

Genesis 9:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, an... 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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

כֹּל	מִינְד	אֶזְרָר	שָׁפֶשׁ	נִפְשָׁת	דָמָקָם	אַתָּה	וְאַתָּה
And surely	H3605	will I require	and at the hand	of your lives	of your blood	H853	H389
H3027	H3027	H1875	H5315	H1818	H853		
מִינְד	אֶזְרָר	שָׁפֶשׁ	מִינְד	פָּאָדָם	מִינְד		
and at the hand	will I require	and at the hand	of man	of man	and at the hand		
H3027	H1875	H2416	H120	H120	H3027		
פָּאָדָם	אֶזְרָר	שָׁפֶשׁ	אֶזְרָר	אֶת	נִפְשָׁת	אֶת	אֶת
of man	will I require	brother	will I require	you	of your lives	of your blood	of every man's
H120	H1875	H251	H853	H120	H5315	H853	H376

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 21:12 (Parallel theme): He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.

Psalms 9:12 (Blood): When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

Exodus 20:13 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not kill.

Matthew 23:35 (Blood): That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Leviticus 19:16 (Blood): Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org