

NEVER AGAIN!, GENESIS 9

This is My Father's World #7

◆**Intro:** Many years ago, I had an aquarium was formless and void, I brooded upon the face of the waters. I separated the waters from each other by putting rocks in the bottom of my creation. I said, "Let there be plants" and there were...small plastic, un-killable leafy plants. I said, "Let there be fish to teem in the waters." and headed off to the pet shop to bring home gouramis, fan-tail guppies, angel fish, tiger barbs and a red-tailed shark. He was black, with white-ash edges to his fins. He was the prize of my underwater world.

◆But... he sinned. He would chase the other fish, and nip at their tails. All the others hid at one end. Panic presided over my little world. I was furious! I only set up the dumb aquarium because it was supposed to be soothing, calming. But lo! Tension mounted! Since sending a flood would've had little effect, I gave the evil creature the magic swirly. But, alas, there would be more sinful fish as time went by.

◆Our text today, the episode after the flood, is a pretty clear repeat of what happened in the Garden of Eden with the fall of mankind into sin. The themes and language of Adam & Eve's fall, and the murder of Abel by his brother Cain are all brought back together a second time in chapter 9. Let's run down a list of comparisons so you can see what I mean.

- ◆1) After the Flood, Noah is the "first" man, like Adam, the progenitor.
- ◆2) God repeats almost verbatim the mandate to be fruitful and fill the earth that he gave to Adam, for a second time and twice! (1,7)

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- ◆3) All the animals are under Noah's supervision, coming out of the ark to fill the earth, just as Adam ruled and named all the animals in chapter 2. (8:19) Only now instead of coming to Adam for names, and coming to Noah for the ark, animals dread mankind. (2)
- ◆4) God again gives every green plant for food, but now adds the flesh of animals for Noah and his family. (v3)
- ◆5) Noah is a tiller of the soil, like Adam worked the ground. (20)
- ◆6) Adam ate the "fruit" and Noah drank the "fruit". (21)
- ◆7) Adam & Eve were at first naked and had no shame, but after sinning, nakedness became embarrassing and shameful. Likewise Noah becomes naked, and Ham does something shameful regarding that. (22)
- ◆8) As with Adam & Eve, there is the righteous son(s) (Abel/Shem/Japheth), and the unrighteous son (Cain/Ham)
- ◆9) Where Cain was cursed for murder, our text *explicitly* forbids murder, and Canaan is cursed for the sin of his father Ham. (v25) We find out in chapter 10:15-18 that Canaan is the father of all the evil peoples that someday Israel would be told to chase out of the land of Canaan: Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, and a bunch more "ites", termites and parasites I think.
Genesis 10:15-17

◆So our author is clearly pointing to the repetition of human history. God has now created and mandated twice, but still man has this seed of sin down deep inside which seems destined to rise to the surface. It's all very frustrating as I'm sure you've felt in your own lives. Several themes stand out in Genesis 9.

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◆ **1. God values me and my human race above all other created reality.** See, history is repeating itself here, but God is not ok with it. There are two main ways we fail to value human hood. Murder & sexual abuse.

◆ A. Because God considers human life as the highest value in the universe, I must not seek to destroy another person. In Matthew 5 Jesus says anger is the same sin as murder. So even if you haven't intentionally run someone over with your car, or shot someone in the face like the Nazis, that doesn't mean the the poison of murder isn't flowing through your veins. Most of us just kill people softly with our words. We hold grudges against people who hurt our feelings. We speak badly about people we disagree with. We might find ourselves on the very verge of hating national leaders for their foolishness rather than praying for them. The Heidelberg Catechism puts it like this:

◆105 Q. What is God's will for you in the sixth commandment?

◆A. *I am not to belittle, insult, hate, or kill my neighbor--not by my thoughts, my words, my look or gesture, and certainly not by actual deeds--and I am not to be party to this in others; rather, I am to put away all desire for revenge. I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself either.*

◆106 Q. Does this commandment refer only to killing?

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◆A. *By forbidding murder God teaches us that he hates the root of murder: envy, hatred, anger, vindictiveness. In God's sight all such are murder.*

◆This means of course that by condemning hatred and anger, God is commanding us to be patient, and peace-loving, and gentle even to people who tick us off! God is telling me that I should want to protect people from harm and that I should look for ways to do good to people who do bad by me. You heard that right.

◆*Romans 12:17-21 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

◆Some years ago I was at the town Leadership Meeting in Highland where we heard a 1/2 hour presentation on organized gang activity in Chicago and it's fingers into our area. These were nationwide organizations that traffic in exploiting human beings. Drug use. Sex industry. Human trafficking. One official told us that often when they pulled a gang member out of a high school and contacted the

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parents, the parents had no idea what their child was involved in! This is the culture we're building. Parents don't even know their kids! We are not choosing life for people around us. We are choosing entertainment, business building, accumulations of wealth, important achievements, exotic experiences, looking at our phones at the restaurant table instead of conversing with our children about their day. We choose to work work work because we want to buy things on Amazon that we've always wanted. But in the process, someone else raises our kids whom we barely see. We are living as life-takers. It's murder in a very real way. And God is saying, "No killing my kids!"

◆B. Secondly, because God considers human life as the highest value in the universe, I must not sexually use or abuse another person. We run into this with Noah's son Ham. What exactly was the sin of Ham? It's not described in detail in our text. It says he "saw" his father's "nakedness", while his brothers were very careful not to. (22-23). But we also know from later in Moses' writings that to "see the nakedness of" or to "uncover the nakedness of" is a Hebrew euphemism for sexual relations of some sort. For example consider Leviticus 18. I'm going to read it from the NASB as it is more exact to the Hebrew wording.

◆Leviticus 18:6-17 (NASB) 'None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover nakedness; I am the LORD. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, that is, the nakedness of your mother. (see, *mom*

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and dad belong to each other alone) She is your mother; you are not to uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness. The nakedness of your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether born at home or born outside, their nakedness you shall not uncover. The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for their nakedness is yours. The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, born to your father, she is your sister, you shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is your father's blood relative. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is your mother's blood relative. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother; you shall not approach his wife, she is your aunt. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife, you shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness (*again, husband and wife belong to each other alone*). You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; they are blood relatives. It is lewdness. (all repeated in chapter 20)

◆ That was probably hard to read, wasn't it? The text goes on to forbid the neighbor lady, same sex people, animals. We might sum it up by saying there is to be no sexual activity involving any people except between a husband and his own wife, because people are sacred. People are physical but also spiritual beings. And human sexuality is so powerful it deeply affects the person in spirit whether we like it or not. Even sex inside of marriage, used selfishly, can become an abuse of the other person such that he or she is damaged in spirit, if not physically. People are sacred. They are not to be used.

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- ◆ Some studies show that as many as one out of three girls and one in four boys suffer some sort of sexual abuse before 18. Sexual abuse is prevalent and it is traumatic. In the two weeks following an assault, 94 percent of women in one study reported experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder such as flashbacks, insomnia, hypervigilance, and avoidance. They also struggled with anger, anxiety, and depression, eating disorders. Childhood sexual abuse is also strongly linked to drug and alcohol use, and those who experience it are about 2.5 times more likely to make a suicide attempt than people who have not been abused.
- ◆ What does this mean? Well, first if you have been hurt like this, know that God is on your side. He opposes such devaluation. And please seek professional help. You can find healing. It's possible.
- ◆ What else does this mean? It means that father's who are abusing their daughters need to stop it. God is saying, "Don't kill my kids!" It means that men who are sneaking off with a lady at work need to stop it. It means that if you are looking at porn on your computer, you are uncovering the nakedness of someone who is not yours. You are killing their sacredness. Stop killing Gods kids! You need to get a filtering service and find some accountability partners to talk with weekly. It means that if you're thinking about moving in with your boyfriend you are making a big mistake because you will NOT be treating each

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other as sacred the way God wants you to. Which brings us to our last observation.

◆2. God views his creatures, including me, as worth his

promise. The other most obvious element I see in Genesis 9 is it's repetition of God's covenant promise. It's his pledge of love, his marriage certificate so-to-speak. It is not a prenuptial agreement that depends on your worth or beauty or actions.

Remember, the text clearly shows that mankind has not improved after the Flood. They are not able to get it right on their own. Yet here we have the very first mention of God making a covenant with humanity. His rainbow is God telling each of us we can start over, and he will stick to us like bees on honey!

◆This text speaks to those times when you've gone and done that one thing again that you know you shouldn't have, OR had something done to you... And you think to yourself, "I'm a lost cause. I'm never gonna do it right."

◆In his book *Jesus in the Margins*, Rick McKinley shares stories of people who have experienced difficulty in life's journey. One of those stories comes from 31-year-old Tiffany. She writes:

◆When I was 9-years-old, I was molested by a family member. At the time I really didn't understand what was happening, but I knew it wasn't normal. I was too scared to tell anyone, and because he was a family member, I felt that somehow my mom and dad allowed it to happen. Looking back, I can see that wasn't true, but at the time I didn't know any better. The abuse continued until I was 12, and I told my mom what was happening. She cried so loud and for so long. I

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realized then the gravity of what had happened.... I've never been able to scrub the sick feeling off my soul that was put there through the abuse. So I just go through life feeling that if anyone ever knew who I was on the inside, they would simply reject me.

◆ I hate men. That's maybe a little strong. But every relationship I've ever had has been shallow because of it. I can't give myself to them, not emotionally anyway. I can have a sexual relationship, but that's about as far as it goes. For some reason, trusting men with my body isn't a big deal; I just can't trust them with my heart....

◆ I'm kind of angry with God. Why did he let it happen to me? He couldn't really love me.... I hope one day I can be honest with someone about my life and about what has happened to me, even the things I've done. And I hope that person can love me anyway.

◆ At the end of the book, McKinley includes another letter from Tiffany, who is now at a different stage in her journey.

◆ I am always amazed at how God has met me in the deepest parts of me....I realize that God has loved me the whole time. The abuse taught me that I was worthless, but Christ has taught me that I am precious to him. The greatest thing is that in his love I could really forgive the person who hurt me and move on. Moving on is a daily thing for me. I can't say that it's cut-and-dried or that the pain is gone forever, but it is different now....

◆ I am still single, but I don't give myself away to guys anymore. I see now that the love I was looking for can only be found in Jesus. I am a grateful daughter who is just trying to stay in my Father's love. pp. 13-14, 183

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◆**Conclusion:** I want us to know and remember that God is the covenant making God. God is the one sticking with his human kids when his human kids can't stick with him. God is the one who keeps making a way, and giving second, and third, and forth chances. He is vehemently against your dying, and for your thriving. Which is why, in the new covenant, Jesus died for sinners who couldn't stop repeating history. God kept his promises. He traded his Son's murder for our birth.