

Wednesday Morning Devotional on July 24, 2024

Passage: Genesis 9:1-17

Genesis 9:1-7 depicts God giving the same blessing and command to Noah and his family that He once gave to Adam: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth."

This command is reiterated in verses 1 and 7, framing the passage and emphasizing its theme.

What does this command entail? It includes the allowance to eat meat and the prohibition against murder, both essential for humanity's growth and flourishing.

Specifically, when permitting meat consumption, God instructs not to eat it with its lifeblood still in it, teaching the value of atoning blood.

The central message of this passage is "Do not murder," which is also the sixth commandment of the Ten Commandments.

Verse 6 clearly explains the reason: humans are created in the image of God, making them precious beings.

This singular reason prohibits all murder.

Based on this scripture, Jehovah's Witnesses in Korea refuse military conscription, which has become a social issue. They believe that serving in the military and fighting against an enemy would lead to killing people, thus disobeying God's commandment. However, this stems from a misunderstanding. In the commandment "You shall not murder," the term in English is "murder," not "kill."

If the nation or individual is threatened, self-defense is justified. It doesn't mean we shouldn't defend ourselves at all. Misunderstanding God's Word can lead us in the wrong direction and make us different from what God intended. We must recognize this.

The command also serves a clear purpose: for humanity to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. Since murder directly opposes and obstructs this, God decrees that He will take the life of anyone who takes another's life. This reveals an important truth: vengeance belongs to God, not us. Murder occurs in the context of conflict with those who trouble or oppose us. In such situations, God instructs us not to take revenge ourselves, for we are sinners and our judgment is not righteous. Judgment and retribution are the domain of the just and righteous God.

The Noahic Covenant and Christ's Salvation

The Noahic Covenant, also known as the Covenant of Preservation, is detailed in verse 11. God promises Noah that He will never again destroy all living creatures. Unlike other covenants of grace with Abraham, Moses, and David, which relate to the salvation of God's chosen people through Jesus Christ, the Noahic Covenant appears to concern the preservation of all humanity and living creatures. Traditionally, the Noahic Covenant has been viewed as the foundation of God's common grace bestowed universally.

However, we should not see the Noahic Covenant as unrelated to the salvation of God's chosen people or special grace. Christ is at the heart of the Noahic Covenant. God's reason for establishing this covenant with Noah and preserving the world is to ensure the time and space needed for Christ to save all the elect.

God promises to sustain the world until the complete fulfillment of Christ's salvation—until all the chosen are saved. Until then, despite human wickedness, God will not judge the world but will preserve it.

Applications for Daily Living:

1. Value of Human Life and Respect for Others: The passage emphasizes the sanctity of human life by reminding us that we are created in the image of God. In our daily lives, this calls us to treat each person with respect and dignity, recognizing their inherent worth. Whether at work, at home, or in our communities, we should strive to be kind, compassionate, and understanding. This can manifest in simple acts such as listening more attentively, offering help to those in need, and refraining from actions or words that harm others. By doing so, we honor God's creation and His commandment against murder.

2. Trust in God's Justice and Patience in Conflict: The passage teaches that vengeance belongs to God, not us. In situations of conflict or injustice, it can be tempting to seek retribution or take matters into our own hands. However, we are called to trust in God's righteous judgment and to be patient. This means resolving conflicts peacefully, seeking reconciliation, and praying for those who wrong us. By leaving judgment to God, we demonstrate our faith in His perfect justice and avoid the bitterness and harm that come with holding grudges or seeking revenge.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the timeless truths revealed in Your Word. As we reflect on the story of Noah and Your covenant with him, we are reminded of the sanctity of life and the importance of treating each person with the respect and dignity they deserve. Help us to see Your image in every individual we encounter and to act with kindness and compassion.

Lord, we also acknowledge that judgment and vengeance are Yours alone. In moments of conflict and injustice, grant us the patience and faith to trust in Your righteous judgment. Teach us to seek peace and reconciliation, knowing that Your ways are higher than our ways and Your thoughts higher than our thoughts.

We are grateful for Your covenant of preservation, which points us to the ultimate salvation found in Jesus Christ. Thank You for sustaining the world and giving us the time and space to know and follow Him. May we live each day in the light of Your grace, sharing Your love and truth with those around us.

In Jesus' name, we pray.