

Here We Go Again

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[0 : 00] Well, please take your Bibles and let's open them up this morning to Genesis chapter 9. Genesis chapter 9. If you're using the pew Bibles in front of you, if you didn't bring a Bible of your own, you can use those pew Bibles there in front of you in the seat back in front. And you can find our passage, Genesis chapter 9, on page 6 of that pew Bible there in front of you. But when you found it, let's stand in honor of the reading of God's Word.

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

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. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. 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. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. For God made man in his own image. And you be fruitful and multiply and increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it. 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 all 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. The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed. Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard.

He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both of their shoulders, and walked backward, and covered the nakedness of their father.

[3 : 25] Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers. He also said, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.

After the flood, Noah lived 350 years. All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died. The grass withers, and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever. Father, we praise you for this word. We believe it is God-breathed that is good for us, and so we pray now that you would speak through it. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

Amanda and I, since being married, have had the opportunity to live in several different places. We met in college in Georgia, and we lived there for a time before moving up to Charlotte, and then from Charlotte, North Carolina, it was down to North Myrtle Beach, and then from North Myrtle Beach, now down here to Allendale. And each move for us, it represented sort of a new start.

It was a new phase of life. And of course, every time that we moved to a new place, we had questions. Some of the core things remained the same. We still had to go out and buy groceries, but when we moved to Charlotte, it was no longer Kroger, now it was Harris Teeter.

We still, after moving from North Myrtle Beach, we still go to the beach, but now it's Isle of Palms instead of Cherry Grove. And my role at the church was different in North Myrtle Beach than it is here.

[5 : 16] In each new place, we had to kind of figure out what work would look like, what life would look like. Each new start came with new opportunities, new challenges, and new questions.

As we come here to Genesis chapter 9 this morning, we see this is a new start for Noah. But not just for Noah, this is a new start for all of humanity, isn't it?

God has moved Noah and his family now to a new place. He has wiped the slate clean on the old world, and so now, as he finally steps foot onto dry land, I can imagine that he's asking some of those same questions that we might ask. Questions like, well, what do we eat?

What are we supposed to do now? What do we give our time to? What will life look like here in this renewed world? Our passage this morning, it gives us our bearings for life in this new beginning.

What is life like after the flood? And you know, if we felt kind of far from the world that we saw pictured for us in Genesis 1 and 2, there in the Garden of Eden, if that felt foreign to us, we really ought to feel a lot more at home here in our passage this morning.

[6 : 30] Because this passage, it explains some important details for life in our world today after the flood. So let's take a look here, and we'll see three questions this morning.

Three questions for life after the flood. If you're taking notes, this is our outline this morning. Three questions for life after the flood. Question number one, what's changed?

What's changed? What's different? And at first glance, as you look through the passage, it seems like not much, right? This is sort of like one of those highlights magazines activities where you have the two pictures side by side, and you have to spot the subtle differences between the two pictures.

This looks so similar to the first new beginning, the new beginning that we saw in the first chapters of Genesis with Adam and Eve. Verses 1 through 7, it gives us an idea here of what's the same and what's different.

One similarity, we see, is that God's blessing and God's command are the same, aren't they? Here, just as at the beginning with Adam, God blesses Noah, and here, just as at the beginning, God gives him this same exact command, doesn't he?

[7 : 46] Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. In fact, he says it twice. He says it there in verse 1 and again in verse 7. He sort of bookends this first section by repeating this command.

Go, be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. And so we see here that the mission is still the same, isn't it? God still plans to fill the earth with his image.

That's one similarity. We see another similarity here in verses 2 through 4. Just as with Adam in the garden, so now Noah and his family are to rule over the animals.

Humans are not part of the animal kingdom. They are not equal with the animals. They're not just the most developed or evolved form of the animals.

They are distinct from them, and God says they are to rule over them. That's a similarity here on this side of the flood, but with one key difference. You notice this?

[8 : 48] On this side of the fall, on this side of the flood, now, verse 2, 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 fish of the sea.

In other words, now the animals are afraid of the humans. I grew up watching some of the old Disney princess movies. I have three sisters. I didn't have a say in it. This was just forced upon me from the outside.

But if you've seen any of the old movies, you know when they walk outside and they start singing, what happens? The birds come and land on their shoulder, and the squirrels come and nuzzle up next to them, and the bunnies and the deer, they're all happy, and they all get along.

Those must have taken place before the flood. Because now, on the other side of the flood, the animals are afraid. And for good reason, right? Because we see in verse 3, verse 3 tells us that now in this new beginning, guess what?

Humans get to eat the animals. And all God's people said, amen, right? The Lord says in verse 3, Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you.

[10 : 00] As I gave you the green plants, now I give you everything. So if you want to eat the plants, if you want to have a salad, go ahead, enjoy it. It's good. But praise God, now on this side of the flood, the menu has expanded.

And now we get steak, brisket, pulled pork, chicken legs, right? But even so, even though God says, now, Noah, you can go kill and eat, God makes certain that we understand here, even so, even on this side of the flood, life is precious.

Life is precious. This is the third similarity here, in fact. We see it in verses 4 through 6, and it's this. It's that all life is valuable, especially the life of mankind.

All life is valuable. God regulates the killing of animals here, but especially, especially the life of mankind. God gives the animals to Noah for food, but with this one regulation, He says, don't eat the animals with the lifeblood still in them.

You can eat the animals, Noah, but you're not an animal. Don't eat the animals with the blood still in them. Their blood, because it represents their life, is precious. And we can look ahead and see this reaffirmed throughout the Old Testament and the dietary laws for Israel.

[11 : 24] Their blood, their life is valuable. And think about this, church. If that's true, if the blood and the life of an animal is valuable in the sight of God, how much more valuable is the life and the blood of humans?

If God's going to give instruction for the life and the shedding of an animal blood, of course He gives direction here concerning the shedding of human blood. Look there to verse 5.

God says, for your lifeblood, the lifeblood of humans, 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.

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. Why? For God made man in His own image.

Human life is especially valuable in the sight of God. So much so, in fact, that God says, if you take a life, you pay for it with your own life.

[12 : 35] This is God instituting here a version of the death penalty. He says human life is precious and valuable in the eyes of God. It is worth protecting.

It is worthy of dignity. Why? Because again, verse tells us the reason why is that even here after the fall, even here after the flood, every single person is made in the image of God.

All people. Humans with dark skin, humans with light skin, humans with money, humans without money, humans who vote how you vote, humans who don't vote how you vote, illegal immigrants and natural-born citizens, Christians and atheists and Muslims, and Buddhists, all people, share this God-given fundamental dignity.

We are all made in the image of God. Now, we have to be careful not to absorb the world's way of thinking and valuing people.

Those who have certain disabilities are of no less value in the eyes of the Lord than the most capable, important person in the eyes of the world. Those who can't contribute much to society anymore due to age or health or limitations are just as worthy of life and protection and dignity as the strongest and most productive member of society.

[14 : 05] Those who have not yet made it outside of the womb are just as worthy of dignity and honor and respect and protection as those who have made it outside of the womb.

How shameful is it that in our country, turtle eggs have greater protections in place than unborn life in the womb? How shameful is it that such a thing as segregation existed no more than 70 years ago in this country?

Christians of all people uphold the sanctity and the dignity of all human life. Why?

The reason is because all human people, all individuals, every single person is made in the image of God. So, we see here first, many similarities, a few key differences here in the post-flood world.

But if I'm Noah, I have another big question on my mind. Do you know what it is? What about God's wrath? That's my second question here on this side of the flood.

[15 : 10] What about God's wrath? God just saw the sinfulness of the world and He flooded it. If I'm Noah, I'm wondering, how can I be certain that that's not going to happen again?

How close do I need to set up camp? How close do I need to live next to the ark? God speaks here in verses 8-17 to put these fears at ease.

He's already promised at the end of chapter 8. But now He seals the deal by making Noah a new promise. He makes Noah a covenant. You remember that term, covenant.

God established a covenant with Adam in the garden. And you remember what we discussed. Covenant defines the relationship. You remember this. Ligon Duncan defines covenant as a special relationship established and bestowed by God that has blessings and obligations and is of life and death significance.

So here God says, verse 9, I establish my covenant. It's clear this covenant is God initiated. This is coming from the top down. Nobody's twisting God's arm to establish this covenant.

[16 : 24] He is initiating this promise. And the promise, He says, who's it with? He says, it's with you, Noah, and your offspring with you and with every living creature that is with you.

All the birds and the livestock, every beast of the earth with you. As many as come out of the ark, it is for every beast of the earth. In other words, this is a common grace covenant, not a special grace covenant.

covenant. This promise is made with all people, not just with God's people. And it's not just all people.

It is made with all creatures. All creatures, all animals are included in this covenant over and over and over again. We see it repeated in this passage. My covenant here is with all flesh.

My covenant is with every living creature. So again, atheists and Muslims, Jews and Gentiles, believers and non-believers, dogs, cats, lions, tigers, bears, all of them are on the receiving end of the blessings of this covenant.

[17 : 33] This is a worldwide, all-encompassing, unconditional, forever promise. And what's the promise? Verse 11. Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood.

Never again shall there be a flood to destroy all the earth. Never again. In other words, Noah, you don't have to live with one foot in the ark and one foot on dry land.

You don't have to live in worry that I will act in wrath against sin to destroy the world with a flood ever again while the earth remains, he said in chapter 8. Seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.

This is a covenant of preservation. Herman Bavink, he calls it a covenant of long-suffering. God says, in essence, he says, I am going to preserve all things, maintain regularity in this sinful world in order to bring it to my appointed end.

I will be patient and long-suffering. Now I will preserve this world for the coming of the Messiah.

[19 : 01] And as a sign of this promise, God says in verse 13, he says, I will 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. You know, the bow in the ancient Near East, in this context, the bow, that's a pretty common weapon of war.

It's a symbol of death and destruction and violence. But now, God takes this image of fear and violence and war and he transforms it into something beautiful.

God, God in essence, is hanging up his war bow. So it's no longer a symbol of wrath. Now it's a symbol of peace. And you notice where the bow is pointing.

It's not pointing down towards us to fire down at the earth. It's pointing up towards heaven. As if God is saying, should I ever break my promise to you, may I be on the receiving end of this wrath.

[20 : 12] May I be destroyed if I don't keep my promise to you. Well, that is astounding grace, isn't it, church? It's unfortunate that many in our culture have hijacked this sign and reinterpreted it as a badge of approval of all sorts of sexual sin.

You know, we need to recover its meaning and teach our children its meaning and make sure we understand what this symbol is up in the sky that God's given us to see.

When we look up at the sky after a rain and we see a rainbow, we ought to be reminded of the long suffering of our God. We ought to be reminded of his patience patience with sinners like us.

All of the ordinary things that we take for granted, every changing of the season is a reminder of his faithfulness. Every rising of the sun and of the moon is a reminder of his faithfulness.

Every rainbow after a storm is a reminder that our God is faithful and he's able to preserve his people through every trial. I love this quote from Marcus Dodds.

[21 : 24] He says, the rainbow is a sign that God has no pleasure in destruction, that he does not give way to moods, that he does not always chide, that if weeping may endure for a night, joy is sure to follow.

If anyone is under a cloud leading a joyless, heartless life, if anyone has much apparent reason to suppose that God has given him up to the catastrophe and lets things run as they may, there is some satisfaction in reading this natural emblem and recognizing it, recognizing that without the cloud, nay, without the cloud breaking into heavy sweeping rains, there cannot be the bow and that no cloud of God's sending is permanent but will one day give place to unclouded joy.

Church, in order to reach that unclouded joy, we have a third question that we need answered, don't we? Question number three, what about our sin?

What about our sin? Praise God he's patient with sinners. Amen? Praise God he is long suffering, that he delays his wrath but what about the problem of our sin?

Has the flood washed it away? the rest of the passage here, verses 18 through 29, show us that the tragic answer is no.

[22 : 57] Here, even in this new beginning, this fresh start, sin and all of its destructive effects still reigns over all people. Look there with me to verse 20.

We see here that now after the flood, Noah began to be a man of the soil and that's what I'm going to call farmers from now on by the way. They're not farmers anymore, they are men and women of the soil.

He says he planted himself a vineyard. Things are going great. He is subduing the earth. He's exercising dominion. He's laboring. This is obedience to God's command.

This is good. It says he drank some of the wine. This is also good. He's enjoying the fruit of his labor. This is good. But then it says he became drunk and that's not good.

Even more so he lay uncovered naked in his tent. Now that's really not good. The scriptures are very clear. Wine is a good gift.

[24 : 02] It gladdens the heart of man but the Bible is also explicitly clear that drunkenness is not good. Drunkenness is sinful and Noah here he's demonstrating a sinful lack of self-control.

As we see this whole event happening and we read this it all just make us want to scream what are you thinking? This is no different. You are just like Adam.

Just think about this for a minute. Noah here he has been given the chance of a lifetime hasn't he? He has just been given grace upon grace upon grace upon grace he alone him and his family out of all the earth have been spared from the judgment that they deserve for their sin.

He's been given this opportunity for a fresh start in a new world and almost immediately he drinks himself drunk and goes laid naked in his tent for all to see. It is an embarrassment.

Well this new start it ends the same old way with another fall into sin. Clearly we see a flood was not enough to resolve his biggest issue.

[25 : 17] He still had this internal problem this internal issue called sin that's ruling over him. You know sometimes we tend to think that maybe a new start is all we need.

We have problems at our old job and so we go run to a new job. We have problems with one marriage and so we run to the next relationship.

We have problems in one church and so we run ourselves to a new church. But the problem is guess what? We take our sin with us. We may think that all we need is just to turn over a new leaf and try something different have a new start but unless this problem of sin is dealt with nothing ultimately changes does it?

And notice here too by the way when did Noah fall? When did Noah fall into temptation and sin? When did he fall from the state of grace? He didn't let his guard down during the storm did he?

He let his guard down once the storm had passed. Up to this point Noah has been a model of faithfulness. It wasn't the trial that wore him down it was peace.

[26 : 33] It wasn't the storm that wore him down it was the time of peace it wasn't until after the storm had passed that Noah falls into sin. Well let this be a lesson for us church.

We need our guard up not only in times of trial but also especially so in times of rest. Some of y'all I know are walking through times of trial right now and you are praying more than you ever have.

You are clinging to Christ. You are trusting God to hold you up. You're reaching out to him asking for his help and all of that is so so good but remember if the storm passes when the storm passes keep clinging to Christ.

keep praying keep trusting God to hold you up keep calling out to him as helpless in need of his grace. You need him just as much in clear skies as you do in the clouds.

Noah just like Adam falls into sin and just like Adam before him he experiences the shame and the disgrace of his nakedness but it's not just him.

[27 : 53] Look what happens next. Verse 22 says Ham the father of Canaan now that's the second time he's pointed that out. Did you notice that? Ham the father of Canaan he tells us twice up in verse 18 and again here in verse 22.

Why does he do that? Well it might not mean much to us but think again about the context here. Think about the Israelites hearing this text. Remember where they are as they receive this book.

They are preparing to enter the promised land. And do you remember who's there? It's the Canaanites. The Canaanites from this point forward in the book of Genesis and onward are sort of the arch nemesis of Israel.

They're the bad guys. So this passage helps explain who they are and where they came from and how they got to be so evil and so wicked. So verse 20 Ham the father of Canaan sees the nakedness of his father and instead of turning his eyes and covering his father's shame and respecting his father he goes and makes a scene of it.

He goes and tells his brothers. We don't know exactly what this looked like but clearly Ham acted in irreverence and disrespect. Does that sound familiar to you at all?

[29 : 11] It should. just as the serpent acted in a way that revealed the shameful nakedness of Adam and Eve so now Ham makes a mockery of his father's nakedness.

And just as God had done for Adam and Eve in covering up their shame with animal skin so now we see Shem and Japheth cover up their father's shameful nakedness with their own covering.

Do you see a pattern here? Do you see the cycle? We are seeing again here even on this side of the flood the unfolding drama of the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

You remember from Genesis chapter 3 verse 15 God promises I will put enmity between you the serpent and the woman between your offspring and her offspring he will bruise your head you shall bruise his heel.

This account here in Genesis 9 with all of his repetition and all of his mirror like images to the first creation with Adam and Eve it shows us some very bad news.

[30 : 27] The flood didn't wash away sin and the flood didn't drown the serpent. Noah is a sinner just like Adam and now Ham is proving himself to be the seed of the serpent.

So verse 24 says Noah wakes up and realizes what had happened and just as God pronounced judgment and promise and blessing after the fall in chapter 3 so now Noah pronounces judgment and blessing here after his fall in Genesis 9 the seed of the serpent is cursed in verse 25.

Cursed be Canaan. He will be a servant of servants the lowest of the low does that sound familiar? On your belly you will go and dust you will eat all the days of your life.

And on the other hand Shem the ancestor of Israel and Japheth his brother will be blessed. All of this just sounds like we're back in Genesis chapter 3 again doesn't it?

Over and over and over again everything is the same and yet everything is different. After all of this a global flood a new start it seems like we're back to square one doesn't it?

[31 : 45] The conflict of the seeds is continuing the fight is still going on the problem of sin still rages on death still reigns no one is righteous no not one the most faithful obedient man on the earth is drunk and naked in his tent.

it's clear to me what we need is not simply a new start what we need is a new covenant a better covenant a covenant that won't just preserve the world a covenant that will purify the world a covenant that won't just hit reset a covenant that will redeem we need a covenant that God won't just be patient with our sin we need a covenant where God will pay for our sin in full the prophets spoke about this covenant we read one passage already Jeremiah 31 says this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days declares the Lord I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts I will be their God and they shall be my people no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother saying know the Lord for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest declares the Lord

I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more again in Ezekiel 36 he says I will take you from the nations I will gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness from all your idols I will cleanse you I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you and I will remove your heart of stone from your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh I will put my spirit within you and I will cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey all my rules this is the new covenant as we look ahead as Christ Jesus comes onto the scene and he prepares to go to the cross he looks around and he says to his friends this cup is the new covenant in my blood for the forgiveness of sins we're just saying what can wash away my sins not a flood nothing but the blood of

Jesus what can crush the head of the serpent not a flood nothing but the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus what can bring a sinful people like us into a true new creation where we won't blow it the second we hit dry land nothing but the blood of Jesus here in this covenant with Noah and all creation God here sets the stage to preserve the earth in order to bring about full and final redemption by sending his own son to live and to die and to rise in the place of sinners so that any who come to him in faith can enter in to this new covenant and be truly cleansed from the inside out if we want a sign of God's love for sinners friend we can look to the rainbow but an even greater sign is found at the cross of

Christ if we want a sign of God's long suffering of his steadfast love of his patience of his grace of his kindness we can look up to the rainbow but a much better sign is seen at the cross and the empty tomb we can look up at the rainbow and see God's wrath averted for a time we can look to the cross and see God's wrath averted from you forever forever church to be to be a new creation the new beginning has begun in you and we look forward with eager expectation to a true new beginning we look forward to life forever with God and the new heavens and the new earth and the return of Christ you want to know what's going to be different there here's a difference for you there will be no possibility of sin ruining it all no more sin no more shame no more serpent no more failure no more guilt no more death no more conflict no more wrath no more tears no more clouds no more storms no more trials anymore just

[36 : 57] God in all his glory forever this is what we have to look forward to for all those who are in Christ because of the new covenant in his blood let's pray father we thank you God for this this new and better covenant that is so undeserved Lord but you pour out graciously on us all by by your grace and kindness towards us in Christ we thank you for your patience with sinners like us and we look forward to the day Lord when we can enjoy you in full freedom free from sin free from shame free from death free from the enemy Lord we thank you for the victory that Christ has over all of this by his victory!

at the cross and the empty tomb we love you Lord we pray this in Jesus