“Genesis 1 – 11 – Fact Not Fiction”

Chapter 9

This chapter is about new beginnings

God has judged the entire world in a catastrophic way through a flood

Only 8 people are left out of many millions

What will happen now and what part will God have in this?

This is where salvation history holds a place of great importance

What Moses writes in the first part of this chapter points to Calvary

God’s Word says His redemptive plan was already divinely ordained even before the universe and world came into existence, c.f. Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20

8 people is very close to total extinction

Yet humans cannot go into extinction because the God-man, Jesus Christ would eventually have to occupy a woman’s womb to be born and ultimately go the cross to pay for humanity’s sin so we could have everlasting life

Therefore, what God communicates to Noah and his family as this chapter begins has tremendous significance

9:1 & 7: A call to renew procreation and earthly stewardship

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What God says here goes back to creation week, namely day six

Genesis 1:28: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground’.”

God placed His divine favour upon Noah’s family just like He had initiated this with Adam and Eve

So we see how and why Noah’s family were instructed by God to procreate and also superintend over God’s creation, including the many animals they would be co-existing with

9:2 – Animals will fear humans

Before the Fall in Genesis 3, animals and humans would have co-existed in perfect harmony

There were no predatory instincts

This, of course, was no longer the case when the animals, who were segregated and caged on the ark were now free to roam

God was going to guarantee this small family’s preservation

He was not going to permit the animals around Noah’s family to indiscriminately attack them without reservation

Again, this has a connection to salvation history because God was going to make sure the human race survived through time

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9:3-4 – Permission is given not to be solely vegetarians

This also goes back to Genesis chapter 1

Genesis 1:29-30: “And God 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. 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.”

As we have already noted, there were no carnivores before humanity’s fall in the garden of Eden

Adam and Eve did not eat meat, neither did the animals

So this meant even the dinosaurs ate only plants, fruit and vegetables

When we move to the New Testament Scriptures, we observe how Jesus ate fish and also lamb at the Passover supper

The apostle Paul told Christians it was okay for them to eat meat, c.f. Romans 14:2-3; 1 Timothy 4:4

This is a principle of Christian liberty

The only stipulation God gave back in Genesis 3 was with regard to not eating the blood from an animal

This command was given to show a proper respect for the life principle of the animal which was its blood

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In other words, we’re to recognize that all life has value, even when eating the flesh of animals for physical nourishment

God gave them this instruction to reinforce what He was going to communicate in verse five

We must hold life in very high regard since it comes from God

9:5-6 – Capital punishment is instituted by God

Before we examine these verses, we need to establish some key foundational points

What we believe about gender, marriage, legitimate sexual practice and expression, and racism is imbedded within the first few chapters of Genesis

This also is true in regard to abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment

According to what the Bible teaches, life is to be very highly valued at its inception, throughout its duration and at its completion

This is because every single human being is made in the image of God

This sets us apart from bacterial organisms, plant life, insects, and all forms of aquatic and animal life

Humans are the only creatures to be made in God’s image

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This involves unique, inherent capabilities in regard to intellect, will and emotion

“Mentally, humanity was created as a rational, volitional agent. In other words, human beings can reason and choose. This is a reflection of God’s intellect and freedom. Anytime someone invents a machine, writes a book, paints a landscape, enjoys a symphony, calculates a sum, or names a pet, he or she is proclaiming the fact that we are made in God’s image.
Morally, humanity was created in righteousness and perfect innocence, a reflection of God’s holiness. God saw all He had made (humanity included) and called it ‘very good’ ([Genesis 1:31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%201.31)). Our conscience or ‘moral compass’ is a vestige of that original state. Whenever someone writes a law, recoils from evil, praises good behavior, or feels guilty, he or she is confirming the fact that we are made in God’s own image.
Socially, humanity was created for fellowship. This reflects God’s triune nature and His love. In Eden, humanity’s primary relationship was with God ([Genesis 3:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%203.8) implies fellowship with God), and God made the first woman because ‘it is not good for the man to be alone’ ([Genesis 2:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%202.18)). Every time someone marries, makes a friend, hugs a child, or attends church, he or she is demonstrating the fact that we are made in the likeness of God.” (gotquestions.org)

The fact each person is made in the image of God gives people equal value in everything pertaining to human life

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Why am I putting such emphasis on this?

It is vitally important we understand how God created humans in His image before we unpack what Genesis communicates about capital punishment

This is not an easy subject for anyone to preach on because people, including most Christians, have strong views on this particular issue

I want to approach this with compassion, grace, humility, wisdom and courage

What I’m most concerned about is interpreting this passage correctly and applying it to our present-day context with integrity, transparency and faithfulness to God’s Word

Scripture is the ultimate authority, not human reasoning

It’s not what we think but what God’s Word teaches that truly matters

Some may say this is Old Testament Scripture so it does not apply to the New Covenant and our present age

However, what is written within Genesis does have application to every one of us right now in our present time

*Human life originates only with God* Genesis 2:7: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

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*God is sovereign over all human life* Job 1:21: “And he said: ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord’.”

*God highly values human life* Romans 5:8: “But showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.” (NLT)

*God has the right to establish the punishment for purposefully, callously, taking away a human life* Psalm 92:15: “To declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

Every one of these foundational truths begins with God

What God thinks matters more than anything else

Let’s remember this whenever we’re interpreting challenging verses from Scripture

One of the primary challenges with God’s command regarding capital punishment is that it requires human agency

In other words, God places the responsibility upon people who are themselves inherently sinful, inconsistent, lack complete knowledge and have imperfect perception

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It is significant to note how God initiates this command when He Himself directly terminated people’s lives in many instances throughout both the Old and New Testament Scriptures

Here’s some examples

The worldwide flood in which millions perished

God’s fiery judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah

He completely wiped out Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea

God split open the earth and it swallowed up the sons of Korah for their rebellion against Moses’ leadership

In the same chapter, God’s fire consumed 250 men who offered incense upon God’s altar with impure hearts

Thousands of Israelites died when God sent fiery serpents into their midst as a consequences of their complaining before God

Twenty-three thousand Israelites died when God judged them for adulterous immorality and idolatry

Uzzah’s life was immediately terminated by God when he touched the Ark of the Covenant

God took the lives of Ananias and Sapphira for their deception in Acts chapter five

In the Corinthian church, God intentionally took professing believers prematurely since they were violating the sacredness of the Lord’s table

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The book of Revelation records yet future judgments in which God will wipe out almost the entire world’s population

Now, would we for one moment say God was unjust in His termination of human life?

Whatever God does must be perfectly righteous and unquestionably justifiable

If this is not true, then God’s divine character could be called into question

No one can put God on trial

No one can take God to court

He will never ever be a defendant with human beings as His prosecutor

He alone initiates life – He alone has the right to intentionally end life

So why does not God take capital punishment in His own hands, as it were, when someone takes the life of another person?

What we observe within Genesis chapter eight is how God puts this obligation upon Noah

What do we know of Noah?

Noah was a godly man but certainly not an entirely perfect man

Noah did not have the power to look into a person’s heart and be able to judge their true motives

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Noah could not see and know everything like God sees and knows, so why give him the responsibility to do this?

First, in the immediate context, the threat of capital punishment would serve as an immediate, strong deterrent

There were only 8 people left and God was going to make sure the human race survived and would not be put into jeopardy through intentional murderous acts

Second, God initiated capital punishment, so throughout succeeding generations, people would highly respect and value life itself

This may seem counterintuitive but the justification for capital punishment is simply because life is so valuable

The primary reason human life is so valuable is because people are made in the image of God

This is a foundational, unalterable, universal, eternal truth

It’s why God says capital punishment must be adhered to when a murder takes place

As such, according to God’s own words and the image of God principle, to take purposefully take another person’s life is to forfeit one’s own life

This was affirmed by the prominent Christian scholar, Matthew Henry

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“When God requires the life of a man from him that took it away unjustly, the murderer cannot render that, and therefore must render his own instead. One time or other, in this world or in the next, God will discover murders, and punish those murders which are beyond man's power to punish. But there are those who are ministers of God to protect the innocent, by being a terror to evil-doers, and they must not bear the sword in vain, [Romans 13:4](https://www.christianity.com/bible/bible.php?q=Romans+13%3A4). Willful murder ought always to be punished with death. To this law there is a reason added. Such remains of God's image are still upon fallen man, that he who unjustly kills a man, defaces the image of God, and does dishonour to him.” (Matthew Henry)

“A person extinguishes a revelation of God when he or she murders someone.” (Dr. Thomas Constable)

This is why I see this as a universal, timeless principle

People never cease to be made and exist in the image of God, right from inception within the womb, throughout life itself right up to their last breath

Third, we must continually maintain God’s moral standards, not purposely seek for ways to lower, diminish or extinguish them

This is true in regard to gender, marriage, abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment

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When God sets standards, He is the all wise God who knows what is best for people and the human race

Having said all this, some important questions need to be asked

What about accidents, when one causes another person to die?

What about protecting oneself and others when threatened by someone else who is intent on ending it?

What about participating in war with another nation ?

I would differentiate between these scenarios and intentional murder in which one prematurely takes away another person’s life without provocation without justification

Fourth, God’s call for the enactment of capital punishment does not negate the fact how He is a God of grace, mercy, compassion and lovingkindness

God always couples His justice with His grace

This becomes evident throughout the next ten verses

He establishes a covenant with Noah in which God promises to never again bring a worldwide judgment by a flood

There’s almost an overemphasis to certify this promise

The rainbow will be the sign of this covenant

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God has kept this promise right up to this very day

It’s not improbable to say that never does one day go by around the world in which a rainbow does not appear in the sky

By far, the most important consideration in all of this is to be on the right side of God’s mercy, grace, and forgiveness rather than His divine wrath and eternal judgment

Let’s humbly uphold God’s principles with an unwavering commitment and loving graciousness within our present society

Let’s continue praising God for giving us eternal forgiveness and a home in heaven through Christ

Let’s ask God for new opportunities to share the gospel with others

9:18-24 – Noah’s drunkenness

Noah became a husbandman – one who plows and cultivates land – a farmer

More specifically, he was a vinedresser

So he intitially planted a vineyard and harvested the grapes

Sounds innocent enough

Now before we go any further, let’s review a few things regarding Noah’s character

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Genesis 6:9 tells us Noah was “a just man, perfect in his generations and he walked with God”

Noah proved his faithfulness and total commitment to God with unquestioning obedience by building the ark

Noah recognized God’s proclamation of judgment was true, inescapable and catastrophic in every way

Noah patiently waited for the flood waters to subside before having the animals and his family leave the ark

Noah most certainly manifested many honorable, godly attributes

When one puts all this together what happens next in chapter nine can only be seen as quite unpredictable and very shocking

Noah drinks too much wine, becomes drunk, and exposes himself

Now it is obvious Noah did not just produce grape juice from his vineyard

Rather, he had the knowhow and intention of producing an alcoholic beverage from his grapes

Throughout Scripture, in the old and new testaments, drunkenness and indecent exposure are both clearly sins

I will return to this a little later

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This historical account provides only limited information

For some reason, one of Noah’s sons, Ham realized his father was naked

What this implies is that the entrance to Noah’s tent was most likely open

The Hebrew language also implies Ham went into his father’s tent for a closer look

There’s been much speculation about Ham’s actions

Some scholars believe Ham took advantage of and violated his father sexually

However, there’s nothing within this account which can verify this conclusion

Notice however, when Moses writes about this he is more specific about Ham than he is Shem and Japheth

He references Ham as being the father of Canaan

Does this ring a bell?

When Moses was writing this the Israelites were on their way to conquer guess who?

The Canaanites who were the occupants of the promised land

What were these Canaanites like?

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They were an entirely godless, immoral nation who practiced the most vile, corrupt acts imaginable

In the genealogy of chapter 10, Moses spends the most time outlining the line of Ham

What he is revealing is how the wickedness of the Canaanites goes right back to Ham

I will also return to the significance of this at a later time

What we do know is Ham simply communicated to his brothers was he saw in his father’s tent

It’s quite possible, he mocked his father before his brothers

He certainly did not try to do anything to rectify Noah’s vulnerability

However, Shem and Japheth immediately took another approach

Verses twenty-three tells us what that was

Noah eventually wakes up from his drunken stupor

He has the vague recognition of Ham’s actions

Next, he pronounces a curse upon Ham but communicates favorable blessings to Shem and Japheth

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What are some principles we can learn from this account regarding Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth?

***Be very wise regarding the use of alcoholic beverages***

The Bible has much to say about this subject

I grew up in a church where drinking alcohol was completely prohibited and strongly frowned upon

Church membership was not even a possibility for anyone who drank alcoholic beverages or worked at a brewery

I eventually wanted to search what the Scriptures really had to say about alcohol consumption and did so in my late 30’s

What I discovered was the Bible made both positive and negative references to drinking alcohol, about a 50/50 split

On the positive side…

Psalm 104:14-15: “He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate— bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts.”

Ecclesiastes 9:7: “Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do.”

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1 Timothy 5:23: “Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.”

On the negative side…

Proverbs 20:1: “Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.”

Proverbs 23:29-35: “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly;at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying:‘they have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?”

Ephesians 5:18: “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.”

So what becomes clear is that this the Scriptures teach this is a wisdom issue other than drunkenness which is clearly a sin

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Furthermore, in far ancient times, people were very limited with regard to what liquids they could safely drink

Their primary options were drinking milk, water or wine

They could not preserve milk well without refrigeration and their water often was compromised by bacteria

Alcoholic beverages had a long shelf life without spoiling and the alcohol itself got rid of any inherent bacteria

Today, we have no such issues

Additionally, there are many viable and safe options with regard to what we will drink

There’s really no need to drink alcohol, especially when one seriously considers it’s potential, harmful side effects

This is more a “why” than a “what” question

Why am I insisting on ingesting alcoholic beverages into my body?

Is it to gain acceptance?

Is it to help me cope?

Is it only because I like how it tastes?

The far wiser choice is to abstain than to participate

It is not wrong to drink alcohol but it is not wise

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If you drink alcohol consistently, you cannot guarantee you will not become an alcoholic

Another important consideration revolves around the weaker Christian principle

We must be sensitive if we are leading someone else into injurious, sinful behaviour

If you have further questions, I welcome speaking personally with you about this

***No one is above falling into sin, not even the greatest saints from Scripture were entirely exempt***

Some primary examples of this would be Moses, David, Peter

There are many verses which provide wise counsel regarding this

1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 1 Corinthians 10:12; 1 Peter 5:6-8; Hebrews 12:1-3

Finish well by leaving a righteous legacy through being a godly example for the future generations to readily follow

Noah lived three hundred and fifty more years after this reprehensible incident,

However, this proves to be the last way Noah is referenced in Scripture for hundreds of years until the N.T. was written

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***Let’s raise the standard for modesty, decency, dignity, and respect within our society***

I’m not saying we need to be hypersensitive, overzealous prudes

We have to admit our culture has not and continues to not go in the right direction regarding moral civility

Ephesians 5:3-4; 1 Timothy 2:9-10

Let’s commit to be godly, gracious, respectable people who honorably represent the Lord Jesus Christ before others

***9:25-27 – Noah’s pronouncements***

He pronounces a curse not upon Ham but upon Canaan, Ham’s son

I believe this was likely a prophecy regarding the evil Canaanite nation who occupied the promised land but would be conquered by the Israelites from the godly line of Shem

***9:28-29 – Noah’s later life***

Noah was one of the most significant people to live on earth

Let’s take what we have been able to learn from his life and live out our lives to glorify and praise God on a daily basis