

GLEANINGS — July 26, A.D. 2015
Noah Charitably Considered

God declares His heart toward a land that sins by persistent unfaithfulness with these words: "Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness, says the Lord GOD." (Ezekiel 14:14; cf. verse 20)

Though the Holy Spirit thus gave them praise that would have thrilled their God loving souls, the whole counsel of God assures us that all three of these men were fallen sinners in need of redemption. However, in the cases of Daniel and Job, the sacred record charges them with no SPECIFIC sins.

As we study about Daniel that man greatly beloved (Daniel 9:23; 10:11,19) we find nothing but commendation. Job's severe ordeal having come upon him, the blessed Spirit tells us (Job 1:22; 2:10) that "in all this Job did not sin." At the end of it all, God says to Eliphaz, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."

Yet, Noah is "categorized" in the infallible word with Job and Daniel. But what about the sad episode that took place at some point after the deluge, as Noah began his labors as a vineyard keeper?

There is no question – inspired Moses wrote that Noah became DRUNK with his harvest (Genesis 9:21). And let us affirm again that like the other two choice men, Noah was born sinful and corrupt in Adam, committed his own sins, and was in need of the saving work of the last Adam.

That being said, let us engage cautiously in some Biblically informed * **SPECULATION** * about Noah's drunkenness. Is it possible that Noah did not know the effect the wine would have on him?

Here are two rationales for this admittedly naive sounding idea. First, there is no mention of wine or any kind of alcoholic beverage in Scripture before this account. Is it possible that intoxicating beverages were not part of the mix in the violent chaos that was the antediluvian world at all, or that antediluvian wine was weaker? That might be a stretch, but is it necessarily one?

The Flood is second only to the Fall itself, with its attendant curse, in its consequences for the lower creation. So even if Noah was aware that too much wine had the power to intoxicate, he might have partaken of what would have been a lawfully moderate amount of wine before the Flood, only to find that this new world wine was not like the wine of the world that then was.

So Noah's drunkenness might be the consequence of something done without ill intent, like the action of the ax wielding manslayer who causes his neighbor's death with no malice aforethought (Cf. Deuteronomy 19:5). Thus, through the prophet Ezekiel the LORD commends three servants who by sanctifying grace were men above reproach par excellence – not two men about whom no specific sin is mentioned and one against whom a specific charge can be made. * **SPECULATION** * ends here.