

GENESIS 8:20 – 9:7 (A NEW DISPENSATION – GOVERNMENT)

When Abraham was asked to demonstrate his faith in a tangible way, what was it he was asked to do? It was to build an altar and sacrifice his son.

When Jacob was leaving the land of Canaan for the last time, what did he do? He offered sacrifices to God.

When the Israelites were in Egypt, what was the reason they gave to Pharaoh for needing to go into the wilderness? To sacrifice to God.

After receiving the Law, they spent almost an entire year at the base of Mount Sinai building a tabernacle and receiving the instructions for worship, for sacrifice, and how to live within the community of believers.

When they entered the Promised Land and as soon as they had established a foothold by destroying Jericho and Ai, what did they do? They went to Mount Ebal and built an altar and offered burnt offerings.

When they returned from captivity, and even before they had laid the foundation of the second temple, what did the Israelites do? In Ezra chapter three it says this –

And when the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem. ²Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as *it is* written in the Law of Moses the man of God... ⁶From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, although the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid.

And today, many thousands of years later, the Jewish people are preparing for a new temple, but above all, they are preparing to offer sacrifices on an altar. The Temple is coming, but even before it's built, they will be making offerings on an altar where it will stand. It is understood from the earliest

times of man, even until today, that a sacrifice is necessary when approaching God.

The effectiveness of sacrifices is a separate issue, but the fact that they're made by the people of the earth is universally recognized as a requirement in our relationship with the Creator.

Introduction: Noah was a man of faith and a faithful man. He understood God in a way that brought him near to his Creator even when the rest of the world had been destroyed. Included in his faith were demonstrations of that faith.

He preached to the pre-flood world about righteousness and the judgment to come. He built an ark when there wasn't an ocean in sight. He gathered and stored up food when the world was eating and drinking from the abundance of the ground.

And after the trial of the flood, Noah continued to demonstrate faith as we'll see today. In our opening verse, Genesis 8:20, and lasting until God's promise to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12, God will work with man under a government type of framework. This is the third of seven general workings between God and man. And it leads us to our text verse today which is Romans 13:1-7

Text Verse: Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴ 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; for he is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who practices evil. ⁵ Therefore *you* must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷ Render therefore to all their due: taxes to

whom taxes *are due*, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Gratitude and Promises

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

I need to note here that the day Noah does this is the same day that Ezra offered his offerings in the book of Ezra and it is the same day that Jesus was born. Right here in this verse is the first time the Bible mentions an altar. Instead of building a house for himself, Noah offers to God. He prepares a spot to meet, give thanks to, and glorify God.

Later in the Bible, we'll read these words in Haggai 1 after the return of the Israelites from captivity –

⁴ *“Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?”* ⁵ Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts:

“Consider your ways!

⁶ *“You have sown much, and bring in little;
You eat, but do not have enough;
You drink, but you are not filled with drink;
You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm;
And he who earns wages,
Earns wages to put into a bag with holes.”*

⁷ Thus says the LORD of hosts: *“Consider your ways! ⁸ Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,”* says the LORD.

By this time, the Israelites had started sacrifices, but they'd lost heart in completing the work of building the temple.

One thing I've noticed while travelling around America is that in the older towns of the land the oldest building in that town, and the building which is most centrally located, is the usually church. Towns were built around the church and centered on the faith and mode of worship of the people who settled there.

When the Mayflower pulled up to the shore of America in 1620, the first thing they did was to write and agree to the Mayflower Compact and then to set a cross on the shore of the land.

In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, defender of the Faith, etc. Having undertaken, for the Glory of God, and advancements of the Christian faith and honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents, solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God, and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic; for our better ordering, and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

Unfortunately, the first thing that's built when a modern town is established is either a shopping mall or a sporting arena. Churches now are built on the outskirts of towns. Instead of being places of intimate worship, praise, confession, humility, and the in-depth preaching of God's word, they now are social events.

There is a high value on providing coffee, creature comforts, and easy listening sermons, and there is a lack of discipline in the Christian life. This is the state of walking with God today. The sanctity and reverence of the altar is a secondary thought, not the first obligation of the purchased and redeemed soul.

But Noah first built an altar; a place for sacrifice. Whether earlier offerings in the Bible included altars or not isn't mentioned. The reason for it being mentioned now is that the earth was completely swept clean by the flood and the Garden of Eden is gone with it.

The Lord is now on high and His presence is withdrawn from the earth. It won't return again to dwell until the time of Moses and the tabernacle. And so, the altar is built to burn sacrifices which will symbolically lift on the smoke to Him and to His dwelling place.

We get our word "altar" from the Latin word "altus" which means "high" or "elevated." Noah was atop the mountains of Ararat and the smoke of his offering would ascend even higher. When the altar was built, it was built to Jehovah and not simply to God.

Jehovah – the Lord, is the covenant keeping God who has proven Himself true to the promise He made to Noah. And because of this, Noah offered "of every clean animal and of every clean bird." By offering from the complete set of them, it was a demonstration of thanksgiving for his complete deliverance.

The term "olah" is used for the burnt offering. This offering is completely burned up on the altar. When an offering like this is made, it's asking that God accept the offering as a substitute for the life of the person offering it and asking for the mercy of God. The fire and burning in the offering symbolize exactly that – the acknowledgment that what is deserved is the Lake of Fire.

The animal is given as a picture of this. Noah offered it because his life was granted to him in the midst of the death of the rest of the earth around him. This and all the other offerings in the rest of the Bible point to the work of Jesus Christ.

The book of Hebrews explains these things and shows how they point to His final sacrifice. In the end, Jesus is the only One who can rescue us from the hell that we rightly deserve. This is Noah's acknowledgment to God.

²¹ And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart *is* evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

The Lord smelled a soothing aroma. God doesn’t have a nose, but the Lord Jesus does. There are two ways to look at this. The first is that the eternal Christ – Jesus, who is the sovereign Lord of the Old and New Testaments, somehow actually smelled this offering and all the other offerings mentioned there and enjoyed the smell.

The other explanation is that it is an offering of faith by Noah. In this flame and smoke is the entire essence of the animal which is being returned to God who gave it. When Noah made this offering of faith, his very heart of gratitude ascended with it.

Everything tied up in the gratitude goes along too – the thanks, the feelings of protection he received, the anticipation of the future which is promised – all of it ascends to the Lord and is therefore a “soothing aroma” to the Lord.

How can we know if this is the correct interpretation? All we need to do is compare it to other offerings in the Bible that weren’t accepted. There are lots of examples, but let’s just look at one from Jeremiah –

Hear, O earth!
Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people—
The fruit of their thoughts,
Because they have not heeded My words
Nor My law, but rejected it.
²⁰ For what purpose to Me
Comes frankincense from Sheba,
And sweet cane from a far country?
Your burnt offerings *are* not acceptable,
Nor your sacrifices sweet to Me.”

The same type of offerings are accepted or rejected based on the attitude of the people, not just on the type of animal being offered. If the fruit of our thoughts is evil, then the offering is considered that way by God. We saw this in the account of Cain's offering.

Even though we're only a part way into today's sermon, this idea of an offering of faith leads us to the end and goal of our faith – the work of Jesus. We'd be remiss if we didn't bring in the true and final sacrifice which God Himself bestowed upon us in Christ –

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”

God sent His Son to live the life we can't live and then to give that life as a substitute for our own. When we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we are transferring our sin and our guilt to Jesus. His death then is just the same sweet-smelling aroma to God which is seen in Noah's sacrifice. Our very heart and gratitude is flowing to God through the death of His Son.

The problem with us is that too often we begin to take for granted the very sacrifice which was made. We tire of our walk, we skip church and Bible study, and we pick up old habits and tread into waters of disobedience.

In essence, we begin to show contempt for the very sacrifice which saved us and brought us close to God. Let's take a moment and pray that our hearts will be renewed in Christ again – just as they were on that first day we accepted Him...

PRAYER

Noah's faithful sacrifice was accepted and God promised to never again curse the earth even though, as He says, “the imagination of his heart is evil from his youth.” Right at that moment in human history, Noah was the priest and representative of his family and everyone who would come after him.

Because God accepted his offering, He graciously transferred that acceptance to the rest of us who came after him. In doing so, God promised to never again destroy every living thing as He has done.

The world will never be destroyed by flood again. One of the questions that I've been asked many times is "Then why do we keep having floods on the earth that kill people?"

The answer is obvious. God only promised no more global floods which would destroy all life. The way of the world, the localized calamities which occur, and judgment on sin has and will continue, but it will never happen again as a worldwide flood. Things will continue on in a constant and even fashion henceforth.

**²² "While the earth remains,
Seedtime and harvest,
Cold and heat,
Winter and summer,
And day and night
Shall not cease."**

"While the earth remains" appears to mean that the earth will not last forever. This is a confusing subject in the Bible, and there are people who will argue verse against verse as to whether the earth will always be here or not, but we're not at the end of things, so we really can't be too big-headed about our opinion.

Even if the earth does last forever, it may not be in the state it's in and so no promise would be violated by God either way. One thing is for sure though – whether the earth lasts forever but has a major makeover, or whether the earth is a goner at some point in the future, until whichever happens, God has promised that things will remain the same.

There will always be seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night. These things are so regular and so predictable, that people have built the wondrous monuments to the precision of God's handiwork – Stonehenge, pyramids around the world, cave drawings, and

even modern scientific equipment and star charts are all testaments to the splendid precision of what God has done.

We know exactly when to plant crops, exactly when we should reap, just the right time to go up to the attic and get out our long johns, and just when we can put them away and get out our swimming suits.

Ski shops know when to put out the new line of snowboards, and the shops in Florida know exactly when the tourists will come down and spend their money buying all kinds of crummy souvenirs that will shortly end up in the landfills of the world.

And along with us, even the animals have a sense of when to do the things they do. Bears hibernate, birds and butterflies migrate, moose get into their annual ruts, dogs shed, and love bugs swarm right at their appointed seasons.

And even more, the plants know when to bud and flower, the grass knows when to sprout its seeds, the oaks know when to drop their leaves, and almond tree has its nuts ready at just the right time.

Everything is balanced so beautifully and so wonderfully that man is ready at just the right time to experience all of these things which come directly from the mind and the wisdom of God who purposed them. We even know when to get out our bows and arrows and our guns and do a little hunting...

II. Tasty Treats

Here we are now, starting Chapter 9 of Genesis. In a beautiful display of God's love for the people of the world, we come to the comforting words of verse 1 –

¹ So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

When God blessed these men of the earth, it was certainly a blessing in their physical person and possibly even in a spiritual sense too, but it doesn't necessarily transfer beyond them.

I say this, because in the coming verses, one of the sons is going to act in a displeasing way towards his father and Noah is going to call down a curse on that son's son instead of directly cursing his own son. As the Bible records elsewhere –

“How shall I curse whom God has not cursed?
And how shall I denounce *whom* the LORD has not denounced?

Cursing the son who has been blessed by the Lord would be a tragic mistake and so the son's son will receive the curse.

The blessing is upon them and they are told to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. This is a repetition of the original command given by God to man back in Chapter 1.

The modern concept of cutting back on population growth isn't just unbiblical, but it's anti-biblical. God has ordained that man multiply, not abort. And we are instructed to fill the earth, not worship the earth.

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.

In Genesis 1, man was given dominion over the creatures of the earth. This same dominion continues after the flood and the title to them belongs to man as well. They are at our disposal and meant for our use. But a new aspect of this relationship comes about after the flood. The fear and dread of man will be on every beast.

This doesn't mean that we won't be eaten by lions if we're not careful, so don't go to the Serengeti without a good long rifle to protect you. What it does mean is that a horse has no idea how strong he actually is compared to the puny little rider on his back who beats on him as he rounds the second turn of the Preakness.

God hides this knowledge from him and gives him a fear of the little jockey so that despite his immense power, he remains in submission to the puny weakling. And animals of prey like the tiger and the lion which can't really be domesticated will still run in terror when man is near. Unless Siegfried and Roy are around, then it's lunch time.

The only animal in the world which is known to actively hunt man is the polar bear. And they are no match to a well-oiled rifle or a few Eskimos who know how to hunt and kill a bear with spears. What was lost in the loving friendship of man and animal before the flood is made up for by man's wisdom and skill.

³ Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.

I like this verse. This is one of those verses that I enjoy day after day. I like hamburgers. I like lamb cutlet and lamb chops. I like pork chops and bacon and ham and sausage and baloney too. I love lobster and if crabs weren't so messy I'd like them a lot more as well. Venison is tasty. And who doesn't love chicken or turkey.

This verse is pretty clear, "every moving thing that lives shall be food for you." Alligator tail soup anyone? Until the time of the Law of Moses, there was no (notta one) prohibition placed on what we could or couldn't eat. The Mosaic Law was introduced to the people of Israel. This means the people of Israel, the Jewish people, not the church.

There simply isn't time today to cite all the verses that tell us the Law of Moses is over and done with, but the book of Hebrews says it explicitly several times. The setting aside of the prohibition against eating certain

foods is so clear and so detailed in the New Testament that only someone who has truly been brainwashed can overlook the truth of the matter.

If you struggle with this issue, don't. Email me and I can give you page after page of information about your freedom in Christ. This freedom includes ostrich burgers. If it flies in the skies, if it treads on the earth, if it slithers through the grass, if it burrows in the ground, or if it swims in the seas, God has ordained that you can have it for dinner. And invite me if it's in a curry sauce, please.

So get your special sauces together and prepare for a banquet of tasty treats of all types. Bon appétit.

⁴ But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood.

When the early church was facing legalism and Judaizers telling them what they could and couldn't eat, telling them that they had to be circumcised, or telling them that they had to observe certain feasts or festivals or the Sabbath, a council was called in Jerusalem. Among the distinguished members were the Apostles Peter and Paul, and James the Lord's brother, and other apostles and elders.

The questions included things like, "What do we do with and how do we instruct the gentiles who are coming to faith in Jesus." "What can they eat, what can't they eat, what do they have to do and why."

Their conclusion was so simple and concise that – really – only an imbecile could get it wrong. And yet denominations all over the Christian world blow it. The letter is short, only a few paragraphs, but here is the conclusion of the matter for those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord –

"For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: ²⁹ that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well."

The Holy Spirit was **pleased** to levy on them four necessary things. To abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.

Clearly, since then, the letters of the apostles have to be considered and applied to our lives, but nothing written by those apostles contradicts this early decision, especially concerning what can and can't be eaten. Paul later clarifies the part about things offered to idols and he and the other apostles speak in detail about sexual immorality.

Beyond this, things that are strangled has its own context in which to be considered. And the drinking of blood is forbidden because it predates the Law of Moses and is explained in the verse we're looking at. The blood contains the life.

It's is explained again later in the book of Leviticus – “For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.”

We're not to drink blood because God is the source of life. The shedding of blood then is the end of that life. When a sacrificial animal was killed then the life of that animal, its blood, was used for the atonement of the person sacrificing.

When Jesus shed His blood, it was for our atonement. God doesn't want us attempting an end around what He has ordained by drinking the blood of an animal to somehow gain its life force.

But the drinking of blood for this purpose has nothing to do with blood transfusions. There are cults which don't allow them, but this completely abuses the intent of what the Bible is saying. The preservation of life through a blood transfusion is a completely different category than what is attempted in drinking blood. Vampires no, donors yes.

III. The Value of Human Life

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.**

This is an eternal standard, set down by God. Man was created in God's image and therefore to shed man's blood brings about a forfeiture of the blood of the one who shed it – whether it is an animal or another man. In fact, as I've said before, Numbers 35:33 says that atonement can't be made for the land which is polluted by bloodshed except by the blood of him who shed it.

Because man is created in God's image, and because the Bible gives the unborn the same rights as those who are born, the curse of abortion in a land is one of the gravest offenses that can be committed against God. There can be no atonement for the shed blood of abortion except by the termination of the life of the person who commits the abortion.

Unfortunately, because this is a political issue, the guilt transfers to the political supporters of abortion. They are actively working against God in order to terminate life created in His image. And even more unfortunately for an entire political movement, those who elect those who support abortion bear guilt in the process too.

This may seem trivial when walking into a voting booth, but when you vote for an abortion supporting candidate – at any level of the political spectrum, you are implicitly involved in the murder of God's image bearer and you bear the guilt of the blood. Think this through when you cast your votes. God demands a reckoning for the life of His image bearers and He will demand it from you.

And one more point about this verse – it says “Whoever sheds man’s blood by man his blood shall be shed.” If someone commits murder, the Bible doesn’t ask us to look at his childhood and determine what made him do it. It doesn’t ask us to look at his social standing or whether he was drunk or on pain meds.

It says, very clearly, that a murderer is to be put to death. This predates the Law of Moses and it is based on the attack against another bearer of God’s image. People who stand outside of state executions and protest aren’t showing compassion; they are really only showing contempt for God.

**⁷ And as for you, be fruitful and multiply;
Bring forth abundantly in the earth
And multiply in it.”**

We finish up today with this verse. God repeats His mandate to Noah to “be fruitful and multiply.” The beauty of children and an earth full of God’s people, created in His image must be a delight to the heart of God.

He created because He is love and love is His very nature. How pleased He must be when His creation returns that love to Him in praise, worship, and adoration.

He asks us to bring forth abundantly in the earth and to multiply in it. Children are a blessing and a heritage from the Lord and we bring Him honor when we get married, have children, and bring them up in the knowledge of the fear and the admonition of Him.

The Dispensation of Government

Noah built an altar, he built it to the Lord
Thanking God for bringing him to a restful shore
He offered of every clean animal and every clean bird
And to the heavens did his precious offering soar

The Lord smelled the aroma that the sacrifice did make
And in His heart He made a promise to all men

I will never again curse the ground for man's sake
Although there is evil in his heart as if inscribed with a pen

The imagination of man is evil from his youth
But I will never again destroy every living thing as I have done
I make this vow, the God of perfect truth
And I will keep it until the end of earth has come

While the earth remains, the cycles will work just right
Through seedtime and harvest, and in cold and in heat
Through winter and summer, and in day and in night
These things will not cease, but will faithfully repeat

And God blessed Noah and His sons with him too
Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth is what I ask of you

Fill it with those who are made in the likeness of God
Fill the whole world, wherever foot may trod

And the fear of you and the dread of you will fill every beast
It will be in them all, from the greatest to the least

Every bird of the air and all that moves on the earth
In the fish of the sea as well will be the dread of you
They are given into your hand for food and for mirth
So enjoy the tasty treats – snack on anything from the zoo

Everything is food for you, even as the garden greens
But do not eat flesh with blood, this is forbidden you
If you want, mix the meat with potatoes and some beans
But first drain out the blood, this is what you are to do

For your lifeblood a reckoning I will demand
From the hand of every beast and also from that of man
Anyone who kills someone in all the land
That one's blood shall be shed, this is your game plan

Man bears My image, the very image of God
Therefore in holiness on my earth you shall trod

Be fruitful and multiply, this again I say to you
Bring forth abundantly throughout all the land
“Multiply” I say again, it is what I’m instructing you
And your seed will flourish just as I have planned

Hallelujah and Amen...

For next week please read Genesis 9:8-28, A Rainbow, a Vineyard, a
Blessing and a Curse