

Genesis 9:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl... 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

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

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|---------------------------|----------------------|--------|-------|---------------------|------------|-----|
| וּמָרָאָכָם | וְחִתְּכָם | כָּל | עַל | יְהִי | הַשְׁמָן | בְּ |
| And the fear of you | and the dread of you | H1961 | H5921 | H3605 | | |
| H4172 | H2844 | | | | | |
| תַּחַת | בְּאָרֶץ | כָּל | עַל | עַזְבֵּן | בְּ | |
| shall be upon every beast | of the earth | H5921 | H3605 | and upon every fowl | of the air | |
| H2416 | H776 | | | H5775 | H8064 | |
| בְּכָל | בְּאָדָם | כָּל | | | | |
| upon all that moveth | upon the earth | H7430 | H127 | H3605 | | |
| H3605 | H834 | | | | | |
| דְּגִים | בְּיַם | בְּיַם | | | | |
| and upon all the fishes | of the sea | H3220 | H3027 | H5414 | | |
| H1709 | | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

James 3:7 (Parallel theme): For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

Genesis 1:28 (Parallel theme): And God blessed them, and God 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.

Ezekiel 34:25 (Parallel theme): And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

Leviticus 26:6 (Parallel theme): And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.

Hosea 2:18 (Parallel theme): And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

Leviticus 26:22 (Parallel theme): I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.