



At times, I've found it almost funny when nurseries have images of Noah and the Ark. Or, you go into a church classroom, and there's Noah's ark with the toy animals. That's a very sanitized version of Noah's Ark, isn't it? I mean, the entire population of people and animals – except those on the ark – died in God's judging flood! But we have a smiling Noah and cute animals to play with. And then, we have a playmobile over the heads of our children with Noah and the animals? Have we forgotten what happened? Judgment. Punishment because sin and death was expanding on the earth. The thoughts and the intentions of the human heart was only evil continually. Then God opened the floodgates. How are we to think of Noah's Ark?

Obviously, death wasn't the end of the story. FYI - I actually don't think it's inappropriate to have Noah and animals as decorations to a nursery. And, it's because this judgment doesn't have the last word. Noah, his family, and the animals are testaments to God's grace. They speak to God's desire to bring about new creation. They speak to God's mercy triumphing over judgment. And they speak to the reality that God keeps his promise to love and rescue humans along with the rest of his creation.

If you were here last week, you heard about the account of the flood from Pastor David. I listened to it, and was so encouraged and moved by that sermon. There we saw that the Israelites would have read that story and been urged to trust the God who is over the waters – the God who brings order from chaos. As we continue in the narrative of Noah today, we discover the waters are receding in chapter 8, and then we enter into chapter 9 with God making a covenant with Noah and all people after him. This covenant is an immense sign of grace to humanity – a mercy triumphing over the judgment of the flood.

This segment of Genesis is so practically important in revealing more of the character of God himself because one could imagine that if God was willing to flood the earth and see the deaths of 99.999% of people and animals, then maybe the message from this is that humanity and animals' lives don't matter to God. Maybe humanity got so bad that God just doesn't care about them anymore. Maybe God's just like Lamech whose vengeance is 777 times. But is that the correction assumption to come to? If it were, then to image God would mean that we can just take the lives of sinners, and we're doing the mission of God.

Think of this. There are some people, in other religions, who think this way. Kill the heathen and God will reward you. But is this Yahweh's perspective? Is the flood to teach us that we are to take vengeance and that people don't matter to the Lord anymore? No! Instead, we see the opposite from God. We see him as a God of grace. And, because we see him showering the creation (pun intended) with grace after the flood, we see how we humans ought to respond.

So, the main idea of the sermon today is: **Because of God's grace, humanity ought to worship and image him in this post-flood world.** This text is quite interesting, and we see how Moses writes in order to emphasize certain ideas. He emphasizes himself and he emphasizes people. So, my outline today is

going to follow those ideas as well. We're going to start and end by talking about God's grace, and in between God's grace, we're going to talk about how humanity ought to respond to God's grace. So, let's start with the first point, talking about God's grace.

### **1. God's grace is revealed in a "new creation" (ch. 8)**

Chapter 8 has many details in it, and we're not going to read through all of it. Instead, I want to point out what I think is particularly important to note. First, chapter 8 is written like it is history – emphasizing that it is actually a historic event. The teaching of the flood was also understood in other ancient narratives, too. We have no indication here that this is simply poetic imagery. Everything points to reality. This is what I hold based on the clear testimony of Genesis' writing style.

Second, there is something that I think the original audience would have picked up on as extremely important in this chapter. Words here in chapter 8 that mirror words in chapter 1. What took place in chapter 1? God was creating the earth. Now, in chapter 8, we find same words and similar ideas here. What does that indicate? The post-flood world is a type of new creation.

Look at this graph and see the comparison with chapter 1. If you're taking notes today, you might just want to take a picture of the slides that are coming. You won't have time to write this all down.

**Precreation. 1:2 – "earth," "deep," "Spirit," "waters"**  
**8:1b-2 – "wind/Spirit, "earth," "waters," deep"**

**Second day. 1:6-8 – "waters," "sky"**  
**8:2b – "sky"**

**Third day. 1:9 – "water," "dry ground," "appear"**  
**8:3-5 – "water," "tops of the mountains," "appear"**

**Fifth Day. 1:20-23 – "birds," "above the ground"**  
**8:6-12 – "raven," "dove," "from. . .the ground"**

**Sixth day. 1:24-25 – "creatures," "livestock," "creatures that move along the ground," "wild animals"**  
**8:17-19 – "creature," "birds," "animals," "creatures that move along the ground"**

**Family & Blessing. 1:26-28 – "man, "image of God," "male and female," "blessed," "be fruitful," "increase in number," "fill the earth," "rule. . .ever living creature"**  
**8:16, 18 – Noah and his wife**  
**9:1-2 – "blessed," "be fruitful," "increase in number," "fill the earth," "fear. . .of you. . .upon every creature"**  
**9:6 – "man," "image of God"<sup>1</sup>**

The similarity here with the original creation becomes clear when we compare the chapters. So, part of the emphasis of chapter 8 (and even chapter 9) is to show that mercy triumphs over judgment. God's intention is to reveal grace that is greater than sin. Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more! God didn't destroy to get rid of humans. He brought judgment in order to showcase mercy. Life will continue

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<sup>1</sup> See Waltke, Bruce. *Genesis*. Pp. 128-129

on this earth. Now, what should be humanity's response to this grace? That leads us to the second point. We see how we ought to respond when we look at Noah's response in 8:20.

## **2. Humanity ought to respond in worship to God (8:20).**

Look at verse 20 with me: <sup>20</sup>**Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.**<sup>2</sup>

Later on in Leviticus, we read about burnt offerings. They signified calling on the Lord. They also spoke to the need for atonement – meaning, a need for reconciliation and forgiveness from God. Noah sacrificed this animal to signify his need for forgiveness. This animal died in his place.

As you learned last week, Noah was not righteous because he was so great and moral in and of himself. He was declared righteous through faith. He was dependent on the Lord. That is evidenced further by this burnt offering. Noah, and his wife, and his sons, and their wives, need the Lord. The children that come from them need the Lord. Noah knows that in and of himself, he deserved the flood. He deserved to die. But he also recognizes that there can be a death that takes the place of his. And he trusts the Lord for forgiveness and reconciliation. This trust is the essence of his sacrifice and worship. Do you realize the essence of the worship of God is faith? Apart from faith, it's impossible to please God. The essence of human rebellion is faithlessness. That's why the world continued to get worse and worse. People depended on themselves. They sought their own ways of doing things. They didn't commune with or rely on the Lord. But Noah, when he sees what God saved him and his family from, and when he knows there is land to live on and a new creation has begun, he begins this new life with a burnt offering. An offering emphasizing his neediness for God's forgiveness and reconciliation. An offering emphasizing his dependence on the Lord.

When faced with the grace of God, this ought to be all our responses! This reminds me of the hymnwriter who says, "Oh to grace how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be." Oh may we always live as debtors to grace! Grace exceeds and overpower and fills us in every way of living! And may God's grace lead us to worship our God. This is God's intention. As I've said in numerous previous weeks: God's kindnesses are meant to lead to repentance. So, humanity ought to respond in worship to God. And also,

## **3. Humanity ought to respond by imaging God (9:1-7).**

Let's read verses 1-7 together: And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. <sup>2</sup>The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. <sup>3</sup>Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. <sup>4</sup>But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. <sup>5</sup>And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. <sup>6</sup>"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. <sup>7</sup>And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 8:20.

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 9:1-7.

Was the message of the flood that God is just as vengeful as Lamech and we should just destroy one another – like he destroyed people in the flood? NO! What’s happening here is a reordering of sorts. Before the flood, we read about even the animals experiencing punishment because it seems they too were going wild even potentially on people. So, what do we find here? Now animals will have a dread about people, and God commands the people to not only rule over the animals, but they can eat from the animals. But, God also says that they’re not supposed to be savage about it. When God says they’re not supposed to eat from the lifeblood, the idea is not simply that you don’t eat blood, but that you’re not going to eat it while its heart is pumping. This emphasis of God reveals at least two things: 1) Animals are kept in check so that humans can flourish, 2) God cares for the animals because we aren’t to just be glutting ourselves with the meat of animals. The animals, too, ought to be respected as lives in God’s creation.

Now, if God cares for the animals, how much more does he care for humans! This narrative forms a contrast to ancient post-flood narratives like that found in the Atrahasis Epic. In that Mesopotamian account of the flood, the gods sent the flood because of overpopulation. And then after the flood, the gods reached a compromise and inflicted women with sterility, a high infant mortality, and artificial barrenness by cult practices (see Walke, p. 144). Yet here, in Genesis, God loves humanity and designs for their flourishing. Be fruitful and multiply! They are still in his image – albeit fallen, they’re still image-bearers. So, as image bearers, they are to multiply. In addition, they are to respect human life. If someone murders someone else, here will be retribution. The other person’s life is to be taken. That law is enacted to keep people from murdering. It’s out of respect of life that this law is given. And this Law formed a basis in Israel and also for governments throughout the ages.

In all of this, notice that God’s design in these laws is to emphasize accountability to the value of his creation – both animals and humans. And, there’s a greater value on image-bearers than anything else here. God didn’t judge through the flood in order to diminish humanity. He sent the flood to emphasize his mercy! And this is what is seen especially in the next point:

#### **4. God’s common grace is extended to the entire world (8:21-22; 9:8-17).**

After Noah raises up the burnt offering, we read of God’s response in verses 21-22: <sup>21</sup> **And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. <sup>22</sup> While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”** <sup>4</sup>

Noah doesn’t seem to hear these words. This is a dialogue God has within himself. In the Scriptures, the idea of something having a pleasing aroma carries with it the idea of acceptance. God accepted the sacrifice and thus accepted Noah. But God went even further. As a result of the sacrifice of faith, God says he’s never going to curse the ground again like he did with the flood. There’s going to be consistency of seasons and life can continue.

And this is grace upon grace because notice that God says “for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” Wait a second! Human beings are still sinful! The flood didn’t take away sin. No. The flood was a message of God’s justice. The flood is a message of how God intends to put barriers up for people and animals so that we can flourish and value one another. Noah was graced by God to continue his promise to bring the serpent-crusher. The flood didn’t take away sin. But instead, it highlights God’s

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<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 8:21–22.

mercy over judgment. Sin will continue, but God's mercy will be greater still. Seedtime, harvest, cold, heat, summer, winter, day and night, will continue. What a gracious God we serve! And this emphasis continues in chapter 9:8-17. We read these verses earlier in the service.

It's in these verses that God reveals his heart to Noah and humanity. We're told that he makes a covenant with Noah. This is an unconditional covenant. This is actually the first unconditional covenant mentioned in Genesis. In Adam's creation, there was a conditional covenant. Adam was not to eat of the fruit of the tree, or else. . . . But this statement is a promise from God despite the fact that human beings will rebel. This covenant is a part of this "new creation." Look at verses 11-13: **<sup>11</sup> I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.** <sup>12</sup> And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: <sup>13</sup> I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."<sup>5</sup>

The covenant is that God will not flood the earth like he did in Noah's day. This is a covenant of common grace. Common grace means grace that is experienced by *every single human – whether they trust God or not*. God shows special kindness to the world here in this new creation by giving them an unconditional promise. This promise is still taking place today. In addition, God gives a sign of the covenant: a bow in the sky. Now, we call this a rainbow. But this word in the Hebrew refers to a warrior's bow. Literally a bow – like in a "bow and arrow." And that's very intriguing because in the ancient world, for example, at least one Mesopotamian culture believed that any stars that were the shape of a bow signified the wrath of the gods. But here, after the flood, **God turned a symbol of destruction and wrath into a symbol of hope**. And *every single time* there is rain, a rainbow is somewhere. Even if you turn the sprinklers on in the sun, there is a bow. And the bow isn't bent towards us. It's like it's hung up. God intends to preserve the world through his mercy!

Isn't this beautiful? So, what should the application of this be for us? Well again, as I've quoted in previous weeks from Romans 2, I'll quote again: **God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance**. Every moment of every day, God is showing kindness to the world that doesn't deserve it. We merit the bow being directed towards us, but God has hung up the bow! Yet, instead of people turning to the Lord, we will see in Genesis (and we see in our day) how people presume on God's kindnesses and give increasing evidence of their sinfulness. We abuse grace instead of allowing grace to melt our hearts so that we would find life and joy in our Creator! And, we even approach June, which is referred to as PRIDE month with a rainbow flag to celebrate. And yet, God is still showing mercy – urging all people everywhere to turn to him. Now, in this narrative, we can see that because of God's grace, humanity ought to worship and image him in this post-flood world. But we also know that people don't image and worship him. So, what are the implications of this narrative for us?

I'm reminded of the apostle Peter who brings together the flood of Noah's day with baptism. Part of the idea is that those who have trusted in Jesus have entered into Jesus and are safe from the waters of God's judgment. And the reason why we're safe is because on the cross, Jesus took the punishment sinners deserved. He took the waters of God's justice, the storm. He endured the bow of God's wrath. But if you have turned to Jesus, you are safe in him – as Noah was safe in the ark. This sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was accepted by God the Father. This sacrifice on the cross was greater than an animal burnt offering. Jesus really did provide atonement there. And so now, those of us who trust in Jesus have a new sign of a greater covenant: the cross as revealed even through communion in the cup and

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<sup>5</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 9:10–13.

the bread. And so we see that in Christ, our ark, God has taken a symbol of destruction and wrath (the cross) and turned it into a symbol of hope.

As a result, because of Jesus, we read in the Scriptures in 2 Corinthians 5: **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.**<sup>6</sup> This verse has become very popular and, I believe, misinterpreted because of our English translations. But in the original Greek, all it says is “if anyone is in Christ, new creation.” In other words, if anyone is in Christ, they have been made part of the New Creation! It’s not simply that you are *a* new creation. No. You are a part of *the* new creation that Jesus is bringing about. And, this is a greater creation than the new creation of Noah. Because in that post-flood creation, God’s covenant was one of common grace. But in Jesus’ new creation, it’s a covenant of saving, redeeming, eternal grace!

As a result, in 2 Corinthians 5, we’re told that we are set free to “. . .no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”<sup>7</sup> And now, our hearts are truly set free to love God and love others in light of his grace! **Because of God’s common grace, humanity ought to worship and image him in this post-flood world. Because of God’s saving grace in Jesus, humanity can worship and image him in this world and the world to come!**

And now, I have a question for you: do you know this Jesus? Do you know the saving grace of God? After we’re told in 2 Corinthians 5 that we’re part of Christ’s new creation, Paul goes on and then says, **“<sup>20</sup>Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”**<sup>8</sup> You can be righteous like Noah – not because of your actions but because of Jesus’ righteousness. I plead with you, be reconciled to God.

And if you are a believer in Jesus, do you live out of the grace of God? Are you worshipping the Lord and imaging him in this world by loving others? You might think, “But they’re so sinful. They’re so bad!” Think about so-called Pride Month coming upon us. They’re trampling on the common grace of God, using a rainbow. Yet, does God want them to come to repentance? How should our Father’s example cause us to speak the truth in love? **God’s promise to not flood the world, and to put up the war bow was given so that someday, all people might see the serpent-crusher and trust and experience saving grace. So, consider where your love is for others. Consider how you might better image for God’s glory. And then also consider how you might be more boldly loving in your witness pointing to Jesus, urging people to be reconciled to God! The new creation has come!**

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<sup>6</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 2 Co 5:17.

<sup>7</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 2 Co 5:15.

<sup>8</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 2 Co 5:20–21.