

TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

Talk Genesis 9:1-7: Changed Conditions After the Flood, and the Institution of Capital Punishment

Lesson 20

In this first section of Genesis 9 we have God's communication with Noah following the Flood. God told Noah that certain living conditions would be changed now that the Flood was over, and God instituted capital punishment for the proper functioning of human government.

"So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.^[a] 2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. 3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. 5 Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man." 6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. 7 And as for you, be fruitful and multiply. Bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it."

Background Notes

Genesis 6-8 describes the worldwide Flood, which was the greatest catastrophe this earth has ever seen. Last week Margie and I visited Mount Saint Helens. Mount Saint Helens is the volcano in the state of Washington that erupted in 1980. The effects of that catastrophe are still very evident today, but the catastrophe caused by that eruption was "child's play" compared to the catastrophe of the Genesis Flood! However, at Mount St Helens you can catch a little glimpse or insight as to the devastation that can take place with a geologic catastrophe.

We believe the Flood of Noah's day was worldwide in scope. It was not a local flood confined to the Mesopotamian valley. The descriptions of the Flood in both Genesis and 2 Peter indicate a worldwide catastrophe. Let's just read the description in 2 Peter 3:3-6: *"knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water."*

Peter certainly believed in a worldwide Flood. Peter certainly intended to teach a worldwide Flood to his readers, to his audience. So if you don't believe in a worldwide Flood, you are essentially saying that two inspired writers of scripture, both Moses and Peter, didn't know what they were talking about!

Some of the effects of the Flood of Noah's day are still seen today in geologic features around the earth. A couple of years ago I was teaching in Korea, and one afternoon we took a hike. There is a mountain in central South Korea called "Maisan," meaning "horse ears." The mountain peak splits and looks like the two ears of a horse. I discovered, to my amazement, that this mountain is composed completely of "conglomerate." Now that may not mean anything to you, but conglomerate is a natural mixture of sand, pebbles, gravel, and boulders of all sizes. All geologists agree that conglomerate is deposited from **rapidly moving waters**, as in a **flood**. It certainly requires more than a local flood to get a high mountain composed completely of conglomerate! This mountain of conglomerate could only be possible with a **huge** flood that would be worldwide in scope. In addition, we found out later that this mountain of conglomerate is loaded with fish fossils from top to bottom -- further evidence of the great worldwide Flood of Genesis 6-8.

Doctrinal Points

1. Eating meat has a biblical basis.

Don't let anyone ever tell you that it is "more spiritual" to be a vegetarian! In fact, that kind of teaching is characteristic of false teachers, according to 1 Timothy 4. The Bible doesn't teach that it's wrong to be a vegetarian, and the Bible doesn't teach that we should eat as much meat as possible, but the Bible does teach that it is OK to occasionally go to McDonald's and enjoy a hamburger. But it wasn't always that way.

God did not give mankind permission to eat meat until after the Flood, as we see here in Genesis 9. Right after God created man (back in Genesis 1:29-30) He said, ""See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. 30 Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so." So until the time of the Flood people were vegetarians, and it would seem that animals were vegetarians as well. But after the Flood some animals become carnivorous. There was no longer harmony between mankind and animals, and man was allowed to kill animals for food. Man was given permission to eat meat.

Let's look at verses 2 through 4 once again, "*And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. 3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.*" Man was given permission to eat meat, so it's OK to enjoy a steak dinner. But notice that the animal must be put to death and the blood drained before it qualifies as food. Eating meat has a biblical basis.

2. Capital punishment has a biblical basis.

Verse 6, "*Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.*"

Notice that the basis for capital punishment is not a low view of life, but a **high** view of life! Man has been created **in the image of God!** How dare a person take another person's life? According to the Bible, a person who murders forfeits his own life. The sanctity of life is upheld by capital punishment. The Noahic covenant (the covenant of Genesis 9 which God made with man at the time of Noah) has never been revoked, lifted or changed. In Romans 13:4 we read, "*For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do*

evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain." In New Testament times human governments had a biblical allw some of you might be thinking, "But what about the Lord's statement to 'turn the other cheek?'" Our Lord's statement to "turn the other cheek" was not addressed to national governments, which have the responsibility to maintain law and order and protect life. You have to consider the meaning of every Scripture in its proper context. Our Lord's admonition to "turn the other cheek" was made to individual believers who were suffering for the sake of Christ. Capital punishment for human governments still has a **biblical** basis.

The biblical basis for capital punishment today is the Noahic covenant of Genesis 9, **not** the Mosaic covenant. Did you realize that? When someone asks you "Where in the Bible is the biblical basis for capital punishment?" don't turn to the Old Testament Law, the Mosaic covenant -- for two reasons.

Reason number one: the Law, or the Mosaic covenant, ended with Christ. We are no longer under the regulations of the Law of Moses. The Mosaic Law was in effect from Moses to Christ. God's **moral principles** in the Law never changed, but the civil and ceremonial regulations and penalties are not the same today as under the law.

Reason number two: under the Law; the death penalty was prescribed for more crimes, not just for murder. Under the Law the death penalty was prescribed for adultery, for homosexuality and other forms of perverted sex, for witchcraft, for spiritism, and even for rebellious teenagers. Did you know that? Yes, the rebellious teenager who wouldn't submit to discipline could be put to death under the Mosaic Law. Now while we agree that all of these things are sin, we don't believe that a nation today has the right to impose the death penalty for these sins. But murder is different. The basis for capital punishment for the crime of murder is **not** the Mosaic covenant, but the Noahic covenant. The Noahic covenant of Genesis 9 was instituted before the Law, and it was not just given to the nation of Israel -- it was given for **all** mankind, for **all** nations, for **all** time. The stipulation of the Noahic covenant for capital punishment in the case of murder has never been revoked or lifted or changed. Capital punishment has a biblical basis.

Practical Application

1. Let God worry about population control.

After God created Adam and Eve, He commanded them in Genesis 1:28, "*Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.*" After the Flood, in Genesis 9, God gave man the same command. Verse 1, "*Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth,*" and verse 7, "*As for you, be fruitful and multiply. Bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it.*"

So part of God's covenant with man at the time of Noah was the command for mankind to repopulate the earth -- in fact, populate the earth abundantly! We have seen that the Noahic covenant has never been revoked or changed. It is still in effect today from God's perspective. It is a covenant with all mankind. But what about overpopulation? What about the earth's food supply? What about standing room only, etc. etc.? Well, we should let God worry about population control!

The command to be fruitful and multiple does not mean that every married couple should try to have as many children as possible. That may create physical hardship for the mother, and besides, we are responsible to provide for the children that we bring into this world.

However, to use unbiblical means such as abortion as a means of population control is sinful! In spite of the problems which may be associated with population growth, let's not break God's command to mankind. Let's let God worry about population control.