

Genesis 7:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that ... This passage belongs to the primeval history section (Genesis 1-11) which establishes universal truths about God, humanity, sin, and divine purposes before focusing on Abraham and Israel. These chapters answer fundamental questions about human origins, the spread of wickedness, God's judgment, and the preservation of a righteous remnant.

Recurring patterns emerge: human sin escalating from individual disobedience to societal corruption, divine patience followed by judgment, gracious preservation of a remnant, and covenant promises ensuring redemptive purposes continue. The genealogies connect historical persons, demonstrate the fulfillment of divine promises (blessing and multiplication), and trace the line leading to Abraham and ultimately Christ.

Key theological themes in this section include:

1. sin's destructive progression affecting all humanity
2. God's righteous judgment while preserving mercy
3. human pride and autonomy opposing divine sovereignty
4. cultural development as both blessing and potential idolatry
5. God's sovereign plan advancing despite human rebellion.

These narratives provide the necessary context for understanding God's calling of Abraham and the covenant promises through which all nations will be blessed.

Historical Context

The primeval history (Genesis 1-11) parallels ancient Near Eastern traditions including Sumerian King Lists (pre-flood longevity), Akkadian flood traditions (Atrahasis, Gilgamesh), and Mesopotamian city foundation myths. However, Genesis demythologizes these traditions, presenting monotheistic history rather than polytheistic mythology. The genealogies connecting Adam to Noah to Abraham provide historical framework absent in pagan myths.

Archaeological evidence confirms ancient urbanization (chapter 4's cities), agricultural development, metallurgy, and musical instruments emerging in Mesopotamia's early history. The Babel account reflects Mesopotamian ziggurat construction (stepped pyramid temples), particularly in Babylon. Linguistic diversity requiring explanation was obvious to ancient peoples, making the Babel narrative culturally relevant.

For Israel in covenant with Yahweh, these chapters explained their relationship to surrounding nations. All peoples descended from Noah, but Israel descended from Shem through Abraham—chosen for blessing all nations. The flood demonstrated God's justice and mercy: judging wickedness while preserving the righteous. This pattern would recur throughout Israel's history, assuring them that God's covenant faithfulness endures despite judgment on the wicked.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and the gospel of redemption?

Interlinear Text

לְכַלְלָה	מִכְלָלָה	טָהָרָה	תְּקִיחָה	לְבָנָה	שְׁבָעָה
H3605	and of beasts	Of every clean	thou shalt take	H0	to thee by sevens
H929		H2889		H3947	
to thee by sevens	the male	and his female		and of beasts	
H7651	H376	H802	H4480	H929	H834 H3808
Of every clean	by two	the male	and his female		
H2889	H1931	H8147	H376	H802	

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 8:20 (Parallel theme): And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

Leviticus 10:10 (Parallel theme): And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;

Genesis 7:8 (Parallel theme): Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth,