

Conflict Resolution



Ham

Conflict, a: “competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons) b: mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands” (Webster's).”

Conflicts arise for numerous reasons. They will either involve an individual’s conflict with their Creator, or with one’s fellow man, and on occasion with one’s own internal struggles. Whatever the case, whatever the cause, in order to have peace a Resolution = “the act of finding an answer or solution to a conflict, problem...an answer or solution to something” (Webster’s), must be found.

Conflicts may arise from within, as was the case with David, king of Israel, and the internal conflict created as a result of his transgressions caused him great anxiety. David said, “When I kept silence, my bones wasted away through my groaning all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: My moisture was changed as with the drought of summer” (Psalms 32:3-4). The Resolution require David to act upon what he knew to be right, saying, “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, And mine iniquity did I not hide: I said, I will

confess my transgressions unto Jehovah; And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin”ⁱ(Psalms 32:5). David’s acknowledgment of his transgression changed his demeanor to such a degree, that he was able to say, “For this let every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: Surely when the great waters overflow they shall not reach unto him. Thou art my hiding-place; thou wilt preserve me from trouble; Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance” (Psalm. 32:6–7).

What is often difficult is to try to understand why some conflicts require stern measures in order to resolve the issues. In some cases it appears that no resolution is capable of achievement, i.e., the transgression is of such a degree a peaceful resolution is unattainable, and all that remains are the consequences of the action.

When a resolution: “the act of finding an answer or solution to a conflict, problem...an answer or solution to something” (Webster’s), is unattainable, there are still lessons to be learned: What was the transgression that created the conflict? What was it about the transgression that merited a harsh verdict? What can we learn?

Our conflict of consideration involved an event that took place after Noah and the Great Flood.

Before we embark upon this new conflict we want to direct our attention to a charge Jehovah had placed upon Israel in the Law of Moses. Although, during the time of Noah no codified system had been formulated there were, nonetheless, laws. As we noted in our consideration of the Great Flood, Noah was referred to as “a preacher of righteousness”ⁱⁱ (2 Peter 2:5). When Jehovah destroyed the world through water it was because “Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”ⁱⁱⁱ (Genesis 6:5).

When we consider the codified system, the Law of Moses, given to Israel we can glean from it practices that were, and are, and abomination before Jehovah, and

from them get a glimpse into the “imagination of the thoughts” of those who lived prior to the flood.

In Leviticus 18, Jehovah told Israel, “Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am Jehovah your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their statutes. Mine ordinances shall ye do, and my statutes shall ye keep, to walk therein: I am Jehovah your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and mine ordinances; which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am Jehovah.” Keeping the statutes and the ordinances of Jehovah required conduct pleasing to Jehovah. Jehovah then set forth appropriate conduct through a negative approach, i.e., “thou shalt not” ^{iv} (Leviticus 18:1–5).

Therefore, Jehovah said, “None of you shall approach to any that are near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am Jehovah. The nakedness of thy father, even the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover” ^v (Leviticus 18:7).

Concerning this type of activity, Jehovah said, “Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you; and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye therefore shall keep my statutes and mine ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations; neither the home-born, nor the stranger that sojourneth among you; (for all these abominations have the men of the land done, that were before you, and the land is defiled); that the land vomit not you out also, when ye defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. For whosoever shall do any of these abominations, even the souls that do them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep my charge, that ye practise not any of these abominable customs, which were practised before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am Jehovah your God.” ^{vi} (Leviticus 18:24–30). The point being, whether during the days of Noah, or the days of Israel, Jehovah had laws regulating acts of uncovering the nakedness of another.

The introduction to the conflict identifies the principals: “And the sons of Noah, that went forth from the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah: and of these was the whole earth overspread.”

Here are a group of men who had been saved from the devastation of the world. They had spent over a year in the ark before the waters had abated. They are now standing upon solid ground, a new opportunity before them, free of the wickedness of man that was great in the earth, and free from every imagination of the thoughts of the heart that was only evil continually: a new world, a new hope, a new start.

Following the departure from the Ark, “Noah began to be a husbandman, and planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine, and was drunken. And he was uncovered within his tent.”

The occasion of the Conflict: “And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.” After witnessing the destruction of the world due to evil, Ham goes into his father’s tent, of which he ought not to have gone, saw the nakedness of his father, then told his brother. Berosus, a 3rd century B.C. Chaldean priest who wrote three books about the creation and the early history of the world, had this to say, concerning Ham: “speaks of him as the public corrupter of mankind; and says that he taught men to live as before the flood, to lie with mothers, sisters, daughters, males and brutes, and creatures of all sorts; and that he actually did so himself, and therefore was cast out by his father Janus, or Noah, and got the name of "Chem", the infamous and immodest.”

We are not told of the horrid act, and or acts that transpired. Even if the act was as simple as going into his father’s tent, and looking upon the nakedness of his father, his brothers knew of the wickedness of so doing, “And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and

covered the nakedness of their father. And their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness”^{vii} (Genesis 9:23).

The consequence of the Conflict: “And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his youngest son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant. God enlarge Japheth, And let him dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant^{viii} (Genesis 9:18–27).

There have been all sorts of surmising as to why Canaan, and not Ham, was cursed. Had Ham been cursed, then all of his seed would have thus been so. But as it was Noah’s youngest that committed the abomination, so it was Ham’s youngest whose seed would bear the curse.

What transpired immediately after the event we can only surmise, but as we consider the history of the descendants of Canaan we see a people, who like their father Ham, are described as a people whose iniquity would one day become full (Genesis 15:16), and of whom Jehovah said, “Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you.”

ⁱ Psalms 32:3-7

ⁱⁱ 2 Peter 2:5

ⁱⁱⁱ Genesis 6:5

^{iv} Leviticus 18:1-5

^v Leviticus 18:7

^{vi} Leviticus 18:24-30

^{vii} Genesis 9:23

^{viii} Genesis 9:18-27