Psalm 96

A. Proclamation of Universal Praise (1–3)
B. The Majesty of the Lord (4–6)
A’. Proclamation of Universal Praise (7–9)
B’. The Rule of the Lord (10–13)

Reference: VanGemeren, Expositor's Bible Commentary

Sign of the Bow (Gen 9:13-16)

Ezek 1:28; Rev 4:3
Assyrian Archer

V. Gilbert and Arlisle F. Beers

Bow Hanging on Wall

“I have set my bow in the cloud…”

Progenitors of All People Groups

V. Gilbert and Arlisle F. Beers
Gen 9:25-27 The Curse of Canaan

1. Ham is not cursed, nor is skin color ever mentioned.
2. Muslim writers in 7th Cent spoke of the “Curse of Ham” as a defense for enslaving black Africans, in which Ham, black skin, and slavery became a single curse.
3. This view was advanced only sporadically during the Middle Ages, was widespread among slave traders and slaveholders during the 18th and 19th Cent. and from time to time by renegade theologians.
4. No Jewish or Christian writing relates black skin to a curse whatsoever, nor was this view ever adopted by Judaism, Roman Catholic, Eastern, or Protestant churches.

Gen 9:25-27 The Curse of Canaan

Why punish Canaan, Ham’s son, and not Ham? Does not Deut 24:16 make it clear that a person receives punishment for his own crimes, not another’s?

Ham had three other sons who were not cursed, nor was Ham cursed.

Some of Canaan’s descendants would later inhabit Sodom and Gomorrah, where they were judged for sexual perversion.

Canaanite descendants would later inhabit the Promised Land, becoming Israel’s arch-enemies, well known for their lewd behavior, sexual immorality, and offenses against the Lord (Lev 18:3-30).

Note the -ite endings beginning in 10:15 (p. 64 notes).

Gen 9:25-27 Curse/Blessing (p. 62)

Canaan’s idolatry would eventually become a threat to Israel’s fidelity toward God (Deut 20:17-18).

Archaeologists have found thousands of Canaanite deities to the 10th-6th century BC in Jerusalem’s Jewish Quarter.

This in violation of God’s command accompanied by dire warnings.

“They will be turned back and be utterly put to shame, those who trust idols, who say to molten images, “You are our gods.”” (Isa 42:17; 44:9-17; Jer 11:9-10; 44:15-25)

Reference: Philip King, Life in Biblical Israel
Controversy Over The Conquest

Divine Instructions for the OT Conquest (1406-1400 BC)

First, Israel was to offer terms of peace (Deut 20:10-11). If a peace treaty was accepted, then no war.

Then, (a) if a peace treaty was rejected, and (b) if the other side declared war, then these rules of engagement apply:

1. Rule 1: For cities outside the land, men were to be killed but women and children spared (Deut 20:12-15).
2. Rule 2: Canaanite cities in the land, everyone was to be killed (Deut 20:16-17).

The reason was theological. In Deut 20:18, Israel was to be intolerant of idolatry in the Land.

Controversy Over The Conquest

Instructions for the Church

- Christianity has no national interest or boundary. “Our citizenship is in heaven,” (Php 3:20, cf. Mt 28:19).
- Christians are commanded to “recognize no one according to the flesh,” (2 Cor 5:16).
- [Jesus]: “You people judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone,” (John 8:15).
- [Jesus]: “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment,” (John 7:24).
- Christians should marry “only in the Lord,” (1 Cor 7:39).

Consistent with the OT, Idolatry is the ultimate concern.

Table of Nations, Gen 10 (p. 63)

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE DESCENDANTS OF NOAH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japheth</th>
<th>Gomer</th>
<th>Tubal</th>
<th>Magog</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gomer</td>
<td>Tubal</td>
<td>Magog</td>
<td>Japheth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
There is no such thing as prehistoric. Numerous evidences show that the human race has lost certain knowledge we once had.

- Building techniques of the pyramids and Stonehenge.
- Bronze and iron were in use prior to the Flood (Gen 4:22).
- Man's spiritual life through Shem.
- Man's material needs through Ham.
- Man's philosophical needs through Japheth.

### Table of Nations (Gen 10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Son</th>
<th>People Groups</th>
<th>Legacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shem</td>
<td>Jews and Arabs</td>
<td>Religion (both true and false)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham</td>
<td>Africans, native</td>
<td>Inventors: metallurgy, weaving, agriculture, building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Americans, Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japheth</td>
<td>Indo-Europeans,</td>
<td>Philosophy, exploration, development of Ham's inventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germanic peoples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Gomer), Greek (Javan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference: Arthur Custance, *Noah's Three Sons*
God is portrayed as the creator of all people groups.

Acts 17:26-27, "and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us."

Deuteronomy 32:8, "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, When He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the sons of Israel." (cf. Gen 46:27)

Race – inherited physical traits that characterize peoples such as cranial shape, facial features, skin color.
Ethnic Group – [Gr.] (ethnos) "people group," an affiliated people who share history, tradition, and culture, familial descent, language, religious and social customs.
People [Heb.] (‘am) and peoples (‘ami) – a covenant community bound by devotion to their god, not strictly by territory, language, or common derivation.
Nation – a political term describing a geopolitical state in a specific locale whose citizenship consists of interconnected communities.
Tribe – an ethnically related subdivision within a total community or nation.

"Race" as we think of it today was not important to ancient people (including the Hebrews) and rarely appears in the Bible text.

The Hebrews and other ANE peoples typically identified foreigners by their language, locale, region, or customs (Num 21:29; Isa 33:19; Amos 1:3).
The word “race” is used twice in NASB OT:
Ezra 9:2, (זרה, זֵרוּעַ) “seed.” Some Jewish leaders expressed concern over the inter-marriage of Levite priests with Canaanite women. The reason for this prohibition was a safeguard from idolatry (Deut 7:4).
Zech 9:6 (מזרע, מַמְזֵר) “bastard of incest.” This was a prophecy that the Philistines, who occupied Ashdod during the time of Alexander the Great, would vanish from the land, only be replaced by a people of mixed nationality as a divine judgment against them.

The word “race” is used four times in NASB NT:
Genos (γένος): descendant, ancestry, posterity
1. Mark 7:26, identification as a Syrophonecian woman, whose daughter healed.
2. Acts 7:19, historical reference to the Jewish nation while enslaved in Egypt.
3. 1 Peter 2:9, a reference to the Christian’s spiritual status as a born-again, child of God (which crosses all ethnic and racial boundaries).
Phusis (φύσις): nature, essential character

Further NT Perspective:
[Jesus]: “You people judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone,” (John 8:15).
[Jesus]: "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment," (John 7:24).
*“From now on we recognize no one according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα)” (2 Cor 5:16).
Racial Differences are Trivial

Genetic differences we attribute to “race” are absolutely trivial.

Genetic differences controlling skin color, eye shape, and similar characteristics of appearance, involve only 0.012% (6% of 0.2%) of the genetic code.

Ref: Ken Ham, Don Batten, and Carl Wieland, One Blood: The Biblical Answer to Racism, Creation Ministries International.

Christ for the Nations (Mt 28:19)

Revelation 5:9, “For You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

Table of Nations (Gen 10)

Conclusions

- Racial superiority / inferiority is not taught in the Bible. Any biblical distinction is made based on nationality or language, not skin color or physical appearance.
- Since all races are equally valuable to God, men should regard others in that way. (Ecc 3:11, “He [God] has made everything beautiful in its time.”)
- The basis of OT prohibition against marriage to foreigners was theological, not racial. The NT directs Christians not to marry non-Christians (1Cor 7:39).
- There is only one race among Homo sapiens. No other racial distinctions are made in the Bible. Thus, there is no such thing as interracial marriage.
**Table of Nations (Gen 10)**

**Conclusions**
- "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character," MLK. (Such a worldview seems consistent with the biblical text.)
- Many Christians have fallen victim to **evolutionary** ways of thinking about race.
- Evolution is an enemy of the biblical worldview.
- Fully embracing a biblical anthropology (man created in the image and likeness of God) provides the only insurance against adopting a secular/racial anthropology.

**Observations (p. 72)**

1. A sharp decline in lifespan began with the first generation after the Flood.
2. Within 500 years after the Flood, lifespans were in the range of our modern world.
3. Lifespans generally decline with each generation, following an exponential curve.
4. Most of the patriarchs outlived their children and grandchildren.
5. Noah overlapped Terah by 129 years.
6. Abraham was born 2 years following the death of Noah.
7. Shem outlived all of the patriarchs except Eber, and died when Abraham was age 150.
8. The graph follows an exponential equation.
Eber (p. 68)

- The great-grandson of Shem was Eber (עֵ֫בֶר). Note the close similarity of his name and the word “Hebrew” (עִבְרִי).
- First use of “Hebrew” is Genesis 14:13 where Abraham is said to be a Hebrew. Etymologically, the word suggests something “beyond.” Interesting that the sound of this word has a counterpart in many languages, including “Iberian” which describes the peninsula between Europe and Africa. It may describe the idea of crossing over from one place to another.
- Eber was born 66 years after the Flood, possibility the earth was still drying up.
- Consider that God called Abraham out of the land or Ur to travel to the land of Canaan, requiring him to cross deserts and rivers in order to get there.

Peleg (p. 64)

- Genesis 10:25, “In his [Peleg’s] days the earth was divided.” Peleg’s name means “divided.” Verse 25, “Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided and his brother’s name was Joktan.”
- The name given to “Peleg” ties him to a specific event known to the original readers. Perhaps it refers to the Tower of Babel episode in which God divided the human race by confusing their languages, thereby dividing the people. In Psalm 55:3, the imperative verb form of Peleg is used in the context of dividing the tongues or languages.
- “Earth” could be rendered as “land,” in which case it could indicate an earthquake or an irrigation canal for agricultural irrigation. Mathews states, “The verb “divide” though its related noun “channel” or “stream” is well attested (e.g., Ps 1:3), it is used of digging a channel for rainwater (Job 38:25). [Note the dip in lifespan]
The Context: A Rapidly Changing World

1. The earth was drying up, revealing the formation of new land masses.
2. Rivers, oceans and lakes were being formed.
3. Earth's atmosphere was cooling by evaporation, producing rain and snow for the first time.
4. Global weather patterns were changing to a "new normal."
5. Some species of animals which came out of the ark with Noah were finding it increasingly difficult to survive in the new climate.
6. Dinosaurs and many other plant-eating creatures from the primeval world were starting to become extinct.
7. Lifespans were declining.
8. The human race was repopulating the earth.
9. During this period another patriarch, Job, would live. Job's theology seems to represent the worldview of general revelation.

Worldwide Disobedience to God

- In Genesis 9:1, God commanded Noah and his sons to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth.
- Settling in Shinar and building a single city and a tower which reached to heaven was not on God's list.
- These engineered works were orchestrated by Nimrod, great-grandson of Noah, grandson of Ham, son of Cush.
- The third generation from Noah (Nimrod his great grandson thru Ham and Cush) was overt in its disobedience to God's will.
- This may have occurred around 2300-2400 BC, based on the chronology (see notes, p. 71).

Repudiation of the Noahic Covenant (Gen 11:3)

A key term in God's covenant with Noah, his descendants and the animals, was His pledge to never again inundate the earth with water (Gen. 9:11). Yet, Nimrod and his generation employed bitumen, stone and cement in their building projects. These are waterproof materials. As well, the tower was probably considered a place of refuge in the event that another flood occurred. This was clearly done in complete disregard of God's promise.

Repudiation of the Noahic Command (Gen 11:4)

God's blessing in Gen 9:1 was accompanied by a command to fill the earth. Yet, Nimrod and his generation were fearful of being "scattered" over the face of all the earth.
Tower of Babel Gen 11 (p. 66)

Humanism, Manmade Religion (Gen 11:4)
• The tower which "reached to heaven" (Gen. 11:4) was an act of humanism.
• As if naïve human beings could ever build anything that might reach heaven on their own, without God’s supernatural help, they were willing to give it a try.
• Enoch had already been raptured, an indication that Nimrod and his generation would like to join him, but on their terms, not God’s.
• Perhaps it represents the ambition of autonomy, of self-empowerment (“name for ourselves”).

Tower of Babel Gen 11 (p. 66)

Divine Inspection (Gen 11:5)
• God responds to human disobedience, as He did in the Garden (Gen 3:22).
• God came down to see the city and the tower. Was this an informative act (Open Theism), or rather an expression of judgment?

Divine Blessing in the form of Judgment (Gen 11:6-9)
• God determines “what they began to do” … to pollute (chalal חָלַל [Hiphil infinitive means to pollute or defile, desecrate, profane]) what they do. (cf. Gen 3:22-23).
• Therefore, God confused their speech, scattering them upon the surface of the earth, to enforce obedience to the command in Gen 9:1.

Babylonian Empire (p. 66-67)

The Babylonian Empire was perhaps the earliest empire in all antiquity. It sprang up in Mesopotamia soon after the Flood, which dates to somewhere around 2,517 B.C. Its entire history as seen through its cultural and literary legacy (Code of Hammurabi, Enuma Elish, Epic of Gilgamesh, etc.), possessed a non-theistic and distinctively pagan world view. The character of Babylon seems to be reflected in the life of its founder, Nimrod, who Genesis 10:9 called a mighty hunter “before the Lord.” The preposition “before” can also be translated, “against” or “opposite to.”

References: See notes, p. 67
Babylonian Empire (p. 66-67)

• Babylon is mentioned 294 times in the Bible, from OT times to NT times.
• Babylon is mentioned in the future - 6 times in Revelation 14,16,17,18.
• First mention of Babylon occurs in Genesis 10:10, naming Nimrod as its founder.
• Babylon existed as a city-state in antiquity. Sometimes the City of Babylon is a metonymy for the city-state.
• At times the City of Babylon fell under the jurisdiction of world empires. In ancient times it was associated with Chaldea, later with Assyria. In 606 BC with the fall of Nineveh, Babylon became the capital of the Babylonian Empire.

Babylonian Empire (p. 66-67)

• Soon thereafter, Babylon belonged to the Persian Empire until the Greeks conquest, then the Roman Empire.
• With the fall of the Roman Empire, Babylon was briefly part of the Persian Empire until the Arab conquest.
• Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, Babylon was in the territory of modern-day Iraq.
• The ruins of this once-great city have been identified by archaeologists on the west bank of the Euphrates, about 50 miles south of Baghdad.
• Once called “the beauty of kingdoms” (Isa 13:19), today it lies in ruin.

Babylonian Empire (p. 66-67)

• Babylon is quite prominent in future biblical prophecy.
• Two entire chapters in the Book of Revelation are devoted to Babylon.
• Revelation 17 and 18 describe it as a place of incredible wealth and international trade. But these chapters also describe the final and complete destruction of Babylon (Rev 14:18; 18:21).
• In the overall narrative, the future destruction of Babylon will take place near the end of the seven-year long Great Tribulation.
• Since the rapture of the church will have taken place prior to the start of the Great Tribulation, it is obvious that there must be a future rebuilding Babylon.
Future Babylon will be so wealthy that a period of international mourning will follow on the heels of its destruction (Rev 18:9-20). Those who mourn will include all economic and political strata, from top political leaders and bankers right on down to those involved in retail and shipping.

Iraq is currently in the throes of political and social turmoil. But somehow, some way, at some future time, the nations of the world will cooperate in the reconstruction of Babylon. Babylon will become an international hub for world trade and finance, ultimately surpassing all other exchanges, including the New York Stock Exchange.

Other OT Empires (p. 67)

- Assyria
- Egypt
- Israel
- Greece
- Rome