

Jan. 5, 2016

- Genesis 8-9 – Noah’s faithfulness followed by God’s blessings followed by Noah’s drunkenness and nakedness.
- Matthew 7:12-8:34 – The narrow and wide gate, the good and bad tree, and the wise and foolish man (chapter 7) and the darkness of Hell (8:12).
- Ecclesiastes. 2:12-17 – The vanity of both wisdom and folly from a temporal perspective.

Reflections:

Genesis 8-9. Chapter eight uses anthropomorphism in describing God as “remembering” Noah. Of course, He never forgets. In this chapter God is faithful to His promises to Noah. In chapter 9 we have Noah after the Flood. The language of the first verse of chapter nine indicates a new beginning with Noah as a second Adam. However, the world of Genesis 9 is much different than the world of Genesis 1. For one, man can now kill animals. While Noah, like Adam, starts out great (a righteous man who walked with God, Gen. 6:9), he acts like a pagan by becoming drunk and taking off all of his clothes (9:21). A lot of speculation has come from Ham’s seeing the nakedness of his father. Some actually believe that Ham had performed a homosexual act on Noah. Others posit that Ham had sex with Noah’s wife. But the text does not say that. It says that Noah got drunk and took his clothes off, and Ham saw his nakedness and told his brothers. I think the key to understanding this issue is in the term “told” his brothers. To the ancients, even seeing one’s father naked was a breach of family ethic. The fact that Ham went and “told” his brothers, perhaps mockingly, brought great shame and disrespect to his father and family. The following curses simply show that the natures of the sons would be perpetuated in their descendants.

Matthew 7:12-8:34. In chapter seven Jesus uses several metaphors to describe His way in contrast to all of the other ways (wide gate, bad tree, and foolish builder). Chapter 8 mentions Hell as a place of darkness. Since Hell is described as a place of fire, the question is often asked how it could also be a place of darkness. Both “fire” and “darkness” are powerful figures of speech, which appropriately describe the unthinkable reality Hell. The exact nature of fire and darkness is unknown. Hell will be like fire because it is a place of destruction and torment. Yet, it is like outer darkness because people are lost there forever. While Hell is a literal place where body and soul will suffer forever, not every description should be taken literally. For example, Hell is also called a garbage dump (Mark 9:43-48), which has a bottom. But, it is also portrayed as a bottomless pit (Rev. 20:3). Each is a vivid description of a place of everlasting torment. All symbols are taken from the human natural realm to point to supernatural realities in Hell—unquenchable, eternal fire is by nature supernatural. Of course, God does not wish anyone to go there, but it is the only place for those who reject Him: 1 Timothy 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. The issue is faith alone in Christ alone, John 3:16 vs. John 3:36.

Ecclesiastes. 2:12-17. As Solomon looks at life simply from human temporal perspective, he suffers great angst as observes that both wise people and fools end up dying. If human life is just about this life, it really is, as the believer Solomon says “madness” or as the atheist Jean Paul Sartre says “nausea.”

In ‘Ehyeh,

Pastor Don