

On the Beginning

15. The New Order

NOTE ESPECIALLY Genesis 9:1-29

According to II Peter 3:5-7 (Look it up), a new era and virtually a new world began for mankind after the Great Flood. Humanity got a new start with Noah and his family, and God's announcement of the new order in Genesis 9:1-7 sounds a lot like what He said to Adam in the beginning (Genesis 1:28-30)!

1. A Great Commission.

When man was first made, he was given a command to “*multiply and replenish*” (fill) the earth. He was also told to subdue and have dominion over all the Lord had made on the earth. These were man's marching orders, God's overall description of what He wanted man to do. Now that the original creation was ruined by man's sin and the first expansion of human population destroyed by the Flood, God gave man (through Noah) a revised commission. It involved a new command to multiply and fill the earth with people (Genesis 9:1 and 7). It authorized men to eat animals as well as plants (Compare Genesis 9:2-4 with 1:29-30). It established government among men, with the power to take life as capital punishment for first-degree murder (Genesis 9:5-6). The Bible records several “great commissions” to men, marching orders directing people to do things for God. The Israelites were commissioned to conquer Canaan (Joshua 1:1-7). The church was commissioned to evangelize the world (Matthew 28:18-20). Over and over again, those with a “great commission” from the Lord have failed to fulfill it because of sin, unbelief, and neglect! We should certainly pay attention to ours!

2. A New Promise.

Genesis 9:8-17 tells us about the covenant God made with Noah and mankind, and about the special promise He made after the Great Flood. This promise relates to what He said after Noah's sacrifice of burnt-offerings (Genesis 8:21).

“I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.”

The promise was that “*the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.*” (Genesis 9:15b). There would be rain, and there would be floods, but there would never again be a Great Flood to wipe out humanity. The token of this covenant and promise is the rainbow.

A divine covenant is a decree from God establishing a relationship between Himself and people. In a covenant, God makes certain commitments to those with whom He establishes the covenant. Also He states their obligations to Him. In the case of His covenant with Israel, the Lord also stated the conditions of His blessing or His curse on the nation. In the Noahic Covenant (which may be seen from Genesis 8:21 - 9:17) God commits Himself to show mankind mercy, and not to send either of the two awful judgments they had experienced in the past: the curse of Genesis 3 or the flood of Genesis 6-8.

3. An Important Prophecy.

The remainder of Noah's life included one major incident that related importantly to those who first read the Book of Genesis. Remember that Moses wrote this book as he led Israel across the desert on their way to the land of Canaan. Israel was to conquer the Canaanites, and take their land, and God had Moses in Genesis explain who the Canaanites were! Read Genesis 9:18-29.

We find that Noah kept a vineyard and got drunk drinking the wine. Understand that the "wines" of the Bible were not always fermented and alcoholic. The term "wine" refers in scripture to the product of grapes. Sometimes it was fresh or "new" and non-alcoholic. Sometimes it was fermented. It is very possible that the absence of the water-vapor canopy over the earth's atmosphere caused things to decay much faster after the Great Flood. Fermentation is decay! Maybe grape juice took much longer to become alcoholic before the flood, and Noah did not know that the "wine" he drank would intoxicate him. We do know that the Lord does not want people to get drunk. Look up Proverbs 20:1 and 23:31-35. We also know that the Lord doesn't want us to show our nakedness! Look up Genesis 3:21, Exodus 20:26, and Exodus 28:42-43. But Noah was both drunk and naked, and his son Ham dared to look upon him in that condition! For this sin (and it is a sin to look deliberately on your father's nakedness—note verse 23), Noah pronounced a curse on Ham's son, Canaan. Notice that the curse was on Canaan, and not on Ham's other sons (See Genesis 10:6). The curse was that Canaan and his descendants would be "*a servant of servants*" to the descendants of Shem and Japheth. The curse was not that people of a certain race are divinely appointed to be slaves to everybody else. The Canaanites specifically were to be servants to Semites (such as Hebrews and Syrians) and to Japhethites (such as the Greeks). They may also have been servants to Canaan's "*brethren*" (Genesis 9:25) by his father Ham, such as the Philistines and Egyptians. We should note that Canaan was a servant "*of servants*," so that the ones he was to serve are servants, too! The prophecy of Noah at the end of Genesis 9 is no excuse for race-based slavery. It was preparation for Israel's future dealings with the Canaanites.