

Lesson 26

The New Beginning

Genesis 8:20-9:17

I. INTRODUCTION

A. After the Flood, there was a new beginning, a fresh start for mankind, full of hope and with every guarantee of God's blessing. Sin had been judged and God was ready to guide the new people of the earth.

B. The Flood removed sin but not sinners, for Noah and his family were still sinners and in need of God's grace. Therefore, there is a need for God to make a covenant with man.

II. THE PROMISE TO NOAH (8:20-22)

A. The Proper Attitude (8:20). The first thing Noah does when he leaves the ark is to give thanks to God. Noah recognized the presence and providence of God. NOTE. Offering thanks is a conscious awareness that God is in control of all things (1 Thess. 5:18).

B. The Promise of God (8:21). God promises that He will never again send a universal flood to the earth to destroy mankind for its wickedness (cf 9:11). NOTE: The earth will be destroyed by God at the end of the world, but it will be by fire (2 Pet. 3:10).

III. THE PACT (Covenant) WITH NOAH (9:1-17)

A. Introduction

1. Meaning of a Covenant. A biblical covenant is where God unconditionally makes a pact with men. God does not reach agreements with sinful men through a bargaining process. Man is no threat to the government of God. God is in control of history and has set down the rules through covenants for men to live by.
2. Source of the Noachic Covenant. The source is God alone (9:9, 11, 12, 17). There is no covenant unless God makes it and keeps it.
3. Scope of the Noachic Covenant. This covenant was made with all men and all animals (9:9-10).
4. Purpose of the Noachic Covenant. God make this covenant to guarantee to all men that the world will never again be destroyed by water (9:11).
5. Duration of the Noachic Covenant. This is an "everlasting covenant" and is for "perpetual generations" (9:12, 16).
6. Sign Covenant. God gave the rainbow as a sign of the Noachic Covenant. It is a guarantee to fulfill all that God has promised in this covenant (9:12-13).
7. Design of the Noachic Covenant. The first design of the covenant is to give blessing to all mankind. However, there may be a second design to the covenant and that is to drive home to men that they are sinful and in need of God's grace and mercy. In 8:21, it says "**the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.**" This is a fundamental truth that God is

forever seeking to impress upon men. Until man understands that he is basically sinful, he has no need for a Savior. NOTE. Through the Noahic Covenant, God orders life in such a way that man cannot escape exposure to this fundamental revelation that he is basically sinful. Every provision of this covenant made with Noah and the whole human race is designed to impress upon man the helplessness of his evil condition, and thus drive him to the love and grace of God.

B. Dependability of Nature (8:22). The first promise of this covenant is that after the Flood there would be complete dependability of nature. Nature is now predictable and modern science and investigation can rely on it. NOTE. God makes nature stable and dependable, so that man cannot blame his evil on the environment.

C. Command to Populate the Earth (9:1,7). Noah and his family are told to conceive children and fill the earth. God desires that there be a propagation of human life. NOTE. Human reproduction helps to accomplish God's purpose in redemption. In his isolation, man finds it easy to maintain his illusion of his basic decency, and his independence from God. But as the world fills up, and we can no longer move away from those that irritate us, we are forced to face our own sinfulness. As our cities increase in population, the earth fills up, and continents overflow, and there is no place to run; men discover what has always been true: that under crowded conditions the thin veneer of culture disappears fast, and all that is hidden underneath breaks out.

D. Man's Rule Over the Animal World Through Fear (9:2). Fear and terror are to characterize beasts in relation to men. That God gives man rule over the beasts is a gracious act, for if animals were left to multiply without restraint, they could hurt man and eventually exterminate him. NOTE. This provision was made to teach man that he is no longer lord of creation as he was originally created to be, having the animal world in loving, obedient subjection to him. Why? Because man is sinful and the image of God in him has been marred by sin.

E. Provision to Sustain Life (9:3). God had given a vegetable diet for man in Genesis 1:30, but now He allows a meat diet also to be added to the earlier menu. NOTE. Perhaps this was designed by God to teach man that his life is sustained by the dying of another creature. Man has no life force of his own; it is all borrowed. He is a very dependent creature. Therefore, man must depend upon God and realize that it is through the death of Christ that man can have eternal life.

F. Prohibiting of Certain Flesh for Food (9:4). Man is not to eat flesh that has not been drained of its blood. There is a sacredness about the blood because it is the very life-principle of a man or an animal (cf. Lev 17:11). NOTE. The sacredness of blood perhaps was designed to teach men that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness for sinners.

G. Punishment for Taking Man's Life (9:5-6). Since life is sacred, as represented by the blood in the body, God will require life of an animal or man that takes a man's life (Ex. 21:38). There is a connection between 9:5 and 9:3. Man who is allowed to kill beasts for food might misuse this principle, become indifferent to the shedding of blood, and regard lightly even the life of another man. God erects a warning ahead of time in view of the wide latitude of possibilities in which sinful man could commit abuses. This command is the basis for capital punishment. Government acts as an instrument of God (Rom. 13:1-6) and has the right to take another person's life. It is God who takes human life, when it is done through proper governmental channels, and therefore it is not murder. This command of "a life for a life" deals with premeditated murder and would not include such things as killing in defense of property, self or others, or military killing. NOTE: Human life is very precious to God, and God wants man to understand that men are not to resort to violence to attain their ends. God does not take lightly the distorting and despoiling of His image in man. Violence breeds more violence, until man at last, in horror at what he has loosed in society, faces up to the fundamental fact that he is infiltrated with evil. Only God can cure it.