

Post-Flood Conditions; Capital Punishment Instituted

Genesis 9:1-7

Genesis 9:1-7 - *“So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill 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. ³ Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. ⁴ But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. 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. ⁷ And as for you, be fruitful and multiply. Bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it.”*

Background Notes

Genesis 6-8 describes the worldwide Flood, which was the greatest catastrophe this earth has ever seen. Last week Margie and I visited Mount Saint Helens, the volcano in the state of Washington that erupted in 1980. The effects of that catastrophe are still very evident today. The extensive catastrophe caused by that eruption was “child’s play” compared to the catastrophe of the Genesis Flood. However, at Mount St Helens you can catch a little awe-inspiring insight into the devastation that can take place with a major geologic catastrophe.

The Flood of Noah’s day was worldwide in scope - it was not a local flood confined to the Mesopotamian valley. The descriptions of the Flood in Genesis and in 2 Peter indicate a **worldwide** catastrophe. 2 Peter 3:3-6: *“knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days..., saying... since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.”*

Peter certainly believed in a worldwide Flood, and Peter clearly intended to teach a worldwide Flood to his readers. So if you don’t believe in a worldwide Flood, you are essentially saying that two inspired writers of Scripture, Moses and Peter, didn’t know what they were talking about!

Some of the effects of the Flood of Noah’s day are still seen today in geologic features around the earth. A couple of years ago I was teaching in South Korea, and one afternoon we hiked up a mountain called “Maisan,” meaning “horse ears.” The mountain peak splits and looks like the two ears of a horse. I observed, to my amazement, that this mountain is composed completely of “conglomerate.” Now that may not mean anything to you, but conglomerate is a natural mixture of sand, pebbles, gravel, and boulders of all sizes. **All** geologists agree that conglomerate is deposited from **rapidly moving waters**, as in a **flood**.

And more than a local flood is required to get a high mountain composed completely of conglomerate! This mountain of conglomerate could only have been formed as a result of a **huge** flood, worldwide in scope. In addition, we found out later that this mountain of conglomerate is loaded with fish and shell fossils, from top to bottom - further evidence of the great worldwide Flood of Genesis 6-8.

Doctrinal Points

1. Eating meat has a biblical basis.

Don't let anyone tell you that it's "more spiritual" to be a vegetarian! 1 Timothy 4 indicates that's a characteristic of false teachers. The Bible doesn't teach that it's wrong to be a vegetarian, and the Bible doesn't teach that it's right to eat as much meat as possible. The Bible **does** teach that it's OK to occasionally enjoy a hamburger. But it wasn't always that way.

God did not give mankind permission to eat meat until after the Flood. In Genesis 1:29-30, right after God created man He said, *"See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. ³⁰ Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so."*

So until the time of the Flood people were vegetarian, and it seems that animals were vegetarian as well. But after the Flood some animals become carnivorous, and no longer was there harmony between mankind and animals. Mankind was now allowed to kill animals for food, and permission to eat meat was given.

Verses 2-4: *"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. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."*

So it's OK to enjoy a steak dinner - but notice that the animal's blood must be drained before it qualifies as edible. Eating meat has a biblical basis.

2. Capital punishment has a biblical basis.

Verse 6: *"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man."*

Notice that the biblical basis for capital punishment does not reflect a "low view" of life, but rather a "**high** view" of life!

Humans were created **in the image of God** - so how dare a person take the life of one who has been created in the image of God? According to the Bible, a person who commits murder must forfeit his or her own life. **The sanctity of life is upheld by capital punishment.**

The covenant that God made with mankind after the Flood in Genesis 9 is called the Noahic Covenant. This covenant has never been revoked, lifted or changed, and it is upheld in the New Testament. Romans 13:4 says, *“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.”* In the Bible, human governments were given authority to administer capital punishment.

Are some of you thinking, “But what about the Lord’s statement to “turn the other cheek””? Well, remember that we must always consider the meaning of any Scripture in its proper context. What was the context when the Lord said, “Turn the other cheek”? Was He addressing a national government that has the responsibility to protect life and maintain law and order? No. Our Lord’s admonition to “turn the other cheek” was made to individual believers who were suffering for the sake of Christ. Human governments still have a **biblical** basis to administer capital punishment.

The biblical basis for capital punishment today is the Noahic Covenant of Genesis 9. It is **not** the Mosaic covenant. Did you realize that? So if someone asks you “Where in the Bible is the biblical basis for capital punishment?” don’t turn to the Old Testament Law, the Mosaic Covenant. Here are two reasons why:

- a. The Law, or the Mosaic Covenant, ended with Christ. We are no longer under the regulations of the Law of Moses. The Mosaic Law was in effect from Moses to Christ. God’s **moral principles** that are part of the Law of Moses didn’t change, but the civil and ceremonial regulations, restrictions and penalties are not the same today as under the Law.
- b. Under the Law of Moses, the death penalty was prescribed for other crimes - not just for murder. Under the Law, the death penalty was prescribed for adultery, for homosexuality and other forms of extramarital sex, for witchcraft, for spiritism - and even for rebellious teenagers. Did you know that? Yes – under the Mosaic Law, a rebellious son who wouldn’t submit to discipline could be put to death!

While we agree that all of these things are sin, we don’t believe that a nation today has the right to impose the death penalty for these other sins. But murder is different.

The basis for capital punishment for the crime of murder is not the Mosaic Covenant, but the Noahic covenant. The Noahic Covenant of Genesis 9 was instituted **before** the Law. It was given **for all mankind, for all nations, for all time** - not just for the nation of Israel. The Noahic Covenant, that includes the stipulation of capital punishment in the case of murder, has never been revoked or lifted or changed. Capital punishment has a biblical basis.

Practical Application

Let God worry about population control!

After God created Adam and Eve, in Genesis 1:28 He commanded them, “*Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.*” After the Flood, in Genesis 9:1, God gave man the same command: “*Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth,*” And verse 7: “*As for you, be fruitful and multiply. Bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it.*”

So part of God’s covenant with man at the time of Noah was the command to repopulate the earth - in fact, to populate the earth *abundantly!* Since the Noahic Covenant has never been revoked or changed, from God’s perspective it is still in effect today. It is a covenant with all mankind. But what about “overpopulation”? What about the earth’s food supply? What about the idea of that soon there will be “standing room only”? Etc, etc... We should let God worry about population control!

The command to be fruitful and multiply does not mean that every married couple should try to have as many children as possible! That may create physical hardship for the mother - and we are responsible to adequately provide for the children that we bring into this world. However, using unbiblical means (such as abortion) as a means of population control is grossly sinful! In spite of the problems that may be associated with population growth, let’s not break God’s command to mankind. Let’s let God worry about population control!