

## GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

Genesis 8:20-9:17

October 5, 2014

**“While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” Genesis 8:22**

God judged the wickedness of humanity by sending a flood that destroyed all mankind, save Noah, his wife and his sons and daughters in law. Noah celebrated that deliverance with worship, offering a sacrifice unto God. God received his sacrifice, and on that occasion announced a covenant with all humanity, often called the “Noahic Covenant.” Everyone since then and until the end of the world lived/lives under the provisions of that covenant.

Its foundation is divine mercy (8:21-22). God recognized the innate, pervasive sinfulness of mankind. But He “said in his heart,” that He would not again destroy man or the earth “as I have done.” And, He affirmed that the normal systems of creation—earth’s seasons, its rotations and solar revolutions, plantings and harvests; everything needed for human preservation—will not again be interrupted by a worldwide judgment. The provisions of the covenant are simple.

**First**, God reaffirmed man’s dominion over the animal kingdom. He placed a fear of man within the creatures, whose flesh became food for humanity. Scripture indicates that humanity was exclusively vegetarian prior to this (Gen. 1:29-30). Now both animals and vegetation are provided for nourishment (9:2, 3). But their blood was not to be consumed as food. The significance of this becomes evident in later instruction regarding blood. It is the essence of life (9:4; Lev. 17:10-14), thus Abel’s blood cried unto God from the ground (Gen. 4:10). Blood is also the very heart and essence of sacrifices offered unto God, and was therefore not for human consumption or appetite. Only by shedding another’s blood can sin be remitted (Heb. 9:22) and a soul be redeemed (1 Pet. 1:18-19). This was to be its use for man’s good, and the ultimate manifestation would be Christ’s blood, “shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 6:28b).

**Second**, God established human government (Gen. 9:5-6). Prior to the flood there was nothing of this sort, thus violence abounded as ungoverned men killed other men, from Cain through Lamech (Gen. 4:8-24). The human race “was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence” (Gen. 6:11). But now God established human government, authorizing man to apply capital punishment to murderers (Gen. 9:6). It is notable that by the means of this authorization, human government would one day utilize this authority to put to death God’s Son, the only sinless man who ever lived.

**Third**, humanity and the earth it occupies will never again be destroyed by a flood of water (Gen. 9:11-17). Within a short time, Noah will observe the ugly lust of mankind and the shame that it begets (Gen. 9:20-27). It will be evident then that the flood did not change corruption of the human heart. But God, mercifully observing that “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Gen. 8:21), covenants that He will never again destroy the earth or humanity with a flood. To remind man of this promise, the rainbow came into being, created by sunrays shining upon the drops of rain falling to the earth. This is how rain storms would end, repeatedly reassuring sinful man that the earth will never again be destroyed by a flood of water.