

The Bible, Government, and Islam (Genesis 9:1-7)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on 8/30/2009

www.goldcountrybaptist.org

Since September 11, 2001, our Western world has been exposed to and immersed in new discussions of issues that really have their origins much farther back, in the first book of the Bible. Islamic history and teaching seeks to trace its origin back to Genesis, in fact many Muslims hold to more literal beliefs in creation and the early chapters of the Bible than many professing Christians do.

Conservative Muslims believe God created the world in six days,¹ in contrast to many conservative Christians. As my dad speaks in the Philippines, which I believe is seeing Islam grow faster than evangelical Christianity, my dad finds that his teaching on creation science is often well-received by Asian Muslims and non-Christian faculty of school and colleges where he speaks, but ironically more opposition in more than one place he's received comes from other Christians against his conservative literal presentation of creation and the foundations of Genesis that we've been studying on Sunday nights. It's sad to say many Muslims are better creationists and more consistent in their understanding of things we've been studying on Sunday night. My dad shared here awhile back that the Roman Catholic Church not too long ago hosted a conference on science and the Bible and evolution, and they didn't allow any conservative creationists there but they did invite a Muslim speaker, who went on to rebuke them for being evolutionists because creation has been their common ground in the past.

Muslims also believe a literal global killed all except those in the ark, unlike many Christians who try and say it was a local flood. Qur'an teaches their foundation begins with Genesis/Torah:

- 5:72: "Say thou: 'O People of the Book, ye are [founded] upon nothing, until ye observe the Taurat [Torah] ... and that which hath been sent down unto you by your Lord.'"
- 5:44: "Lo! We did reveal the Torah, wherein is guidance and light, by which the prophets who surrendered, pass judgment for the Jews, and the rabbis and the priests by such of Allah's Scriptures as was entrusted to them and thereunto they are witnesses."

The events of early Genesis are retold in the Qu'ran with its own spin, especially when you get to chapter 12 and following (Abram and Ishmael, Isaac, etc.) which is a few weeks away for us. Today Muslims argue that the Hebrew OT is corrupted and not their authority, but the Qu'ran itself taught to keep and confirm Torah.

The origin and ancestry of the people groups that would settle in various parts of the world identified as Muslim today, can all be traced back to Genesis 9-11ff, and some of that we'll discuss in future weeks. The Arab-Israeli conflict also has its roots in Genesis; don't tell me this ancient book has no relevance today!

Long before 9/11, in the 2nd half of the 20th century much of modern Western society has shifted its views on a number of fronts

- The right of governments to execute murderers, as seen in much outcry against execution of Saddam Hussein recently
- The rightness of any type of war, or even the rightness to declare anyone else is wrong, regardless of what atrocities they have done to human life, and the questioning of the rightness ever of deadly force ("instead let's just dialogue, enlighten and educate terrorists and then they won't want to kill all of us, it's all Bush's fault, etc.)

- the blessings and value of children and desire to have many
- the sanctity of human life, including unborn life, as made in God's image and distinct from animal life (it's not uncommon to see a car with pro-abortion bumper stickers and "save the whales" stickers side-by-side, or vegans and animal rights groups that neglect rights of unborn humans)
- the blessing God has given us in all the varieties of food and meat and good things to enjoy (some today think any killing of animals is wrong, but it's ok to abort our babies)
- many if not most who support woman's "choice" to kill her innocent unborn baby also oppose capital punishment of guilty murderers (instead we spend billions to rehab criminals, but do penitentiary's make them penitent?)

God's unchanging Word speaks very relevantly to today's world:

Genesis 9:1-7 ¹ *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth."* 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."* ³ *"Every moving thing [animals from v. 2] that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant."* ⁴ *"Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."* 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."* ⁶ *"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man."* ⁷ *"As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it."*

This chapter, as we'll see more in future messages, is not just a little speech God gives to Noah. There are MASSIVE implications here for all humanity for all time (v. 9b *"I establish my covenant with you **and with your descendents after you**"* – which is all humanity). What God says here is not limited to Israel or the church (neither of which existed yet technically) and it's not even limited to humanity alone but extends to all life on earth. It's universal: 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 [and it doesn't stop there] ...* ¹³ *I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a covenant **between Me and the earth.***

So this is not only for all life on the planet, but for the planet itself. This context is universal even in the sense that the whole universe is involved, not just the rainbow in our atmosphere, but heavenly bodies in the universe (sun, moon, stars) that govern the seasons: **8:22** *While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, And summer and winter, And day and night Shall not cease.*

I'm convinced many Western / American / Christians have no idea how much impact and harm has been caused by a failure to take seriously God's Words to the world here right after He judged the world. These words are not addressed to Israelites under an Old Covenant law code that has been abolished by Christ and the NT. This is God's Word to humanity, via Noah, the representative of humanity, who receives the same basic charge as the man's first representative, Adam. Both as representative heads are instructed:

- about the penalty of sin being death
- about man's place in this world in relation to the animals

- about mankind being created in the image of God and therefore there is inherent dignity and value in human life above animal life which we're responsible to rule and use
- that our ability to reproduce life, even life in the womb, is a divine blessing and precious gift from God and therefore children are to be seen as a blessing, not as a burden
- both are told to be fruitful and multiply God's image, in other words to spread God's image / glory in all the earth

Virtually every part of what I just said, and more importantly what we just read from God to the human race, has been ridiculed and reversed in significant measure by our nation along with virtually all formerly Christian Western nations in the last 50+ years.

And during the same century and years, Islam, which believes many of these things from Genesis but with their own twist, and twisted perversions of biblical truth, their false religion has seen unprecedented fruitful multiplying grown those 50 years. And while Western nations with Christian heritages, including ours, are working hard to remove every vestige of God and to make man the center of all, another religion is growing rapidly with a radical religious effort to make their god central and all man subordinate

The Muslim world is extremely theocentric. Its focus is on God. In Islamic communities the phrases, "Lord willing," "Praise God," "In the name of God," "There is no God but God," are heard daily. However, in the Western world, with its materialistic, secular, and humanistic viewpoints, God is left out of almost every area of life.²

Biblical commentators are largely agreed in recognizing that the text we just read is the origin of human government, established by God, which would be made more explicit later in this same scroll of Moses (what we call the book of Exodus). In its basic form, what we read in v. 6 about man executing justice on those who shed blood by shedding the murderer's blood in turn, the *lex talionis* principle of justice that the Torah will develop more later. This is the origin of and basis of courts and authorities to ensure justice takes place. Personal revenge is not in view in this principle but society/govt has responsibility to bear the sword, consequences on those who commit the greatest crime towards man made in God's image by ending precious life in God's image by murder.

Romans 13 says that government is ordained by God (which in basic form you could say was ordained in Genesis 9), and that includes pagan governments like the Roman government when that chapter was written, and God can and does use the most pagan and godless nations and rulers in His sovereign purposes.

In the OT, much of Mosaic Law was temporary and now fulfilled / superseded by Christ, or given New Covenant significance (ex: Lord's table instead of Passover, sacrifices done away with, along with ceremonies, civil laws under theocracy in land, etc.). Some in Britain and America have imagined their nation is the new Israel or replacement of Israel, or more common is the view that the church is Israel and God has no future plan for Israel as a people in prophecy. Some theologians/postmil writers have argued that civil government should institute OT laws on society, and there is a lot of theology out there that I don't believe handles the OT carefully. But almost every careful theologian I know of recognizes that *this passage* (Gen. 9), given before and apart from Old Covenant law to Israel in the land, this is a passage that reveals God's moral revelation for all time, including us, which we neglect to our peril.

To demonstrate that further, let's look at how the NT reaffirms the basic commissions given to man through Noah in the new world after the flood and judgments, words very parallel to the what God instructed original man and woman in the perfect Eden before sin.

The blessedness and preciousness of life, children, even unborn

The NT gospel starts in Luke 1 with God giving barren Elizabeth the blessing to conceive and be fruitful, and then miraculously the blessing of life and child is also promised to a virgin named Mary.

And the angel departed from her. ³⁹ Now **at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah,** ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, **the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.** ⁴² And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "**Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! [Heb. phrase for child, cf. Ps 127]**" ⁴³ "And how has it happened to me, that **the mother of my Lord** would come to me?" ⁴⁴ "For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, **the baby leaped in my womb for joy.**"

Man's special place in God's image above animals (Jas. 3, etc.)

I shared this during our family foundations series: 'two days after that man began serving his twelve-year prison sentence [convicted by court in Janesville, Wisconsin of animal cruelty in 1998 for killing 5 cats], a Delaware court sentenced a woman to only thirty months in prison for killing her newborn infant. The woman had tossed the newborn child out a third-floor motel-room window into a garbage bin in the alley below, umbilical cord still attached. Evidence showed the baby was alive when thrown out the window but died of exposure, abandonment, and massive skull fractures. It is clear that our society as a whole no longer believes humans are made in the image of God, very different from animals ... Ingrid Newkirk, founder of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), says, "There is no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights [then went on to essentially equate] a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy."

Newkirk sees no difference between the atrocities of World War II and killing animals for food: "Six million Jews died in concentration camps, but six *billion* broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses."

... vice president of the Humane Society of the United States ... says, "The life of an ant and the life of my child should be granted equal consideration." ... The future is unthinkable for a society without any moral standard by which to determine right and wrong. Already we are willing to sentence people to prison for killing animals, while encouraging abortionists to kill children. Where is our culture going? What kind of value system, what kind of morality, what kind of world are we establishing for the next generation?"³

We saw this in our study of Genesis 4, but when Abel killed animals and brought them before the LORD, He was pleased. But when Cain kills his fellow human, God is not pleased. This is a key distinction that may be obvious to us, but is important to emphasize in our world: it's a very important and special thing when a child is conceived in God's image to multiply on earth.

Genesis 9:2-3 (NASB95) 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.*” ³ “*Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant ...*” ⁶ “*Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.*” ⁷ “*As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply*”

So animals and all other life forms can be killed for food but taking another human’s life will result in the taking of your life. This is such a serious thing because it reverses God’s intention for His image to multiply and be spread on the earth, a theme that continues to the end of the OT regarding God’s intent for godly offspring (Malachi 2) as well as the NT (1 Corinthians 7, Eph. 6, etc.). Right on the heels of mentioning God’s image in v. 6, God again reminds them of the creation commission or blessing to be fruitful and multiply and spread God’s image and glory abroad through children. Don’t murder, multiply God’s image through children. Babies are special and precious in our Lord’s eyes, who asked the little ones to be brought to Him while He was here on earth and is in the womb with them personally (Psalm 139).

Sadly, quite a different view of children is held by so much of our world. Children are seen as unimportant, nuisances, in the way of what grown-ups want to do, they’re seen as liabilities, hindrances to a woman’s career, a mere choice for woman’s rights, burdens not blessings, and for America’s top leaders right now; as long as an infant is not completely out of the birth canal, late term abortion is considered ok. The evil of abortion is such a serious and Satanic undermining of God’s very purpose that Genesis 1 and 9 records. We need to pray God would open the eyes of our leaders and legislators – even unbelievers – to what is right and wrong.

We live in a country which is so harsh on people who kill certain unborn animals, and yet so harsh toward any who want to protect unborn human beings from being aborted. It’s illegal to kill an unborn eagle, it’s unthinkable wrong for baby seals to die, while the killing of baby humans is legally sanctioned and furiously fought for by liberals. Try and cut some trees down in many areas, and you’ll cause quite an uproar, but those who want shade for their family from liberal agendas, those who want to protect unborn children and protect a biblical understanding of the family, those like us are said to be the real radicals and dangerous ones!

The wages of sin being death – Rom. 6:23, etc.

God Himself imposed the death penalty on man in Gen. 2 if they would sin by eating the forbidden fruit. Not every sin in OT law required death penalty of stoning to be carried out, and God chose to be gracious a number of occasions, but it wasn’t because sin isn’t serious and deserving death. “The soul that sins shall die” is the message of the prophet. Anytime any sinner remains alive is due to God’s amazing grace.

Death penalty carried out by man for murderers in particular?

Genesis 9:6 “*Whoever sheds man’s blood, **By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.***”

In Matthew 26:52, Jesus said to Peter about to kill a Roman soldier, a man in God's image: "***Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword.***" Further Scripture makes clear that the governing authorities of justice are to carry out capital or other punishment. *Sword*=deadly force and its threat is part of what God ordained for stable society:

Romans 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 ...* ⁴ *for it is a minister [servant] 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.*

In Acts 25:10-11 (ESV), Paul said to Festus: "*I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried ... If then I am a wrongdoer and **have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death.***"

When the nation of Israel allowed many bloody crimes to go unpunished, among their other sins, God's judgment came on them

Ezekiel 7 prophesies it this way: ²³ *'Make the chain, for the land is full of bloody crimes and the city is full of violence.* ²⁴ *'Therefore, I will bring the worst of the nations, and they will possess their houses. I will also make the pride of the strong ones cease, and their holy places will be profaned.*

If God's covenant nation Israel could be judged in this way, do we as America in our nation that has filled up with the blood of millions of murdered unborn babies among other crimes, can we feel we are safe from the worst of Muslim nations who want to bring our pride down and desecrate holy places by turning them into mosques? It's happening right now to other nations that once had as great a Christian influence, as I want to show you later ...

Numbers 35:33 (ESV) *You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, **except by the blood of the one who shed it.***

God holds the very nation, the very land, guilty when it doesn't shed the blood of those who shed innocent blood, when it doesn't recognize the seriousness of murdering innocent life in God's image, when a nation of land departs from what God laid down in Genesis 9, God describes the very land as polluted, blood-guilty. God already said in Genesis 4:10 that the blood of the murdered one, Abel in that case, was crying out to God from the ground, crying for justice, and God hears that cry even though no man killed Cain as Cain feared and knew he deserved in v. 14

Jesus affirmed that the blood of all God's children killed, from Abel to Zechariah, testified against them. In Heb 11:4, God said Abel being dead, still speaks to God to this day. Innocent bloodshed in murdering God's image requires death literally from Gen-to-Rev. Before there were governing authorities established to restrain evil in the earth before the flood, we read things like:

Genesis 4:23 *Lamech said to his wives, “Adah and Zillah, Listen to my voice, You wives of Lamech, Give heed to my speech, For I have killed a man for wounding me; And a boy for striking me; ²⁴ If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”*

Genesis 6:11 *Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and **the earth was filled with violence.** ¹² God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. ¹³ Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me; for **the earth is filled with violence** because of them; and behold, **I am about to destroy them with the earth.**”*

In Genesis 9, God says no more, no more letting murder and violence run while blood runs to the ground that calls out to God. After the flood, God ordains restraint of murder by execution and God Himself executes in judgment the whole world because of such violence and bloodshed, and the only reason He hasn't done the same with our nation is certainly not that we're any less guilty (not only of murder in general, but of the innocent unborn as well).

Our nation rejected capital punishment in large-scale in the 1960s and 70s and other Western countries do to this day and some are opposed to discipline by parents in outlawing spanking. So you can't apply loving discipline to your kids as they grow up but you can kill them if you want while they're really small and less than 9 months from when their life started? And while we're on this topic of punishment, it would be an interesting study for another time to look at the history of the prison system that the US came up with, in contrast to how God's law and people sought restitution and restoration of crimes done in centuries past.⁴

Last principle in Gen. 9: Being fruitful and multiplying

Muslim faith and families, for all their false theology, have taken seriously the twice repeated command here which is also in Gen. 1:28 to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Children are seen as a blessing by their god, not a burden. Children are greatly desired by their culture to be multiplied and to multiply their faith and spread it through all the earth. Islam is wrong on so many fronts, but at its core, this is right and is actually rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures. Muslims take seriously their responsibility to train up and educate their children in the ways of their religion, while Europe and North America has not very much.

In 1800, American women bore an average of 8 children. In 1964, the average woman still bore 3.5 children, but 24 years later, the average was 1.93.⁵ It's remained in the 1 range as I understand, w/ a little help from immigration of families from non-Western nations. I recently received the following reproduction statistics:⁶

In order to maintain a culture for 25 years it must have a 2.11 birth rate. Historically, no culture has ever reversed a 1.9 fertility rate (1.3 impossible to sustain). The average rate of reproduction in Europe overall is 1.38 (Greece, Germany, Italy, Spain, even lower). In a matter of years, Europe as we know it will be no more.

But the population of Europe is growing. Do you know how? Immigration. 90% of all European population growth in the last 20 years has been immigration, Islamic immigration.

The Islamic birth rate is 8.1 children per family in France. In southern France, historically one of the most populated church regions in the world, there are now more mosques than churches. 30% of all 20 and younger are Islamic. In some of the larger cities, including Paris, the number has grown to nearly 45% - very soon more than half of the young people in France's big cities will be Muslim. In one generation, France will be an Islamic Republic.

In the last 30 years, Great Britain's Muslim population has seen a 30-fold increase. Many former churches that used to teach the Bible in that nation have been converted to one of the 1,000 + mosques in Great Britain. I told you it's already happening ...

Within the next 17 years, one European government estimates 1/3rd of all children born in Europe will be Muslim. In the Netherlands, 50% of all newborns are Muslim. It will only take 15 years before they make up half or the majority of the population, some say.

The German government was the first to speak on this publicly and has conceded that their country will be a Muslim state in about 40 years if current trends don't change. Muammar al-Gaddafi of Libya stated: "There are signs that Allah will grant victory to Islam in Europe without swords, without guns, without conquest. We don't need terrorists, we don't need homicide bombers. The 50+ million Muslims [in Europe] will turn it into a Muslim continent within a few decades." There are almost half that many Muslims just in Russia alone. 40% of the Russian army will be Islamic in just a few years.

In our North American neighbor Canada, Islam is the fastest growing religion. In 2001-2006, their population increased 1.6 million, 1.2 million of those were immigration. The USA's Muslim population will soon exceed 10 million (it was only 100,000 in the decade I was born). In 30 years, they predict there will be 50 million Muslims living in America.

Some studies suggest that at its current growth rate, it may only take 5-7 years before Islam is the dominant religion of the world (its membership numbers have already surpassed Catholicism's and will soon pass all other forms of Christianity combined)

The majority of Muslims today do NOT live in the Middle East, nor are countries with the highest percentage of Muslims located in that part of the world. Asia has the most – this has been happening for awhile. Could it be that as western society turns its back on God and His truth that judgment will fall on them by false religion? God has done it in Bible times, and you could certainly argue it's already taking place and will continue apart from true repentance and trust in the only true God who will win in the end, but we need to wake up in the meanwhile. Thankfully we have the book that has written the end of the story, but we need to believe it and live it now.

¹ Samuel Shahid, "Christianity Vis-à-vis Islam," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 44/2 (Spring 2002): 73. The Muslim perspective is not monolithic and does allow for long ages of time, though many conservative Muslims consistently reject evolution.

² Patrick O. Cate, "Islamic Values and the Gospel," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155/619 (July 1998): 356

³ John MacArthur, What the Bible Says About Parenting: God's Plan for Rearing Your Child, p. 4-5.

⁴ John MacArthur, *Why Government Can't Save You: An Alternative to Political Activism*, p. 48-50. For a secular psychological perspective and history, see: http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1987/5/1987_5_92.shtml

⁵ *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S Bureau of the Census, 1991), page 65.

⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-3X5hIFXYU>

