

Pentwater Bible Church

God's Sign & Noah's Curse

Genesis Message Twenty-Nine



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Review:

Genesis 9: 1-7 begins with an announcement of God Blessing Noah and his sons. Noah was indeed blessed for he essentially became the sole man through whom all the earth's people groups would descend. Just as in Adam the world would be populated so to in Noah would all the earth come from his seed. God blessed Noah and his family with a covenant. The covenant is initiated with God's words, "*and said unto them.*" The covenant with Noah reduced personal liberty by the instituting of human government. The new beginning made it necessary to implement obligations for order on the earth. Just because God destroyed all mankind except one family it did not mean that he did not hold human life sacred. Humans were given the duty of avenging blood for blood in the post-deluvian world. (Genesis 9:6) After the flood, God made it a duty of men, and sometimes of beasts, to repay murder with the punishment of God-ordained retribution in kind. The provisions of this covenant are still in effect. They have not been nullified. Therefore the essence of this covenant was to *stabilize nature through laws to provide a guard against wickedness.*

THE COVENANT HAS FIVE PROVISIONS.

1. The earth is to be filled with humanity
2. The fear of man is imparted to the animal kingdom
3. All living animals become food for humans
4. God implements a prohibition of consuming blood
5. The implementation of capital punishment

1. THE EARTH IS TO BE FILLED WITH HUMANITY

God declares that the earth's population was to be replenished through Noah and his sons. Noah becomes the new representative head of humanity like Adam was. Noah himself would have no more offspring. The covenant will begin to be carried out through his sons. We can see the inclusion of them in verse one affirming their role in repopulating the earth.

2. THE FEAR OF MAN IS IMPARTED TO THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Up to now the animals coexisted with humans in relative peace. Now God puts the fear of man within their nature. He includes the beasts of the earth, the fowl of the air, all that crawls on the ground and the fish of the sea (Genesis 9: 2). Excluded are the cattle and the domesticated animals. They would not have an inner fear of mankind. This aspect of the covenant was necessary because they are becoming food for man and need to not be needlessly slaughtered, as some are prone to do. Now they will naturally fear man and generally avoid him to preserve their lives. Nevertheless God gives dominion to man over the animal kingdom. Because of the dominion man is required to provide responsible stewardship over the creatures of the earth. We see similar provisions in the Adamic Covenant with one large exception. That is the command Adam was given to subdue the earth is not given to Noah. Satan has usurped this at the Fall in the Garden of Eden. This relationship with the animal kingdom will continue until the Great Tribulation. During that future time the animal kingdom will turn on mankind in an adversarial relationship. They will assist the Lord in the destruction of twenty-five percent of the world's human population (*Revelation 6:8*).

Following the Great Tribulation is the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom where the animal-human relationship will revert back to its Edenic state. The knowledge of God will permeate throughout the entire world, causing man and animals alike to all live peaceably together in harmony (*Isaiah 11: 6-8*).

3. ALL LIVING ANIMALS BECOME FOOD FOR HUMANS

Adam was a vegetarian. Noah now is able to eat two classes of foods, meats and vegetables. So now in addition to every living plant (green herb) mankind can eat all animals, which are now fit for food. Until this time the animal kingdom provided clothing, dairy products and were used for sacrifices. There are no limits on which of them Noah could eat. Later in the Mosaic Covenant (Cir. 1444 B.C.) God will apply prohibition to certain classes of the animal kingdom for human food.

4. GOD IMPLEMENTS A PROHIBITION OF CONSUMING BLOOD

Because God declares the life is in the blood he says that humans must not consume it. The Hebrew word for life is *nefesh* נֶפֶשׁ. It is also the same word for soul. In God's animal creations the meat of the animal is for consuming but the blood is for Him and Him alone. Later in Mosaic Law He will make a distinction between the two (*Leviticus 17: 6-12*).

In the Old Testament, the blood of man or beast is equated with its life, and the loss of blood is equated with death. In the sacrificial system, the blood was given back to God by being poured out at the base of the altar. The power of

the blood was in its atoning for the sins of the people; innocent blood being spilled to cover the sins of the guilty. This principle reached its final fulfillment in the death of Christ and the shedding of his blood; an innocent man giving his life for a guilty world. The power of Christ's shed blood brings forgiveness and sanctification; it establishes peace with God and is the only foundation for man's restored fellowship with God (Hebrews 10:18,19; 1 Corinthians 10:16; Revelation 7:14). Christ's blood justifies all who come to him (Romans 3:25,26). God clears us of all guilt when we confess our sins (1 John 1:7-10) and the power of his shed blood gives us a clear conscience before God (Hebrews 9:14). This prohibition continued until the Church age. However, to cause a Jewish brother to not stumble it was best for the Gentile believers to continue to avoid it (food sacrificed to idols which still had undrained blood) in the Jews presence (Acts 15: 29). Many of the Gentiles came out of paganism and the practice of drinking blood was commonplace. It was associated with the demonic world and as such any connection to the netherworld must be avoided. The early Christians refused to drink blood, at least through the second century (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. IV, p. 192). Pagan offenses utilizing blood were still prominent, including the gladiator's drinking of his victim's blood. Such a climate would prevent Christians from allowing themselves the liberty to eat blood; for they did not desire to be classed with pagans. This same prohibition given to Noah was incorporated in the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 3: 17, 17: 10-14,7: 26-27; Deuteronomy 12: 15-16, 12: 20-24).

5. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Here God implements capital punishment for premeditated murder. It is to be applied to both humans and animals. This is corresponding to God's implementation of divine retribution bringing the Flood. He now allows man the authority to punish another human with death. It is this act that begins the era of human government. Later, the Mosaic Law would provide other reasons for capital punishment. For now, it is only as punishment for murdering another human being. It also applies to an animal that turns on a human and kills him. This is simply divine retribution imparted to mankind for retribution of murder. Capital punishment is not to deter others from the same activity. It is a punishment for the evildoer. God does this because we are made in His image and as such he will not tolerate murder. Again man's authority does not extend to the earth for that belongs to Satan for now (Luke 4: 6; John 12: 31; II Corinthians 4: 4).

Today's Message

Genesis 9: 8-29 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, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you. Of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. 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: 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. 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. 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 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. And 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. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. 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. 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. 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 (ASV 1901).

GOD CONCLUDES HIS COVENANT WITH NOAH WITH A TOKEN

After finishing the exposition of the Covenant with Noah (Genesis 6: 18) and essentially all of mankind after him (Genesis 9: 9) by signifying that “all seed after him” were included, God gives Noah a sign or token. Interestingly, He makes this Covenant with every living thing on the earth as well. God says that never again will the inhabitants of the earth be cutoff with a flood (Genesis 9: 11). This is further attestation to the universality of the Flood since there have been many local floods since the Great Flood. God never said that He would not destroy the mass of humanity again, just that He would not do it by means of a worldwide flood. God also verified this through the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 54: 9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

From Scripture we know that the next time the destruction comes it will be by fire (Isaiah 24: 5-6; II Peter 3: 10; Revelation 6: 1-19: 21). We remember that Josephus noted in his day (1st century AD) that the stone, which Adam erected and engraved with text, declared the earth’s destruction by Flood and Fire (The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 1 Chapter 2 para. 71). This will come about for violating the Noahic Covenant (enlarging wickedness). The sign or token is the

bow in the sky. The Hebrew word for bow is *keshet* קֶשֶׁתִּי

It is the same word used throughout the Old Testament for a military bow. One gets the sense of God declaring with a visible sign that He is putting His armaments up for all to see that He has ceased carrying out His divine justice. God here promises *unconditionally* that He will not destroy all flesh with a Flood. The pre-flood *rakiah* contained only invisible water vapor and therefore light passing through it produced no colorful bow. With the new weather pattern (hydrological cycle) the bow is now possible to be produced and visible. Two other Covenants in the Bible are assigned a token (Abrahamic is Circumcision (Genesis 17: 11 & Mosaic is The Sabbath Exodus 31: 16-17). Outside the book of Genesis the Bow is found three times first in Ezekiel 1: 28 second in Revelation 4:3 where it is part of the Shekinah Glory and lastly in Revelation 10: 1, the reflected glory of a leading angel.

The next text we see (Genesis 9: 18-19) is the short discussion of the sons of Noah who left the ark to populate the earth. They were Shem and Ham and Japheth. This lists them in their birth order (Genesis 5: 32, 6: 10, 7: 13, 10: 1 and I Chronicles 1: 4). Interestingly as a pivotal verse to the next section God singles out Canaan the son of Ham. Canaan will become a focal point in Genesis from the twelfth Chapter of Genesis onward.

THE CURSE OF CANAAN

Noah has been given a new occupation of farmer (husbandman) and he planted a vineyard (Genesis 9: 20). Noah drank of the wine, became drunk and as a result was unclothed in his tent. Nowhere in the Bible is the consumption of alcohol prohibited (Judges 9: 13; Psalm 104: 15 etc.). Drunkenness however is a sin. Everybody can and does sin (I Kings 8: 46; Ecclesiastes 7: 20; Romans 3: 23, 6: 23; I John 1: 8 etc.). Noah inherited the original sinful nature from Adam and Eve. All humankind has this chronic condition, which is only ameliorated by God Himself with Christ's death. Some see this first mention of wine in the Bible as evidence that Noah was not responsible because different post Flood atmospheric conditions enhanced the fermentation of the grapes and produced a stronger wine than was available before the Flood. Noah knew what he was doing and could have stopped had this been true. He would have sensed the extra strength and been able to stop if he wanted to. This is simply a moral lapse of a man from whom God asked much in the greater history of all mankind. Noah got drunk and removed his clothes. The Hebrew verb form describes the uncovering as being done by Noah himself. Frequently drunkenness leads to nakedness (Lamentations 4: 21; Habakkuk 2: 15). Scripture warns us to be sober and vigilant because our adversary the Devil walks about seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5: 8). The text next describes the sin of Ham and his youngest son Canaan.

Ham who is cited here as the father of Canaan, committed a sexual sin of some sort. Many opinions have been offered up as to what that sin just might have been. They include:

1. Ham castrated Noah to prevent him from having any more children
2. He had or allowed Canaan to have homosexual relations with Noah
3. They viewed Noah's nakedness with impure thoughts, failed to cover Noah, and told others what they saw deriding Noah

What ever the exact nature of the sexual sin was Noah cursed it. He was disgraced as a result of this sin. The curse fell on Canaan and he developed Ham's characteristics. This clearly demonstrates that the sins of the fathers are visited on the sons (Exodus 20: 5, 34: 6-7; I Kings 14: 22; II Kings 15: 9; Nehemiah 9: 2; Daniel 9: 16; etc.). The result of the curse was that Canaan was to be a servant of servants to his brother's progeny (Genesis 9: 26). This has been obvious throughout the Bible. The term "servant of servants" is called a superlative genitive in the Hebrew and means the most abject slavery. The offspring of Ham and Canaan in later years became just that to the offspring of his brothers Shem and Japheth (I Kings 9: 20-21). The enslavement of Canaanites is seen in many situations in the history of the Old Testament. The

Canaanites were defeated and enslaved by eastern kings (non-Jewish Shemites Genesis 14: 4). Another example was the Gibeonites who later under Joshua became woodchoppers and water carriers for Israel's tabernacle (Joshua 9:27). The Canaanites became servants to the Jews who descended from Shem. The Phoenicians became servants to the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans all of whom descended from Japheth. The subjugation of Canaan to Japheth's line would end with the Battle of Carthage (146 B.C.) where the Phoenicians (who were Canaanites) were finally defeated. The text (Genesis 9: 26) then moves on to state a blessing and a cursing. Shem is blessed with knowing Jehovah. He would have the very oracles of God imparted to him (Romans 3: 2) and the Seed of the Woman would come through him. Abraham the first Hebrew and Jesus came through the line of Shem (I Chronicles 1: 24-28; Luke 3: 36). Canaan is cursed as being the servant to the Shemites.

The text then prophecies that God will enlarge Japheth (Genesis 9: 27). This means that he would have the largest number of descendants. His descendants would include those of Asia and Europe. The Hebrew text stating that Japheth "would live in the tents of Shem" means that they would have fellowship with them. So while the Jews would be inferior to the Japhethites numerically they would conquer them spiritually. Having God's oracles, which were given to the Japhethites who gradually accepted Jehovah God and His son Jesus the Messiah. Canaan is cursed into slavery and his progeny were sexually debased with sin.

NOAH DIES

Noah lived for an additional 350 years after the Flood. Only two of his predecessors lived longer, Jared (962) and Methuselah (969). In fact Abraham was 28 years old when Noah died. Noah lived to see the rise of Nimrod and the confusion of the languages at Babel. His death ended his Toldot. We see the New Testament give us four quotations regarding this.

1. The Days of Noah (Matthew 24: 37-39; Luke 17: 26-27)
2. The faith of Noah (Hebrews 11: 17)
3. Saving of the Jews physically by baptism (I Peter 3: 19-21) Jesus went Sheol to release the Jews who loved God and spiritually could not be released until Jesus' death
4. God can deliver from Judgment (II Peter 2: 5)

NEXT WEEK: NOAH'S TOLDOT & THEIR DISPERSION AROUND THE EARTH

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