

Genesis 9:1-29

As we ended last week's lesson, Noah and his family, and all the animals that had been with them in the ark, stepped into a new and *very different* world.

Noah's first thought was to build an altar and sacrifice to the Lord God.

Genesis 8:21-22 " **And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.**

²² **While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."**

And so began God's covenant with creation that has lasted down to this present time.

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V 1 **"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.**

2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered."

--"into your hand are they delivered."

Here again God gives man dominion over the animals, but this time it was on an entirely different basis.

God had first given this dominion to Adam, as we see in Genesis 1:28--"**and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and**

over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Originally, man in his innocence ruled over the animals by love.

They were tame, and came to him without fear to be named.

But this time, man's dominion over the animals would be different. They would be ruled by fear.

Yes, the fear of man was now lodged in the heart of every creature, and their service to man would be on the basis of subjection.

The domestic animals would serve him in life, and--in death--to provide his clothing and food.

The horse and the ox would patiently submit to the bridle and the yoke, and the

sheep would be dumb before the shearer and before the butcher, for man was no longer to be a vegetarian.

And it was a good thing for man that God had lodged the fear of man into the hearts of the animals.

For by fear, the wild animals that could be harmful to man are restrained.

It is the fear of man that keeps wolves out of our towns, and lions out of our streets, and confines them, for the most part, to the wilderness.

And by the restraining hand of God, we can tame and rule over animals that are much larger and stronger than ourselves, like the horse and the ox, and the domestic elephant.

Yes, our dominion over the animals is a gift from God, and we should not abuse it.

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V 3 **"Every moving thing that liveth shall be
meat for you; even as the green herb
have I given you all things."**

Here man receives another grant from God to
supply himself in this new world.

Up until this time, God had maintained man
on a vegetarian diet.

Genesis 1:29 says **"And God said, Behold, I
have given you every herb bearing seed,
which is upon the face of all the
earth, and every tree, in the which is
the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to
you it shall be for meat"** (or for
food).

Now God adds *meat* to his diet as a further
provision for His sustenance.

We might well ask why it was now necessary
to include animals in man's diet?

We don't know for sure, but it seems reasonable to assume that in this new world, without a universally temperate climate, fruits and vegetables would not be as abundant as before, so meat would be a necessary addition.

However, with this addition, God enforced a new dietary law to govern the eating of meat.

V 4 **"But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."**

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Scripture teaches that blood is synonymous with life.

For instance, Leviticus 17:10 says, **"And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any**

manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

So blood is not really intended to be food, but rather is a symbol of life, and in that capacity, it is "**an atonement for**" the soul.

Because "**the wages of sin is death,**" then atonement must involve the shedding of blood, which is the same as the shedding of life.

This, of course, points to the fact that when Christ shed His blood upon the

cross, He poured out His very life for our sakes.

So because of the special place that blood holds in the economy of God, the blood of animals was not to be consumed as food.

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And because blood and life are inseparably connected, God has emphatically set down another rule concerning blood that has nothing to do with diet.

V 5-6 **"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.**

⁶ **Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."**

Now, some people might point to God's judgment upon the Antediluvian world as a proof that He has very little regard for human life, but that is not true.

We can see from these verses that God puts the highest value upon human life, and invokes the ultimate judgment upon those who would destroy the life of any man.

And this prohibition was put upon both man and beast--V 5 " **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"**

No, God's actions, in destroying man by the flood was not a disregard for human life, but rather the rightful prerogative of the Creator to cleanse the earth of sin.

Genesis 6:12 **"And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."**

So, because of His righteous nature, and the exceeding sinfulness of the Antediluvian race, **"the Judge of all the earth"** needed to take action.

And those whom God sets up as His representatives also bear the responsibility to carry out His laws.

V 6 **"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."**

By God's law, every man's life is protected, because every man is created in the image of God.

Yes, God commands capital punishment for wilful murderers of mankind, and the

authorities of our land, set up under God, bare the responsibility to carry out His commands.

Romans 13:4 says concerning those in authority, "--**for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.**"

In the immediate context, this verse refers to the godless Roman government, but it still maintains that those in authority are--"**the minister of God.**"

Tragically today, God's Law has been legislated out of the courts of our land, so that our judges actually do bear the "**sword in vain,**" and as a result, the innocent suffer.

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V 6-7 **"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.**

7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein."

God's purpose was to replenish the earth that had been destroyed by the flood. Unlimited tracts of land, indeed the whole earth, were before man and beast.

While on the one hand man had been commissioned to travel across the earth and to **"multiply therein,"** on the other hand, man had been given God's divine protection against those who would violently take away his life.

And no doubt God's prohibition against the taking of human life was to guard

against a reoccurrence of the evil practices of the Antediluvian age.

Genesis 6:11 **"The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence."**

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V 8-11 **"And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,**

9 And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;

10 And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

11 And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a

flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth."

We often think of God's promise as a covenant made exclusively for mankind.

And, indeed, it was made with man--"**with you, and with your seed after you.**"

However, we need only look at V 10 to see that this covenant was with all of God's creation, "**And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.**"

Indeed, creation had once suffered because of Adam's sin, and had again suffered greatly because of the sins of the Antediluvian race.

So this covenant was an assurance to them that man's sin would never again destroy the animals while the earth remained.

V 11 **"And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth."**

We need only revisit Chapter 8 to be reminded of the occasion of this covenant.

V 21 **"And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done."**

The "**sweet savour**" of Noah's sacrifice spoke elegantly of the Lord Jesus Christ and the coming of His supreme sacrifice for sin.

Because of this, God could deal with man in grace rather than judgment.

As the old world's ruination was a monument to God's justice, so this covenant with the new world was a monument to God's grace.

We should always remember that the waters that were once above the firmament are still with us upon the earth, with the potential to once again cover the entire globe.

However, by God's mercy, this tremendous quantity of water is now locked into ice caps at our poles, and is contained

in mammoth seas and oceans that cover much of the earth's surface.

Their proud waves still rise, but only so far, and will never again threaten the life of all mankind.

Job recognized God's grace in these limitations, and spoke about them in-- Job 38:8-11. **"Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?**

9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,

10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,

11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"

And so man, even though he continues to mock God, is kept safely under the terms of God's covenant with Noah and creation.

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V 12-17 "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:

15 And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

16 **And the bow shall be in the cloud;
and I will look upon it, that I may
remember the everlasting covenant
between God and every living creature
of all flesh that is upon the earth."**

We notice again that God's covenant is not with man alone, but it **"is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh."**

And V 16 tells us the bow was a reminder of that covenant.

V 16 **"--and I will look upon it, that I may
remember the everlasting covenant
between God and every living creature."**

We humans sometimes need a bow or a string on our finger to remind us of something.

But God never forgets, so I wonder why He says He will place a bow in the cloud

"and I will look upon it, that I may remember"?

I think the bow is actually there, not as an aid to God's memory, but it is a visible assurance to man that God has not forgotten His covenant.

V 17 **"And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."**

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I remember years ago when Eleanor and I bought our first house.

When the real estate man gave us the papers to sign, he put a little red sticker next to the line we were to sign on.

These stickers were circular, and the edges were serrated, and out of curiosity, I asked him what they meant.

He said it was reminiscent of the days when
people would sign with their blood.
Their finger would be picked, and a drop of
blood put in front of their signature.
So, in effect, that drop of blood was a
token, or a symbol, of the sincerity of
the person signing.

So the bow in the cloud was a token to
establish in man's mind the sincerity
of God's promise.

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And, spiritually, the bow in the cloud
speaks to us of God's mercy upon each
one of us.

Through His grace, the dark clouds of
judgment that had hung over our heads
when we were without God and without
hope, were suddenly changed to a

thing of beauty when the Son of
Righteousness shone into our lives.
And the bow in the cloud also speaks to us
of Calvary itself.

In that darkest of all clouds that hung over
the cross and discharged God's judgment
upon the Lamb of God, the eye of faith
can see the most brilliant and
beautiful bow appear as the words of
Christ ring out, "**It is finished,**" and
light triumphs over darkness.

And God also looks upon Calvary and sees the
bright bow of Christ's triumph over
sin.

He sees His glorious victory shining on the
dark cloud of judgment, and remembers
His covenant with the tribes of Israel,
and the Church of Jesus Christ, and all
creation.

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Have you ever gazed upon a beautiful rainbow
and suddenly realised that at that
precise moment, God was looking at the
very same thing as you were?

And as we gaze upon the bow, it is wonderful
to contemplate what God will and will
not remember.

He will remember the new covenant, but He
will not remember His people's sin.
The cross, which ratifies the first, puts
away the second.

We often say, *You just can't have it both
ways.*

But, in Christ Jesus, we do have it both
ways.

God remembers His covenant, but forgets our
sin.

And it is also encouraging to remember that when God brings "--a **cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud.**"

Yes, when God allows the storm clouds to gather in our lives, He will also bring the beautiful bow of hope.

And, if we will trust Him completely, we will find that the darker the cloud, the brighter will be the bow.

2 Corinthians 1:5 **"For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."**

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So when dark clouds would roll in over Noah's head, and his old fears would make him a little nervous, then he would see God's sign and be assured once again, "--**I will remember my**

covenant, which is between me and you
and every living creature of all flesh;
and the waters shall no more become a
flood to destroy all flesh."

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V 18-19 "And the sons of Noah, that went
forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham,
and Japheth: and Ham is the father of
Canaan.

¹⁹ These are the three sons of Noah:
and of them was the whole earth
overspread."

There is no indication that Noah had any
more than these three sons.

Not a large family in that day, and yet,
from these three men, "**was the whole
earth overspread.**"

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V 20-23 "And Noah began to be an
husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:

²¹ And he drank of the wine, and was
drunken; and he was uncovered within
his tent.

²² And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw
the nakedness of his father, and told
his two brethren without.

²³ 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."

Before the flood, Noah had spent a great
deal of his time in carpentry, but
perhaps now he had gone back to his
normal occupation of farming.

We know that **"Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God,"** so there is no reason to think that wine was a problem in his life.

However, perhaps he had initiated a feast with his family to celebrate the ingathering of his crops, and he drank too much for his head at his age and became drunk.

After his complete resistance to the influences of the ungodly, now it seems that more relaxing times were a snare to him.

Yes, we must guard against the more subtle temptations.

As the Scripture says, **"--let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."**

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V 22 " **And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.**"

The fact that Ham had seen his father's nakedness accidentally was not a sin in itself, but the little word "**saw**" in this context implies the thought "to gaze at," and evidently with some satisfaction.

So Ham's actions seemed to bring to light a long hidden resentment of his father's godly authority.

It is the character of evil people to rejoice in evil.

So perhaps he had been reproved by his father for this very sin of drunkenness, and was now pleased to see Noah overcome by the same fault.

So Ham seeks out his brothers to relay this juicy piece of information, but found that their reactions were quite different from his own.

V 23 **"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."**

Notice the difference in the sons' reactions to their father's fall into sin.

Ham rejoiced, and exhibited his inner rebellion against his father's authority, and God's authority also.

Shem and Japheth's reaction showed Godly grace.

They covered his sin, just as God, by His grace, had covered theirs.

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V 24 **"And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him."**

The event was a great tragedy, but it did have this one advantage--the true motives of his son's hearts were laid bare before him.

And although Noah's words would be a reaction to his sons' actions, they definitely went far beyond his own human capacity.

So it is evident that God was using this terrible event as an occasion for a divine prophecy.

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As scholars have looked down through history and tried to relate this prophecy to the historical record, there have been

differences of opinion as to its fulfillment.

One problem is the fact that although the sin was clearly Ham's, Noah addresses the curse not to Ham himself, but to one of his sons.

Genesis 9:24-25 **"And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.**

25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

So the question comes, *Was this curse to affect all of Ham's sons, for he had four in total, or was it only to be visited upon the descendents of Canaan?*

If the curse was to be upon the entire family, for after all, the offence was

Ham's, not Canaan's, then many nations would have been affected.

For instance, some of Ham's descendents included the Egyptians, the Ethiopians, and other nations of the past.

All of these were great nations, represented many peoples of different colours and languages, but there is no indication that any of these were subservient to other peoples.

Unfortunately, in spite of the wide variety of nations that stemmed from Ham, there are those who would single out the African-American, and erroneously apply this prophecy to him, in order to justify their own evil deeds perpetrated against that nation.

In so doing, they added insult to injury, both to God and man.

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However, it seems to me that verse 25 clearly indicates that Noah's curse was to specifically fall upon the descendents of Ham's youngest son, Canaan.

V 25 **"And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."**

Perhaps, of all of Ham's sons, Canaan was the one that was as rebellious as his father, and so justly inherited the curse.

And scripture does indicate that some of the descendents of Canaan, which included the Canaanites and the Hittites, did become servants to the Israelites, who were one of the descendents of Shem.

Yes, scripture confirms the fact that 800 years after Noah's prophecy, Israel destroyed or put under tribute these descendents of Canaan, and inherited their land, as God had promised their father Abraham.

And, interestingly enough, the reason that these nations were subdued and destroyed was to exercise God's judgment upon them for the very same rebellious and godless ways that had brought down Noah's curse upon Ham and Canaan.

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V 26-27 **"And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.**

27 **God shall enlarge Japheth, and he**

**shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and
Canaan shall be his servant."**

There are many nations represented in the lineage of the other two sons of Noah. In the line of Shem, we have such nations as Israel, the Arab nations, and the Syrians, etc.

In the line of Japheth, we have the Indo-European nations.

V 26 says, "**Blessed be the LORD God of Shem.**"

Actually, Noah blesses God here, not Shem directly, for through the line of Shem, God has brought blessing to the whole world.

Yes, it was through Israel, the seed of Abraham, that Jesus Christ came and blessed all nations.

But the question comes, *How did the
descendents of Japheth **"dwell in the
tents of Shem"**?*

Well, for a period of time, some of the seed
of Japheth, that is, the Greeks and
Romans, did rule over Israel.

But, spiritually speaking, to a large
degree, the descendents of Japheth
actually have benefitted from the God
of Israel.

The Jewish Messiah, Who was rejected by
Israel, has become the Saviour of the
world, and because of this, the
Gentiles have been grafted into the
good olive tree.

So in that very real sense, Japheth does
"dwell in the tents of Shem."

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V 28-29 **"And Noah lived after the flood
three hundred and fifty years.**

**29 And all the days of Noah were nine
hundred and fifty years: and he died."**

God gave Noah a long life. He lived 20
years longer than Adam, and only 19
years less than Methuselah, the longest
living man on earth.

Noah lived to see two worlds, both of which
were quite different from each other,
but, in the end, both tainted by sin.

However, because he was an heir of
righteousness that is by faith, he left
both of these worlds behind, and once
again stepped into a new world, a new
eternal world that defies description.