

Robert Vannoy, Old Testament History, Lecture 16

The Flood Narrative (Gen. 6-9) and Mesopotamian Parallels

1. Babylonian Flood Stories

Similarities

Between the Mesopotamia account and the biblical record of the flood we noticed that the general structure of both stories is the same but there are differences in detail. I wanted to just illustrate that a bit further. We noticed both were told to build a great ship, but their dimensions are different and I have just a couple more illustrations to give you an idea of how this works out. As far as the occupants of the ark are concerned both stories say the hero and his family as well as animals and birds are delivered from the destruction by the means of a ship. But when you come to the details again there are differences as we have already noticed here the names are quite different as far as the leading figure, Zuisudra, Utnapishtim, Atrahasis and then Noah in the biblical account and there seems to be no etymological connection between the name Noah and these other names. In addition, in the biblical account there are a smaller number of people saved on the ship. Noah was accompanied by his wife and three sons and their wives. In the Gilgamesh epic Utnapishtim talked and I pull from the text all of his family and kin aboard the ship as well as all the craftsmen and the boats-man. So we have all his family and kin and all the craftsmen and a boats-man whose names were given so it seems like a substantial number of people. In the Atrahasis epic the hero brought his family, his relatives and the craftsmen aboard the ship. In the Sumerian version Zuisudra took his relatives his wife and children and close friends on board. So it seems the biblical account is more restricted to a small number of people so again there is a difference of details.

The bird incident is one more illustration where the birds were released to determine whether conditions are suitable to leave the ark. Both the stories in Mesopotamia and the Bible have that, but again there are differences in detail. In the Babylonian story there are three releases of birds and in the biblical story there are four. Utnapishtim and Noah are both said to have released a single bird at a time while

Zuisudra lets go of a number each time. Utnapishtim is said to have released a dove, a swallow, and a raven in that order. Whereas Noah is said to have released a raven and three doves. Note the contrast there, Noah released the raven first and Utnapishtim released the raven last. In a book I don't think I have mentioned yet but it is on your bibliography Alexander Hiedel, who wrote the volume that compared the Babylon creation story with the biblical creation stories, also has written a book called *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*, which is a good study of the biblical account compared with the Babylonian account. I believe that's on your bibliography page ten next to the last entry of this particular incident. The title says that there is a mistake in logic on the part of Utnapishtim since the raven is a more hearty bird, the logical progression would have been that utilized by Noah; the more hearty bird first the doves later whereas Utnapishtim has it turned around.

Explanation of the Parallels

In any case there are differences in detail so then we come to this question that we ended the last class with, what do we say about the relationship between the Babylonian and the biblical story? How do we explain the similarities and the differences? I think we have three responses to that question and I will mention them and discuss them briefly. First, the Mesopotamian account is derived from a Proto-Semitic/biblical account. Again I will discuss what I mean about that in a minute. Second, the biblical account is derived from the Mesopotamian account, it reverses it. Third, both go back to a common original source.

a. The Mesopotamian Account Was Borrowed from a Proto-Semitic/Biblical Account

First, the Mesopotamian account was borrowed from a Proto-Semitic/biblical account. It seems quite clear that the Mesopotamian accounts were in existence by at least 2000 B.C. There is not a lot of dispute about the Babylonian version going back to about 2000 B.C. Whereas the biblical account would be about 1200-1400 B.C. associated

with Moses and his writing of the Pentateuch. The relative dating suggests with the extant text that the Mesopotamian account is earlier. Now it's for that reason that many have said the biblical account is derived from the Mesopotamian account. However on your bibliography you'll notice an entry at the bottom of page ten the third from the bottom Clay's *The Origin of Biblical Traditions*, Yale University press 1923. In that volume Clay makes this statement on page 165 and 166. He says the argument that alleges the story originated with the Sumerians because the earliest version of it is found in the Sumerian language is no more final than it would be to say the work of Shakespeare has a German origin because a copy of it written in a German language was found in Berlin. You see, suppose 2000 years from now people were excavating our civilization and turned up a copy of Shakespeare written in German that is earliest extant copy of Shakespeare. It doesn't prove a whole lot. It just happens to be that that's the earliest version that you happen to have of that story. Clay proposes that the Gilgamesh Epic was originally written in an Amorite legend that became Acadianized about 2000 B.C. Now the Amorites were Semitic peoples living to the west of Mesopotamia. He feels that that whole story was brought into Mesopotamia and Acadianized about 2000 B.C. He said it's an Amorite legend which Semites brought from the west. Now this is Clay's proposal but if you thought that the Proto-Semitic account here is in Sumer and that same Proto-Semitic account going down into the biblical account, it could be that out of that account you get this Acadianized version. As a break off of the Proto-Semitic account in the tradition comes down into the form that we have the biblical account and that's to say the Acadian is derived from the Proto-Semitic/biblical account. Just because you have an earlier document that's Acadian of this story it doesn't necessarily mean the biblical account is derived from the Mesopotamian account. He makes the statement on the basis of Amorite names and words that he feels are to be discerned in the Gilgamesh Epic and that gets into the linguistic discussion but he feels there is evidence that it has been Acadianized and was originally Amorite.

b. The Hebrews Borrowed their Account from Mesopotamia

The second view point of course is speculative. We really don't have any hard evidence of the Proto-Semitic account. We certainly don't have a tablet or document so this is somewhat theoretical. The second idea is that the Hebrews borrowed their account from the Mesopotamians. So here you were to have this Mesopotamian account or Acadian account and the Hebrews borrowed it so you have the biblical account derived from the Mesopotamian account. Of course, you could ask the question, if that's the way it happen, was there ever really a flood of the sort that we have described in the biblical account or is this the Mesopotamian account? What's behind it is hard to say. It doesn't sound like the same the sort of flood you have in the biblical story. Yet the skeleton of it is. Hiedel comments on this proposal and he makes the statement on page 268, "as in the case of the Creation story we still do not know how the biblical and Babylonian heritages of deluge are related historically. The available evidence proves nothing beyond the point that there is a genetic relationship between Genesis and the Babylonian versions. The skeleton is the same in both cases, but the flesh and blood and, above all, the details and spirit are different. It is here that we meet the most far reaching divergences between the Hebrew and the Mesopotamian stories." I'm not sure that this kind of structure gives you sufficient explanation of why the differences. But if the biblical material was simply borrowed from the Mesopotamian, why the differences to the extent that you find them?

c. Von Rad's Analysis: Both Independent with a Common Source

In von Rad's commentary on Genesis, von Rad is someone on many points we would take issue with his conclusions, but he says on page 119, I think it's on top of page 11 in your bibliography, "Today forty years after the height of the Babel/Bible controversy on the relation of the biblical traditions of the Babylonian stories flood like as in the Gilgamesh Epic is more or less closed. A material relationship between both versions exist of course but one no longer assumes that it is a direct dependence of the biblical tradition on the Babylonian. He feels there is too much difference. You can't

assume a direct dependence of the biblical material on Babylon. What he substitutes is a more refined version of this. He says both versions are independent arrangements of a still older tradition which itself stems from perhaps the Sumerian.

Now that sounds something like an independent arrangement of an older tradition but then he goes on to say Israel met with a flood tradition in Canaan at the time of her immigration and assimilated it into their religious ideas. That is pure hypothesis with not a scrap of evidence. He just makes it as a statement. "Israel met with a flood tradition in Canaan at the time of her immigration and assimilated it into their religious ideas." There is not a Canaanite flood story, so he is attempting to explain the similarities on the assumption that there must have been one that the Hebrews adopted. But his other suggestion you know he crosses out is not direct dependence but he does feel they might go back to a common source somewhere. Is it reasonable I wonder again, what common source? We don't have a lot of evidence for that. It is just something we can't speak of directly. As for the natural and historical aspects of the flood beyond theology he says he is not confident to express an independent opinion. It may be said however that even natural scientists have not considered the prevailing explanation that the numerous flood stories in the world rose from local catastrophes to be sufficient. On the one hand, the distribution of the saga among the Indians, Persians, Africans, Australians, among the Eskimos and Indians of the Americas etc. On the other hand, there is a remarkable uniformity in flood caused by rain required the assumption of the actual cosmic experience a primitive recollection which to be sure is often clouded and often brought to new life and is revised only by later by local floods. What he is saying is the extent of distribution of flood stories across all these nationalities and peoples locally as well as the uniformity of the stories suggests that there must have been some sort of actual cosmic experience that is behind all this.

d. Common Source of National Occurrence

Now the third of the three possibilities is a common source of national occurrence.

There you say there was a flood and the tradition of that comes down to Mesopotamia and the other tradition gets down to biblical materials. In addition, there is enough recollection of what actually happened that would explain the similarities and there has been enough diversions of transmissions to explain the differences. They both go back independently to an actual occurrence that is certainly a possibility. Von Rad suggests there must have been something behind this tradition to explain this widespread use and I think often conservative people have pointed to the widespread and uniform character flood stories to argue for historicity. There is some force for that argument but you have to be careful of that argument and the reason I say that is this. If you look on your bibliography under the last entry page ten *Christian View of Anthropology and Modern Science and Christian Faith* page 187, they speak of the widespread distribution of the flood story and say this was thought to prove the actuality of the biblical flood or to be evidence of the descent of all mankind from a single nation that had once experienced it. But in commenting on that idea Anthropologists say that far more often stories of this sort fuse without migration and they can fuse across cultural linguistic lines. They point out that there are other widespread legends that are amazingly uniform besides the flood story. One such case is the magic flight or obstacle flight, which is distributed completely around the globe among both Aboriginal and historical peoples particularly in Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, and Indonesia. In this tale there is a specific structure with the flight away from an ogre and objects thrown back over the shoulder forming obstacles. Examples are, a stone which becomes a mountain, a cone which becomes a thicket, and oil which becomes a body of water. The details are always given with only minor changes such as a forest for a thicket, and some other liquid for oil. Then there is the statement that this tale is ancient, widespread, and uniform. The multiplicity of flood themes is likewise ancient widespread but not quite so uniformed. In general anthropologists feel that the widespread and geographically continuous distribution of both the magic flight and the various flood accounts is due to the transmission of the tale of one group to another slowly spreading out from the centers of origin. The universal

prevalence of flood legends cannot be considered proof of the actual reality of the flood or that all peoples who have flood accounts most similar to the biblical accounts have passed them on through their generations for time and memorial. If it is so, there is a stronger proof of the occurrence of the magic flight, so you have to be careful of how you use that argument. Stories can have an event in the that story comes and then just branches out and continues to branch out until you have it pretty fantastic like that. What they are saying is a story could start here and transmit this way and it is not necessarily a proof of historicity just because many people have it. It can cross linguistic, ethnic and cultural lines by diffusion. Someone gets it and takes it to other people, someone there takes it somewhere else and it doesn't necessarily prove historicity.

What I find striking about the flood stories is that so many people have it and its generally uniform and widespread. That may say something about as von Rad said about historicity, but I don't think you could use that as any kind of proof of historicity. Any questions or comments? I believe there are some from the Indians. They differ again in details but they are closer. I think flood geologies are beyond the scope of this course. I don't think that's a biblical problem. I think it is a scientific question but I did give you a number of other sources of books and both sides if you want to read some of that material that's under the middle of page ten there B1.

6. Conditions Governing the Post-Deluvian World

a. The Directions for the Propagation and Maintenance of Human and Animal Life

Ok, let's go on to 6. 6. is: "Conditions governing the post-deluvian world." We find that in chapter nine the first seventeen verses. I want to give you a few sub-points that were not on your outline sheet. So a. under 6 is, "The directions for the propagation and maintenance of human and animal life" in the first seven verses. "Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea;

they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man. As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.”

So you have directions for the propagation and maintenance of human and animal life. You notice first that Noah is told to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Lest there be any doubt about that. The Lord repeats what he had said to Adam and Eve. It is pleasing to the Lord for man to be fruitful and to multiply even though he brought this judgment on mankind. Now it was the task of Noah and his family to fill the earth.

b. Dominion of Man over the Animals is Reconfirmed

Secondly, dominion of man over the animals is reconfirmed. That dominion was given back in Genesis 1:28 again in the pre-fall condition is reconfirmed. Here it is said that the animals are restrained by fear of man. In addition this statement is explicit that animals are permissible for man to eat. Verse 3, “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you even as the green herb have I given you all things.” If you go back to 1:28 there is dominion given over the animals and in Genesis 3:21 the Lord makes coats of skin from the animals. In Genesis 4:4 you read Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and the fact there of the Lord had respect unto Abel to his offerings. So there are previous indications that the life of animals had been taken for the service of man you might say the bringing of sacrifices. The further question, did man eat of animals prior to the time of Noah? There is no explicit statement about that in Scripture one way or another. Some people claim that only vegetables were eaten prior to this time. I am not sure you can say that dogmatically, you’re really arguing from silence. The question really isn’t addressed. Calvin says in his commentary “since it is of little consequence, what they mean is ‘I

affirm nothing on the subject.”

Then the added qualification though is in verse 4 “the flesh with the life there of which is the blood shall you not eat.” In other words, animals were to be bled and the blood was to be out of the animal prior to eating so that the question then comes what was the purpose of that particular qualification. Was that considered kosher? Yes that’s part of it. Again that question is not answered in the text. There have been various suggestions. In Wenham’s commentary on Leviticus he says the significance is elusive because you get further reference to this in the blood in Leviticus, but he says that perhaps it is to encourage reverence for life. Life is in the blood and in addition it is the blood that atones for sin. Thus it is sacred and should not be eaten. In other words, there may be some anticipation here of the ordinances that are later to govern blood sacrifice and to show the importance of the blood in this very early time. Again, that is somewhat speculative, but animals are given to man for food, although they are not to use or eat them with the blood. In other words they are to be bled, not just strangled and eaten.

3. They are to be Fruitful and Multiply and Sacredness of Human Life

The third thing that you find is they are to be fruitful. They are to have dominion over the animals and the animals can be eaten. The third thing is the life of man is sacred because God protects the life of man by the death penalty for anyone who violates another person’s life. Verse 6, “who shall shed man’s blood by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made man.” I think what you find there is an important principle. It’s the divine ordinance for the death penalty. If someone takes another person’s life, the life of the person that does that should be taken. This is because man is made in the image of God and man’s life is sacred and it should not be violated. Men are given this power to take another man’s life, if he commits a capital offense as God’s representatives they are to enact that punishment. Now that doesn’t mean we find that further in that book in plentitude. That does not mean that it must follow in every case as the Mosaic Law develops because when you get to Numbers 35 you find that there are

cities of refuge for accidental deaths as distinguished from premeditated murder. So that distinction is made and I won't go on to read through that chapter but the death penalty is a divine ordinance given for protecting the life of man. This is still a subject that's hotly debated.

God has given those animals to man for sustenance and life with the restriction, of not eating the blood. Well it seems to me that is related to Leviticus 17:11, I believe it is Leviticus 17:11, "for the life of the flesh is in the blood I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls for it is the blood to make the atonement for the souls." It seems to me the significance of that is in connection with the further legislation with the sacrificial system and it seems to me that sacrificial system is given up when you come to the New Testament. You have all the regulations pertaining to that as well as all concerned with cleanness and uncleanness. The Lord said to Peter don't consider anything unclean. All that seemed to be done away with when the one comes who has really fulfilled that which it was pointing forward to. So I would not say that provision continues on beyond the period which the ritual laws were in effect. Now I guess it could be argued that this is not Mosaic. It seems to be that it is closer to the way with respect to the sacrificial system.

Ok, as far as the death penalty or even beyond just the death penalty, the right or lack of right of man in positions of governmental authority to use the power of the sword seems to me clearly stated by Paul in Romans 13. When you get into the whole issue of Pacifism and whether or not it is ever right to take another person's life. What you read in Romans 13 that every soul should be subject to the higher power. Verse 2, "whoever resisted the power resisted the ordinance of God." Verse 3, "for rulers are not are not a terror of good works but evil." Verse 4, "for he is the minister of God for good but if you do that which is evil be afraid for he bares not the sword in vain for he is the minister of God and the avenger to execute wrath upon him who does evil." It seems to be a strong sanction of the right of government to hold the power of the sword and I think that same issue has been addressed back here in Genesis 9. Paul doesn't seem to deny that power,

he seems to support it. God has given to human governments the right. That right can be misused and abused and many governments have done that, but that doesn't mean the principle is negated.

2. The Noahic Covenant that You Find in Genesis 9:8-17

Well that was a. “The directions for the propagation and maintenance of human and animal life.” b. is, “The Noahic covenant that you find in Genesis 9:8 through 17.” God spoke to Noah and his sons saying, “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you--the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you--every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.’ And God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.’ So God said to Noah, ‘This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.’” So never again will all flesh be destroyed by a flood, the token is a rainbow not that the rainbow did not exist prior to this. But now it has a special significance and we are inclined to think when we see a rainbow that we are reminded of the promise God has made, that he would never again destroy the earth which is legitimate but you notice in the text, verse 15, “the Lord says, I will remember that it shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth that a bow will be seen in the clouds and I will remember.” You call that an anthropomorphic or anthropopathic kind of expression where God speaks in human terms to describe himself

but that bow is a reminder that God has made that promise. I think the idea is from this point forward the earth will be preserved as the arena in which God's plan of redemption will be worked out and that will continue until the final judgment, till the consummation. But in the intervening period, never again is God going to do what he did at this point in bringing a flood.

7. The Curse on Canaan

Ok, let's go on to 7 which is the latter part of chapter 9, "The Curse on Canaan." Verses 18 and 19 speak of the three sons of Noah and then immediately you get this story in verse 20 down through the end of the chapter. So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.' The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the earth. Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, he said, 'Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers.' He also said, 'Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave.'"

a. Ham and Slavery

Now this is one of several biblical passages but this is primarily one that has often been used to support both slavery and segregation in this country. There is a volume that is mentioned on your bibliography top of page 11, second one. J. R. Buswell III,

“Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture.” You may be familiar with J. R. Buswell junior’s theology. This is his son who is an anthropologist and wrote this little volume. On page 16 he says, “Most of the advocates of slavery, if they considered the negro a human being, based their entire biblical case upon the confident assumption that the negro race must be identified as descendants of Noah’s second son Ham. Thus, automatically any and every mention of peoples in Egypt, Ethiopia, and other lands occupied the dispersal of Ham’s progeny were assumed to refer to Negroes, despite the fact that these populations in historic times were non-Negroes. The lengths to which proslavery arguments were carried to prove the association of the characteristics of Negroes with Ham in order to justify the conclusion that they were under Noah’s curse were utterly fantastic.” He discusses that in more detail but we see this passage where it says, “Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.” The text has often been used to defend slavery and segregation.

b. Curse on Canaan

Now, the question is, is there any basis for that kind of a view? I think the answer is clear, “No.” But let’s look at the passage. The story is introduced in verse 19 by reference to the three sons of Noah. “These are the three sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham is the father of Canaan and of them was the whole world overstrip.” The interesting thing is that the curse is pronounced after that incident is not on Ham. The incident with Ham and Noah, the curse is on Canaan down in verse 25. It is not on Ham; Canaan is the fourth son of Ham. If you look over at chapter 10 verse 6 you read, “The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan.” So out of the four sons, Canaan is the fourth one, it is not necessarily that they came in that order but it is possible. But in any case the curse is on one of the sons of Ham, Canaan. I don’t think we should understand that statement of Noah so much as a curse in the sense of just an expression of wrath and anger. Rather it is a prediction. I think Noah here speaks really by the revelation of the whole experience because he is giving a prophetic statement about

what will be and the lines that flow out of these descendants of these three sons of Noah. So it is not just an expression of Noah's ill will. He could not know by human means the things that he speaks of in these three verses. They are striking statements so they are the unveiling of what will be.

The question, of course, is, why is the curse on Canaan instead of on Ham? What did Canaan do as the son of Ham? It is hard to answer. There is nothing that addresses at question directly in the text. I think it is reasonable to suggest that by the Holy Spirit Noah understood and saw the characteristic that was expressed there in Ham and what he did would be perpetuated in Canaan his son and perhaps even to a greater degree. In addition, it's Canaan or at least Canaan's descendants with which the Israelites come in to a great deal of contact later on. So perhaps the answer lies in Noah's perception by the Holy Spirit that the trait shown in him is present in his son Canaan even more strongly. If you look at Leviticus 18 you have there a chapter that lists a lot of things about the Canaanites. If you look in Leviticus 18:24 and following it says, "Defile not you yourselves and any of these things for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you." In other words, by the inhabitants in the land of Canaan, the land is defiled. "Therefore I do visit the iniquity there of upon it." Verse 27, "for all these abominations have the men of the land done who were before you in the land is defiled." Verse 30, "therefore you will keep my ordinance that you commit not any of these abominable customs which were committed before you and defile not yourselves for I am the Lord your God." Now one of those abominable customs of the whole first part of the chapter speaks of sexual abusive diversions and perhaps the curse comes on Canaan because Noah sees that tendency in the Canaanites that to a certain extent is exhibited in the father, Ham.

What was Ham's Offense?

What I want to do at this point well maybe I'll just make another comment on that text because what I want to do is look at the content of the cursing and blessings that are

pronounced because they are significant and have far reaching applications. But let me just pose another question and then we will stop for today. What was Canaan's offence or Ham's offence? You read "Ham the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brethren outside. Shem and Japheth took their garments and laid it upon both their shoulders and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. So their faces were backward and they saw not their father's nakedness."

Now what was the offence of Ham, now what did he do? Carlin Darix said it was a display of shameless sensuality, as contrasted with the reverential modesty of the brothers, Shem and Japheth. It seems that Ham took pleasure in his father's shame. He wanted to expose him to his brothers. It certainly shows disrespect for the father and perhaps a perverse sort of sensual nature in the part of Ham. Now it seems to me that's about as much as you can say about the offence. Some try to seek more and they point to verse 24, "Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done to him." They emphasize something must have been done and some suggest that when it says in verse 22 Ham saw the nakedness of his father that that is a euphemism "saw the nakedness" for some deviant sexual act. I don't think there is any real good basis to conclude that to say that. It is possible that you could understand that and as a euphemism and as a figure and to say that there is more than literally said. Then you have to fit verse 23 with that and verse 23 seems to just think that it's just a matter of exposure of the father.

I will leave our discussion with that and then I will look at the content of the curse and blessing next time.

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