

As Noah and the other residents of the ark emerge after the flood, God blesses them with a command to replenish the earth with their offspring. He reaffirms the sanctity of human life as being created in His image, distinct from the animal kingdom. Our passage closes with God's promise to never again destroy the world with a global flood.

¹ And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

Noah was a just man and morally "perfect" (complete) in the midst of the wickedness of the world (Gen. 6:9), and so God would naturally bless him. However, God's desire to bless Noah and cause him to prosper had an additional purpose now that earth needed to be repopulated. He commands them to have children so that the earth will be filled with people.

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.

"And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth..." - Apparently prior to the flood animals had no need to fear man and possibly acted like domesticated animals. Since God was now allowing mankind to eat meat the animal kingdom would be at a disadvantage, so He protected the animal kingdom by giving them an inherent fear of man. This fear would make animals a challenge to kill lest they be easily hunted to extinction.

"into your hand are they delivered" – Mankind is given the power of life and death over the animal kingdom in addition to the dominion already given to Adam (Gen. 1:26). They are allowed to slay animals for food and other needs as needed.

"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things" – Just as God had given man fruits and vegetables to eat for food, now He is also making living creatures available for food as well. Men were vegetarians before the flood and now meat is being added to the menu.

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

God alone is the giver of life, and that life is represented by blood. After the flood mankind is allowed to eat meat but they are still not given permission to consume blood. This prohibition is reinforced under the Mosaic Law in passages such as **Lev. 17:10-11** - *"¹⁰ And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."* The book of Hebrews teaches us that the OT sacrifices pointed to the coming Redeemer Who would shed His blood for our atonement and so God set aside blood as a temporary atonement for sin until the time when Christ would come and shed His blood as the true atonement for our sin. Thus mankind is only allowed to consume meat when the blood has been drained from it. We must respect the life that God gave and also respect the sacrifice that Christ made by shedding His blood on the cross for us. **Heb. 9:12** (speaking of Christ as our Great High Priest in the heavenly temple) *"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."*

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.

The LORD now makes a distinction between the shedding of human blood and the shedding of an animal's blood. Whether a man's blood is shed by an animal or another man, the penalty is the same: death. Anyone, man or beast, who takes the life of a human being must forfeit his/her life in return. The life of a human being is of much more value than the life of an animal because man was created in the image of God.

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

God repeats His command that Noah and his family have offspring so that they may fill the earth with descendants who are created in the image of God. Human life is precious to God and He wanted the earth to be filled with it.

⁸ And God spake unto Noah, 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.

The Hebrew word for "covenant" means "an agreement" or "a pledge" and here it represents God making a promise to Noah and his descendants. Interestingly, the animal kingdom is also included as beneficiaries of the promise. God is making this promise to all of the life that He preserved during the flood.

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.

God's promise is that He will not destroy all life on earth in a global flood ever again. This promise does not cover local floods where the destruction is limited for there have been many of these since Noah's day.

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.

“And God said, This is the token [sign; reminder] of the covenant which I make” - God establishes a sign that will serve as a reminder of His covenant to never again destroy the earth with a flood. Interestingly, the Hebrew word for “token” is the same as used for “mark” in Gen. 4:15 speaking of the mark that God placed on Cain to protect him from being slain by anyone seeking revenge.

“between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations” – God reiterates that this covenant is between Himself, humanity and the animal kingdom. He also adds that this covenant is not just to those currently alive but perpetually to all the descendants of Noah and the living creatures that would come later.

“I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth” – The sign that serves as a reminder of God’s promise is the rainbow that can be seen from time to time. The first time rain fell on the earth was when the flood began, which might cause Noah and his family some fear the next time they saw it rain. Rain is often accompanied by a rainbow and so this sign would be a reminder that each time they saw rain they could be confident that a global flood was not on its way.

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. ¹⁶ And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

“And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud” – Thanks to modern science we know today that a rainbow is the result of sunlight being refracted by moisture in the air after it has rained. The conditions for creating a rainbow would have been rare or even non-existent before the first rainfall, so God points to the natural occurrence of rainbows once rains began happening on the earth as a reminder of His promise to never again bring a global flood on the earth.

“And I will remember my covenant...And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant” – Does God need a reminder to help Him remember His covenant? Of course not. God is merely assuring us that He will not forget the covenant by using tangible things that we can relate to and understand as human beings. Such imagery is used throughout the Bible, where God is spoken of as having eyes, ears, hands, etc. and other human characteristics so we can understand His perspective. How could we ever comprehend God if He expressed Himself only in “almighty” terms?

¹⁷ And God said unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

God concludes by reaffirming that the rainbow is the reminder, both to God and to man, of the covenant that He has made with all flesh on the earth to never again destroy them with a global flood.