

Beginnings: Study and Discussion Questions

Lesson Nine: The Beginning of Life Under Covenants – Genesis 9:1-17

Read Genesis 9:1-7.

- 1) In these verses, we learn that following the Flood, God decreed law and order for mankind. Whether or not these represent actual changes to the antediluvian (pre-flood) order, summarize the major principles of order given for the new world. **Mankind was to be fruitful, increasing in number and filling the earth (verses 2, 7). The animals would fear and dread people (verse 2), and people would dominate them (verse 2). Animals were food for people, as green plants had been (verse 3). Since blood is a symbol of life, and life was to be respected, people were not to eat meat with blood in it. Reverence for human life was also to be enforced by capital punishment for murder.**
- 2) **a) Which command in Genesis 9:1-7 was also given in Genesis 1? Be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase on it (to animals in 1:22 and to people in 1:28).**
b) How does Genesis 9:19 speak of its fulfillment? Genesis 9:19 says the descendants of Noah's sons scattered all over the earth (implying increase in numbers and geographical scattering).
c) Why do you think this command was God's will for His people? Give both practical and spiritual reasons. It seems to have been God's pleasure from the beginning to bring many people into existence. Given the possibility of natural disasters, population growth was essential to the survival of the race. Symbolically, fruitfulness and "kingdom building" are critical aspects of God's plan for His people in every generation. Since He knows the only way people find genuine and lasting fulfillment is by being in relationship with Him, He wants His people scattered among unbelievers in every part of the earth.
- 3) This section is introduced by the words, "Then God blessed Noah and his sons..." (verse 1). How do God's commands and established order bless believers in general and also, you specifically? **Believers are blessed by the commands in God's word because they protect us from transgressing His law and the natural consequences that follow transgression. God's commands lead to life. Personal sharing**

From Genesis 9:1-7:

- 4) State the command given to Noah and his sons in Genesis 9:4? **Don't eat blood in meat.**
- 5) In what specific ways is blood vital to life? **Blood carries various elements throughout our bodies, such as nutrients, red and white blood cells to protect our health, and water to keep us hydrated.**
- 6) How is blood significant in the following passages?
 - a) Genesis 3:21 (implied) **Adam and Eve's original sin resulted in God shedding the blood of animals to cover them.**
 - b) Leviticus 17:10-11, 14 **The Israelites were not to eat blood in meat as an act of reverence, because God said blood represents life.**
 - c) Exodus 12:3-7, 23 **The Israelites were commanded to put lamb's blood on their doorframes as an act of obedience and faith that God would pass over their own households when His angel of death went out to kill the firstborn sons of Egypt.**
 - d) Luke 22:20 with John 6:54 and 1 John 1:7 **Jesus' blood was spilled so we could be freed from the penalty of sin and have eternal life. We participate in Holy Communion as a reminder of what our salvation cost Jesus and the preciousness of His blood.**
- 7) What are some practical ways in which you express your respect for the sanctity of life? **Personal sharing**

From Genesis 9:1-7:

- 8) Based on Genesis 9:1-7 and your recollection of the condition of humanity prior to the Flood (Genesis 4:23-24; 6:5), give reasons why God mandated capital punishment in Genesis 9:5, 6. **First, Genesis 9:6 reminds us that man was made in God's image, and therefore, human life is sacred. Second, blood represents life. To take the life of another human being is to desecrate what God calls sacred. Third, prior to the Flood, mankind was so thoroughly depraved and as Lamech's boast indicated (4:23-24), murder had become prevalent. By this postdiluvian law given, it seems God established a basis for human government (protecting us from our own depravity).**
- 9) List all of the radical adjustments Noah and his family would have had to make in rebuilding their lives after the Flood. Assume Genesis 9:2-6 represents changes in the order of life following the Flood. You may also include any ideas based on previous lessons in Genesis. **Climatic changes, possible changes in longevity and health conditions as a result of climatic changes, changes in the appearance of the world and its geography, changes in diet, changes in their relationship to animals, leaving those with whom they had experienced such intimacy on the Ark in order to scatter over the earth, etc.**
- 10) 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us that anyone who is in Christ is a new creation: "The old has gone, the new has come." What adjustments are you *currently* making to leave the "old" behind and live in the new, Christ-like manner? **Personal sharing**

Read Genesis 9:8-17.

- 11) Recall (or look up) and record the definition of "covenant" from Lesson 7. **A covenant is a contract between two partners.**
- 12) Can you think of any reason why God chose to communicate His decision to never flood the earth again to Noah and his family? Consider: Is God obligated to communicate His decisions to mankind? If not, why would He have on this occasion? Would this knowledge benefit Noah in some way? **God is not obligated to man on any level; He owes us nothing and certainly could have determined to never flood the earth again without sharing this decision. One reason God probably communicated His decree to Noah by way of a covenant was to minimize the trauma Noah and his family would have experienced following the Flood. The event was a catastrophe such as few living people today could fathom. They desperately needed God's comfort, reassurance, and a measure of security in order to remain psychologically healthy. Without God's promise, they might have lived in terror that every rain cloud represented a threat to their existence.**
- 13) How does God communicate with people today? See Psalm 19:1, John 16:13, Ephesians 4:29, and Hebrews 1:1-2, 4:12. What can you do to ensure that you hear His voice? See Psalm 46:10a, John 10:2-4, Ephesians 4:30, and 1 John 1:9. **God communicates with us today through His creation, by His Spirit, through His Word, through godly people, and through His Son, Jesus Christ. Only those who are in relationship with Jesus recognize His voice. We do not hear His voice when we have unconfessed sin in our lives, for this grieves the Holy Spirit. The ability to hear His voice often requires stillness on our part.**

In consideration of Genesis 9:8-17:

- 14) Look up and read about the following Biblical covenants. Answer the four questions about each.
 - a) Noahic Covenant: Genesis 6:18, 9:8-17
 - i. Which words or phrases summarize God's promise(s)? Include verse numbers. **They would "enter the ark" (6:18). "Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life" (9:15).**
 - ii. Who was the covenant with? **Noah and all the earth (9:9-10, 12, 15-16)**
 - iii. What restrictions, conditions or limitations did the covenant have? **None; it was unconditional.**
 - iv. What "sign" was associated with the covenant? **"I have set my rainbow in the clouds" (9:13).**

b) Patriarchal (Abrahamic) Covenant: Genesis 12:2-3, 15:2-5, 15:18, 17:1-19

- i. Which words or phrases summarize God’s promise(s)? Include verse numbers. “Make you a great nation”/make your name great” (12:2), blessing to all people on earth through you (12:3), “A son coming from your own body will be your heir” (15:4), offspring would be as numerous as the stars (15:5), land given to Abram’s descendants (15:18), “father of many nations” (17:4), “The whole land of Canaan...I will give you as an everlasting possession” (17:8)
 - ii. Who was the covenant with? **Abram (15:2), his descendants (17:7)**
 - iii. What restrictions, conditions or limitations did the covenant have? **Abraham was required to keep God’s covenant for the generations to come by circumcising every male among them (17:9-14).**
 - iv. What “sign” was associated with the covenant? **Name changed from “Abram” to “Abraham” (17:5) and circumcision (17:9-14)**
- c) Mosaic (Sinaitic) Covenant: Exodus 24:1-8, 31:13; Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 5 (skim)
- i. Which words or phrases summarize God’s promise(s)? Include verse numbers. **Rain and thriving crops (Leviticus 26:3-5), peace in the Land (Leviticus 26:6-8), God’s favor, presence, and their fruitfulness (Leviticus 26:9-13), life, prosperity, and prolonged days in the land of their possession (Deuteronomy 5:33), and generally speaking, God’s blessing for obedience and curses for disobedience (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 5:29)**
 - ii. Who was the covenant with? **All the people of Israel (Exodus 24:1-3).**
 - iii. What restrictions, conditions or limitations did the covenant have? **Obedience to the Book of the Covenant (all the Lord’s words and laws [Exodus 24:3, 7 and Leviticus 26:14-15])**
 - iv. What “sign” was associated with the covenant? **Blood sprinkled on bowls, altar, and people (Exodus 24:6, 8) and the Sabbath (Exodus 31:13)**
- d) Davidic Covenant: 2 Samuel 7 (especially verses 7-16)
- i. Which words or phrases summarize God’s promise(s)? Include verse numbers. **“Your throne will be established forever” (7:16)**
 - ii. Who was the covenant with? **David (7:8)**
 - iii. What restrictions, conditions or limitations did the covenant have? **None, since it was “forever” (7:13, 15-16)**
 - iv. What “sign” was associated with the covenant? **A son from his own body to assume the royal throne and build a house for God (7:12-13).**
- e) New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34, Matthew 26:28, Luke 22:20, Galatians 3:29, and Hebrews 9:15
- i. Which words or phrases summarize God’s promise(s)? Include verse numbers. **Change people’s hearts and minds so they desire obedience (Jeremiah 31:33), be their God (Jeremiah 31:33), all will know Him because “knowing Him” will mean relationship, not rules (Jeremiah 31:33).**
 - ii. Who was the covenant with? **With houses of Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 31:31), all who belong to Christ (Galatians 3:29), with those who are called (Hebrews 9:15)**
 - iii. What restrictions, conditions or limitations did the covenant have? **None**
 - iv. What “sign” was associated with the covenant? **The shed blood of Jesus, acknowledged in the cup of the Holy Communion meal (Matthew 26:28, Luke 22:20, and Hebrews 9:15).**
- 15) If you have entered a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, you have entered into the New Covenant with God. The New Testament is filled with promises for those who are in this covenant relationship. What difference can it make in your life today that the God of all creation has committed Himself into a permanent covenant relationship with you? Try to think of something specific to the events or circumstances of your life this very day. **Personal sharing**