

1. Review the main purposes of this course:

- Knowing better and appreciating better the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Gaining a better understanding and appreciation of God’s Word.
- Becoming able to use messianic prophecy (prophecy that predicts how Jesus would come and be the Messiah) to share and defend our faith.

2. Reviewing the Protoevangelium or “First Gospel.”

God had promised to send someone to crush the head of the serpent: *“...I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”* (Gen. 3:15)

Christians have always viewed this as the first announcement of a Coming Redeemer, and so this passage was called the First Gospel. Note:

- First, there would be an extraordinary seed – the seed of a woman.
- Second, God said there would be a state of enmity between the two seeds. The devil has been at war with the people of Messiah from the beginning.
- God also says that the seed would be wounded. The special seed of God would be bruised in his heel.
- Note the kindness of God at the very worst of times in giving us a hope. God would slowly add details to the Messianic promise.

3. God narrows down the field of candidates for Messiah.

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." (Gen. 4:1)

It's possible that Eve was confused about the child she had carried. She might have suspected that this very first child of the human race was the Redeemer.

A. Noah

The first narrowing down of the field of messianic candidates was made at the Flood. Noah was "perfect in his generations."

B. The Family of Noah

The three divisions of mankind became the major divisions of the world population. The Jewish people believe that they are alone in the world with the 70 nations of the Gentiles ("Benjamin and the 70 wolves").

The *Table of Nations* in Genesis 10 shows us how the family tree of Noah's three sons became 70 families. These are the 70 groups Gentile nations, as Jews conceive of them:

- Shem's grandsons: *"Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram."*
- Ham's grandsons: *"Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan."*
- Japheth's grandsons: *"Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras."*

C. God's Choice of Shem

In Genesis 9, Noah blesses his three sons. How did he bless Shem?

20 And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. 21 Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

24 So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. 25 Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren." 26 And he said: "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. 27 May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem; and may Canaan be his servant."

- Notice: the blessing upon Shem is not actually a blessing upon Shem... it is a recognition that God is the God of Shem.
- Japheth's blessing says he will expand and will dwell in the tents of Shem. This likely means that Japheth would be blessed because throughout much of history he would follow the God of Shem. It is only in these last days that the whole earth is hearing the message of the God of Israel.
- Ham has spent the least amount of time under Shem's spiritual influence.

Who's who in today's world? It's hard to say.

- The people of Shem became Middle Eastern and probably Asiatic peoples: the Hebrews and related people in the Middle East, Arabia, and Asia.
- Japheth are mostly what we call "Caucasian" people, but this includes many people that Americans don't think of as Caucasian.
- These concepts have little or nothing to do with what Americans call "race."

Be sure to recognize that there is no “curse of Ham.” The Bible says there was a curse upon Canaan; Ham was already blessed by God. Bad doctrine can have serious consequences in everyday life – this bad teaching one truly did.

D. The call of Abraham

The next narrowing down occurred with the call of Abraham, ten generations after Shem. The promise of the special land where God's kingdom would be manifest and where the Word of God would come is found in Genesis 18:18: *...Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him...*

E. The Covenant confirmed to Isaac

In Genesis 17:19 God says, “*...Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.*”

- This has been a source of serious division. Unlike Muslims, Jews and Christians would say at this point that Isaac is the spiritual father.
- Out of all the millions of people living at that time, God had already narrowed the line of Messiah down to a single family.

F. The line narrowed to Jacob

The line was further narrowed when God chose Jacob over Esau. We refer to the God of Judaism as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

- There has been great enmity between the children of Esau (Edom) and the people of Israel. This was notable in the two destructions of the Temple and it seems that it will be evident again the future (see: *Obadiah*).
- The one who is born according to the flesh always persecutes the one who is born according to the spirit!

G. The line narrowed to Judah

Among the 12 sons of Jacob, whose line would bring forth the Messiah?

- Reuben, the firstborn, was rejected.
- Others such as Joseph might have been spiritually excellent, but God did not choose them either.
- God’s choice for the kingly line of Messiah was the tribe of Judah.
- The patriarchal blessing given to Judah was different from that spoken over the other tribes, because it declared rulership.

8 “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. 9 Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him? 10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people. (Genesis 49:8-10)

- This is a clear statement that the other tribes would bow to Judah. Judah would hold “the scepter” until Shiloh came.
- Shiloh is thought to be a name for Messiah, meaning something like “the one whose right it is.”
- The rabbis believe that God chose Judah because he developed a kingly character during the years of the mistreatment of Joseph. Judah becomes an intercessor, being willing to take Benjamin’s place.
- The line of Messiah, the leadership of the tribes, passed to Judah.
- More than once, God made a perhaps unexpected sovereign choice as to who the leader would be, overriding the custom of giving leadership to the firstborn.

H. The line narrowed to David.

About 1050 years before Christ, Saul was anointed as Israel's first king. However, God's choice was to establish David as the first king of the messianic line. In 2 Samuel 7, God promises David that his house would be the royal house in Israel.

- See how much God has already narrowed down the field.
- The narrowing down of the field also meant that the Devil could now focus his attacks upon fewer and fewer people.
- The choice of Solomon was at risk (1 Kings 1).
- Centuries later, Athaliah killed all but one of the princes of Judah. But God's purposes cannot be defeated!
- The right of kingship to the Jewish throne passes from David and down through Solomon down to Jesus Christ, legally and by blood.

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