

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Life and Death in the New World

Scripture: Genesis 9:1-6

Code: 90-262

Well let's open our Bibles to Genesis chapter 9, and we're gonna look at the opening seven verses of this chapter.

For those of you who haven't been with us in sequence are at a bit of a disadvantage, because we have been marching our way through the Book of Genesis, and we have been going through the flood. Appropriately, most of the time I was preaching on the flood it rained, and when I ended the preaching on the flood the rain ended as well; divine providential timing. Things have dried out, and now Noah and his wife and three sons and their three wives, a total of eight people, have left the ark.

As we come to chapter 9, they have come out of the ark, built an altar, worshipped the Lord, and started to populate the new world. And verse 1 says, "And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth". Now the key phrase here is "God blessed". He blessed Noah and his sons, and of course implied are the wives as well.

This is good news after judgment. Blessing after cursing if you will; good news. Terrible, terrible holocaust without equal in the history of the world is over, they have come out of the ark, and onto dry land, a land early strewn with death, the death of all living things that were air-breathing, now it's a start of new life and it's good to know that the Lord blesses them.

In the original creation in Genesis 1:28 God blessed them, in Genesis 2 God blessed them, and here again in Genesis 9:1, God blesses them. They spent over a year on the ark, shut up on that ark with the animals on board, riding over the waves of judgment that have drowned the air-breathing life on the planet and much of the sea life as well; rearranged the surface of the earth, created sea basins and new mountains as we know. The ark has finally come to rest on the mountains of Ararat or modern Turkey, the waters have rolled down the mountains into the massive new sea basins created in the upheaval of the earth's surface, the land is finally dry and they are all alone in the new world.

And as I noted for you back in chapter 8:20, the first thing Noah did was build an altar; an altar which accomplished two things. It was an act of sacrifice, which expressed worship to God as well as penitence. Burnt offerings were offerings of penitence, offerings that recognized sin and the need for a substitute to bear the penalty for sin. And here was Noah and his family, though they had escaped the judgment, very, very aware of their own sinfulness, aware that they certainly deserved to be drowned along with everybody else, but in gratitude for the grace of God and the mercy of God

toward them, and in an expression of their own penitence and their own recognition of sin and the need for a substitute, they offered a burnt offering - in fact, many burnt offerings to the Lord.

This act of obedience, this act of worship, this act of penitence elicited from God a response in verse 21, it says the Lord smelled the soothing aroma, that's sort of an anthropomorphic way of saying God was pleased with their offering, pleased with their hearts, and therefore God said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, even though the intent of his heart is evil from his youth, even though he's still depraved, even though the world is gonna be repopulated with depraved people, I'll never do this again, I'll never again destroy every living thing as I have done while the earth remains. As long as this planet is here, I will not destroy it and its life in this fashion".

Noah, then, had escaped judgment not because he was sinless, not because he was righteous, but because he believed God and received grace or favor in God's sight. He saw the staggering judgment, the extreme anger of God against sinners like nobody since has seen. And thus he offered to God a sacrifice of repentance, acknowledging that his family was sinful, deserved death and needed a substitute to die in their place. All of that pointing, as all the Old Testament sacrifices do, to the one sacrifice for sin - namely Jesus Christ.

So Noah was the first priest for the new humanity. And he recognized the need for atonement, and this act moved God to further grace, and the promise that no such judgment would ever again come as long as the earth remained.

In fact, as we come into chapter 9, God says life is going to go on in its normal cycle; seed time, harvest, cold, heat, summer, winter, day, night; but it's gonna be more than that. God blessed Noah. God then fits the new world and the people in the new world with blessing in spite of their sin, which is acknowledged again in verse 21, God knows the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth, that isn't gonna change because Noah and his wife and the three sons and their wives are sinners, they're gonna produce more sinners; in fact, we know that very, very clearly because it isn't long after this, we're in the ninth chapter, we get into the eleventh chapter and the world is so sinful God has to scatter the people all over the globe and change their languages as a punishment. So man is sinful, but God will be gracious.

And this introduces to us; I suppose we could call it the Age of Grace. And this is the time described in Acts 17:30 as the time of ignorance, the times of ignorance which God overlooked. This is the time of God's patience, and God's forbearance, and it's been going on, as you know, for 4,500 years up until now.

So life begins in the new world. Man is still a sinner, he is going to produce sinners, more and more sinners populating the world again with sinners, and here we are the living proof of all of that. But during this period, God is going to be patient, God is going to be gracious with sinners, and not

destroy the planet in a holocaust of judgment like he did in the flood as long as the earth remains. As long as it remains.

Someday, heaven and earth will pass away. Someday the judgment will come. In fact, that day has already been fixed. Acts 17 says the Lord has fixed the day in which he will judge the world, and that's why he calls on everyone to repent. The day is fixed, just as the day of the flood was fixed, and Noah was told it was coming in 120 years, so the day of the return of Christ and ultimately the destruction of the heavens and earth that we know of is fixed, and this is the time to repent. As the people in Noah's time had 120 years to repent, we have longer than that to repent. In fact, we've already had 2,000 years since the day was fixed and the revelation was written down in the Book of Acts.

But in this time, before that final judgment, we experience blessing. Blessing. And the blessing that is described here is five fold. I'm going to give you five words that start with "P" that you can jot down, which define for us the character of the blessing in this particular period of God's administration.

Number one, the first blessing is procreation, the second blessing is prominence, the third blessing is provision, the fourth blessing is prohibition, and the fifth blessing is protection. The first three are positive, the last two are negative. Procreation, prominence, provision, prohibition and protection. This is what God has granted to us since Noah, who lives in this post-flood world.

And these, essentially, are the foundational mandates of human society. The old dispensation, writers used to say, this is where the inauguration of the dispensation of human government came in. I don't wanna go so far as to make this into some isolated dispensation and over-define it, but what you do have here is divine blessing framing human society. After the flood and continuing until today. These are the universal blessings for all mankind. They are not limited to the people who love God; they are just general mandates and blessings that frame the life of men on the earth. They deal with family, they deal with food, they deal with health, and they deal with criminality or justice.

Let's look at the first one. Procreation. Verse one: "And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth'". And that, by the way, is repeated in similar words in verse 7. This sort of brackets this section of blessing, verse 7, "As for you, be fruitful and multiply, populate the earth abundantly, and multiply in it".

Now, notice that God said to them, this is direct revelation, the source of this blessing, direct revelation. And the first great blessing is to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. That is a repeat of the command in chapter 1:28, when God originally created Adam and Eve and put them in the Garden, before there was any sin, the Lord said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth". And that is exactly what he repeats here. The wonderful privilege of procreation given to the original couple in the Garden of Paradise is reiterated.

Be fruitful and multiply is a common expression for fecundity or procreation. It is used numerous times - I'm not gonna march you through all of the uses of it - but if you have some kind of a concordance and you can look up the words, you'll see this phrase used in chapter 17, chapter 22, 24, 26, 28, 35, 48 and 49 of Genesis. This is the common expression for procreation. And so here is this reiteration of this first and primary blessing.

Man, you remember, was made in the image of God, meaning that man is transcendent. Man is eternal, unlike animals and unlike plants. Man bears a spiritual life that is not visible, and is not physical. Man is made in the image of God and has attributes of personhood, not possessed by animals. Self consciousness, reason, abstract thinking, appreciation of beauty, emotion, moral consciousness, and above all, the capacity to make relationships, to personally relate to other people, as well as to personally and especially relate to God; being able to love him, know him and worship him.

Made in God's image, man also has the ability to procreate life. To procreate this same kind of life. Animals can procreate physical life, but only man has the wonderful blessing of being able to procreate spiritual life. That is not only a physical being, but a spiritual being. A rational being. A being of moral consciousness. A being with whom man can have a relationship and frankly, the sweetest and most wonderful relationships in all of life are those between a man and his wife, the procreators, and their children whom they procreate. God not only created man in his image, but granted man the ability to procreate more in his image.

And this reiterates again the blessedness of marriage. Back in chapter 2:24, God had defined marriage in very simple terms, this is the way marriage should go, a man should leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife and they become one flesh; two people, man and woman, come together from their families, establish a new union, and produce a child which is the one flesh product of the two. Procreation.

I suppose, as I thought about it, God might have said to Noah, "You know, I really, really, after what's gone on from Adam and Eve, I've decided not to allow you to have any babies. I really don't wanna deal with any more of this, so I'm just gonna let you live until you're dead, and I'm gonna start all over. I'm gonna sterilize all of you so you don't produce any more sinners, and I'm gonna create a new and sinless humanity and try this deal all over again. No more sinners. After you die, that'll be the end of them."

But God didn't do that. He gave to those sinners the blessing of marriage, the blessing of children, the blessing of family. And he knew that they would produce billions of sinners, and billions of sinners living sinful lives - the horrors of which would be mitigated by marital love, and family. And it's true, as you get into chapter 10 and 11, Noah's sons fathered the nations. They were prolific. They fathered

the nations. It was out of the line of one of his sons, Shem, that the people of God came. And it was out of the people of God that the Messiah, the Redeemer, the one promised in the third chapter and the 15th verse, the seed of a woman who would bruise the serpent's head, the Savior of sinners, the conqueror of Satan.

Adam did father some good people; Seth, and some in the line of Seth, and Noah, after all, had come from Adam originally. And Noah would father, down the way, some good ones too; Abraham and the patriarchs, and people of God from whom would be virgin-born the Savior of the world.

And so this was the first blessing, procreation. And I think any people on the face of the earth would confess that in all the trials of life, in all the difficulties of life, in all of the effects of sinfulness that bear upon life, even the unregenerate would confess that the best thing in life is love, and children. That's a blessing. Unlike any other blessing. The highest human joy is in a marriage, and a child - a son, a daughter, and even a granddaughter, and extended family. Though they don't always remain that way, the initial relationships and the initial joys of children don't have any human equal. No one knows love like the true love of a man and a woman, and no one knows love that can match the unique and true love of a parent and a child.

So the first blessing is marriage and children and grandchildren. And aren't you glad in this sinful world that you have that? That is a blessing for all mankind. How good is God, to mitigate the effects of sin by giving us intimate, fulfilling, joyous relationships.

Sometimes I go to watch my grandchildren run track or play soccer or do some activity where there are a zillion other parents and a whole lot of little rug rats running in every direction, and you just see the joy on the faces of the parents, that they find in their children. And that's by God's design.

The second blessing, in addition to procreation, comes in verse 2 - it's prominence. I suppose we could call it preeminence. "And the fear of you and the terror of you shall be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky, with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given". Here the sovereignty of man is repeated. Back in chapter 1, we remember that in verses 26 and 28, God says in verse 26 of Genesis 1, the original creation, "Let's make man in our image according to our likeness; let them rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle over all the earth, over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth"; verse 28 repeats the very same thing: "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, over every living thing that moves on the earth". The original preeminence of man - man was created as king of the earth.

The sovereignty of man is here repeated. Also, the sovereignty of man was echoed in chapter 2, by the way, and verse 19, "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, every bird of the sky, brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called a

living creature, that was its name". And again, he demonstrates the sovereignty of man by putting man in the position of identifying and naming all of the created beings.

So the dominion of man was established in the original creation. And here it is reestablished. Man is not only the procreator of all human life, but the ruler over all lower forms of life. He is truly the king of the earth. He is to subdue nature, so as to use it, to shape it in the direction that will reflect the usefulness, the order, the beauty and the purpose of its creator.

And even after the flood, this is still true - though it takes on a very different sense. And we have introduced into this a very different element. "For the fear of you and the terror of you shall be upon all these animals". That's new. Before there was a compatibility between man and the animals, all the animals got in line and went marching by Adam as he named them. But after the fall, there was hostility between man and the animal kingdom, and that hostility is here indicated as fear and terror.

On the one hand that is the evidence of the curse, on the other hand, that is a blessing. It is a blessing. It is a blessing that for the most part, animals who might harm us are afraid of us. And that is generally true in the animal world. God has wired the animals to be essentially afraid of man. The realm of animals and man's reign over them has changed, because the realm of animals is no longer benign. It used to be subdued and rule, and now it turns to fear and terror. The cursed animal world has a general fear of man because of his superior intelligence. Because of his superior power. A lion would be a threat to a man, if a man puts himself in a difficult spot.

And I heard the wackiest story this week, when I was talking to somebody who was telling me about two Japanese tourists that went to visit Krueger National Park in South Africa where I have visited. If you go to Krueger National Park, that's not like any park you've ever been in. You simply drive into a certain area, and the animals live there, and that's where they live. It's not a zoo, and they're not de-clawed. And the famous story is there were two Japanese tourists and one of them decided he wanted to have his picture taken with a lion. And so he gave his friend the little camera, and he went over to stand by the lion, and as the South Africans put it, "he got chowed". Can you imagine some guy saying "take my picture with a lion". Watching too much TV.

If you put yourself in the path of a lion - I can remember driving through Krueger and there was this massive elephant, I don't know how tall, but it was higher than I am above the floor. Huge, huge elephant. And African elephants can never be tamed. All circus elephants are Asian elephants, African elephants have a much more ugly and harmful disposition. And they have a tiny, tiny brain as well, so they can't process much information. If you get in their path, they see it as an attack.

I jumped out of the van, which you're not supposed to do, to take a picture of this elephant coming at us. Poor Peter Gruner was having a small paroxysm of fear, as he was watching. He kept saying, "Get in, get in". He showed me a newspaper clipping where two women in a similar van driving

through a week before stopped to take a picture, and both of them were skewered by the elephant who went through the front windshield.

But if you stay out of their path - by the way, we survived. You can tell, right? But if you stay out of their path as a general rule, the animals are afraid of you.

Man exercises a fiercer, stronger, more deadly rule over animals, and that is because of God's design. John Calvin had an interesting comment on this in his commentary. He said the providence of God it is that a secret bridle is placed on the animals to restrain their violence. God has caused them to have a fear of man.

And even before the flood, and during the flood, all of the animals were in the ark. The only animals that survived the flood were in the ark. So the animals that had a fear and dread of man were in the ark. But apparently, that was somehow controlled or subdued in the ark so that there wasn't a great amount of hostility there. They must have had some kind of symbiotic relationship at that time. Maybe God hit them with some kind of providential tranquilizer for the duration of the year. But now, the animal world essentially lives in fear of man. Animals cannot get organized to conquer man. But man gets organized to conquer them. He is the king.

The end of verse 2, it says, "Into your hand they are given". Into your hand they are given. The entire animal kingdom - listen to this - "The entire animal kingdom is for the use of man". Did you get that? Very important. In the book coming out "The Battle for the Beginning"- there's a little section on this that you might find interesting. "If evolution is true, humans are just one of many species that evolve from common ancestors. We are no better than animals and we ought not to thin that we are." That's the typical evolutionist view; that's the view of the tree huggers and all of the environmentalists and the animal people. "If we evolve from sheer matter, why should we esteem what is spiritual? In fact, if everything evolved from matter, nothing spiritual is real. We ourselves are ultimately no better than or different than any other living species. We're nothing more than protoplasm waiting to become manure." As a matter of fact, that is exactly the rationale behind the modern animal rights movement - a movement whose reason is the utter degradation of the human race. The evolutionists ultimately don't see us as anything more than up at the top of the evolving line of animals. And all radical animal rights advocates are evolutionists. Their entire belief system is the inevitable byproduct of evolutionary theory. The idea that we have to treat the animals the way we treat the people because they're just what we are, and we have to treat them better than we treat the people because they can be easily abused by the people.

Then there is that group called PETA, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals; they maintain that killing any animal for food is the moral equivalent of murder. Eating meat is cannibalism, and man is a tyrant species detrimental to his environment. PETA, a very popular group, opposes the keeping of pets and companion animals - including guide dogs for the blind. They call this animal

slavery.

Ingrid Newkirk, PETA's controversial founder said, and I quote, "There is no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights. A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy. Newkirk told a Washing Post reporter that the atrocities of Nazi Germany pale by comparison to the killing of animals for food. "Six million Jews died in concentration camps, but six billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughter houses".

Ms. Newkirk, you would know that wouldn't you - Ms. - is more outraged - why would you know that? Why would you know that? Ms. Newkirk is more outraged by the killing of chickens for food than she is by the wholesale slaughter of human beings. In fact, she probably considers the extinction of humanity the most desirable thing.

She and other animal rights advocates often sound that way. She told a reporter, "I don't have any reverence for life, only for the entities themselves. I would rather see a blank space where I am. This will sound like fruitcake stuff again, but at least I wouldn't be harming anything." There is a magazine called Wild Earth, and an article in it says, "If you haven't given voluntary human extinction much thought before, the idea of a world with no people in it may seem strange. But if you give it a chance, I think you'll agree that the extinction of Homosapians would mean survival for millions, if not billions of earth-dwelling species. Phasing out the human race would solve every problem on earth, social and environmental". What does she think, that the animals aren't gonna keep eating each other? Stupid, irrational, immoral, deadly.

There is an organization called the Church of Euthanasia. They have a web page that advocates suicide, abortion, cannibalism and sodomy as the main ways to decrease the human population. And they give on the website detailed instructions for committing suicide. And the church only has one commandment, this is it: "Thou shall not procreate". This is lunacy, but it's rooted in the idea of evolution. Man is a mere animal with no purpose, no destiny, and no likeness to the Creator. Frankly, we have no more dignity than an amoeba, and probably less.

That's not how God designed life. God designed life for us to procreate. And for us to be prominent in the creation. And everything in this creation is given into our hands. All the fish, all the birds, and all the animals. Everything.

Now that leads to a third element, provision. We are the prominent ruler of creation, that is true, and God has given us everything, and he has given it to us for provision. Verse 2 implies the eating of animals, the eating of birds, beasts, crawling things, fish, but verse 3 makes it explicit: "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you". Now, you don't have to eat it all. Some of you are saying yuck, there are plenty of crawling things that I'm not interested in eating. But, they're all given for that purpose. Every moving thing that is alive.

Some people think we as Christians should be under some kind of dietary laws, because they were under dietary laws in the Old Testament. But the only people who were ever under dietary laws were those in Israel under the Mosaic Law. Under the original creation, there were no dietary laws. Every - can't be more explicit - *moving thing that is alive shall be food for you*. And let me tell you something right now. If you're crawling through the desert, and you can't find anything to eat, you're gonna eat anything that's moving, that you can catch. Every moving thing that is alive.

Originally, in the original creation in Genesis 1:29 and 30, man could only eat plants. Why? Because death hadn't entered the world. There was no death. Every animal and man were vegetarian. Shortly after the fall, man began to eat animals. Back in chapter 4:20 it tells us they began to develop livestock. And I'm quite confident they started eating animals sometime after the fall, but here is God's official authority to do so on those who entered into the new world. They might have asked the question, alright, were entering into a new world, does God want us to go back to the beginning and be vegetarians again. And God says no, everything moving that is alive shall be food for you.

By the way, 1 Timothy 4 says the same thing, 1 Timothy 4:4, "Everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude. For it is sanctified by the means of the Word of God in prayer". What's he talking about? Food. There are those who tell you to abstain from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth, and everything is good.

So in Timothy, you have a reiteration of Genesis 9. Before the Mosaic Law and after the ceremonial law was set aside, you have the same standard. God says anything that moves and is alive you can eat. Isn't it amazing the variety that God has provided for food in his world. Only in the unique sanctions of the Mosaic Law were there dietary restrictions. You can read about them in Leviticus 11 and some other places, certain animals that couldn't be eaten, and that was to set apart Israel uniquely and to teach them now to live differently than the people around them. But since that law was set aside, since the Mosaic ceremonies were set aside, since the new covenant entered in, and since the church began, all those dietary laws are null and void.

Romans 14 says some people wanna eat certain things and not other things, some people don't mind eating anything; it's really not an issue, just be sensitive to each other. He goes on to say the Kingdom of God is not food and drink. There is no dietary restriction on us as there was on Noah and his family in the new world. I give it all to you. I give it all to you.

You're not a vegetarian because it's a biblical issue. Meat eating, in fact, then becomes a very important part of living in the new world. What a blessing. Let me put it together for you. The whole animal world is for you. So put on your wool sweater made from the hide of sheep. Put on your leather shoes made from the hide of a cow. Put on your silk shirt made by a worm, and pick up your

crocodile purse. And put a feathered hat on your head. And take your husband and children and ride on a horse-drawn buggy to a restaurant. And order a mixed grill of chicken, fish and filet minion. Just so you can have one evening when you fully participate in Noahic blessing. You're entitled to all of it. And not only that, have a salad. Because the end of verse 3 says have a salad. Do you see it there? I gave you the green plant; eat that. You can eat it all. You get the salad from Adamic blessing, you get the meat from Noahic blessing.

This is life, isn't it? What an incredible world. I don't know about you, but I think eating is a big deal to you. We have a lot of restaurants, don't we? That indicates to me that people like to eat. And they don't wanna stay home and have peanut butter and jelly sandwiches all their life. I mean eating, for some people, is an absolute way of life. It's a drama played out three times a day, seven days a week. And it's not all the food, it's just the theatrics of the whole environment. You probably wouldn't eat a great meal in a tacky place, you would probably eat a tacky meal in an artistic place. Eating is a big thing in life. I mean, let's face it - we have to do it three times a day at least. And as I learned working with the Russians, if you're with them, you have to do it four times a day. Because your last meal is at 11:00 at night. Eating is a big thing. And God says "Here's a whole world full of stuff. Everything that grows and everything that moves, you can eat". What blessing.

You see, this is common grace. This is God just unloading the blessings of creation. You can get married, fall in love, get married, have an intimate relationship with your spouse and just create the best of life in children, in family, and grandchildren - I give you all of that, and I'm not even asking that you believe in me to get it, I'm just giving it to you. And I'm giving you this plethora of options to enjoy food.

But there are some blessings that come by avoiding certain things, and so the last two are negative. The first of those negatives and the fourth in our little list is prohibition. The world is fallen, and built into the fallen world is the law of entropy; that is, the disintegration of things. Since the fall, there have been certain mutations of forms of life in the world that have created dangerous parasites, dangerous viruses, dangerous bacteria, and so the Lord has to give us a prohibition. But this prohibition is a blessing.

Verse 4: "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life." That is, its blood. Only is but. Before you get too carried away here, I need to protect you. Why is God protecting people? Sinful people? This is his common grace. This is his goodness. When you go out to eat the mixed grill, cook it. Don't eat flesh with its life.

What is that, first of all? Don't eat live meat. You say who eats live meat? There are some people who eat live meat in the history of the world, in some tribal areas, who consider that a delicacy. The great Old Testament commentators Harrell and Baylitch record the history of the Avacinians, that's another name for Ethiopians in northern Africa. And Harrell and Baylitch record the Avacinians would

cut out a piece from a hind quarter of a cow that they were driving. They were driving a cow or an ox pulling a cart, and they got hungry, they didn't wanna kill the thing, they only had one, but they just wanted to eat it piece by piece.

And so while they were driving, they would take some kind of an instrument and cut out its raw flesh with its blood with the muscular contortions still visible, and they considered that as the greatest of dainties.

They're not the only people who have done and do that, consider it a delicacy to eat a living animal. In some cases as well, eating raw meat which is also implied here, don't eat flesh with its life. That is its blood. The picture here is raw meat. Don't eat a live animal, and don't eat the still-bleeding uncooked flesh of a slaughtered animal.

I told you, there are parasites, bacteria, microorganisms, and viruses that carry disease in the fallen world, animals carry man of those harmful creatures. Salmonella, clostridium, staphylococcus, other serious bacteria, even tapeworm are found in raw meat.

Now it's a little easier for us to deal with meat that we eat because we live in a country that is so sophisticated, that we have an agency called the FDA that polices all of that kind of thing. I've walked through a chicken killing plant, which is a really bizarre experience, and watched how they process chicken. But at every point along the assembly line where they process many millions of chickens a day, there is an FDA agent stationed there to make sure that the process is absolutely consistent with the standards.

But most of the world throughout its history, and most of the world today doesn't have that kind of protection. And God in his goodness and in his grace says I wanna protect you. You can't just go out there and eat animals that are living, or that are uncooked.

MSNBC has a website and on the website they have a whole long article about how you should prepare meat. And they say consumers should be most concerned and careful about buying ground meat. Because of the extra processing involved, ground meats are at more of a risk for contamination than other cuts. If you cut the animal and you just take that cut and put it into the freezer, that's one thing. But if there's another step - take the cut, put it somewhere else, put it through a grinder, the process exposes it to whatever is in the air, and at a more threatening temperature, and therefore it has more likelihood to collect certain contamination.

They also say buy meat that is raised in the United States, because everywhere else in the world you are at a higher risk. The article went on to say always handle meat with clean, dry hands. Because any kind of bacteria or anything you have on your hands can find a great host in that meat. Store meat in the coldest part of the refrigerator. If there's a meat place in your refrigerator, use that. Use

meat within two to five days. Ground meat, sausage, and organ meat like liver should be tossed after two days. Everything else kept for three to five, and that's it. You can keep a canned ham for six to nine months if refrigerated. Use freezer-safe wrap. Never defrost meat on the counter, always in the fridge or in the microwave. Don't eat steak tartar. Do you know that that is? A slab of raw meat. Always cook your meat. Don't marinate in a metallic pan. Why? The acid in the marinade can interfere with the metal, and the metal then can contaminate the meat. Don't unnecessarily interrupt the cooking process; don't keep pulling open the oven, shut the oven, pull it open, shut it, all the time, because what you're doing is exposing the meat to a lower temperature, and the infestation of some harmful bacteria. I mean, it gets pretty serious. Deal with meat.

You can eat rare meat as long as it's not pork, but it has to be cooked at 160 degrees, or ground meat 145 degrees for beef, veal, lamb 160 degrees for pork, because the danger zone for bacteria is between 40 degrees and 140 degrees. If you have any meat gravy, boil it before you use it again. I mean, it goes on and on like that.

Why are they telling us that? Because meat can be what? Harmful. It's a blessing, but you better be careful. You don't wanna be eating flesh with its blood, with its life still there. There may be some overtones here of blood as belonging to God in atonement, but I think the main idea here is just to protect you.

And you don't wanna eat blood. That's obvious. The Scottish people have this terrible thing called black pudding. First time I tried it I was just told "would you like some black pudding". I figured it was dark chocolate. Black pudding is fried blood. And they fry it in a pan, and then they cut it up like little pieces of a casserole. Can't imagine why anybody in their right mind would eat it, but it's sort of a traditional thing. But at least they fry anything in it to death. And it's crunchy. And when I found out what it was, I was glad it was crunchy, I'll tell you that.

Now why would the Bible tell us not to drink blood? I mean, for obvious reasons. All diseases are carried through the body by the blood. The health ramifications from blood are really serious. From minor ones, which would be a severely upset stomach because your stomach can't interact with that foreign blood, to just literally incomprehensible list of potential bacteria that can be all the way up to deadly. There are people who even drink human blood. There have been always in the history of the world. Sometimes when one tribe would conquer another, they would drink their blood as a way to sort of demonstrate the conquering. But human blood drinking can transmit AIDS, meningitis, pneumonia, endocarditis, conjunctivitis, flu, septicemia - which is kind of a blood poisoning - eboli, encephalitis, hepatitis, blood clots, tetanus, lockjaw, you don't wanna do that. Same thing in animals. Trichinosis, rabies, botcholism.

God knew all of that. When Noah stepped off the boat, he had this symbiotic relationship with animals. He may not have been a flesh-eater, because he was faithful to God and God had never

given license to do that, while the rest of the world may have been doing that - we don't know. but he needed to know if he was gonna survive in the world to come, he needed to be prohibited from doing the kinds of things that would bring him into contact with death that was now in the world. And so we cook our food. And to make that possible, God gave us a wonderful invention. What's it called? Fire.

Well there's one last blessing. Procreation, prominence, provision - the positives; prohibition and finally protection. This is controversial among some people, it's not controversial in the Bible. Verse 5 it says if God says and by the way while I'm talking about blood, let me say this. "Surely I will require your life blood. From every beast I will require it, and from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man". And here's when I will require it. "Whoever sheds man's blood by man, his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man". And this is the predominant law of God for social protection. And it is the law of capital punishment. Who poses the greatest threat to the life of man? Well, the bacteria pose some kind of a threat and viruses, parasites, microorganisms, but the greatest threat to the life of man comes from beasts, and from men. And so God designed a law designed to protect people from being killed by others. And look, murder is a problem in the world already, right? What is the first sin that we find in the Old Testament? Cain what? Killed his brother. Fratricide. One brother killing another.

And God gives an effective protection for this by essentially saying if somebody kills somebody, they are to be killed. You say well I don't know, psychological studies and criminal studies say that that's not a deterrent. Oh yes it is. Because dead people can't kill anybody else. That's a serious deterrent. If you're dead, you can't kill anybody. Don't give me that gobbeldy-gook, that it doesn't deter. Of course it deters. Why do people believe that stuff?

And in verse 5 - you know, there's not a lot of criminal law here. There's not a whole massive system of law. God just says I wanna protect you, and here's how. I'm gonna require your life blood, that's really a synonym for your death. I'm gonna require your life blood. Require is a judicial term in Hebrew meaning compensation, recompense, satisfaction - literally to avenge. I'm gonna require compensation from you. And this is a divine death sentence. This is new. You remember when Cain killed Abel? Cain said God didn't kill Cain, God hadn't instituted capital punishment. God didn't give that antediluvian pre-flood civilization this protection. Maybe if He had, they wouldn't have gotten so rotten so fast. But you remember Cain, after he killed Abel, was afraid that somebody was gonna take his life, remember that? Because anybody who cared about Abel would want vengeance on Cain, and God put a mark on Cain so nobody would do that.

So prior to the flood, God was protecting people. And then there was in the later part of the fourth chapter a man named Lamek, and Lamek you remember said that he had killed a man and that he was proud about it, there's no indication that God required his life.

But now, in the new world, God is gonna provide some blessing that He didn't provide before. He's gonna authorize the eating of anything and everything, He's gonna tell them to cook it so that they don't introduce into their body those kinds of things that can cause their death, and He's gonna put into place capital punishment to prevent people being killed.

Notice again in verse 5, "Surely I will require". In Psalm 9, I think it's verse 12, God is actually called He who requires blood. The Psalm has identified God as the one who required blood, referring to God's requirement for execution as compensation.

This is of course repeated elsewhere in the Old Testament. 2 Chronicles chapter 24 has a section that deals with this. In verse 20 of 2 Chronicles 24, "Then the Spirit of God came upon Zachariah, the Son of Jehovah the priest. He stood above the people and said to them, 'Thus God has said, why do you transgress the commandment of the Lord and do not prosper because you have forsaken the Lord; he has also forsaken you.' So they conspired against him and at the command of the king, they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the Lord. Thus Jonas the King did not remember the kindness which his father Jehovah had shown him, but he murdered his son. And as he died he said, 'May the Lord see an avenge.'"

Here was a man being murdered illegitimately, and he looks to Heaven and says, "May God avenge you for this" because he knew what the law of God against murder was.

And you will also compare 2 Samuel 4:10. It tells the story about David and you remember, David carried out this law of capital punishment on those who killed Ishbasha. Do you remember, he was the son of Sol, and he was killed and David acted as God's avenging agent. So they knew what the Law of God was with regard to those who killed.

And not only humans, but the Lord first of all says "From every beast I will require it". From every beast. If an animal takes the life of a man, the life of that animal is to be taken. That animal has stepped across the boundary of fear and dread that animals should have toward man, and I require the life of that animal.

Exodus 21:28, "If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox should surely be stoned, its flesh shall not be eaten, the owner of the ox shall go unpunished. If, however, an ox was previously in the habit of goring, and its owner has been warned, yet he doesn't confine it, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner shall also be put to death". Hmm, better kill that ox. It could cost you your life. God will avenge the death of a man on the animal which has broken through the divine fence as it were of fear and terror to kill a man. So the destruction of that kind of animal receives divine sanction.

And God doesn't stop with animals. He says verse 5, "From every man's brother I will require the life of man". Man is included in this. Every man. From every man's brother, and that is an allusion to Cain killing Abel. And by the way, at the time he said this, there was only one father and three brothers. Killing a man is serious. Killing your brother is serious. "And I will require the life of man". Exodus 21:12, "He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death".

Now, look at this sentence in verse 6, "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed". That very precise sentence is given in what's called a lapidary style. It is a keyostic parallelism. What does that mean? It repeats in the second half of the sentence every word in the first half in reverse order. "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed". It's said that way so that it might be remembered. This is the law of lex talionis, the law of retaliation. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" as Exodus 21 says it. If you shed man's blood, that means you murder somebody. By man, at the hands of man, your blood shall be shed. This is not personal vengeance, this is simply the responsibility of humanity. By man in the humanity sense. If you kill someone, your life will be taken by man. The agency then is man. Under divine mandate. He is the instrument of God's vengeance, in human society, on murderers.

All through the Scripture there's the forbidding of personal vengeance. But societal vengeance is prescribed under God's law for man's protection. And when you get into the New Testament, Jesus confirms this in one of the really important statements. It's Matthew 26:52 and the soldiers have come into the Garden to take Jesus, and you remember Peter is there. Peter sees the soldiers coming to take the Lord, he doesn't want them to do that, so he pulls out a sword, remember? And he swings at the head of Malakus, the servant of the High Priest who was probably in front of the crowd kind of going ahead of the High Priest, and he tried to cut his head off. You don't use a sword just to make scratches on people or to whack off their ears; nobody is that good with a sword - least of all Peter, who wasn't even a soldier. He was trying to cut his head off and he ducked, no doubt, and lost an ear.

And Jesus said this to Peter. Matthew 26:52, "Put your sword back in its place. For all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword". What was Jesus saying? If you take that man's life, you have to give your life. You can't use that sword to kill somebody with impunity. You take his life, they have a right to take your life. Jesus said all those who take up the sword are gonna die by the sword. All who kill will themselves die. And thus did Jesus uphold the law of capital punishment.

The Apostle Paul did the same thing; he upheld the death penalty. He was speaking in Acts 25:11 in the Roman Court under Festus in the city of Czarina, he said, "If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die". Paul understood that the capital punishment law was a law of God. And he said if I've done anything worthy of death, I don't refuse to die - I can accept my just execution.

And then that very familiar portion of Scripture, Romans 13 which is very clear. It tells us if you do what is evil be afraid, for it does not bear the sword for nothing. It is a minister of God and it's talking about government. Talking about authority; the powers that be. And he says, "the powers that be, if you do what is evil, should cause you fear, for they do not bear the sword for nothing. Rather, they are ministers of God, avengers who bring wrath on those who practice evil."

What is a sword for? A sword was not to slap people with, it was not to scratch people with, it was to kill people with. It was a deadly weapon. It wasn't a whip, it wasn't sticks, it wasn't stocks, it was an instrument of death. And he says the government doesn't have this instrument of death for nothing, but rather, as avengers of God who bring God's wrath on ones who practice evil. So Paul taught submit to the civil authorities. Submit to the government. Because they have the power of capital punishment, and they do it - this is interesting - as the minister of God.

I remember one time I was doing a training session for the LAPD down in Parker Center, and it was everybody from sergeants right on up through the ranks of the Los Angeles Police Department. And I wanted to give them a new understanding of their identity, and so I taught them Romans 13. And I started out by saying I'm here as a minister of God to speak to fellow ministers of God. And some of them put down their cigars and said, "What?" I said, "Yes, you're ministers of God".

And I wanted to tell them that they are ministers of God for vengeance on evil people. They had, for the most part, never even heard of such a thing. They liked it. They liked it a lot. And they asked me, I think a few weeks later, to give the same talk to the fire department. This is a little bit different, since they don't carry weapons. We covered some other areas. But they are ministers of God. Governments are responsible to take life when life has been taken.

It's unpleasant to think of a lethal injection; it's unpleasant to think of an electrocution, it's unpleasant to think of a hanging, it's unpleasant to think of a firing squad, it's unpleasant to think of a guillotine or any other mode of death - but those are the kinds of things that stand as threats behind the stability of civilized society. And this is a protective power. A necessity determined by the creator for the blessing of his creation.

So God says, "Kill all the animals you want, no penalty." Isn't that amazing now? People kill animals and they're going to court and being sent to jail. Isn't that true? When God says you can kill and eat anything you want it doesn't mean somebody else's pet, you understand that; I mean, there's a limit. It also doesn't mean you can climb the fence and kill the next rancher's cow. There are some obvious limitations. But, the general pattern is that all of these creatures are for our use. If you need a horse to ride, that's wonderful. If you need a goat to keep the grass cut, that's great. If you wanna eat the animals, you can do that as well, as we all do. but once you kill a man, you're gonna lose your life. Big difference between an animal and a man. Right? what's the difference? Back to Genesis; the

big difference, do you see it, the very end of the verse, "For in the image of God He made man". Now we're back to that same great reality, that man is transcendent; man is eternal, man is personal.

Nothing is as devastating, folks - and you know this - nothing is as devastating in human experience as somebody's death. Right? you can lose your job, survive. Lose your house, survive. You lose your kidney, survive. Lose your foot, survive. You lose your dog, you survive. But the pain of all pains is when you lose somebody in your family, isn't it. that's because of personhood. It's because of relationships. Spiritual connection. That's true even among degenerate people. murder, then, is a sin of the highest rank in the physical realm. It is the ultimate crime. It's the worst crime of all crimes. You can steal a man's cow, steal a man's sheep, burn a man's field, ruin his reputation - that's bad, but the worst thing you can do to somebody is kill them. devastating to their whole family.

It is the ultimate crime against the highest of God's creation. Somebody in God's image, who is transcendent, personal, and eternal. And a murderer has removed one of the images of God from the earth; and consequently, severely disfigured that image in himself so as to deserve death. And maybe the widespread evil in the pre-flood world was aided and abetted by a failure to deal with murderers. I would be convinced today that crime in our society and killing in our society is aided and abetted by a failure to kill murderers. And to kill them swiftly.

And just as a footnote, the Mosaic law provides lesser punishment for manslaughter, inadvertent, accidental killing, and we're not talking about war, when one is defending ones self against an attacker who is a would-be murderer. Actually, in the later law of Moses, there were about 35 different sins for which God prescribed capital punishment. But the worst of all was murder.

So here's life in the new world. and God provides these blessings. Procreation, what a blessing is marriage and family. Prominence, and what a blessing it is to rule, to be king of the earth, all the animal life, all the plant life for our enjoyment. Sometimes it is for pets, sometimes it is for animals that work the farm, and sometimes it is for food; but it's all ours. And then there is the wonderful blessing of prohibition, where the Lord says don't eat it raw, and don't drink that blood, because its' harmful and I wanna protect you from the mutating microorganisms that since the fall carry death potentially. And then there is the protection of all protections that labels one who is a murderer of man and eliminates his life.

And all of this, folks, is the common grace that exists in the world that demonstrates the patience and forbearance of God that is meant to lead man to repentance, in the words of Romans 2:4. this is God's goodness for all mankind. And sadly, God has been so patient and so gracious and so kind and so good to sinners, and he hasn't destroyed the world since the flood, and he won't until the very end. And so we can say with the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:1, 2, "Now is the day of salvation", right? this is the time to see the good hand of God in the world. to see his patience and forbearance. To recognize that he has overlooked the accumulated sinfulness of man, dealt with us graciously.

The sad thing is, Romans 1 says that when we had all of this from God, we glorified him not as God, right? that's the way man reacts. But from the day that God made this promise until today, these things are still God's blessings for the life of man. And when man follows them, he enjoys the best of human physical life. But all of that is not an end in itself. all of that is a means to an end. It is the patience and forbearance of God intended to lead us to recognize a benevolent, gracious, merciful, kind God who has not dealt with us according to our iniquities, and to embrace him as Lord and Savior through Jesus Christ. This is still the age of grace, and the day of salvation. Let's pray.

Well, we've covered an awful lot tonight Father, but how rich and how insightful to understand the world that we live in this way. thank you for all you've given us, for all these temporal blessings. More than that, thank you that by your grace, some of us have been led to the spiritual blessings that are ours in Christ. We thank you for him, and our salvation in him. so that we know not only your common grace, but your eternal grace. The uncommon, saving grace. And may those who do not know Christ come to him and to that grace, and embrace the Savior, that they might not only know your blessing in time, in the physical world, but through eternity in the spiritual world to come. Amen.

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