

\* The Heights Baptist Church \* Series: Genesis—The Book of Beginnings \*  
\* Topic: The Noahic Covenant \* Scripture: Genesis 8:15—9:17 \* 7/23/2023 \*

## MAIN POINT

Following unique seasons of life, God calls us to remember His faithfulness and proclaim it to others.

## INTRODUCTION

**When did you experience a major change in your life that you knew was coming, but before it came, was really hard to perceive as going to become your new reality.**

**What lessons can you learn from these events?**

We pick up in Genesis this week with Noah and his family having been on the ark for more than a year. They had left their old, wicked world behind, and probably found it hard to imagine what the new world was going to look like after they exited the ark. But God remembered Noah, and Noah remembered God. Noah would start this new chapter by worshipping God, and God would start this new chapter by making a covenant with Noah.

## UNDERSTANDING

**How might the new world have looked different from the old world Noah and his family had left?**

The previous world was full of people. The Bible doesn't tell us, but it is estimated that roughly a billion people may have lived on the earth at the time of the flood. Now the land was completely devoid of human and animal life.

It is thought Noah likely brought the seeds of edible plants such as corn, wheat, and many other types of food along with him on the ark. But the rest of the vegetation on the earth was probably wiped out. Modern floods show that large mats of vegetation form and float on the water. These mats may have been responsible for vegetation to begin regrowing on the earth. It is interesting that the dove returned with an olive branch, showing vegetation had begun regrowing on earth. And even then, God kept them on the ark for at least a couple more months to exit the ark. Part of the reason for this may have been to allow the vegetation to regrow to the point it could sustain the animals leaving the ark.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ GENESIS 8:15-22

**What was the first thing Noah did after he exited the ark, and what lesson can we learn from this?**

Noah made an altar, and worshiped God. His time of worship included sacrificing an innocent animal to God, which required shedding the animal's blood.

**How did God respond to Noah's act of worship?**

God was pleased by it. He acknowledged the sinful condition of man, and even so, pledged never again to curse the ground or destroy all living creatures as he had done, as long as the earth endures.

*Note to study leader: This is one more of many reasons we can know Noah's flood was not a local flood. God promised that "never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth" (Genesis 9:11). This makes no sense if God was referring to a local flood, since there have been many local floods throughout the course of history.*

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ GENESIS 9:1-4

**In verses 1-3, the Edenic covenant was renewed. Read Genesis 1:28-30. How was this new covenant the same as the Edenic Covenant, and how was it different?**

People were given the same mandate to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And people were again given plants to eat. But now animals were given a natural fear of mankind, and people were now authorized to eat meat as well as plants.

**What limitation was given with the new allowance to eat meat?**

People were not to eat the blood of an animal. This demonstrated the sanctity of blood, wherein life resides. This makes the idea of the cup in communion representing the blood of Christ even more amazing.

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ LEVITICUS 17:11-14; EPHESIANS 2:1,12-13; JOHN 6:53-54; JOHN 11:25-26; AND 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-22.

**While celebrating the Lord's supper, we don't just pour out the juice or wine from the cup, representing Jesus' blood having been shed for us; we drink it. Why is it necessary that we drink the cup as we celebrate communion?**

"The life is in the blood." In Adam, all of us have died; there is no life in us. We were all dead in our sins. But Christ lived a perfect life, and there is life in his blood. Jesus is the provider of our spiritual life. Unless we drink the blood of Christ, we have no life in us.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ GENESIS 9:5-11

**What new direction is given by God to Noah in verse 6?**

"Whoever sheds human blood, by humans their blood shall be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind." This is a new covenant that was not previously described in the Bible.

One branch of theology is known as "Dispensational Theology", which can be summarized as viewing God revealing new things to people that change our perspective of ourselves and God.

The first dispensation is known as "The Age of Innocence", where Adam and Eve were innocent of the knowledge of evil while they were in the garden of Eden. This ended badly, with God making man mortal, the issuing in of spiritual death to all mankind, the creation being cursed, and Adam and Eve being expelled from Eden. Now they were "knowing good and evil".

The second dispensation is known as "The Age of Conscience", since mankind now knew good and evil (Gen. 3:22). People now have a conscience, and a sin nature. This age is summarized pretty well in Judges 17:6, where during the time of the judges, "everyone (in Israel) did what was right in their own eyes." This dispensation ended terribly, with God having to bring a global flood to destroy all of mankind other than Noah and his family.

The Noahic Covenant is thought to have issued in what is called "The Age of Government". It appears from Genesis 3:6 that mankind was now responsible to police each other, especially in the area of capital punishment for murder. The reason for this can be seen in the second half of the verse, which presents a high regard for human life, since people are created in the image of God.

## APPLICATION

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ GENESIS 9:12-17

### **What sign did God give Noah and his sons to help them and God remember the covenant?**

God placed his rainbow in the sky.

There appears to be some spiritual warfare going on between good and evil when it comes to places and things. Examples include:

- The archangel Michael disputing with Satan over the body of Moses (Jude 9).
- The university of Haifa on Mount Carmel, is dedicated to religious tolerance and the worship of all sorts of false deities. This is where Elijah demonstrated that only the one true God is to be worshiped.
- The body of the apostate Charles Darwin is now buried in Westminster church.
- A large plaque that has recently been placed at Golgotha, the likely site of Jesus' crucifixion, which reads, "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammed is his messenger."
- Another is related to Joaquin Neander, who wrote the great Christian hymn, "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation." The valley where he lived was named the "Neander Valley" in his honor. This happened to be the valley where the first Neanderthal bones were found, and so this supposed evidence that man evolved from apes is named after Joaquin Neander.

*Note to study leader: The biblical view of Neanderthal people is they are an extinct race of people who likely were descendants of Noah's son Japheth, since they are mainly found in Europe, and are found above the sedimentary rock layers deposited by Noah's flood. Secular scientists agree that "modern humans" mated with them, which means they were fully human.*

An application we can gain from these verses is to "take back the rainbow" in our minds. The rainbow has been hijacked by the world to represent pride in living outside of God's design for marriage. We can commit to looking at rainbows and remembering God's faithfulness to Noah, and his faithfulness to us.

*Note to study leader. The remainder of this lesson plan includes an optional discussion on the remainder of Genesis 9, which may be discussed in class, time permitting.*

ASK A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 9:18-29.

### **What happened in this debacle with Noah and his sons?**

Ham's attitude is not clearly described in these verses. The Hebrew word for "saw" where we read that Ham "saw his father naked" can be translated as "to regard, consider, or give attention to". So this was not about Ham catching a glimpse of his naked dad. This, combined with Noah's reaction after he came back to his senses, makes us wonder what was going on in Ham's head. Maybe he resented Noah's righteousness, and was now happy about Noah's moral lapse, and Ham wanted to make a mockery of Noah to his brothers.

### **What lessons can we learn from this debacle with Noah and his sons?**

One of the qualifications for becoming an elder listed in Titus 1:7 is that the elder must be "above reproach", or "blameless". Clearly, we are all sinners, but we are to reflect Christ to a sinful world, and we need to maintain our testimony. Other than the persistent witness of nature (Psalm 19:1-4 and Romans 1:19-20), we may be the only view of Jesus people of this world may get. Our lives need not to reflect poorly on Christ.

## PRAYER

Thank the Father for His gift of grace through Jesus Christ. Ask Him to make you teachable and to give you courage to live as one who has been transformed by His grace. Ask that He would give you new opportunities to be bold to share the gospel so that others might be spared from the judgment still to come.

## COMMENTARY

### GENESIS 9

9:1-2 This blessing fortifies the parallels between Noah and Adam (1:28), as both blessings began with the command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. However, in Noah's day the blessing is altered. Mankind is still to take dominion over creation (1:28), but due to the presence of sin, the harmony that existed in the garden of Eden had ended; now animals were filled with the fear and terror of humans. Terrorized animals can be dangerous; even so, God placed the animals under people's authority, ensuring that humans would prevail over the animal kingdom.

9:3 The original dietary regulations given to Adam and Eve (1:29) were now expanded. Animal proteins would join green plants within the human diet. The phrase referring to animal food sources can be translated literally as "every creeping/gliding animal" and would normally be understood to refer to smaller animals on land or sea, but it is usually understood here to mean every creature that moves. Israelites would later be limited to eating only clean animals (Lev. 11).

9:4 Though meat would be permissible as food, blood would not. God required Noah and his offspring to drain the lifeblood from any animal before eating it. This guideline would be expanded and clarified in Israel's Sinai law code (Lv 7:26-27; 17:10-14; 19:26; Dt 12:16,24; 15:23). To avoid offending Jewish Christians, first-century Gentile Christians were also encouraged not to eat blood (Ac 15:20,29).

9:5-6 Because God made humans in his image, the taking of a human life by either an animal or another person was not treated like the death of an animal. Any animal and any human who killed a human was to have its own blood . . . shed . . . by humans as a just punishment. This verse establishes that unauthorized taking of a human life is a capital offense and implicitly authorizes properly credentialed authorities to execute murderers. Other verses in the law of Moses reinforced this concept (Ex 20:13; 21:23; Dt 19:21). No such law exists for the killing of animals; the Bible consistently teaches that humans are of superior worth to animals.

9:7 God's blessing of humanity in Noah's day begins (v. 1) and ends with the command to be fruitful and multiply. This repetition underscores the sacredness and desirability of human reproduction within God's plan.

9:8-11 These verses are the formal conclusion of the covenant first mentioned in 6:18. The initial expression of the covenant unconditionally offered safety in the ark to Noah's family and many classes of animals. In the style of a royal grant or unilateral agreement, this portion of the Noachic covenant unconditionally promises that there will never again be a flood of the same destructive scale as Noah's flood.

9:12-17 Accompanying the covenant was a visible confirmation of the agreement between God and the earth that would continue for all future generations: God's bow in the clouds represented his promise that he would never again send a flood to destroy every creature. From this point forward the rainbow would have profound significance as an affirmation of God's grace and peace. Elsewhere in the Bible the rainbow is associated with the presence of God or his angelic representative (Ezk 1:28; Rv 4:3; 10:1). This covenant is one of three in the Bible that were accompanied by a sign; the other signs were circumcision (Gn 17:11) and the Sabbath (Ex 31:16-17).

9:18-19 Beginning with repeated material (5:32; 6:10), the writer launches into a new narrative designed to prepare readers for God's judgment on the nation of Canaan. The familiar genealogy is extended with the note that Ham was the father of Canaan. At the same time v. 19 prepares readers for chap. 10.

9:20 The parallels continue between Noah and Adam as Noah is now shown to be a farmer (lit man of the soil [Hb 'adamah]) in the new world prepared for him by God.

9:21 As Adam had sinned through the consumption of fruit (3:6), so Noah drank some of the wine and became drunk. After sin entered the world, shattering innocence, nakedness was associated with shame (cp.

2:25; 3:10). In this case Noah brought the shame on himself through his sinful drunkenness. A minimum of two years likely elapsed between vv. 20 and 21 since grapevines must grow that long before they can produce grapes.

9:22 Noah “uncovered himself,” and Ham saw Noah naked. This passage does not say that Ham “uncovered the nakedness of Noah,” which would be a euphemism for perverted sexual activity (Lv 18:6-19). A parent’s sin often becomes a child’s stumbling block (Ex 34:7). In this case, Ham dishonored his father and thus sinned (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16) in two ways: First, he dishonored his father by staring at his nakedness (Hab 2:15). Second, he increased both his sin and his father’s shame by reporting his father’s condition to others. Later, the law stipulated curses for dishonoring a parent (Ex 21:17; Dt 27:16).

9:23 Shem and Japheth demonstrated their nobler natures by reacting to their father’s condition far differently from Ham. First, they did not look upon their father’s shameful condition. Second, they covered their father’s nakedness, thus ending his shame. Their action parallels God’s clothing of Adam following Adam’s sin (3:21).

9:24-27 When Noah learned what his youngest son had done, he placed the curse on Ham’s son, Canaan, who would be the lowest of slaves to his brothers, that is, the slave of the descendants of Shem and Japheth. This curse on Canaan had prophetic implications. In later centuries the Canaanites, the descendants of Canaan, were pressed into slavery by the Israelites (Jos 17:13; Jdg 1:28-35; 1Kg 9:20-21). This curse does not refer to the descendants of Ham who settled in Africa.

9:28-29 Noah’s 950 years mark him as the third-oldest human in biblical history, behind Methuselah (969 years) and Jared (962 years).