

Genesis – 9 – Don't be drunk and naked in a tent!

THEME: New instructions and arrangements; the sin of Noah and his sons.

Now we come to a new beginning. It is difficult for us to realize what a revolutionary beginning it is. The dispensation of human conscience is over, and God is putting man under government—he is to govern himself. We will see something of this in the covenant which God made with Noah. And let's keep in mind that, when God made the covenant with Noah, He made it with you and me, for He made it with all mankind. - McGee

Gen 9:1 So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

The word replenish is meaningful here because we know that there was a civilization before the Flood, and now there is to be a civilization after the Flood. (When Adam was told to replenish the earth, we assume that there had been living creatures—I don't know what to call them—before Adam. They apparently were living creatures of God's creation; anything I could say beyond that would be pure speculation.)

Notice that the first thing God tells Noah to do is to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” There is to be the propagation of the race. Remember that God gave this command under special circumstances. Today we are in a time of population explosion, and there is overpopulation that is quite dangerous. However, Noah stood in a unique position. He and his family were the only folk around. Can you imagine driving down the freeway, going to work in the morning, and there are cars in front of you, cars to the right of you, cars to the left of you, cars behind you, cars honking—you're in a traffic snarl. Then about a year later you go out on the freeway and there is not another car there. Yours is the only one. You might as well take down all the traffic lights. You won't need them because you are the only one driving through. This would be quite an unusual experience for us, would it not? Well, this was the experience of Noah in his day. - McGee

Gen 9:2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand.

Another part of the covenant is man's protection and rulership over the animal world. I take it that before this time the relationship was different. Apparently, man had not been a meat eater before. All the animals were tame, and one is not inclined to eat an animal that is a pet. Remember that the animals came to Noah when the Flood was impending; they seemed to have no fear of him at all.

Now the animals will fear and dread man. However, man is responsible for the animal world. Man's treatment of the animal world is a brutal story. Man has attempted to exterminate many of the animals. Man would have slaughtered all the whales around the Hawaiian Islands for the money they could get if the government had not intervened. At one time the buffalo were in great herds in the West, but they were killed by man. Today we must have places of refuge to protect animals and bird life. It is well that we do that. The animals of Africa are being exterminated. Man is a mighty brutal creature. We need a government to protect the animals from man.

Gen 9:3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.

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Now God gives to man a new provision for food. Before the Flood God gave to man the green earth, the plant life, to eat. Now He tells Noah that he is able to eat animal life. There are diet faddists, and often this type of thing becomes a part of a person's religion. I once met a lady who was a vegetarian as a part of her religion, and she was quite excited when I told her that these antediluvians were all vegetarians. She thought this reinforced her argument that we should all be vegetarians, and she had her assistant take it down in her notes. However, I think she must have erased it later because I told her this: "I wouldn't make too much of it if I were you because you must remember that it was a bunch of vegetarians who were destroyed in the Flood. If diet had in any way improved them at that time, they would not have been destroyed." We see here that God now permits man to eat flesh.

However, God prohibits the eating of blood. – McGee

Gen 9:4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.

The blood should be drained out. The blood speaks of life; draining it indicates that the animal should be killed in a merciful way rather than prolonging its suffering and that it must be really dead. Although I enjoy the sport of hunting, I don't like to shoot quail, for instance, because sometimes I just wound the little fellow and it crawls away so that I can't find it. I don't like to do that. God says that when you are going to eat animals, you are to make sure that you don't eat them with their blood. It should be drained out, ensuring that the animal is killed in a merciful manner.

Gen 9:5 Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man.

And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

This is an interesting statement, but not so meaningful to those of us who do not live on a frontier. However, there are certain animals even we encounter—such as skunks and opossums which may be rabid or disease-carrying rodents—that pose a real danger to man.

Now the fifth and the last statement in the new covenant is the most amazing—

Gen 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.

Here God lays down the principle for government and protection of man. He gives the government the right of capital punishment. We have seen that in this new covenant which God has given, man is to propagate the race, he is to have the protectorate and the rulership over animals, he is given a new provision for food and a prohibition against the eating of blood. Now we see that he is given the principle of government, which is the basis of capital punishment.

May I say to you that it is amazing how the attitude of the present generation has gotten away from the Bible. You see, we do not have a Bible-oriented population anymore. It is almost totally ignorant of the Word of God. As a result, we find the judges, the lawyers, and the politicians all wanting to get rid of capital punishment. They have succeeded in many cases, and I think that finally it will be eliminated totally from American culture. At the same time we have an increase in crime and the most horrible crimes taking place. I have dealt with this subject more in detail in a booklet which I entitled, *Is Capital Punishment Christian?* I believe that capital punishment is scriptural and that it is the basis of

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government. The government has the right to take a life when that individual has taken someone else's life. Why? Well, I think it is quite obvious that God has ruled it so in order to protect human life.

Our lives are no longer safe on the streets and often not in our homes, either. Although I know that many officials would deny this, one reason is our attitude toward capital punishment. When a criminal knows that if he takes a life, his life is going to be sacrificed, then may I say to you, he'll think twice before he takes a life. Also, there is an idea today about getting a gun-control law. May I say that the problem is not with the gun in the hand, it is with the heart inside the man.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" is a law that we had better get back on our statute books and get rid of this sob-sister stuff. Human government is the area into which all mankind has moved (Gentiles included). "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" is the basis for human government. It has not been changed as far as the governments of the world are concerned. - McGee

Gen 9:7-10 And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth And multiply in it." Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth.

This is a repetition of God's instructions in verse Gen_9:1. "With your seed after you" includes all the human race.

All of God's creatures are included in this covenant. Isaiah predicts that someday the lion and the lamb will lie down together and that they will not hurt or destroy each other. In Paul's Epistle to the Romans he mentions that the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain in this present age. May I say to you that God has made this covenant with Noah and with all of His creatures until the time His Kingdom comes on earth. It is for all of Noah's descendants and "every living creature that is with you."

Gen 9:11-13 Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.

This is God's promise. His purpose is that He will not again destroy the earth with a flood. The next time His judgment of the earth will be by fire. We find that stated in 2 Peter 3.

In the next few verses we see the picture of the covenant, and in my opinion, really a spiritual meaning of the covenant. It is sort of a sacrament, if you please. The thing which makes it that is a visible sign to which are annexed promises. – McGee

The rainbow is more or less of a sacrament, that is, a token of a covenant.

Gen 9:14-17 It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living

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creature of all flesh that is on the earth." And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Notice that God says, "I will look upon it" and "I will remember." God didn't say that *you* would see it; He said that *He* would see it. He said He would look upon it and it would be an "everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." That ought to be the encouragement whenever you look at a rainbow.

This is God's covenant, not merely with Noah but with all flesh that is upon the earth.

Let me say again that the rainbow could be called a sacrament because a sacrament is a visible sign to which are annexed certain promises. The Passover feast, the brazen serpent, Gideon's fleece, and in our day, baptism and the Lord's Supper are such signs.

Dr. John Peter Lange once made the statement, "God's eye of grace and our eye of faith meet in the sacraments." That is what happens when man looks at the rainbow. Faith lays hold of the promise attached to the sign. You see, the merit is in what the sign speaks of. There is no faith in a promise and there is no assurance in a sign—the word and the sign go together, you see. God makes a promise and attaches a sign to it. Now the rainbow is God's answer to Noah's altar. It is as if God says, "I'll remember, and I'll look upon it." A friend of mine told me about a time he was traveling by plane across the country and going over a storm. The plane was up where the sun was shining, and all of a sudden he saw a rainbow that went all the way around, a complete circle. I guess that is the way God always sees it.

Gen 9:18-21 Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent.

Here is the record of Noah's sin. The hard fact of the matter is that Noah got drunk, and this is sin. There is no satisfactory excuse, although many expositors have attempted to find excuses for him. One excuse is that he was ignorant of the effect of wine since no one had been drunk before. You will notice that before the Flood, drunkenness is not mentioned as one of the sins. Then there are those who hold the canopy theory about the Flood. (There are many things I have not had time to mention.) The canopy theory is that before the Flood there was an ice covering which the sunlight filtered through so that grapes did not ferment before the time of the Flood and that this was something new to Noah. Well, all I can say is that this is a new beginning in a new world, but it is old sin that is still there. This incident reveals this, and it was given to answer a big question, as we shall see. – McGee

In spite of God's grace to Noah, he sinned by becoming **drunk** and then lying naked **in his tent**. When **Ham** saw him and reported the matter to **his brothers**, they **covered** their father's shame without looking on his naked body. - BBC

Gen 9:22-25 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 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. So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren."

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When he **awoke, Noah** pronounced a curse on **Canaan**. The question arises, "Why did the curse fall on **Canaan** instead of **Ham**?" One possible explanation is that the evil tendency which was manifested in **Ham** was even more pronounced in **Canaan**. The curse was thus a prophecy of his immoral conduct and its fitting punishment. Another explanation is that Canaan himself committed some vulgar act against his grandfather, and that Noah later became aware of it. Noah **knew what his younger son had done to him**. It may be that verse 24 refers to Canaan as Noah's *youngest grandson*, rather than to Ham as his *younger son*. In the Bible, "son" often means "grandson" or other descendant. In this event, **Canaan** was not **curled** for his father's sin, but for his own. Yet another possibility is that God's grace allowed Noah to curse only a small segment of Ham's descendants and not a possible third of the human race.