

Explore the Bible: January 21

Protect • Genesis 9:1-15

By Laura Lee Leathers



Leathers

To
da
y
ma
rk
s
th
e
40th
an
nu
al
Sa
nc
ti
ty
of
Li
fe
Su
nd
ay
.
Th
e
ke
y
do
ct

ri
ne
fo
r
to
da
y'
s
le
ss
on
is
th
is
:
"T
he
sa
cr
ed
ne
ss
of
hu
ma
n
pe
rs
on
al
it
y
is
ev
id
en
t

in
th
at
at
Go
d
cr
ea
te
d
ma
n
in
Hi
s
ow
n
im
ag
e,
an
d
in
th
at
Ch
ri
st
di
ed
fo
r
ma
n;
th
er
ef
or

e,
ev
er
y
pe
rs
on
of
ev
er
y
ra
ce
po
ss
es
se
s
fu
ll
di
gn
it
y
an
d
is
wo
rt
hy
of
re
sp
ec
t
an
d

Ch
ri
st
ia
n
lo
ve
.”
(S
ee
Ex
od
us
20
:1
3;
Ma
tt
he
w
5:
43
-4
8;
Jo
hn
15
:1
2-
Li
fe
wa
y.
)

What do you believe about the sanctity of life? Is your belief system based upon your preconceived ideas, the world's

perspective, or the Word of God?

God's word is clear: we are made in His image. Life is precious from conception to the grave, and to abuse or murder another individual is against God's original purpose, design, and command.

Throughout the study of Genesis, we've seen God cover specific instructions regarding four different areas of life: replenishing the earth with human life, a plan to sustain life, the protection of life, and a unilateral covenant.

The Blessing (Genesis 9:1-4, CSB) – For the fifth time, God communicates directly to Noah, but notice this time it is to him and his sons –“them.” Our passage begins with “God blessed (barak) Noah.” To bless an individual means to “bestow good” or to “fill with strength.”

The command is reissued to “be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth.” The world would be replenished from eight people, two of each kind of unclean, and seven pairs of clean animals.

In verse two, the relationship between humans and animals changes. Now, all the animals, also the sea creatures, would be fearful of man. Creatures would be under man's authority through force and fear–“into your hands.”

Also, in this section, we now have the phrase “food for you.” The first mention of eating meat. However, there was one stipulation: the meat wasn't to be eaten “with its lifeblood in it” (see Mosaic law, Lev. 17:10-14; Deut. 12:24).

An animal was not to be eaten alive. The blood from the animals had to be drained before being eaten, and no one was allowed to drink the blood. Life is in the blood, meaning it is sacred to God. “The consumption of blood is also forbidden due to the blood's connection with the atonement for sin” (Lifeway).

The Warning (Genesis 9:5-7) – The word “require” is used in this passage three times. God will “require a penalty for your lifeblood and from any animal and any human if someone murders a fellow human” (v. 5). And here’s the warning: God would “require that person’s life.”

The phrase is used again in Deuteronomy 19:21; the Mosaic law emphasizes “life for life” (also see Romans 13:1-7). As we study this passage, we must remember that the focus is on the sanctity of life –exceedingly serious to God.

Remember when God asked Cain about his brother, Abel, and Cain responded am I my brother’s keeper? That is literally what the phrase “person’s life” is referencing, “brother of every man” (Gen. 4:9).

The final verse in this section stresses the command, “Be fruitful, multiply, spread out over the earth and again multiply on it. In other words, it is an intentional commitment to procreation and the sanctity of human life.

The Covenant (Genesis 9:8-15) – Continuing the speech to Noah and his sons, God describes the covenant He establishes. The word establish is used three different times, “with different Hebrew tenses: imminent future (v. 9), present (v. 11), and past tenses (v. 1)” (Lifeway). The word means “to fix, stand, or confirm.”

Never again would God destroy humanity by a flood. The statement is made thrice (vs. 9, 11, 15). In other words, you can bank on God’s promise. The phrase “wiped out” is translated as “cut off” or “destroyed.” Another reference to this is in Genesis 15:9-19 when God “cut” a covenant with Abraham.

This covenant is not just for Noah and his family but for all future generations. “God extended mercy to future generations in anticipation of the coming Messiah and His atoning death for the sins of all humanity” (Lifeway).

The sign of the covenant would be a bow in the clouds. "The rainbow was a visible manifestation attesting to the grace God extended to the human race" (Lifeway). You will find a reference to rainbows three more times in Scripture: Ezekiel 1:28 and Revelation 4:3: 10:1.

The next time you witness God's creation of a rainbow in the clouds, thank Him for the promise that He will never again destroy everything in the world by a flood. But also thank Him for creating man in His image and sending Jesus as the propitiation for our sin (1 John 2:2).

Leathers is a member of First Church, Lexington. Contact her at laura.l.leathers@gmail.com