

The Lord Established a Covenant with Noah

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why true worship brings joy to the Lord. We saw how Noah showed true worship by his decision to sacrifice one of each of the clean birds and clean animals. In this topic, we will learn about the covenant that God established with Noah.

Genesis 9:1-3 says, “So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.’” The Lord had smelled a sweet aroma when Noah offered one of every clean animal and bird as a sacrifice to the Lord. As a result, we see that God blessed Noah and his sons. Then, God repeated one instruction that God had given when He created Adam and Eve. Genesis 1:28 says, “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” Here, God told Noah to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth.

Then, God established a new relationship between mankind and the animals. God said the animals would fear man. Even the wildest animals will usually flee rather than attack mankind unless they are surprised, cornered, or extremely hungry. God also said that the animals would have a dread of man. Dread speaks of the fact that the wild animals are dismayed and will even try to avoid contact, if possible, when they are able to keep out of sight. We see that God said that this would be true of the birds, the fish, and everything that moves on the earth in addition to the animals. Here, we see that God said that the animals and other creatures have been given into the hand of mankind.

In verse three, we see that before the flood, the people were apparently vegetarians and got their food from the green herbs, trees, and other plants. God said that mankind was now given every moving thing as food to eat. This meant that mankind was now free to eat the various animals, birds, and fish as food. With this freedom to eat the various creatures, God also placed certain limitations on mankind in the following verses. Genesis 9:4-7 says, “‘But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood. Surely for your lifeblood I will demand *a reckoning*; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it.’”

First, we see that man was not to eat the flesh of the animals while the blood was still in the flesh. In Leviticus 17:11, we read, “‘For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.’” Here, we see that later Israel had the reason explained why God had said not to eat the blood. God said that the life of the flesh is in the blood. That is why God went on to say, in

Leviticus 17:12-14, “Therefore I said to the children of Israel, “No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.” Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for *it is* the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, “You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.”” In these verses, we see that if an animal or bird was killed while hunting, the blood was to be poured on the ground and covered with the dust.

God said that He would demand a reckoning for the shedding of the lifeblood of any person. That was true even if the lifeblood of a person was shed by an animal. Exodus 21:28-29 says, “If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox *shall be* acquitted. But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death.” Here, we see that an ox was to be put to death if it killed a person. In addition, the owner was also to be put to death if the owner knew that the ox had gored people in the past and did not confine the ox securely so it could not get near a person. God also gave principles to make the distinction between manslaughter and murder and said that the person guilty of murder was to be put to death.

Then, God explained the reason why an animal or man was to be put to death if the person was guilty of shedding the blood of another person. God said that was the penalty because God made man in His image. This is what makes man different from animals. We are made in the image of God and can have fellowship with God. Genesis 1:26 says, “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’” Then, 1 John 1:3 says, “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” God has given each human being infinite value because He created us in His image and also chose to have fellowship with us. That infinite value was placed on human life by the fact that Christ chose to die for our sins so we can have forgiveness.

God then told Noah and his family to be fruitful and multiply. In these verses, we see that God expanded those instructions. In addition, God told them to bring forth abundantly on the earth. He also told them to multiply in it. The word translated “bring forth abundantly” means *to teem or to swarm*. It is used in Exodus 8:3, where we read, “So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls.” We see that Moses told Pharaoh that from the river would come frogs that would be everywhere. As a result, Noah, his sons and their descendants were to produce so many descendants that there would be descendants throughout the earth.

Genesis 9:8-13 says, “Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: ‘And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, 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. 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.’ 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: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.’” This is the covenant with Noah.

We see that God told Noah that this covenant was not only with Noah but with all of his descendants that would ever live in the future. In addition, this covenant was also with every living creature on the earth. In the first part of the covenant, God said He would never again destroy all flesh with the waters of a future flood. Throughout history, there have been various local floods that have destroyed some people and animals in that area. However, the promise here is that God will never again destroy all of the people, animals, birds, and creeping things with a flood. God said there would never again be a universal flood that would destroy the entire earth.

This does not mean that the earth will not be destroyed in the future, but it does mean that it will not be the result of a flood. In 2 Peter 3:10-13, we read, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” This judgment of the earth, by fire, will come after the final judgment of all unbelievers. Then, we see that there will be a new heavens and a new earth that will be eternal because there will be no more sin. Instead, the new earth and heavens will enjoy eternal righteousness.

God also gave the rainbow as a sign of this covenant that God made with Noah and all future generations. God said He would set His rainbow in the cloud as a sign of the covenant that He made between Him and the earth. The word translated “bow or rainbow” is translated “bow” and refers to the bow used by a hunter. However, God said that this rainbow would be in the cloud, instead of a bow used on the earth. It would be a permanent reminder to the people on the earth that God would never again completely destroy the earth by a universal flood. This is an eternal covenant which will include the new heavens and the new earth. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the meaning of the rainbow to others. We also want to help our children learn to explain what God taught Noah about the blood and explain why God said that the fact that we are created in His image makes us different than the animals. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.