

Genesis Chapter 9

Genesis 9:1 "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."

“Blessed Noah ... Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth”:

God blessed Noah and re-commissioned him to fill the earth (1:28).

Not only did God bless Noah by saving him and his family during the flood, but this was another blessing that God spoke on Noah and his family.

God's request was that they produce children and repopulate the earth.

Verses 2-3

“The fear of you”:

Man's relationship to the animals appears to have changed, in that man is free to eat animals for sustenance (verse 3).

Genesis 9:2 "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."

“Fear ... dread”:

These take the place of the previous harmony between man and animals.

God now sanctions man to eat animals.

However, further revelation (in Leviticus 17:10), prohibits eating blood.

We see by this that man is higher than animal form.

You can, also, see how ridiculous it would be to believe that man has evolved from a monkey which is an animal.

All animals have a natural (God given), fear of mankind.

God made them all for the use of mankind.

Genesis 9:3 "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

This statement discounts being a vegetarian.

The counterpart of this verse in the New Testament is (1 Timothy 4):

1 Timothy 4:1-3 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;" "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;" "Forbidding to marry, [and commanding] to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

You see, God wants us to enjoy the things He has provided for us.

In Luke, we read the account of Jesus telling the parents of the little girl He raised from the dead, to feed her some meat.

Luke 8:55 "And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat."

Genesis 9:4 "But flesh with the life thereof, [which is] the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."

"Blood":

Raw blood was not to be consumed as food.

It symbolically represented life.

To shed blood symbolically represented death (Lev. 17:11).

The blood of animals, representing their life, was not to be eaten.

It was, in fact, that blood that God designed to be a covering for sin (Lev. 17:11).

At first glance, you would think that this Scripture contradicts the above Scriptures, but it surely does not.

The word that was translated flesh, above, means the flesh of mankind.

What it was saying, is do not eat human flesh.

Basar is the word translated "flesh", and it means person, mankind, or man body.

You see, God does not make mistakes.

Our interpretation sometimes confuses us.

Genesis 9:5 "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; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man."

“And surely your blood of your lives will I require”:

The God-given right of executing murderers involves the establishment of human government following the Flood.

This right of capital punishment has not been rescinded during the Christian era (Acts 25:11; Romans 13:4).

The really terrible thing about murder is that it strikes at the very image of God in man, which makes man of vital importance to God.

“Beast ... man”:

Capital punishment was invoked upon every animal (Exodus 21:28), or man who took human life unlawfully.

See (19:11; Acts 25:11; Rom. 13:4), for clear New Testament support for this punishment.

Genesis 9:6 "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

“For in the image of God”:

The reason man could kill animals, but neither animals nor man could kill man, is because man alone was created in God's image.

Man is a special creation of God, and man is made in God's image and He will not allow the murder of mankind.

Genesis 9:7 "And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein."

“And you, be ye fruitful and multiply”:

Instead of taking away the lives of men, the great concern should be to multiply them; and this indeed is one reason of the above law, to prevent the decrease and ruin of mankind; and which was peculiarly needful, when there were so few men in the world as only four, and therefore it is repeated in stronger terms:

“Bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein”:

So that the whole earth might be overspread with men, and re-peopled sufficiently, as it was by the sons of Noah.

Verses 9-17

This is the first covenant God made with man, afterwards called the Noahic Covenant.

Genesis 9:8-10 "And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying," "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;" "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."

The covenant made with Noah (Genesis 6:18), is now formally confirmed.

The purpose conceived in the heart (Genesis 8:21), now receives significant expression.

Not only a new blessing is bestowed, but also a new covenant is formed with Noah.

For he that has offered an acceptable sacrifice is not only at peace with God, but renewed in mind after the image of God.

To give Noah and his sons a firm assurance of the prosperous continuance of the human race, God condescended to establish a covenant with them and their descendants, and to confirm this covenant by a visible sign for all generations.

In summing up the animals (in Genesis 9:10), the prepositions are accumulated.

First embracing the whole, then to those which went out of the ark, and lastly "with regard to," extending it again to every individual.

“With you ... with your seed ... with every living creature”:

The covenant with Noah included living creatures as was first promised (in 6:18).

Genesis 9:11 "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."

“By the waters”:

The specific promise of this covenant, never to destroy the world again by water, was qualified by the means, for God has since promised to destroy the earth with fire one day (2 Peter 3:10-11; Rev. 20:9; 21:1).

We see here, that God had reconciled Himself to man.

God Himself established the covenant.

Covenant was translated from the word "beright".

It means (in the sense of cutting), compact (made by passing between pieces of flesh), or it could mean confederacy or league.

Many serious covenants were made by killing an animal and passing between the two halves of the animal.

At any rate, we know that this promise of God to mankind was a very serious promise.

It probably was sealed by blood.

Genesis 9:12 "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;"

“The token of the covenant”:

The rainbow is the perpetual, symbolic reminder of this covenant promise, just as circumcision of all males would be for the Abrahamic Covenant (17:10-11).

This covenant involved the dispensation of human government, with humanity governing itself.

Man was responsible to govern the world for God.

The governing covenant of this era was the Noahic covenant (verse 11).

Under it, man's relationship to the earth and to the order of nature was confirmed (verses 2-11), human government was established, and God promised never again to use a universal flood to judge the world (verses 11-17).

The failure of man under his dispensation culminated in the building of the tower of Babel and resulted in the judgment of the confusion of tongues (11:1-3, 7).

Notice here, that just like salvation, this covenant of God was made by Him alone.

Mankind has nothing to offer God as surety.

Salvation is a free gift; we have nothing good enough to trade for it.

Please also note that this covenant was not just for Noah and his sons, but for all of us, as well.

This word that is translated perpetual could mean a number of things.

"Olam" means: Vanishing point, time out of mind, always, eternity, or without end.

You see, this promise is still good today.

Genesis 9:13-15 "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." "And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow 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; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."

The seal of this covenant was the rainbow, which it is likely, was seen in the clouds before, but was never a seal of the covenant till now it was made so.

The rainbow appears when we have most reason to fear the rain prevailing; God then shows this seal of the promise that it shall not prevail.

The thicker the cloud, the brighter the bow in the cloud.

Thus, as threatening afflictions abound, encouraging consolations much more abound.

The rainbow is the reflection of the beams of the sun shining upon or through the drops of rain: all the glories of the seals of the covenant are derived from Christ, the Sun of righteousness.

And he will shed a glory on the tears of his saints.

A bow speaks terror, but this has neither string nor arrow; and a bow alone will do little hurt.

It is a bow, but it is directed upward, not toward the earth; for the seals of the covenant were intended to comfort, not to terrify.

As God looks upon the bow, that he may remember the covenant, so should we, that we may be mindful of the covenant with faith and thankfulness.

“I will remember”:

Not simple recognition, but God’s commitment to keep the promise.

Genesis 9:16 "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."

“The everlasting covenant”:

This covenant with Noah is the first of 5 divinely originated covenants in Scripture explicitly described as “everlasting.”

The other 4 include;

- (1) Abrahamic (Gen. 17:7);
- (2) Priestly (Num. 25:10-13);
- (3) Davidic (2 Sam. 23:5); and
- (4) New (Jer. 32:40).

The term “everlasting” can mean either

- (1) To the end of time and/or;
- (2) Through eternity future. It never looks back to eternity past.

Of the 6 explicitly mentioned covenants of this kind in Scripture, only the Mosaic or Old Covenant was nullified.

Genesis 9:17 "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."

“And God said to Noah, this is the token of the covenant”:

Which is repeated for the greater confirmation and certainty of it, since the fears of men would be apt to run very high, especially while the flood was fresh in memory.

An "everlasting covenant" is a covenant "for perpetual generations," one which shall extend to all ages, even to the end of the world.

The fact that God Himself would look at the bow and remember His covenant, was "a glorious and living expression of the great truth, that God's covenant signs, in which He has put His promises, are real vehicles of His grace, that they have power and essential worth not only with men, but also before God".

We need to realize in all of this that the rainbow has a twofold message in it.

When we look at the rainbow, we are assured that God will not destroy the earth and all in it again by a flood.

The other promise and the covenant He made with mankind through Noah.

Sometimes, I am sure, God despairs of mankind and their evil ways.

God cannot, and will not lie.

His covenant with man is good even now.

Genesis 9:18 "And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham [is] the father of Canaan."

“Shem”:

He was thought to be the oldest, and he was in the messianic line (note the order in 5:32; 6:10; 7:13; and 10:1).

“Ham Is the father of Canaan”:

Canaan’s offspring, the idolatrous enemies of Israel whose land Abraham’s descendants would later take (15:13-16), became a primary focus in chapter 10.

This notation is important since Moses was writing the Pentateuch, and that was just before the Israelites took Canaan.

This circumstantial clause actually traces the beginnings of the family of Canaanites and shows that Ham, acting as he did, revealed himself as the true “father” of Canaan, which would recall to the Israelite mind many unfavorable images because of their corrupting influence (12:6; 13:7; 15:16; 18:20-22; 19:38; Lev. 18:2-6).

The word "Canaan" means humiliated.

His Canaan, here mentioned, was not a country; it is a man's name.

Genesis 9:19 "These [are] the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread."

“Of them was the whole earth”:

All men who have ever lived since the Flood came from these 3 sons of Noah (10:32).

The “one man” (Acts 17:26), from whom all nations came is Adam through Noah.

All physical characteristics of the whole race were present in the genetics of Noah, his sons and their wives.

The word translated earth here, is a very versatile word.

It could mean a country, a nation, or in fact, the entire world.

If you believe the translation means the entire world, then you must also believe that there were no other living beings except Noah and his family, and that all the nationalities of the world sprang from these few of Noah's family.

Because of the words "whole earth":

I believe the above means the entire earth (the whole globe).

Genesis 9:20 "And Noah began [to be] an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:"

“Noah began”:

The word began brings an ominous note to the early stories in Genesis (10:8; 11:6).

“Husbandman”:

This literally means “man of the soil,” that perhaps indicating “master of the earth,” or “lord of the earth.”

The indication of the word "husbandman" is that Noah took on the responsibility of his family, and began to cultivate the earth.

His mistake was in growing grapes to make wine.

These next few verses we are about to study, just prove that even though a person has walked with God and pleased God in the past, he still can fall back into sin, if he gets careless in his fellowship with God.

Genesis 9:21 "And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent."

“Was drunken”:

Fermentation, which leads to drunkenness, may have been caused by changed ecological conditions as a result of the Flood.

Noah may have taken off his clothes because of the heat or his being involuntarily exposed due to his drunkenness.

“And he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered”:

[“uncovered himself”] “within his tent”:

Noah had been so faithful to God that it is unlikely that he did this deliberately.

His drunken condition may have been a totally unexpected result of the changed environment after the Flood.

When a person drinks enough to get drunk, he is not aware of things like being covered up.

Drunkenness brings on a lapse of your will.

Nothing good can come from this type behavior.

Genesis 9:22 "And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without."

“Ham ... saw the nakedness of his father”:

There is no reasonable support for the notion that some perverse activity in addition to seeing nakedness, occurred.

But clearly, the implication is that Ham looked with some sinful thought, if only for a while until he left to inform his brothers.

Perhaps he was glad to see his father's dignity and authority reduced to such weakness.

He thought his brothers might share his feelings so he eagerly told them.

They did not however, share his attitude (verse 23).

While many explanations have been suggested for this phrase, it is best to take it to mean merely what it says.

There is no indication of any gross violation.

The phrase is not the same as (in Leviticus 20:17), where it is parallel to another term used exclusively for sexual violations.

The phrase indicates that this violation of privacy was merely the beginning of eventual future sexual degradation.

Genesis 9:23 "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."

The conduct of Shem and Japheth was such as became pious and affectionate children, who appear to have been in the habit of treating their father with decency, reverence, and obvious obedient respect.

On the one the spirit of prophecy (not the incensed father), pronounces a curse: on the others the same spirit (not parental tenderness), pronounces a blessing.

These things had been just as they afterwards occurred had Noah never spoken.

God had wise and powerful reasons to induce him to sentence the one to perpetual servitude, and to allot to the others prosperity and dominion.

Besides, the curse pronounced on Canaan neither fell immediately upon himself nor on his worthless father, but upon the Canaanites; and from the history we have of this people (in Lev. 18:6-7; 18:24; 18:29-30; 20:9; 20:22-24; 20:26; Deut. 9:4; 12:31).

We may ask, could the curse of God fall more deservedly on any people than on these?

Their profligacy was great, but it was not the effect of the curse; but, being foreseen by the LORD, the curse was the effect of their conduct.

But even this curse does not exclude them from the possibility of obtaining salvation; it extends not to the soul and to eternity, but merely to their bodies and to time.

Though, if they continued to abuse their liberty, resist the Holy Ghost, and refuse to be saved on God's terms, then the wrath of Divine justice must come upon them to the uttermost.

How many, even of these repented, we cannot tell.

There are several things we need to notice here.

Canaan was born before Ham sinned.

By revealing his father's nakedness, Ham did the very opposite of honoring his father.

He really was making fun of his father in his drunken condition.

Yet Shem and Japheth acted with respect.

I believe moral character gets involved here.

Ham had poor morals.

We have discussed the names of these sons in a previous lesson.

We learn through this incident, the three types of people will spring from these three sons, (the Negroid, Caucasian, and Oriental).

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

The writer does not mean to affirm that Noah resumed his agricultural operations after the flood, but that as a husbandman he began to cultivate the vine; because it was this which furnished the occasion for the manifestation of that diversity in the character of his sons, which was so eventful in its consequences in relation to the future history of their descendants.

In ignorance of the fiery nature of wine, Noah drank and was drunken, and uncovered himself in his tent (Genesis 9:21).

Although excuse may be made for this drunkenness, the words of Luther are still true: "This trifling fall served to display the hearts of his sons.

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

Not content with finding pleasure himself in his father's shame, he just proclaimed his disgraceful pleasure to his brethren, and thus exhibited his shameless sensuality.

The brothers, on the contrary, with reverential modesty covered their father with a garment which was at hand), walking backwards that they might not see his nakedness (Genesis 9:23), and thus manifesting their childlike reverence as truly as their refined purity and modesty.

For this they receive their father's blessing, whereas Ham reaped for his son Canaan the patriarch's curse.

In Genesis 9:24 Ham is called "his (Noah's), little son," and it is questionable whether the adjective is to be taken as comparative in the sense of "the younger," or as superlative, meaning "the youngest."

There is an awakening always.

What sorrow was brought on this family through this one act!

Verses 25-27

"Cursed be Canaan":

The shift from Ham to his son Canaan established the historic legitimacy of Israel's later conquest of the Canaanites.

These were the people with whom Israel had to do battle shortly after they first heard Moses' reading of this passage.

Here, God gave Israel the theological basis for the conquest of Canaan.

The descendants of Ham had received a sentence of judgment for the sins of their progenitor.

In 10:15-20, the descendants of Canaan are seen to be the earlier inhabitants of the land later promised to Abraham.

Genesis 9:25 "And he said, Cursed [be] Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

“Cursed be Canaan”: The essence of this prophetic curse is that only the Canaanites are cursed, not all of Ham’s descendants.

“Servant of servants”:

This literally denotes the most abject slavery.

Even when the blessings are declared for the brothers, the theme of Canaan’s servitude is repeated both times.

The Canaanites were white.

In no way is this to be interpreted as a curse on the black race.

The Canaanites inhabited Palestine and were first subjugated by Joshua and later by Solomon (such as Carthage), were finally conquered by the Japhetic Romans.

They practiced ritual prostitution, homosexuality, and various orgiastic rites, and were the center of God’s prophecy of judgment (in Genesis 15:16), to be carried out by Israel after their sojourn in Egypt.

But the curse did not preclude individual salvation, for Rahab joined Israel and Hiram, king of Tyre, gave materials for the temple.

Genesis 9:26 "And he said, Blessed [be] the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

“Blessed be the LORD God of Shem”:

Shem’s blessing is a spiritual one, by virtue of his knowing Yahweh.

It looks to his descendants, Israel, who would enter a covenant relationship with Him (in Exodus 19 and 20).

By blessing one’s God, the man himself is blessed.

The Jews are of Semitic origin, from Shem (Semitic are people who speak Hebrew and Arabic).

“And Canaan shall be his servant”:

Conquered peoples were called servants, even if they were not household or private slaves.

Shem, the ancestor of Israel, and the other “Semites” were to be the masters of Ham’s descendants, the Canaanites.

The latter would give their land to the former.

Genesis 9:27 "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

“Japheth”:

This is the verb meaning “to enlarge,” and Japheth’s descendants would receive the temporal blessings along with the prospect of participation with Shem (“dwell in the tents of Shem”).

They dominated the great northern frontier from the Aegean Sea to the highlands of Iran and northward to the steppes beyond the shores of the Black Sea.

“Dwell in the tents”:

This means that spiritual blessings would come to the Japhethites through the God of Shem (verse 26), and the line of Shem from which Messiah would come.

Here, we see the contrast of blessing for respect of the father, through Shem and Japheth, and cursing for disrespect of the father through descendants of Ham.

Notice the blessing (in verse 26), "Blessed be the LORD God of Shem".

You see, it is the God of Shem who was blessed.

Genesis 9:28-29 "And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years." "And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died."

“And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years”:

So, that he not only saw the old world and the wickedness of that, and the destruction of it for it, but an increase of wickedness again, the building of the tower of Babel, the confusion of languages, and the dispersion of his offspring, and the wars among them in the times of Nimrod, and others.

However, it was a blessing to mankind that he lived so long after the flood in the new world, to transmit to posterity, by tradition, the affairs of the old world; and to give a particular account of the destruction of it, and to instruct them in the doctrines and duties of religion.

The Jews conclude from hence, that he lived to the fifty eighth year of Abraham's life: it may be remarked, that it is not added here as usual to the account of the years of the patriarchs, "and he begat sons and daughters".

From whence it may be concluded, that he had no more children than the three before mentioned, as well as from the silence of the Scriptures elsewhere, and from the old age of himself and his wife, and especially from what is said.

From (9:24-29), Noah declares a curse on Canaan, the son of Ham; perhaps this grandson of his was guiltier than the rest.

A servant of servants, that is, the meanest and most despicable servant, shall he be, and that's even to his brethren.

This certainly points at the victories in after-times obtained by Israel over the Canaanites, by which they were put to the sword, or brought to pay tribute.

The whole continent of Africa was peopled mostly by the descendants of Ham.

And for how many ages have the better parts of that country lain under the dominion of the Romans, then of the Saracens, and now of the Turks!

In what wickedness, ignorance, barbarity, slavery, and misery most of the inhabitants live!

And of the poor negroes, how many every year are sold and bought, like beasts in the market, and conveyed from one quarter of the world to do the work of beasts in another!

But this in no way excuses the covetousness and barbarity of those who enrich themselves with the product of their sweat and blood.

God has not commanded us to enslave Negroes; and, without doubt, he will severely punish all such cruel wrongs.

Genesis Chapter 9 Questions

1. In verse 1, God told Noah and his sons to do what two things?
2. Into whose hands were the animals delivered?
3. What did verse 2 tell us about man evolving as a monkey?
4. What shall be meat for mankind?
5. In Genesis 9 and in 1 Timothy 4, it speaks against being what?
6. In Luke, what did Jesus tell the parents to give the little girl?
7. In verse 4, what did the word that was translated flesh mean?
8. Was this a contradiction?
9. What will God require for the life of a man?

10. Why?
11. Who did God covenant with?
12. For how long?
13. What does the rainbow tell us?
14. For whom is the rainbow shown? Name two.
15. Who was the father of Canaan?
16. What does Canaan mean?
17. By whom was the whole earth overspread?
18. What did husbandman indicate here?
19. Is it possible to fall back into sin after salvation?
20. What happened to Noah, when he got drunk?
21. Which of the three sons did not show respect to Noah?
22. What happened to him?
23. What are the three basic types of people in the world?
24. How many years after the flood did Noah live?
25. How old was he, when he died?