God's High Regard for Human Life

("God's Covenant With Man")

Genesis 8:21 – 9:17

1/25/98



INTRODUCTION:

*Human life is precious to God!

Since human life is precious to God . . .

I. God gives <u>responsibility</u> to people (9:1-7)

A. God commissions people to <u>produce</u> life (v. 1, 7)

B. God instructs people to <u>preserve</u> life (v. 2, 4)

C. God commands people to <u>protect</u> life (v. 5, 6)

Since human life is precious to God . . .

II. God keeps His <u>promises</u> to people (9:8-17)

God makes a covenant to never again destroy the world by a flood; He promises to preserve human life.

A. God's covenant would be <u>unconditional</u> (8:21-22)

B. God's covenant would be <u>universal</u> (9:8-11)

C. God's covenant would be <u>visible</u> (9:12-17)

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INTRODUCTION:

Due to God's destruction of the world by the flood, people might wonder what God's value of human life was. Is life "cheap" with God?

"This covenant through Noah declared that God held life sacred and that humankind, too, must preserve life on earth." (Ross, p. 201).

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Since human life is precious to God . . .

I. God gives <u>responsibility</u> to people (9:1-7)

A. God commissions people to <u>produce</u> life (v. 1, 7)

v. 1
"God blessed Noah and his sons"

God blesses the fathers (the heads of the homes) from which the rest of the human race would flow.

Note: By blessing the men of the families, God is implicitly showing the continuity of male leadership in the home. Dads, you are responsible for your families!

"Replenish the earth" – Imagine being Noah, and stepping off the ark into a world where there were <u>no</u> people at all!

Imagine the silence, the peace; yet the eerie sense of aloneness.

No busy streets, no noise of the market place, no settlements, no noisy modes of transportation, no channels of communication or commerce, no criminals to worry about, no neighbors to contend with, no relatives to visit. Nobody!

Noah in a sense functions as a "second Adam," in that through him mankind would be replenished on the earth. Both Adam and Noah received God's command to "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." (Gen. 1:28; 9:1).

v. 7
"Be ye fruitful and multiply" –

A "full quiver" is a blessing from God (Ps. 127:5).

Birth control and abortion amounts to man trying to "play God." He, no we, should determine the number of children we should have!

"Overcrowding" is a poor excuse to justify small families. It has been calculated that you could fit the present population of the entire world into the USA, with each person having ample room to spare.

B. God instructs people to <u>preserve</u> life (v. 2, 4)

v. 2
Prior to the flood, animals did <u>not</u> fear man; there was a harmony, which enabled the animals to willingly come to Noah to board the ark (Gen. 6:20). Now, an instinctive avoidance of man would exist. Due to fear--the fear of being eaten by man—since man now would eat animal flesh (v. 3).

v. 3
No longer would mankind be strictly vegetarian (now steak dinners, hamburgers, pork chops, and barbecued chicken wings would be added to man's menu).

v. 4
"Life. . . which is the blood" – Any creature's physical life is dependent on its blood; therefore, "blood" came to be symbolic of "life."

[Modern medical science has validated this principle which God stated many millennia ago: that the quality and longevity of life can be measured by the health of a creature, which can be measured by the condition of the blood."

God wants the blood to be drained out of an animal before its flesh can be consumed (cp. Levit. 17:10-16; Deut. 12:16, 23; Acts 15:290

To consume its blood is to consume , as it were, that which gave it life and that which only belonged to God in sacrifice (cp. Lev. 17:11).

To drink blood is barbaric and a common practice in devil worship.

Note: This prohibition not to "eat" blood does not prohibit blood transfusions (for the purpose of saving life).

C. God commands people to protect life (v. 5, 6)

v. 5
God requires blood, if man's blood is shed.

--If a beast kills a man, it was to be killed (Exodus 21:28a - 28 If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit.

--If a man kills a man or if even a brother kills his own brother (as Cain did to Abel), his life was to be taken (Exod. 21:12).

V. 6
Now "life for life" legislation would be enforced. Why would God require capital punishment? Is it because He is against life? No, to the contrary, it is because He is for life. Since man was made in the image and likeness of God, his life is sacred; his life has a dignity that is to be honored and respected. To murder a man is to dishonor that man and to dishonor God (cp. I Cor. 11:7; Ja. 3:9).

"By man" – Not by individual citizens per se (cp. Rom. 12:19; Mt. 5:38-39), but by governmental officials. The dispensation of human government is now being enacted by God (with new requirements for man to follow).

God would now legislate a matter which was out of control prior to the flood, when "the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. 6:11, 13). Blood shed had been rampant and people like Lamach were bragging about the people they had killed (Gen. 4:23-24).

Capital punishment is Biblical. It is not murder (Exod. 20:13), because murder is when one takes the life of an innocent person. Capital punishment is the law taking the life of a guilty murderer.

Murder is intentional, pre-meditated homicide. Killing is not murder in cases of accidents (this is why God legislated "cities of refuge"), or self-defense, or capital punishment.

Other Scriptures dealing with capital punishment include:

Num. 35:33 – 33 So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.

Rom. 13:4 – 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; 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.

Acts 25:11 – 11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

Capital punishment is a deterrent to murder (and thereby it saves lives). To not enforce capital punishment is to let criminals "get away with murder!"

Countries with stiff penalties against crime always have a lower crime rate.

Capital punishment is justice (a restitution to the bereaved family who lost their loved one).

Since human life is precious to God . . .

II. God keeps His promises to people (9:8-17)

God makes a covenant to never again destroy the world by a flood; He promises to preserve human life.

A. God's covenant would be unconditional (8:21-22)

The fulfillment of this covenant would not be determined by man's faithfulness to God, but by God's faithfulness to man.

v. 21
"I will not again curse the ground" –
Initially this sounds like God may be referring to the curse of Gen. 3:17, which may have been somewhat alleviated after the flood, due to the post flood conditions (including the seasons, the water cycle [rain, evaporation, etc.]). However, the earth is still cursed with thorns, thistles, weeds, etc. and is waiting for freedom from its present bondage (Rom. 8:19-22).

A better view is that God is referring to the flood, that He will never again curse the earth with a world-wide deluge. This is the emphasis of the context in 8:21-9:17.

"The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" – The reason God gives for never again wiping out the human race by a flood, is that it wouldn't change man's heart. Noah's family was spared, but they themselves would propagate the future generations who would still have the same old nature as the pre-flood generation.

Evil is so deep-seated in man's nature that no judgment could cure it; punishment is not corrective, it is punitive (retribution). It cannot change man's heart.

"Heart" - the heart of man's problem is the problem of the heart. It is out of the heart that flows all the evil practiced on earth.

Education, new living conditions, better housing and job opportunities, etc., will not improve mankind spiritually. Man needs a new heart, which comes from God through Christ! (cp. I Cor. 5:17)

"From his youth" – Man's battle with sin does not begin in adulthood, but in youth. Children have the same sin nature as their parents do. They are not born with a clean slate nor in a state of sinlessness. Rather, we all were sinners from the moment of conception (Ps. 51:5). Understanding the nature of children will help you to be a successful parent.

"Neither will I again smite . . . as I have done" – God will again smite man for his sin (in "the day of the Lord"), but never again "as" He did in Noah's day. Never again will the world perish by water; the next time will be by fire! (II Pet. 3:10-13).

v. 22
God promises an uninterrupted continuity of <u>seasons</u> with consistent times for:

--planting and harvesting – “seedtime and harvest”

--winter coats and short-sleeved shirts – “cold and heat”

--sunny, warm days and cold, blustery days – “summer and winter”

--sunrise and sunset – “day and night”

This regularity is limited to “while the earth remaineth.”

B. God’s covenant would be <u>universal</u> (9:8-11)

This covenant would extend from Noah tot he entire human race throughout history.

v. 9
“I establish my covenant” – Everytime God enacted a new covenant (a new set of promises), He began a <u>new dispensation</u>.

A new dispensation of “age” of time would be accompanied by new revelation from God and a new set of responsibilities for man to follow.

Dispensational Title	Time Period
Innocence	Adam to Fall
Conscience	Fall to Flood
Human Government	Noah to Abraham
Promise	Abraham to Moses
Law	Moses to Christ
Church Age	Pentecost to Rapture
Kingdom	Millennium

C. God's covenant would be <u>visible</u> (9:12-17)

Through a beautiful cosmic display of colorful light, God would give a reminder of His covenant.

v. 12
"Token" – God often gave signs or reminders of his power and promises.

--Stones of remembrance
--The contents in the ark of the covenant
--The Lord's supper

v. 13
Through the light refraction off of the water droplets in the sky, a prism of beauty would be God's natural way of reminding us of His faithfulness to His promises.

"Bow" – ". . . The bow is the same word for the regular battle bow, and so it makes a vivid description of what was going on: God hung up His 'battle bow' to be a sign of peace." (Ross, p. 206).

v. 16
"I will look. . . I will remember" – God is speaking anthropomorphically here; He does not have memory loss. The bow is more for man's benefit than God's. it is a reminder to us of His enduring promise.

God is <u>faithful</u> to His promises!

(SEE: Theology Proper notes regarding God's faithfulness)

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