

• LESSON 4 (January 22) •

## The God Who Has Set His Bow in the Cloud

Our last lesson concluded with the LORD God pronouncing judgment on Adam, Eve, and the deceitful serpent in Genesis 3. By the time we reach Genesis 6, the situation is truly dire.

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. (Gen 6:5-6)

- ❖ What can you find between the end of Genesis 3 and the beginning of Genesis 6 that serves as an example of “the wickedness of man”? Notice also Genesis 6:11-12.

So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. (Gen 6:7-8)

Throughout the rest of Genesis 6, God gives instructions to Noah—“a righteous man, blameless in his generation” (Gen 6:9)—for the building of “an ark of gopher wood.”

“For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. **But I will establish my covenant with you**, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.” (Gen 6:17-18)

- ❖ We’ve established already in this study that a *covenant* is a relationship based upon promises and expectations. How then would you describe this covenant God is establishing with Noah in your own words?

On the other end of this catastrophic flood,

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. 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. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” (Gen 8:20-22)

- ❖ What is God doing in Genesis 8:21-22?

Pay careful attention to Genesis 9:8-17.

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I **establish my covenant** with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. 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." 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: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a **sign of the covenant** between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will **remember my covenant** that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember **the everlasting covenant** between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is **the sign of the covenant** that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

- ❖ God is clearly the *establisher* of the covenant being described in Genesis 9. But who is this covenant with and on what is it based?
- ❖ How might Jesus' words in Matthew 5:44-45 enhance our understanding of what has been happening ever since the days of Noah?

Finally, take some time to reflect on the clear warning contained in 2 Peter 3, noting especially 2 Peter 3:5-7.

- ❖ What do we need to understand about the covenant God established in Genesis 9? How does it relate to us?
- ❖ Perhaps most importantly of all, how does what we have studied from Genesis 6-9 relate to our own future, and the future of all mankind?