



**Sunday School Lesson for September 3, 2006  
Released on August 30, 2006**

**"God's Covenant with Noah"**

**Printed Text: Genesis 9:1-15**

**Background Scripture: Genesis 9:1-17**

**Devotional Reading: Psalm 36:5-9**

**Genesis 9:1-15**

**1** And God blessed No'ah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

**2** And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth *upon* the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

**4** But flesh with the life thereof, *which* is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

5 And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

**6** Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

**8** And God spake unto No'ah, and to his sons with him, saying,

**9** And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;

**10** And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

11 And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

**12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:**

13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

**14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow 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; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

## **Introduction**

Through the centuries, God has made a number of covenants with humans. Some were made with individuals (such as Noah, Abraham, and David), while others were made with the nation of Israel. It is interesting to note, however, that God's covenant with Noah was extended to all of his descendants and to all animals of the earth, thus giving it a universal dimension. This covenant refers specifically to God's promise to never again destroy the earth with floodwaters. The rainbow was given as a guarantee of His promise (Gen. 9:14-15).

Children seem to be fascinated when they are shown a prism. It amazes and delights them to see a ray of light divided into the colors red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.

We can all appreciate the beauty of a rainbow, which often signals that a rainstorm is over. The rainbow should also remind us of God's covenant promise to Noah, all of his descendants, and all animals.

When the earth again experiences God's judgment, it will be by fire. From this will arise new heavens and a new earth indwelt by righteousness (2 Pet. 3:10-13).

## **Lesson Background**

The flood that occurred the year Noah was 600 had just ended. Noah, his family, and the animals emerged from the ark after spending many months within it.

The account of the flood is always fascinating to read. It is interesting that over 200 similar accounts have been found in legends around the world. These sagas have common threads of a god or gods who were displeased with humanity and thus

destroyed just about everything except for one individual and his family. Over two-thirds of the stories indicate that animals also were saved. Over half of the stories have the vessel of safety landing on a mountain. There are many differences among the accounts, so the conclusion for the Christian is that the straightforward presentation as found in Genesis is the only one that is authentic.

The New Testament contains several references to the events of the great flood. Matthew 24:38, 39; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; and 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6 confirm that Jesus and the inspired writers of the New Testament were confident that the flood was a historical event.

As the family of Noah departed from the ark, they found themselves alone in a world that had been cleansed. We can only wonder how the raging waters of the flood affected continents and climates, topography and temperatures. In His wisdom God does not reveal those things to us.

Noah's first action upon leaving the ark was to offer sacrifices of the clean animals and birds (Genesis 8:20). As the aroma arose, the Lord spoke first to himself about the earth-its daily and annual cycles. He then spoke the words that are the printed text for today's lesson.

The word *covenant* is a very important word in God's expression of His will for humanity in every age. That word occurs nearly 300 times in the Bible. It is a vital part of today's lesson, "God's Covenant with Noah."

### **Today's Aim**

**Facts:** to examine the stipulations, promises' and people involved in the Noahic covenant.

**Principle:** to understand that our God is a covenant-keeping God.

**Application:** to realize that we have a God who can be trusted to keep His promises.

### **1. How is Genesis 9:1 reflective of 1:28?**

In Genesis 9:1, God blessed Noah and his sons and re-commissioned them to fill the earth just as he did with Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28- "God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth".

God had made a similar pronouncement at the creation of humans (Genesis 1:28). In that case the ensuing prosperity led to humanity's detriment as people used God's blessings to focus on evil (Genesis 6:5).

**2. Is it correct to say that all people descended from both Adam and Noah?**

After Noah and his sons had come out of the Ark, it was the mark of a new beginning for the human race so it would be correct to say all the people destined to populate the earth since that time would descend from both Adam and Noah.

**3. Despite the ferocity of some animals, do most of them fear human beings? Why? (v. 2)**

The promise by God that the animals will fear humans is a general principle. It is normally true that wild animals do whatever they can to avoid humans, but we all know about the exceptions. The exceptions ordinarily have to do with the self-preservation instincts that God placed within the animals. In normal circumstances most animals run from encounters with us.

**4. What are the two main sources of food God has given mankind? (v. 3)**

God has given mankind two sources of food: animals and vegetation. In verse 3, God told Noah that every living thing could be used for food. This included animal life, as well as vegetation or plant life, which is called "green herb". Those who choose to eat meat should not be ridiculed and on the other hand, they should be tolerant of those who choose to eat meat (see Acts 10:9-15).

Moses will repeat this restriction for the nation of Israel (see Leviticus 17:12-14). The same limitation is found in Acts 15:20, 29 among the restrictions that Gentile Christians are encouraged to observe. Many scholars see parallels between Genesis 9 and Acts 15.

**5. Why did God want people to avoid eating or drinking blood? (v. 4)**

When God gave the two sources for food, there also came along a condition – no raw blood was to be consumed as food. It symbolically represented life. To shed blood symbolically represented death (Lev. 17:11). The blood of animals representing their life, was not to be eaten. It was, in fact, that blood that God designed to be covering for sin. (Lev. 17:11). Shed blood (death) from a substitute atones for or covers the sinner who is then allowed to live.

**6. Why did God require people to be punished for shedding human blood? (vs. 5-6)**

Clearly, God views the taking of human life to be a very serious thing. The sanctity of *blood* as the life principle puts it into God's domain to render such a

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judgment. It also becomes evident that the taking of human life is much different from taking the life of an animal; in the previous verses God approved the latter as means of obtaining food.

No one should interpret the dramatic loss of life in the great flood to mean that human life is cheap. God can choose to take human life in any manner He chooses, because He is the one who gives the breath of life to all in the first place. Anyone who deliberately and with malice aforethought takes the life of someone else must understand that there can and should be severe consequences from earthly tribunals. There also will be an accounting in the final judgment of God.

The reason for the equal retribution "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" is very specific: "for in the image of God made he man." Since each person is made in the image of God, no individual should endanger the lives of the innocent (c.f. Exodus 20:13).

### **7. What command did God repeat to Noah and his family? (v. 7)**

God repeated to Noah and his family the same command as he did in (v 1), "to be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it".

God seems not to be concerned about overpopulation.

### **8. Did God establish His covenant with Noah alone? (vs. 10-11)**

In the time of Noah, when God established His covenant, the covenant included living creatures as was first promised in 6:18. Although Noah's family was most important, the animals who were in the ark were also going to be involved in reactivating the earth. God's promise and covenant extended to them also.

### **9. What promise was at the center of God's covenant? (v. 11)**

The promise of God's covenant was that there would not be a reoccurrence of the massive flood that had destroyed all land life on the planet. The history of the earth demonstrates that God has been faithful to keep this promise. There have been local floods involving terrible loss of life. But there has not been another flood to destroy all life on earth.

### **10. What token, sign, or symbol did God give as a visual aid to His covenant? (v. 14)**

The "rainbow" is the perpetual, symbolic reminder of this covenant promise. As it appears in the clouds, that reminds God of His covenant promise. We might wonder why God would ever have to be reminded of anything, since we know that He is perfect and omniscient (all-knowing). It appears that the wording here refers to how people think, not to how God thinks. There could be times when an especially violent rainstorm or a devastating local flood occurred, and the people

affected by it might wonder whether God had forgotten His promise or changed His mind. The bow in the clouds would assure them that He remembers and He keeps His promises.

**Conclusion:**

One lady stated that her first connection between God of Scripture and the God of her own little world as a child came after being read this account of Noah and the flood in a Bible-story book and then being shown the rainbow after a particularly heavy rainstorm. Such an association is exactly what God intended. The beauty of the brilliant spectrum of light in the sky is to remind people of any age, in every age, that they have a connection to God. It is up to individuals to determine whether they will be faithful or faithless in their responses to the God who makes covenants with us.

**Prayer:**

Lord, today I promise to be more alert to Your perpetual promise. Help me not to be so busy with things that I fail to keep my promise to live, so that everyone recognizes that Jesus is my Lord and Savior. In His name, amen.

**Thought to Remember:**

Look for the rainbow. Remember God's promise

**Anticipating Next Week's Lesson:**

Study "God's Covenant with Abraham" *Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22*

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