

Genesis 9:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed:
for in the image of God made he man.

Analysis

Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.... 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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
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

וְשֹׁפֵךְ	דָּמַי	בְּאָדָם	בְּאָדָם	דָּמַי	וְשֹׁפֵךְ	כִּי
Whoso sheddeth	blood	by man	by man	blood	Whoso sheddeth	H3588
H8210	H1818	H120	H120	H1818	H8210	
בְּצַלְמֵ	אֱלֹהֵי	עָשָׂה	אֶת	בְּאָדָם		
for in the image	of God	made	H853	by man		
H6754	H430	H6213		H120		

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 24:17 (Parallel theme): And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death.

Matthew 26:52 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Revelation 13:10 (Parallel theme): He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Numbers 35:33 (Blood): So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.

James 3:9 (Creation): Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

Genesis 5:1 (Creation): This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;

Romans 13:4 (References God): For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Genesis 4:14 (Parallel theme): Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

Psalms 51:4 (Parallel theme): Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Leviticus 17:4 (Blood): And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people:

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