy them. God would hereby show,

(1.) That though they were lords of the creatures, yet they were subjects to the Creator, and under the restraints of his law. That they must not be greedy and hasty in taking their food, but stay the preparing of it; not like Saul's soldiers (^{<OR2>}1 Samuel 14:32), nor *riotous eaters of flesh*, ^{<PR3>}Proverbs 23:20.

(3.) That they must not be barbarous and cruel to the inferior creatures. They must be lords, but not tyrants; they might kill them for their profit, but not torment them for their pleasure, nor tear away the member of a creature while it was yet alive, and eat that.

(4.) That during the continuance of the law of sacrifices, in which the blood made *atonement for the soul* (^{<OR7>}Leviticus 17:11), signifying that the life of the sacrifice was accepted for the life of the sinner, blood must not be looked upon as a common thing, but must be *poured out before the Lord* (^{<PR6>}2 Samuel 23:16), either upon his altar or upon his earth. But, now that the great and true sacrifice has been offered, the obligation of the law ceases with the reason of it.

2. Man must not take away his own life: *Your blood of your lives will I require*, v. 5. Our lives are not so our own as that we may quit them at our own pleasure, but they are God's and we must resign them at his pleasure; if we in any way hasten our own deaths, we are accountable to God for it.

3. The beasts must not be suffered to hurt the life of man: *At the hand of every beast will I require it*. To show how tender God was of the life of man, though he had lately made such destruction of lives, he will have the beast put to death that kills a man. This was confirmed by the law of Moses (^{<1213>}Exodus 21:28), and I think it would not be unsafe to observe it still. Thus God showed his hatred of the sin of murder, that men might hate it the more, and not only punish, but prevent it. And see ^{<1153>}Job 5:23.

4. Wilful murderers must be put to death. This is the sin which is here designed to be restrained by the terror of punishment

(1.) God will punish murderers: *At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man*, that is, "I will avenge the blood of the murdered upon the murderer." ^{<1422>}2 Chronicles 24:22. When God requires the life of a man at the hand of him that took it away unjustly, the murderer cannot render that, and therefore must render his own in lieu of it, which is the only way left of making restitution. Note, The righteous God will certainly make inquisition for blood, though men cannot or do not. One time or other, in this world or in the next, he will both discover concealed murders, which are hidden from man's eye, and punish avowed and justified murders, which are too great for man's hand.

(2.) The magistrate must punish murderers (v. 6): *Whoso sheddeth man's blood*, whether upon a sudden provocation or having premeditated it (for rash anger is heart-murder as well as malice prepense, ^{<4151>}Matthew 5:21, 22), *by man shall his blood be shed*, that is, by the magistrate, or whoever is appointed or allowed to be the avenger of blood. There are those who are ministers of God for this purpose, to be a protection to the innocent, by being a terror to the malicious and evildoers, and they must not *bear the sword in vain*, ^{<5114>}Romans 13:4. Before the flood, as it should seem by the story of Cain, God took the punishment of murder into his own hands; but now he committed this judgment to men, to masters of families at first, and afterwards to the heads of countries, who ought to be faithful to the trust reposed in them. Note, Wilful murder ought always to be punished with death. It is a sin *which the Lord would not pardon* in a prince (^{<1243>}2 Kings 24:3, 4), and which therefore a prince should not pardon in a

subject. To this law there is a reason annexed: *For in the image of God made he man* at first. Man is a creature dear to his Creator, and therefore ought to be so to us. God put honour upon him, let not us then put contempt upon him. Such remains of God's image are still even upon fallen man as that he who unjustly kills a man defaces the image of God and does dishonour to him. When God allowed men to kill their beasts, yet he forbade them to kill their slaves; for these are of a much more noble and excellent nature, not only God's creatures, but his image, ~~SORD~~ James 3:9. All men have something of the image of God upon them; but magistrates have, besides, the image of his power, and the saints the image of his holiness, and therefore those who shed the blood of princes or saints incur a double guilt.

~~OR~~ GENESIS 9:8-11

GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

Here is,

I. The general establishment of God's covenant with this new world, and the extent of that covenant, v. 9, 10. Here observe,

1. That God is graciously pleased to deal with man in the way of a covenant, wherein God greatly magnifies his condescending favour, and greatly encourages man's duty and obedience, as a reasonable and gainful service.

2. That all God's covenants with man are of his own making: *I, behold, I.* It is thus expressed both to raise our admiration — “Behold, and wonder, that though God be high yet he has this respect to man,” and to confirm our assurances of the validity of the covenant — “Behold and see, I make it; I that am faithful and able to make it good.”

3. That God's covenants are established more firmly than the pillars of heaven or the foundations of the earth, and cannot be disannulled.

4. That God's covenants are made with the covenanters and with their seed; the promise is to them and their children.

5. That those may be taken into covenant with God, and receive the benefits of it, who yet are not capable of restipulating, or giving their own consent. For this covenant is made with *every living creature, every beast of the earth.*

II. The particular intention of this covenant. It was designed to secure the world from another deluge: *There shall not any more be a flood.* God had drowned the world once, and still it was as filthy and provoking as ever, and God foresaw the wickedness of it, and yet promised he would never drown it any more; for he deals not with us according to our sins. It is owing to God's goodness and faithfulness, not to any reformation of the world, that it has not often been deluged and that it is not deluged now. As the old world was ruined to be a monument of justice, so this world remains to this day, a monument of mercy, according to the oath of God, that the waters of Noah should no more return to cover the earth, ²⁵⁴⁹Isaiah 54:9. This promise of God keeps the sea and clouds in their decreed place, and *sets them gates and bars; hitherto they shall come,* ³³⁸⁰Job 38:10, 11. If the sea should flow but for a few days, as it does twice every day for a few hours, what desolation would it make! And how destructive would the clouds be, if such showers as we have sometimes seen were continued long! But God, by flowing seas and sweeping rains, shows what he could do in wrath; and yet, by preserving the earth from being deluged between both, shows what he can do in mercy and will do in truth. Let us give him the glory of his mercy in promising and of his truth in performing. This promise does not hinder,

1. But that God may bring other wasting judgments upon mankind; for, though he has here bound himself not to use this arrow any more, yet he has other arrows in his quiver.

2. Nor but that he may destroy particular places and countries by the inundations of the sea or rivers.

3. Nor will the destruction of the world at the last day by fire be any breach of his promise. Sin which drowned the old world will burn this.

GENESIS 9:12-17

GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

Articles of agreement among men are usually sealed, that the covenants may be the more solemn, and the performances of the covenants the more sure, to mutual satisfaction. God therefore, being *willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his councils*, has confirmed his covenant by a seal (³⁶⁷Hebrews 6:17), which makes the foundations we build on stand sure, ³¹⁹2 Timothy 2:19. The seal of this covenant of nature was natural enough; it was the *rainbow*, which, it is likely, was seen in the clouds before, when second causes concurred, but was never a seal of the covenant till now that it was made so by a divine institution. Now, concerning this seal of the covenant, observe,

- 1.** This seal is affixed with repeated assurances of the truth of that promise of which it was designed to be the ratification: *I do set my bow in the cloud* (v. 13); *it shall be seen in the cloud* (v. 14), that the eye may affect the heart and confirm the faith; and it shall be *the token of the covenant* (v. 12, 13), *and I will remember my covenant, that the waters shall no more become a flood*, v. 15. Nay, as if the Eternal Mind needed a memorandum, *I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant*, v. 16. Thus here is line upon line, that we might have sure and strong consolation who have laid hold of this hope.
- 2.** The rainbow appears when the clouds are most disposed to wet, and returns after the rain; when we have most reason to fear the rain prevailing, then God shows this seal of the promise that it shall not prevail. Thus God obviates our fears with such encouragements as are both suitable and seasonable.
- 3.** The thicker the cloud the brighter the bow in the cloud. Thus, as threatening afflictions abound, encouraging consolations much more abound, ⁴¹⁵2 Corinthians 1:5.
- 4.** The rainbow appears when one part of the sky is clear, which intimates mercy remembered in the midst of wrath; and the clouds are hemmed as it were with the rainbow, that they may not overspread the heavens, for the bow is coloured rain or the edges of a cloud gilded.

- 5.** The rainbow is the reflection of the beams of the sun, which intimates that all the glory and significancy of the seals of the covenant are derived from Christ the Sun of righteousness, who is also described with a *rainbow about his throne* (~~606~~Revelation 4:3), and a *rainbow upon his head* (~~606~~Revelation 10:1), which intimates, not only his majesty, but his mediatorship.
- 6.** The rainbow has fiery colours in it, to signify that though God will not again drown the world, yet, when the mystery of God shall be finished, the world shall be consumed by fire.
- 7.** A bow bespeaks terror, but this bow has neither string nor arrow, as the bow ordained against the persecutors has (~~302~~Psalm 7:12, 13), and a bow alone will do little execution. It is a bow, but it is directed upwards, not towards the earth; for the seals of the covenant were intended to comfort, not to terrify.
- 8.** As God looks upon the bow, that he may remember the covenant, so should we, that we also may be ever mindful of the covenant, with faith and thankfulness.

~~008~~ GENESIS 9:18-23

SIN OF HAM

Here is,

I. Noah's family and employment. The names of his sons are again mentioned (v. 18, 19) as those from whom the whole earth was overspread, by which it appears that Noah, after the flood, had no more children: all the world came from these three. Note, God, when he pleases, can make *a little one to become a thousand*, and greatly increase the latter end of those whose beginning was small. Such are the power and efficacy of a divine blessing. The business Noah applied himself to was that of *a husbandman*, Hebrews *a man of the earth*, that is, a man dealing in the earth, that kept ground in his hand, and occupied it. We are all naturally men of the earth, made of it, living on it, and hastening to it: many are sinfully so, addicted to earthly things. Noah was by his calling led to trade in the fruits of the earth. He *began to be a husbandman*, that is, some time

after his departure out of the ark, he returned to his old employment, from which he had been diverted by the building of the ark first, and probably afterwards by the building of a house on dry land for himself and family. For this good while he had been a carpenter, but now he began again to be a husbandman. Observe, Though Noah was a great man and a good man, an old man and a rich man, a man greatly favoured by heaven and honoured on earth, yet he would not live an idle life, nor think the husbandman's calling below him. Note, Though God by his providence may take us off from our callings for a time, yet when the occasion is over we ought with humility and industry to apply ourselves to them again, and, in the calling wherein we are called, faithfully to *abide with God*, ^{<412>}1 Corinthians 7:24.

II. Noah's sin and shame: *He planted a vineyard*; and, when he had gathered his vintage, probably he appointed a day of mirth and feasting in his family, and had his sons and their children with him, to rejoice with him in the increase of his house as well as in the increase of his vineyard; and we may suppose he prefaced his feast with a sacrifice to the honour of God. If this was omitted, it was just with God to leave him to himself, that he who did not begin with God might end with the beasts; but we charitably hope that it was not: and perhaps he appointed this feast with a design, at the close of it, to bless his sons, as *Isaac*, ^{<127>}Genesis 27:3, 4, *That I may eat, and that my soul may bless thee*. At this feast he *drank of the wine*; for who planteth a vineyard and *eateth not of the fruit of it*? But he drank too liberally, more than his head at this age would bear, for he was *drunk*. We have reason to think he was never drunk before nor after; observe how he came now to be overtaken in this fault. It was his sin, and a great sin, so much the worse for its being so soon after a great deliverance; but God left him to himself, as he did Hezekiah (^{<442>}2 Chronicles 32:31), and has left this miscarriage of his upon record, to teach us,

- 1.** That the fairest copy that ever mere man wrote since the fall had its blots and false strokes. It was said of Noah that he was *perfect in his generations* (^{<106>}Genesis 6:9), but this shows that it is meant of sincerity, not a sinless perfection.
- 2.** That sometimes those who, with watchfulness and resolution, have, by the grace of God, kept their integrity in the midst of temptation, have, through security, and carelessness, and neglect of the grace of God, been

surprised into sin, when the hour of temptation has been over. Noah, who had kept sober in drunken company, is now drunk in sober company. *Let him that thinks he stands take heed.*

3. That we have need to be very careful, when we use God's good creatures plentifully, lest we use them to excess. Christ's disciples must take heed lest at any time *their hearts be overcharged*, ^{<213>}Luke 21:34. Now the consequence of Noah's sin was shame. He was *uncovered within his tent*, made naked to his shame, as Adam when he had eaten forbidden fruit. Yet Adam sought concealment; Noah is so destitute of thought and reason that he seeks no covering. This was a fruit of the vine that Noah did not think of. Observe here the great evil of the sin of drunkenness.

- (1.) It discovers men. What infirmities they have, they betray when they are drunk, and what secrets they are entrusted with are then easily got out of them. Drunken porters keep open gates.
- (2.) It disgraces men, and exposes them to contempt. As it shows them, so it shames them. Men say and do that when drunk which when they are sober they would blush at the thoughts of, ^{<3125>}Habakkuk 2:15, 16.

III. Ham's impudence and impiety: He *saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren*, v. 22. To see it accidentally and involuntarily would not have been a crime; but,

1. He pleased himself with the sight, *as the Edomites looked upon the day of their brother* (^{<3112>}Obadiah 1:12), pleased, and insulting. Perhaps Ham had sometimes been himself drunk, and reprov'd for it by his good father, whom he was therefore pleas'd to see thus overcome. Note, It is common for those who walk in false ways themselves to rejoice at the false steps which they sometimes see others make. But charity rejoices not in iniquity, nor can true penitents that are sorry for their own sins rejoice in the sins of others.

2. He *told his two brethren without (in the street, as the word is)*, in a scornful deriding manner, that his father might seem vile unto them. It is very wrong,

(1.) To make a jest of sin (^{<2149>}Proverbs 14:9), and to be puffed up with that for which we should rather mourn, ^{<412>}1 Corinthians 5:2. And,

(2.) To publish the faults of any, especially of parents, whom it is our duty to honour. Noah was not only a good man, but had been a good father to him; and this was a most base disingenuous requital to him for his tenderness. Ham is here called the *father of Canaan*, which intimates that he who was himself a father should have been more respectful to him that was his father.

IV. The pious care of Shem and Japheth to cover their poor father's shame, v. 23. They not only would not see it themselves, but provided that no one else might see it, herein setting us an example of charity with reference to other men's sin and shame; we must not only not say, *A confederacy*, with those that proclaim it, but we must be careful to conceal it, or at least to make the best of it, be doing as we would be done by.

1. There is a mantle of love to be thrown over the faults of all, ~~(1018)~~ 1 Peter 4:8.

2. Besides this, there is a robe of reverence to be thrown over the faults of parents and other superiors.

~~(1018)~~ GENESIS 9:24-27

NOAH'S PROPHECY

Here,

I. Noah comes to himself: He *awoke from his wine*. Sleep cured him, and, we may suppose, so cured him that he never relapsed into that sin afterwards. Those that sleep as Noah did should awake as he did, and not as that drunkard (~~(1235)~~ Proverbs 23:35) who says when he awakes, *I will seek it yet again*.

II. The spirit of prophecy comes upon him, and, like dying Jacob, he tells his sons what shall befall them, ~~(140)~~ Genesis 49:1.

1. He pronounces a curse on Canaan the son of Ham (v. 25), in whom Ham is himself cursed, either because this son of his was now more guilty than the rest, or because the posterity of this son was afterwards to be rooted out of their land, to make room for Israel. And Moses here records it for the animating of Israel in the wars of Canaan; though the Canaanites

were a formidable people, yet they were of old an accursed people, and doomed to ruin. The particular curse is, *A servant of servants* (that is, the meanest and most despicable servant) *shall he be, even to his brethren*. Those who by birth were his equals shall by conquest be his lords. This certainly points at the victories obtained by Israel over the Canaanites, by which they were all either put to the sword or put under tribute (⁴⁰²³Joshua 9:23; ⁴⁰²⁸Judges 1:28, 30, 33, 35), which happened not till about 800 years after this. Note,

(1.) God often visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, especially when the children inherit the fathers' wicked dispositions, and imitate the fathers' wicked practices, and do nothing to cut off the entail of the curse.

(2.) Disgrace is justly put upon those that put disgrace upon others, especially that dishonour and grieve their own parents. An undutiful child that mocks at his parents is *no more worthy to be called a son*, but deserves to be *made as a hired servant*, nay, as *a servant of servants*, among his brethren.

(3.) Though divine curses operate slowly, yet, first or last, they will take effect. The Canaanites were under a curse of slavery, and yet, for a great while, had the dominion; for a family, a people, a person, may lie under the curse of God, and yet may long prosper in the world, till the measure of their iniquity, like that of the Canaanites, be full. Many are marked for ruin that are not yet ripe for ruin. Therefore, *Let not thy heart envy sinners*.

2. He entails a blessing upon Shem and Japheth.

(1.) He blesses Shem, or rather blesses God for him, yet so that it entitles him to the greatest honour and happiness imaginable, v. 26. Observe,

[1.] He calls the Lord *the god of Shem*; and happy, thrice happy, *is that people whose God is the LORD*, ⁴¹²⁵Psalm 144:15. All blessings are included in this. This was the blessing conferred on Abraham and his seed; the God of heaven was *not ashamed to be called their God*, ⁴³¹⁶Hebrews 11:16. Shem is sufficiently recompensed for his respect to his father by this, that the Lord himself puts this honour upon him, *to be his God*, which is a sufficient recompence for all our services and all our sufferings for his name.

[2.] He gives to God the glory of that good work which Shem had done, and, instead of blessing and praising him that was the instrument, he blesses and praises God that was the author. Note, The glory of all that is at any time well done, by ourselves or others, must be humbly and thankfully transmitted to God, who works all our good works in us and for us. When we see men's good works we should glorify, not them, but *our Father*, ⁴¹⁵⁶Matthew 5:16. Thus David, in effect, blessed Abigail, when he *blessed God* that sent her (⁴¹⁵⁷1 Samuel 25:32, 33), for it is an honour and a favour to be employed for God and used by him in doing good.

[3.] He foresees and foretels that God's gracious dealings with Shem and his family would be such as would evidence to all the world that he was the God of Shem, on which behalf thanksgivings would by many be rendered to him: *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem*.

[4.] It is intimated that the church should be built up and continued in the posterity of Shem; for of him came the Jews, who were, for a great while, the only professing people God had in the world.

[5.] Some think reference is here had to Christ, who was the Lord God that, in his human nature, should descend from the loins of Shem; for of him, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.

[6.] Canaan is particularly enslaved to him: *He shall be his servant*. Note, Those that have the Lord for their God shall have as much of the honour and power of this world as he sees good for them.

(2.) He blesses Japheth, and, in him, *the isles of the Gentiles*, which were peopled by his seed: *God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem*, v. 27. Now,

[1.] Some make this to belong wholly to Japheth, and to denote either, *First*, His outward prosperity, that his seed should be so numerous and so victorious that they should be masters of the tents of Shem, which was fulfilled when the people of the Jews, the most eminent of Shem's race, were tributaries to the Grecians first and afterwards to the Romans, both of Japheth's seed. Note, Outward prosperity is no infallible mark of the true church: the tents of Shem are not always the tents of the conqueror. Or, *Secondly*, It denotes the conversion of the Gentiles, and the bringing of them into the church; and then we should read it, *God shall persuade Japheth* (for so the word signifies), and then, being so persuaded, *he shall*

dwell in the tents of Shem, that is, Jews and Gentiles shall be united together in the gospel fold. After many of the Gentiles shall have been proselyted to the Jewish religion, both shall be one in Christ (⁴⁰⁴Ephesians 2:14, 15), and the Christian church, mostly made up of the Gentiles, shall succeed the Jews in the privileges of church-membership; the latter having first cast themselves out by their unbelief, the Gentiles shall dwell in their tents, ⁴¹¹Romans 11:11, etc. Note, It is God only that can bring those again into the church who have separated themselves from it. It is the power of God that makes the gospel of Christ effectual to salvation, ⁴¹⁶Romans 1:16. And again, Souls are brought into the church, not by force, but by persuasion, ⁴³⁰Psalms 110:3. They are drawn by the cords of a man, and persuaded by reason to be religious.

[2.] Others divide this between Japheth and Shem, Shem having not been directly blessed, v. 26. *First*, Japheth has the blessing of the earth beneath: *God shall enlarge Japheth*, enlarge his seed, enlarge his border. Japheth's prosperity peopled all Europe, a great part of Asia, and perhaps America. Note, God is to be acknowledged in all our enlargements. It is he that enlarges the coast and enlarges the heart. And again, many dwell in large tents that do not dwell in God's tents, as Japheth did. *Secondly*, Shem has the blessing of heaven above: *He shall* (that is, God shall) *dwell in the tents of Shem*, that is "From his loins *Christ shall come*, and in his seed the church shall be continued." The birth-right was now to be divided between Shem and Japheth, Ham being utterly discarded. In the principality which they equally share Canaan shall be servant to both. The double portion is given to Japheth, whom God shall enlarge; but the priesthood is given to Shem, for *God shall dwell in the tents of Shem*: and certainly we are more happy if we have God dwelling in our tents than if we had there all the silver and gold in the world. It is better to dwell in tents with God than in palaces without him. In Salem, where is God's tabernacle, there is more satisfaction than in all the isles of the Gentiles. *Thirdly*, They both have dominion over Canaan: *Canaan shall be servant to them*; so some read it. When Japheth joins with Shem, Canaan falls before them both. When strangers become friends, enemies become servants.

GENESIS 9:28-29

NOAH'S DEATH

Here see,

- 1.** How God prolonged the life of Noah; he lived 950 years, twenty more than Adam and but nineteen less than Methuselah: this long life was a further reward of his signal piety, and a great blessing to the world, to which no doubt he continued a *preacher of righteousness*, with this advantage, that now all he preached to were his own children.
- 2.** How God put a period to his life at last. Though he lived long, yet he died, having probably first seen many that descended from him dead before him. Noah lived to see two worlds, but, being an heir of the righteousness which is by faith, when he died he went to see a better than either.