

In The Beginning: Session 17: Our Faithful God

בְּרֵאשִׁית

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The Sign Of the Covenant (Gen. 9:8-17)

8 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: 9 “And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, 10 and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. 11 Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

12 And God said: “This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 13 I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. 14 It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; 15 and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” 17 And God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

- God makes binding agreements with people, even though he is under no obligation to do so, and even though he has no need to do so.
- He makes unconditional promises with his people throughout the Word.
- No matter what mankind does, God has promised to never again completely destroy the world, and never again to send a flood to cover the whole earth.

The Rainbow Is His Bow

- The rainbow is a reminder to God of what He did to make rainbows possible.
- The rainbow is a good picture of the grace of God.
 - It is something you can only after you have a reminder of God’s judgment.
 - When we reflect upon God's grace, we see different facets of who He is.
 - The Bible says God's throne is a throne of grace, and it is a rainbow throne.

Sons of Noah (Gen. 9:18-27)

18 Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. 19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

20 And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. 21 Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 But

Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

24 So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him.

25 Then he said:

“Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren.”

26 And he said: “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. 27 May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem; and may Canaan be his servant.”

- Shem might not have been the firstborn, but he was the preeminent one.
- The Israelite people are Semitic people, meaning they are descended from Shem.
- Ham and Canaan are held up to us in this story as disreputable people.

The Drunkenness of Noah

- Another episode that shows Divine authorship of the Bible; the Bible doesn't whitewash the flaws of its heroes of faith.
- It doesn't seem this was mere mockery; nor is it about covering sin.
- Many commentators believe Noah was violated.

A Curse Pronounced

- Why did Noah curse Canaan and not curse Ham?
 - A judgment from God as Noah was led by the Holy Spirit to pronounce it.
 - The mercy of God to reduce the fortunes of a smaller portion of our race.
 - God had just blessed Ham personally.
- This curse is not the *curse of Ham*, as many people have called it.
- Canaan (lowlands) would be a servant of servants to his brothers.
- The Canaanites would be some of the most wicked people ever to live on the Earth since the Flood. They debased themselves and severely defiled the land which God would give to His own people.

Noah's Blessing

- Noah blessed his sons, perhaps now. As the patriarchs blessed, they described a person's character and spoke prophetically about his destiny, by the Spirit.
 - Shem is established as the leader of the human family, a spiritual leadership.
 - Here we see God beginning the process of narrowing down the Messianic line.
 - While there is no additional blessing for Ham, there is one for Japheth. Japheth has indeed spread and dwelt in the tents of Shem.
 - Noah lives another 350 years, a numerical picture of completeness and blessing.
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The Structure (Chiasm) of the Flood Story: God's Faithfulness!

- A Noah (6:10a)
- B Shem, Ham, and Japheth (10b)
- C Ark to be built (14-16)
- D Flood announced (17)
- E Covenant with Noah (18-20)
- F Food in the ark (21)
- G Command to enter the ark (7:1-3)
- H 7 days waiting for flood (4-5)
- I 7 days waiting for flood (7-10)
- J Entry to ark (11-15)
- K YHWH shuts Noah in (16)
- L 40 days flood (17a)
- M Waters increase (17b-18)
- N Mountains covered (19-20)
 - O 150 days water prevail (21-24)
 - P God remembers Noah (8:1)**
 - O' 150 days waters abate (3)
 - N' Mountain tops visible (4-5)
 - M' Waters abate (5)
 - L' 40 days (end of) (6a)
 - K' Noah opens window of ark (6b)
 - J' Raven and dove leave ark (7-9)
 - I' 7 days waiting for waters to subside (10-11)
 - H' 7 days waiting for waters to subside (12-13)
 - G' Command to leave ark (15-17 [22])
 - F' Food outside ark (9:1-4)
 - E' Covenant with all flesh (8-10)
 - D' No flood in the future (11-17)
 - C' Ark (18a)
 - B' Shem, Ham and Japheth (18b)
 - A' Noah (19)

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