

## Genesis 9A (2011)

The minister was preoccupied with thoughts of how he was going to ask the congregation to come up with more money than they were expecting for repairs to the church building. Therefore, he was annoyed to find that the regular organist was sick and a substitute had been brought in at the last minute. The substitute wanted to know what to play.

"Here's a copy of the service," the pastor said impatiently. "But, you'll have to think of something to play after I make the announcement about the finances."

During the service, the minister paused and said, "Brothers and Sisters, we are in great difficulty; the roof repairs cost twice as much as we expected and we need \$4,000 more. Any of you who can pledge \$100 or more, please stand up."

At that moment, the substitute organist played "The Star Spangled Banner."

And that is how the substitute became the regular organist!

- As we enter Chapter 9 today, we see Noah entering a strange, new world
  - Noah's experience continues to mirror the story of Creation and Adam in the Garden
    - The world has been made new out of water
    - And Noah has come into a world with no one else, a new beginning
    - Not coincidentally, there are 8 people on the Ark, and the number 8 in the Bible is associated with new beginnings
  - But more than just looking different, Noah's world will be different in several important and fundamental ways
    - God is now about to change His dispensation of grace from what existed prior to the flood, to a new order
    - And He does this in conjunction with a new covenant given to Noah and the world

**Gen. 9:1** And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

**Gen. 9:2** "The fear of you and the terror of you will 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.

**Gen. 9:3** "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.

[Gen. 9:4](#) "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.

[Gen. 9:5](#) "Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man.

[Gen. 9:6](#) "Whoever sheds man's blood,  
By man his blood shall be shed,  
For in the image of God  
He made man.

[Gen. 9:7](#) "As for you, be fruitful and multiply;  
Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it."

- You may remember a few weeks back I briefly mentioned that God has determined to work with the sinfulness of men through a series of covenants or dispensations
  - Each of these periods in human history have operated under a different set of conditions, but each has been designed to teach the same principle
    - The first period was a period of innocence before the Fall
      - But man couldn't remain faithful and he sinned
    - The next period was the dispensation of conscience, in which sinful man was left to his own in choosing right over wrong
      - But man couldn't rule over his flesh nature, so it led to the Flood
    - Now we come to the third period or dispensation
      - God will no longer rely on human conscience alone
      - Now He adds a new element for controlling man's sin: His covenant with Noah
  - As with His previous covenant with Adam, God's covenant takes a certain form
    - This is a "one-way" covenant, which we call a suzerainty covenant
    - It is a covenant given by a greater party to a lessor party
      - The other type of covenant is a parity covenant, where two equal parties agree to terms

- A suzerainty covenant doesn't require the lessor party to do anything in order for the covenant to be in force
      - It remains in force strictly on the faithfulness of the strong party, in this case God
      - So we can be sure this covenant will remain in force forever, since God is the only party Who must remain faithful to its terms
- Speaking of its terms, God gives mankind three terms and God assigns Himself one
  - He begins by blessing Noah and his sons, saying be fruitful and multiply
    - God appoints these men to repopulate the earth, and they will have the capacity to do so
  - Secondly, God changes the relationship between men and animals
    - In v.2 God declares that the beasts of the earth and the birds and all creeping things and all sea creatures will now instinctively fear man
      - Take note that there is one category of the animal kingdom missing from that list, and I don't mean poodles
      - God doesn't mention the category of "cattle"
      - Remember that beasts refers to wild animals while cattle refers to domesticable animals like livestock
      - All wild animals now will fear man
    - We see this command present in the world we know today
      - Wild animals will instinctively flee men
      - Even large wild animals fear men under most circumstances, even though they could overpower us
      - Have you stopped to wonder why? Genesis 9 tells us
- Next we see the reason why God wanted wild animals to fear man: He wanted to level the playing field
  - While God instructed Adam to only eat plants, now men are told that every beast or bird or creeping thing or sea creature is available for food

- God says meat can now supplement the vegetable diet
  - Notice that God reiterates in v.3 that green plants are still available
  - But meat is now added to man's diet
- We can't be sure that some men didn't try eating meat before the Flood in disobedience to God's instructions in the Garden
  - But we have no evidence that animals were seen to be food prior to this moment
  - I wonder what Noah and his family thought when they heard God tell them they could eat meat... "you go first"
- These kinds of changes to life and behavior become markers to help us distinguish changes in God's way for ruling over men
  - God is always showing men grace, but He dispenses His grace in various ways over human history
    - As an example, we know that when the Law is given to Israel, the rules for eating change again
    - Israel will not be permitted to eat certain animals following the giving of the Law
  - Why do animals become food for men at this point?
    - We can see one reason immediately and one for the future
      - Immediately, we have Noah facing a world without much food
      - Many of the trees will have survived and will flower and bring forth fruit in the coming months
      - Other seeds will have been buried and will begin to grow again
      - But still, during the early years after the flood, Noah's family and those who follow will need the nutrition that eating meat will provide
    - Secondly, God is planning to institute feasts and other celebrations to picture important things

- And in these feasts, animals will be consumed, like the Lamb at Passover
- God wanted a powerful picture to communicate the power of Christ's physical death and our need to partake of Him, like eating the lamb at Passover

[John 6:51](#) "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

[John 6:52](#) Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

[John 6:53](#) So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.

[John 6:54](#) "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

[John 6:55](#) "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.

[John 6:56](#) "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

[John 6:57](#) "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.

[John 6:58](#) "This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."

- Some listening in the crowd took this message literally i.e. cannibalism, but Jesus was speaking in metaphors
  - When we eat an animal as food, that animal's life becomes part of our life
  - In the same way, our spiritual life is made possible by receiving (taking in) the work of Christ on the cross – we consume it and make it part of our own life
- Having given animals fear and men permission to begin eating animals, God then moves to His second term for men: they may not eat blood
  - God tells Noah that when eating meat, man must not eat meat with its life, that is the blood
    - To be specific, God is saying that the slaughter of animals must include a process of draining the blood that runs through the veins
  - God isn't prohibiting eating meat that's rare or even raw

- God's concern is in slaughtering an animal in such a way that the blood remains in the veins and is consumed intentionally
- Mankind has been following this rule throughout the world since the day of Noah
  - Slaughterhouses everywhere drain the blood of an animal as part of the process of preparing the meat
  - Only cults or similar groups routinely consume blood, in disobedience to God's command
- God has prohibited consumption of blood because blood is both the literal and figurative representation of life
  - Literally, blood carries the nutrients that keep our flesh alive
    - It carries energy for muscles, carries away waste products from metabolism
    - It transports hormones and other essential chemical agents
    - It delivers oxygen and fuel to the brain, without which our mental activity ceases in a matter of seconds
  - Spiritually, God uses blood to picture the pouring out of life, just as blood loss leads to death
    - When blood is poured out on the altar, the symbolism communicates that life is leaving the body and is returning to God
    - And that's the point of God's prohibition...He is the One Who gives life and takes it away
    - Therefore, we can't direct life by our own power
      - We can't take it from another apart from God's decree
      - And we can't gain it for ourselves by our own efforts
    - When a person drinks another's blood, the symbolism is clear: we are trying to acquire life in some sense

- But this is not possible, and it offends the Life Giver Who alone gives life
- Finally, God gives mankind a third mandate: human and animal life may now be required as justice for taking life
  - God decrees that He now requires that a life be taken, whether of beasts and of men, when man's blood is shed
    - In v.6 God gives His reason behind the decree
      - God is the One Who made man, and therefore God is the life-giver
      - As the One who gives life, God is also the One Who has the right to end life
      - And if a person should step in and assume God's authority over life and death, that person must be put to death
  - Simply put, God is instituting capital punishment
    - Since there is so much controversy today over the practice of capital punishment, let's take a moment to be sure we understand God's instructions
    - First, we have to begin where God begins: God says He requires this be done
      - In v.5 it says God "requires" this action (literally: calls for)
      - Capital punishment isn't contrary to our belief and values as God's people
        - On the contrary, it was God Himself who required this step be taken
    - Secondly, God's principle is that taking a life has only one punishment: giving a life for a life
      - Later in giving the Law to Israel, God will expand this rule to incorporate additional offenses that warrant death
      - But in its inception, the principle is pure: a life for a life
      - If we look ahead to the Gospel story, we can see why God wanted to draw this connection in our understanding

- The sin we have requires that a life be given for our life of disobedience
- That's where the life of Christ came in, His life given so that we might gain our lives
- Third, God decrees in v.6 that this punishment will be carried out by the hand of man
  - Though this reference is a bit hard to see at first glance, in fact this statement is the beginning of human government
  - If man is going to carry out this decree, he must establish rules and processes for executing this decree
  - Obviously, it starts small, but as government is wont to do, it grows over time
  - And this structure is something God puts in place at this point
- Remember this is the beginning of a new dispensation: the dispensation of government
  - Where before God ruled men through their conscience directing them in judging right from wrong
    - But that dispensation only served to prove that men's conscience is incapable of taming the evil of their hearts
      - So God stepped in and brought the flood and a fresh start
      - But that fresh start didn't cure sin, nor was it intended to do so
    - So, God brings a new control for sin: human government with the power of the sword
      - Paul elaborates on this truth in Romans

**[Rom. 13:1](#)** Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

**[Rom. 13:2](#)** Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

**[Rom. 13:3](#)** For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

[Rom. 13:4](#) for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

- Paul confirms the principles we see established here in Genesis 9
  - Paul says that there is no authority on earth except those established by God
  - And if we resist – meaning act in defiance – to authority, we are resisting God Himself
  - And then Paul says government doesn't bear the sword for nothing
    - He's saying that God has given government the right to take life for a reason: to punish evil doers and to encourage law keeping
    - Here's our confirmation that the arrival of government coincided with the arrival of capital punishment
    - And they were both given as checks on man's sin, to help control the evil of men's hearts
      - They are new dispensations of God's grace
- But as before, they are not solutions for man's sin
  - Government isn't the solution to the evil of man's hearts
  - And no government is good enough to solve a problem that only finds its solution in a spiritual change
    - God is at work teaching mankind over and over again that the only solution is found with God Himself
- Having given men the three decrees, God now turns to Himself and obligates Himself to one important promise

[Gen. 9:8](#) Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying,

[Gen. 9:9](#) "Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you;

[Gen. 9:10](#) and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth.

**Gen. 9:11** "I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth."

- God states plainly that He is making this agreement by His own hand: a suzerainty agreement
  - And the agreement is between Noah and all Noah's descendants
    - Under these circumstances, this means all mankind
    - Remember, like Adam, every human being descends from Noah
  - God even goes a step further and obligates Himself to every creature in Creation, not just man
    - This is the last covenant in Scripture made between God and all mankind or creation
      - Thereafter, God's promises of grace begin to narrow and become exclusive to a portion of humanity
      - God's dispensation of grace to mankind will become a function of His work with a single people group
  - But at this point, God offers His word of promise to all humanity
    - He will never again cut off life with a flood of water
    - The earth will never see such a destruction again
      - But God leaves open the option of destroying the world other ways
  - In Isaiah and 2 Peter, we hear that the world is destined for another destruction
    - And this time, the destruction isn't merely for the purpose of ending sinful life
    - In the next worldwide destruction, God puts an end to the physical Earth itself
    - And He replaces it with something completely new and different
  - And by faith we are assured to be a part of that new world
    - And we will survive that coming judgment just as Noah survived this one: secure inside the Ark of Christ