

Awakening in the Word

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THE OVERVIEW

There are times in life when things don't go the way we had planned and hoped they would. As children, when this happened, we would simply yell, "DO OVER!" and begin all over again. Refusing to accept humiliation or defeat, the "DO OVER!" was a chance for a new attempt, a new beginning, and a new and hope-filled effort to succeed where past efforts had failed. In many ways our portion this week is a "DO OVER." In this portion we witness a new and hope-filled beginning for man and creation. It should not surprise us, therefore, to see numerous parallels to the original creation story echoed in this particular portion. We must be careful, however, not to overlook the numerous and significant differences between the first creation narrative and this new beginning. The waters of the flood purged the world of a number of sinners, but not of sin. Within this portion we witness the Creator's attribute of mercy as He binds Himself by His word, promising never to completely destroy creation due to the sin of man. We also witness the command for man to establish government in order to curb man's sin nature, which survived the flood. In this portion Noah and his family are commanded to leave the ark and commissioned to resume the calling of Adam and Chava to repopulate the earth.

THE OUTLINE

- Genesis 8:15-17 The command and commission to leave the ark
- Genesis 8:18-19 The passengers leave the ark
- Genesis 8:20 Noah builds an altar and makes an offering
- Genesis 8:21-22 YHWH makes a covenant
- Genesis 9:1-2 The blessing of Noah and his family
- Genesis 9:3-4 The dietary laws
- Genesis 9:5-6 Any man or beast that takes a human life must die
- Genesis 9:7 The command to be fruitful and multiply
- Genesis 9:8-17 The covenant confirmed

SUGGESTED STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of the use of the name "Elohim"?
2. What is the significance of the use of the name "YHWH"?
3. What is the significance of the order in which Noah and his family came off the ark?
4. What is the significance of the variations in the blessings to be fruitful?
5. What is the meaning of Noah's altar and sacrifice?
6. What do "clean" and "unclean" mean?
7. Why does the Creator change man's diet?
8. Why does the Creator prohibit the eating or drinking of blood?
9. What are the Noahide laws and who are they for?
10. What is the covenant of the Creator?

THE TEXT Genesis 8:15-9:17

Genesis 8:15 And Elohim spake unto Noah, saying, ¹⁶ Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. ¹⁷ Bring forth with thee every living thing that *is* with thee, of all flesh, *both* of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. ¹⁸ And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: ¹⁹ Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, *and* whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark. ²⁰ ¶ And Noah builded an altar unto YHWH; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹ And YHWH smelled a sweet savour; and YHWH said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. ²² While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. **9:1** ¶ And Elohim blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. ² And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth *upon* the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. ³ Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. ⁴ But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. ⁵ And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. ⁶ Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of Elohim made he man. ⁷ And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein. ⁸ ¶ And Elohim spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, ⁹ And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; ¹⁰ And with every living creature that *is* with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. ¹¹ And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. ¹² And Elohim

said, This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations: ¹³ I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: ¹⁵ And I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between Elohim and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth. ¹⁷ And Elohim said unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

After 373 days in the ark, the Creator finally commands Noah and his family to disembark. One can only imagine how different the world looked, smelled, and felt after the flood. How strange it must have been to realize that the only living things in the whole world were those contained within the ark. There was no one to greet Noah and his family as they came out of the ark – no cheering crowds, no herds or flocks of animals – nothing at all. There were no animals roaming wildly upon the altered terrain and no birds singing in the trees. How strangely quiet the world must have seemed! Without the canopy of water over the heavens, the sun must have felt hotter and the air thinner. The receding waters would also have altered the geography of the earth, leaving higher water levels, erosion-worn gorges, and changes in climate. The purging of the wicked from the face of the earth was nearly perfect. I say “nearly perfect,” because, as we shall see in future portions, the flood did indeed purge sinners from the earth; but water alone could not remove the sin nature of man from the earth. Nonetheless, what we witness in our portion this week is a new beginning. We should not be surprised by the numerous similarities and parallels to the original creation narrative.

Genesis 1:2 *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Elohim moved upon the face of the waters.*

Genesis 1:9-13 *And Elohim said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. ¹⁰And Elohim called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and Elohim saw that it was good. ¹¹And Elohim said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. ¹²And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and Elohim saw that it was good. ¹³And the evening and the morning were the third day.*

Genesis 1:20-23 *And Elohim said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. ²¹And Elohim created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and Elohim saw that it was good. ²²And Elohim blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. ²³And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.*

Genesis 7:18-20 *And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. ¹⁹And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. ²⁰Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.*

Genesis 8:1-5 *And Elohim remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and Elohim made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; ²the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; ³and the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. ⁴And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. ⁵And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.*

Genesis 8:6-10 *And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: ⁷and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. ⁸Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; ⁹but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. ¹⁰And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark.*

Genesis 1:24-25 And Elohim said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. ²⁵And Elohim made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and Elohim saw that it was good.

Genesis 1:26-28 And Elohim said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷So Elohim created man in His own image, in the image of Elohim created He him; male and female created He them. ²⁸And Elohim blessed them, and Elohim said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis 1:29-30 And Elohim said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

Genesis 8:17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

Genesis 8:18 And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him.

Genesis 9:1-2 And Elohim blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. ²And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

Genesis 9:3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

While the Sovereign One did not completely obliterate the very substance of creation, it is evident that He did roll back the clock, so to speak, and begin creation again. We see that the earth was once again covered in water prior to the appearance of dry land. Following the appearance of dry land, plants began to grow, followed by the repopulation upon the earth of fish and the fowl, cattle, and creeping things which had been released from the ark. Man appeared again upon the earth. We witness man being given dominion over the animal realm as well as man's diet being assigned. Clearly this is a new beginning for man and animals upon the earth.

We witness in all of these events the sovereignty of the Creator as He orchestrates every moment of this new beginning. Just as in the original creation narrative, the title "Elohim" is used throughout this portion. The title "Elohim," as we have already learned in previous portions is associated with the sovereignty of the Creator. With only three exceptions, the name "Elohim" is used consistently throughout this portion. The use of the name "Elohim" affirms that even in this new beginning, the Creator alone is still the Sovereign One who has the right to judge both heaven and earth. It was Elohim alone who created the world; it was Elohim alone who judged the world; it was Elohim who chose to save Noah and his family; it

was Elohim who called Noah and his family into the ark; and it is the same Elohim who now calls Noah and his family out of the ark to begin the process of repopulating the world.

We must understand that Noah and his family were merely passengers and caregivers on the ark, passively riding out the flood. There was no steering wheel, pilot house, or rudder on the ark. The ark floated upon the hands of the Creator alone. Clearly it was solely the Sovereign Elohim who orchestrated this rescue. I do not mean to imply that Noah's obedience to the Creator's command to build the ark was unessential, but even this obedience was in response to the Creator's will. It is the Sovereign Elohim who must be given all thanks, praise, and adoration for the merciful rescue of creation.

And so it is that Noah, upon leaving the ark, builds an altar and offers up sacrifices unto YHWH. Here we must take notice of the name change. While throughout the rest of the portion the name "Elohim" is used to indicate the sovereignty of the Creator, now, when Noah offers sacrifices in worship of the Creator, it is the name "YHWH" that is used. The name "YHWH" is associated with the Creator's attributes of mercy and deliverance. It is fitting, therefore, that Noah offers up his praise, thanks, and offerings to the One who mercifully delivered him and his family from the destructive judgment of the flood.

The interplay between the two names is significant. This portion clearly reaffirms the Creator as the Sovereign Elohim of the universe. The fact that Noah builds the altar to YHWH and that YHWH responds to Noah's offering clearly demonstrates that the attributes of righteous judgment and divine mercy are not mutually exclusive, but are both to be found in the Sovereign Creator of the universe. Justice, which gives what is deserved, and mercy, which gives what is not deserved, are indeed mutually exclusive in most cases. However, both of these attributes are present and functioning at the same time in the Creator. The words of the psalmist express this truth most eloquently:

***Psalm 85:1-13** YHWH, Thou hast been favourable unto Thy land: Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. ²Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people, Thou hast covered all their sin. Selah. ³Thou hast taken away all Thy wrath: Thou hast turned Thyself from the fierceness of Thine anger. ⁴Turn us, O Elohim of our salvation, and cause Thine anger toward us to cease. ⁵Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt Thou draw out Thine anger to all generations? ⁶Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee? ⁷Shew us Thy mercy, O YHWH, and grant us Thy salvation. ⁸I will hear what Elohim YHWH will speak: for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly. ⁹Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land. ¹⁰Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. ¹¹Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. ¹²Yea, YHWH shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. ¹³Righteousness shall go before Him; and shall set us in the way of His steps.*

We will return to Noah's offerings in a moment, but for now, it is enough that we understand the very character of the Creator. He righteously judges His creation, while at the same time demonstrating great mercy in rescuing His creation. This is what is conveyed by the interplay of names describing these two major attributes of our Creator and Deliverer. Once again, we are reminded that the Creator of the universe is not some impersonal, uncaring, ambiguous, and distant force. Instead, we clearly see a righteous and merciful Creator who cares for His creation in a very meaningful way. Within the narrative of the flood and this new beginning, we witness the consistent desire of the Creator to know and be known and to love and be loved by His creation. To this end, the Creator calls Noah and his family to come forth from the ark that they may once again restore creation.

We should note that in the calling forth of Noah and the other passengers from the ark, the purpose of the rescue is made clear.

***Genesis 8:17** Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.*

This purpose is repeated in the blessing given to Noah and his family.

Genesis 9:1 *And Elohim blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*

Once again we see an important parallel to the original creation narrative. I have color-coded the passages to make it easier to see the numerous parallels.

Genesis 1:22 *And Elohim blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.*

Genesis 1:27-30 *So Elohim created man in His own image, in the image of Elohim created He him; male and female created He them.*

²⁸*And Elohim blessed them, and Elohim said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,*

and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

²⁹*And Elohim said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.*

³⁰*And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.*

Genesis 8:17 *Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.*

Genesis 9:1-7 *And Elohim blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*

²*And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.*

³*Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.*

⁴*But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. ⁵And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. ⁶Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.*

for in the image of Elohim made He man.

⁷*And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.*

Let us first take note of the great similarities between the blessing of the animals and Adam in the original creation narrative and the blessings upon the animals and Noah as they leave the ark. First, we should note that the blessing is first spoken over the animals, and then to Adam and Noah. Second, we should note that the blessing is spoken "about" or "over" the animals, but not "to" them, whereas the blessing and

commandment to be fruitful and multiply is spoken directly to Adam and Noah. Here again we see confirmed that sexual activity is simply instinctual to the animal realm. Animals are driven by the appetites of their flesh. Animals mate out of instinct, not out of a sense of calling or love. Man, however, is not to be driven by such animal appetites and instincts. For mankind, sexual activity is a choice. We may remember that part of being the image of the Creator is man's ability to create, to be fruitful, and to multiply. Therefore, sexual activity for man is not to be mere animal instinct; it is to be an act of the will. Man is to sanctify sexual activity through the intention of the heart to keep the commandments of the Creator. Since animal sexual activity is simply instinct, the blessing is spoken "over" or "about" the animals. However, the Creator speaks this blessing directly "to" man because he is to sanctify this activity and raise it up by the willful keeping of the commandment to be fruitful and multiply. Sanctifying even our most animal acts, such as eating and sexual activity, is part of fulfilling the command to love YHWH with our whole heart, mind, and being.

Deuteronomy 6:5 *And thou shalt love YHWH thy Elohim with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

Recognizing that the Creator is making a distinction between man and animal is extremely important, for it is one of the major themes of this portion. In both instances, the fact that man was made in the image of Elohim is affirmed. It is also clear in both instances that man was to exercise dominion over the animal realm. In both blessings we see that Elohim is establishing man's diet, but here we must note a major change has occurred. In the first blessing man was given dominion over the animal realm, but he shared a vegetarian diet with the animals. After leaving the ark, however, the Creator gave permission to Noah and his descendants to eat animal flesh. This is a major change in the diet of man.

There are a number of details to ponder concerning this issue. First, we must acknowledge that clear permission is given to eat the flesh of animals.

Genesis 9:3 *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.*

Here it would appear that there are no boundaries concerning what animals are to be utilized for food. It is difficult to argue with the very plain meaning of the phrase "every moving thing that liveth." I do believe that this is an unrestricted concession to eating the meat of "every" animal. We should keep in mind that Israel has not yet been called to its unique vocation as the covenant people of YHWH. It is not until Mount Sinai that a clear restriction is placed upon those who entered the covenant.

Leviticus 11:3 *Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.¹*

Leviticus 11:21 *Yet these may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth.*

Leviticus 11:9 *These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat.*

Leviticus 11:46-47 *This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth:⁴⁷ to make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten.*

¹ Birds are listed by name and kind, not by sign. I have omitted them here for brevity's sake, but recommend reading all of Leviticus chapter 11 and Deuteronomy 14.

The diet of the children of Israel is, indeed, restricted compared to that of the rest of the world. The Torah confirms this truth by making a clear distinction between what the nations may eat as opposed to what the children of Israel may eat.

Deuteronomy 14:21 *Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou art an holy people unto YHWH thy Elohim. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.*

Here we clearly see that what is acceptable for the nations is not acceptable for the children of Israel. As for the permission granted in Genesis 9, it is addressed to all humanity prior to the calling of Israel; therefore, we should be careful not to judge those who are not members of the covenant who eat all flesh without distinction. With all of this said, however, there are a few details that we should be careful not to overlook.

We should recall that Noah took only two of every species of animal with him into the ark, one male and one female.

Genesis 6:19 *And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.*

Noah was also told to bring seven pairs of each of the “clean”² animals.

Genesis 7:2 *Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.*

If Noah and his family were to kill and eat any one of the “unclean” animals before they multiplied, they would not have been able to breed and become abundant! Therefore, if Noah and his family ate any of the animals that came off the ark, they would have eaten only of the “clean” animals which were already in abundance. Thus, while permission to eat any living thing was given, Noah would have chosen the “clean” animals for his diet.

We should also take careful notice that even in the granting of permission to mankind to eat the flesh of all “living” things, there is still a very pointed restriction.

Genesis 9:4 *But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.*

This is one of a number of prohibitions against drinking or eating blood.

Leviticus 3:17 *It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.*

Leviticus 7:26-27 *Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. ²⁷Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.*

Leviticus 17:10-14 *And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set My face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*

² The word “clean” is the translation of the Hebrew word *tahor*, which means “acceptable.” In regards to the animals, it is referring to those animals that are acceptable as sacrifices as well as those that are listed in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 as acceptable as food for the children of Israel.

¹²Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. ¹³And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. ¹⁴For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.

Leviticus 19:26 *Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times.*

Deuteronomy 12:16 *Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.*

Deuteronomy 12:23 *Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.*

Deuteronomy 15:23 *Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water.*

The sheer number of prohibitions listed in the Torah tells us that this was indeed a common practice. Understanding the culture will help us understand why this practice was so prevalent among the ancient Near Eastern people. The Torah clearly teaches that life is in the blood; therefore, before an animal could be eaten, its life-blood had to be drained from it. This means that the animal had to be dead. It was against the will of the Creator to eat meat from a living animal. In our culture, complete with modern appliances, this practice sounds very barbaric and repulsive. In a nomadic desert culture, however, where meat spoils very quickly, a limb could be taken from a living animal and eaten while the animal was kept alive for another day. Likewise, where water was scarce, it was not uncommon to puncture a vein in a living animal and to drink a little of its blood for the fluids. A living animal was a means of survival.

The Torah clearly forbids such practices not only for the children of Israel, but for all humanity. Such cruelty towards animals is not to be cultivated or practiced by mankind. We also know that in many of the pagan cultures it was believed that drinking the blood of an animal imparted the animal's vitality and soul to the one partaking of its blood. Another pagan practice was to place bowls of blood and milk on the ground so that "divs" and "demons" would come and drink it and reveal their dark secrets to those who generously performed this ritual. This prohibition against eating or drinking blood is clearly an indication that the Creator desires all men, not just Israel, to live above the animal nature.

This still leaves us with the question as to why the Sovereign One has given man permission to eat the flesh of animals. The answer to this question is found in the permission itself.

Genesis 9:3-6 *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. ⁴But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. ⁵And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. ⁶Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of Elohim made He man.*

Here we see that the Creator gives man "every moving thing that liveth" for food. We have also seen how the prohibition against eating or drinking the life blood of the animal qualifies the word "liveth." What we now look at is the clear distinction between animal life and human life. We should note that even human flesh could be included in the statement "every moving thing that liveth." The prohibition against eating or drinking the life blood does not protect against cannibalism. We see in the above passage that the Creator places yet another restriction upon the diet of man. Man is prohibited from killing and eating man. The practice of eating human flesh is understood to be a sign of living under the curse.

Leviticus 26:27-29 *And if ye will not for all this hearken unto Me, but walk contrary unto Me;²⁸ then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. ²⁹And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.*

Deuteronomy 28:53 *And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which YHWH thy Elohim hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee.*

2 Kings 6:28-29 *And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. ²⁹So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.*

Jeremiah 19:8-9 *And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof. ⁹And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.*

Lamentations 4:10 *The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.*

Ezekiel 5:9-10 *And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations. ¹⁰Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.*

Clearly cannibalism is prohibited by this restriction to man's diet.

It should be clear that the prohibition against the shedding of human blood is not limited to the diet alone. Man is not permitted to shed human blood for any reason, with the exception of justice. We must be careful to understand the Torah's distinction between murder and the execution of justice. Clearly the Torah teaches that if a man murders another man, the murderer's own life will be taken. Here we see the beginning of government being established and empowered in order to assure justice and to protect the sanctity of human life. This distinction between the execution of justice and murder is affirmed again later in the Torah in the covenant made with the children of Israel.

Numbers 35:9-12 *And YHWH spake unto Moses, saying, ¹⁰Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; ¹¹then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. ¹²And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment.*

Numbers 35:17-21 *And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. ¹⁸Or if he smite him with an hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. ¹⁹The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him. ²⁰But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die; ²¹or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him.*

Deuteronomy 19:11-13 *But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities:*

¹²then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. ¹³Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.

In our current passage, however, this prohibition against the shedding of human blood is extended to all humanity. Since all human beings were to be the bearers of the image of the Creator, human life is endowed with a unique sanctity. For the sake of the Creator, all human life is to be protected and valued above all other forms of life. We should note, therefore, that while man may kill animals, animals cannot kill humans. Whoever sheds human blood, whether man or animal, shall be held accountable and put to death.

The Creator's permission for man to kill and eat animal flesh, while at the same time prohibiting animals and man from killing and eating human life, clearly teaches that we are to make a distinction between human life and all other life. It also teaches us that we are not to live like animals. Once again, we should note the connection between this distinction and being the image of Elohim. From the very beginning man was to be the image of Elohim, not in how he looked, but in the manner in which he exercised dominion over the animal realm.

Genesis 1:26-28 *And Elohim said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷So Elohim created man in His own image, in the image of Elohim created He him; male and female created He them. ²⁸And Elohim blessed them, and Elohim said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

The impetus for the judgment of the flood was the fact that man had begun living in the flesh, failing to make distinctions between the righteous and the unrighteous, acting wickedly and violently upon the earth. Now that the flood is over, man is again called to make distinctions between animal life and human life and to sanctify even the most basic of human appetites – sexual activity and diet. Recognizing that “*the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth,*”³ YHWH has established the means by which man may daily be reminded of his calling and the sanctity of human life.

It is in this light that we should understand the proclamation of Noah's sacrifice upon the altar. We may note that this is the first animal sacrifice specifically mentioned in the Torah. It is also the first use of the word “altar.” Many point to the clothing of Adam and Chava as the first sacrifice.

Genesis 3:21 *Unto Adam also and to his wife did YHWH Elohim make coats of skins, and clothed them.*

While this may have indeed been the first death in the garden, there is no mention of it being a sacrifice or offering. The idea that YHWH offered a sacrifice raises the problematic question of whom He offered it to.

Others may point to the offerings of Cain and Abel as being the first sacrifices and altar mentioned in the Torah.

Genesis 4:3-5 *And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto YHWH. ⁴And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And YHWH had respect unto Abel and to his offering: ⁵but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*

³ Genesis 8:21

Many teach that the reason Abel's offering was accepted over Cain's was due to the fact that Abel's offering was a blood offering (a sacrifice). This line of teaching is based upon an argument of theology and not the actual text of the Torah. The Torah is very clear that the offerings of Cain and Abel were *minchah* or "bloodless" offerings. There is no mention of a sacrifice or altar in this particular story. Therefore, according to the actual text, Noah's offering is the first time an altar and sacrifice are mentioned in the Torah.

We may then ask what Noah was trying to communicate to the Creator through his sacrifice. We have already stated that Noah was offering an animal sacrifice. The Torah tells us that the offering was an *olah* or "elevation" offering. Through this offering Noah was communicating his willingness to subdue his animal nature, while at the same time expressing his desire to live in the upper or spiritual nature. We may understand this offering to be Noah's way of expressing his assurance to the Sovereign Creator that he would live in his upper nature instead of his lower animal nature.

Throughout this portion we repeatedly witness the calling for man to make a distinction between his lower animal nature and his higher spiritual nature. These distinctions are part of the Creator's restoration of both creation and His image. Thus, we see in this distinction between the upper and lower natures of man a restoration of the order of creation.

We witness this restoration of the order of creation in the very order in which Noah and his family are called from the ark. We should note that there is a difference in the order that the Creator calls them from the ark and the order in which Noah and his family disembark from the ark.

Genesis 8:15-17 *And Elohim spake unto Noah, saying, ¹⁶Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. ¹⁷Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.*

Genesis 8:18-19 *And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: ¹⁹every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.*

Let us look at and compare the subtle differences.

<u>The Calling of the Creator</u>	<u>The Order of Disembarking</u>
• Noah	Noah
• Noah's wife	Noah's sons
• Noah's sons	Noah's wife
• Noah's sons' wives	Noah's sons' wives
• The animals	The animals

When the Creator commands Noah and his family to come forth from the ark, we should note that the humans, the higher nature, come forth first. We should also note that Noah, the head of the family, is called first from the ark. When the Creator calls the humans from the ark, He honors the union between husbands and wives.

Genesis 2:24 *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

Matthew 19:4-6 *And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, ⁵and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? ⁶Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore Elohim hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

The Creator calls forth Noah and his wife as one flesh, and then the sons with their respective wives as one flesh. Here we see the Creator recognizing and confirming the created order. We should remember that it is by this unity of the flesh that each would be fruitful and multiply.

When the passengers leave the ark, however, we witness the honoring of headship within the marriage. Noah and his sons are the heads of their respective families, and therefore the heads are first to venture forth from the ark, with their wives to follow. In both lists we see a practice of good order. Again, we may infer from this that man is to live an orderly and mutually respectful life before the Creator, living in and honoring the Creator's order.

Finally, let us turn our attention to the actual covenant and promises made by the Creator. This covenant comes in two sections, the content of the covenant and the token of the covenant.

Genesis 8:21-22 *And YHWH smelled a sweet savour; and YHWH said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.²² While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*

Genesis 9:11 *And I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.*

The Creator's promise is a straightforward one. The Sovereign One promises that as long as the earth exists, He will not again interrupt its rhythms because of man's wickedness. Neither will the Creator use a worldwide flood to purge the earth of life. As a sign of this promise YHWH stretched forth a rainbow in the sky. The rainbow appears when the sunlight is refracted in the moisture remaining in the air after it rains. Since rainbows generally follow a rainstorm, this sign serves to remind us that when the rain stops, it is by the will and mercy of the Sovereign Creator of the universe.

It is important to realize that the covenants, promises, commandments, and prohibitions given in this portion are for all of humanity, not simply those who will become identified as the children of Israel. Noah and his family are the beginning of all human life. The instructions, commandments, prohibitions, covenants, and promises given to Noah and his sons are given to all humanity. These instructions, commandments, and prohibitions are often referred to as the "Noahide Laws."

Rabbinic Judaism has enlarged upon these commandments and turned them into a separate status for Gentiles. In other words, the rabbis teach that if you are a Jew, you are to follow the Sinai Covenant; but if you are a Gentile, you need follow only the seven Noahide Laws. Some of the rabbis contend that Noah learned these laws from Adam through Seth. According to the rabbis, the seven laws are as follows:

1. Thou shalt not worship idols
2. Thou shalt not curse or blaspheme YHWH
3. Thou shalt not kill
4. Thou shalt not steal
5. Thou shalt not engage in sexual immorality
6. Thou shalt not eat the limb of a living animal
7. Thou shalt establish courts of law to enforce these laws

While I agree that these laws may have been taught by Adam and Seth, as well as others, it is not because they are a separate code of ethics; it is because they are a part of the eternal Torah or self-revelation of YHWH. While the ignorant nations may be held accountable to these "universal laws," they are by no means to be the end of the road for the Gentiles. The Torah is the self-revelation of the Creator. All humanity is to bear the image of the Creator; therefore, all humanity is ultimately to keep the

Torah. Israel was called at Mount Sinai to be the first to bear this yoke for the sake of the nations. In other words, the people of Israel were later called to receive the written Torah so that they might embody it for the rest of the nations. Israel was called to be a light to the nations. The instructions, commandments, covenants, and promises given to Noah are indeed for all humanity, but we should not believe or teach that YHWH desires all humanity to keep the “minimum” requirements rather than desiring to embody the full revelation of His image. The establishment of the Noahide Laws as taught by the rabbis is simply a means of pushing the Gentiles away from the blessings of obedience to the Torah, while at the same time protecting their elitist view of rabbinic Judaism. We should never settle for the crumbs on the floor when the Creator has invited us to a wedding feast.

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