

Genesis 9:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

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

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. How should this truth about Ham's Sin shape our daily decisions and priorities?

3. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

Interlinear Text

כָּל	הַ מְשַׁר	אֲשֶׁר	הוּא	חַי	לְךָ	יְהוָה
H3605	Every moving thing	H834	H1931	that liveth	H0	H1961
	H7431			H2416		
לֶאֱכֹל	כִּי יִרְקַח	עֵשֶׂב	נָתַתִּי	לְךָ	אֶת	כָּל:
shall be meat	for you even as the green	herb	have I given	H0	H853	H3605
H402	H3418	H6212	H5414			

Additional Cross-References

Romans 14:14 (Parallel theme): I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

Deuteronomy 12:15 (Parallel theme): Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (Parallel theme): Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Colossians 2:16 (Parallel theme): Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

Romans 14:3 (Parallel theme): Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

1 Corinthians 10:23 (Parallel theme): All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

Leviticus 22:8 (Parallel theme): That which dieth of itself, or is torn with beasts, he shall not eat to defile himself therewith: I am the LORD.

