

# Restoration After the Fall

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning.

Good morning.

You know, it's just fascinating. It's just fascinating to read about all that stuff. And as many of you know, our world seems to be having an increasing number of such disasters.

a building standing in some places, some of the video of the floods where the entire island was simply underwater, engulfed by the sea.

And seeing the video footage of the survivors afterwards coming out from their refuges and looking at the wreckage, the complete destruction, the creation that they had lived in and the forms that had given them life were wiped out.

[ 2 : 17 ] Many of you are old enough to remember Hurricane Katrina, pictures of people sitting on their roofs, hoping that someone might rescue them from the floodwaters days after the hurricane was gone, hoping against hope that they might be rescued.

The aftermath of these storms is devastating. And of course, in our lives, there are other types of storms as well, aren't there?

The end of a marriage, a tragic diagnosis, losing your job, an untimely death, and many others.

When we think about these things, it's easy for us to be consumed by fears. Some of us may struggle with big fears. I have this chronic fear that when I go away and I come back to my house, I'm going to come back and the whole thing will be burned down.

And all there is is a concrete slab and ashes. And this is recurring. It happens all the time. When I go away, this is what I think about. Maybe you have other kinds of fears.

[ 3 : 34 ] And it's not just the fears when we think about these things. It's not just the fears about what will happen to us.

But when we think about a God who rules over the universe and sovereignly cares over all things, it raises questions and fears in our hearts about God as well. In the aftermath of such things, what will God do?

Who will God be to us? Is he safe? Will he do it again? The fears that arise in the aftermath are what bring us to our passage this morning in the book of Genesis.

What will happen after the flood? If you want to turn with me in your pew Bibles, you can turn to page 6. We're looking at Genesis starting in chapter 8, verse 20. And as you turn there, let me just remind you where we are in the story.

Anyway, going back a couple of chapters, God looked at the world and he saw the evil that every intention of the hearts of humankind was only evil always.

[ 4 : 44 ] And he determined to make an end to that evil by flooding the world and destroying all the living creatures. And yet in his mercy, he remembered Noah and he saw Noah in his righteousness and he called Noah to be the one that he would rescue in the ark.

And Noah and his family were rescued through the flood. And in chapter 8, verse 19, they literally have just stepped out of the boat. They are walking into the aftermath of the flood.

And they're asking the questions that we ask often in our own lives. What will God do now? What will happen to us?

Where do we go from here? So that's what we're going to look at this morning. As we look at this, I'm going to read the passage and then we'll pray together.

And then we'll dive in. So Genesis chapter 8, verse 20. 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.

[ 6 : 00 ] And when the Lord smelt 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, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease. And God blessed Noah and his sons. And he 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 hands 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.

[ 7 : 13 ] 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. Team on the earth and multiply in it. And 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.

[ 8 : 39 ] And the water 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.

And 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. Now 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 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 brothers outside.

Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both of their shoulders, and walked backwards and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backwards.

[ 9 : 46 ] They did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine, he 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. 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 for 350 years. All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you for your word this morning.

We thank you that you have not left us to grope in the dark, or to wonder what kind of God you are, but that you have made yourself known. You have revealed yourself to us, Lord, through your son, Jesus Christ, and through your written word here that we read this morning.

[ 10 : 53 ] Lord, we pray now that you would help us by your spirit to understand your word, and to apply it to our hearts. Lord, that we might know you, and that we as your creatures might respond to you, our creator, as we ought.

Be with us this morning, we pray. I pray, Lord, that you would help me. Lord, that I might speak clearly, and that my words would be true, and that, Lord, you would help me this morning.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. What kind of God will God be after the flood?

And what will happen to humankind? These are the two questions that this text answer for us this morning, and we're going to look at those in order. So first, what kind of God will God be?

As we start in verse 20 of chapter 8, we will see that in the first section of this, going all the way through 917, we will see that God is a God who will graciously restore his creation, that he will make a covenant to preserve life in God's creation in a post-flood world.

[12:18] This is his purpose, and this is his plan, and this is the God that we see in it. Let's look at it. We'll break it down into three sections as we look at this chunk together.

Three things that God restores. First, in chapter 8, 20 through 22, we see that God is restoring the form of creation. What do I mean by that?

Well, in response to Noah's response, Noah walks out of the ark. He puts his feet back on solid ground after days and weeks and months and maybe even years.

It's not quite clear how long, but a long time he was on the boat, and he's finally on solid ground. If you've ever been on a boat for a while, it feels good, doesn't it? Whew, solid ground.

But he recognizes that he's there because God has graciously preserved him and his family, and so he responds as he knows. He builds an altar, and he worships God, and he offers up a burnt offering, which is a thanksgiving and praise offering to God for his deliverance.

[13:23] It is also, I believe, a recognition because a burnt offering, as you see it played out in the rest of the Old Testament, is often an atoning sacrifice, something where something is being offered and burned up as a recognition that sin requires death, that sin causes judgment to fall, and something must die for sin.

And so he offers up this sacrifice to God, and God responds. And interesting, when you look at it in verses 21 and 22, he doesn't actually talk about humanity at all.

What he talks about here is that what God is doing is saying, I will never again curse the ground the way that I've just done with the flood. Right?

He says, I will not destroy the creation again. I will not strike down every living creature as I have done. Now, if you think back to what we've talked about and what God was doing in the flood and the way that he was, the flood was in some ways an uncreation, mirroring in a negative way what had happened in Genesis 1 where God had taken a world from watery chaos to form, and those forms of day and night and land and sea and dry land and created the place where life would flourish, where animals and plants and then human beings would flourish.

And what the flood was was a deconstructing of all of that, an uncreating of all of that. And now that God, now that the waters have receded and there is still life there, God is saying, I will never again destroy it the way that I have.

[15:15] It's fascinating when you look at verse 22, you think about some of these structures that would have been very familiar in an agricultural society, maybe less so to us today, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.

These are the normal rhythms. And what God is saying is, I will no longer uproot and overthrow the normal rhythms the way that I did in this judgment and in this flood.

Now we need to recognize this is not a removal of the curse on the ground that we see in Genesis 3, 17. For Romans, in Romans 8, 19 and following will tell us that all of creation is subject to the curse as it's waiting for the redemption of God's people and a final glory and a final renewal that we will see.

So it's not that God is removing all of the curse, but God is saying, I will never again bring this form, this kind of judgment onto the world. And interestingly enough, he does it in the face of knowing that humans will sin.

Isn't verse 21 interesting? I almost stumbled over it and maybe you stumble over it too. What is God saying here? I will never again curse the ground because of man for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.

[16:36] What is going on? It almost feels against the flow. He's promising not to destroy it, but then he's saying, but this evil continues. And in fact, that's exactly what he is saying.

God is saying that despite the ongoing presence of human sin, despite the ongoing offense where humanity will continue to rebel against me, and therefore, because they were given dominion over the earth and a representative role over the earth, this judgment came upon all of creation because of man's sin.

Now I'm going to say, I will never again destroy the creation in this way, even though man's sin will persist. And so God is graciously saying, I will continue to uphold and sustain the forms that I created in Genesis 1 that will create life.

So that's the first thing we see is that God restores the form of creation. And then as he keeps going in the beginning of chapter 9, God restores the flourishing of life in creation.

And the reason why I say this is because you see in verse 1 and verse 7, this repetition of the creation mandate. Be fruitful and multiply. I've created this world for you to live in.

[ 18 : 04 ] Now go and live in it and be a flourishing, abundant life that I've made you to be. But interestingly, in contrast to what we see in Genesis 1, this flourishing is going to happen not in a world apart from sin, but in a world that is now marred with sin.

And so you see in verses 2 through 6 the ongoing way in which he's having to qualify or constrain how life is going to flourish in a fallen world where sin and murder have already happened.

So he talks about the relationship between man and human beings and animals. And what had been what was meant to be a husbanding or a dominion that was life-giving, there is now fear. That humans will be fearsome to the animals. But even more than that, you see as you keep going in verses 1 through 7 of chapter 9, we see verse 5, for your life blood 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.

In Genesis 1, God never had to say this because there had been no murder, there had been no death, there had been no killing. But now, after Cain and Abel, after Lamech, after chapter 6, after the evil of man's heart spreading and infecting and corrupting all the world, God says, I want you to flourish and multiply, but I know that you're doing that in a fallen world and that means that I have to teach you how to value the life that I've created in a new way.

[ 20 : 06 ] You may not eat meat with blood in it because the blood is the life of a creature and I want you to value the life of that creature. So, even though I'm giving it to you to eat, you should drain it out so that you do not take its life lightly.

And then he translates that and he says, and if that's true with animals, how much more is it true for human beings who are created in the image of God?

So, you see in verse 6 this incredibly powerful statement, whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed for God made man his own image.

How will life flourishing go forward in a fallen world where human beings are going to kill each other? There will be justice but that justice won't come in this cataclysmic global form of a flood anymore.

God is now delegating that justice to human society to say life is meant to be preserved and now you are entrusted with responding to murder with justice.

[ 21 : 21 ] When you kill another unjustly, your life will be forfeit. Now look, we need to understand this is a movement of God away from what we saw in chapter 4 at the end.

Do you remember Lamech? The descendant of Cain. Do you remember his vengeful spirit, his promise to kill not just one but seven times? God is saying, no, that is vengeance and that is not right.

That is cruelty and that is destructive and that is not valuing life. But to value life in a fallen world, there is this principle. If you take life, your life will be forfeited.

And it is just. And it creates a principle that has been typically true in many cultures throughout all of history.

Now, I am not going to spend the next 15 minutes talking about the details of capital punishment and what we think about that in our modern state and in our modern government. It's a great conversation.

[ 22 : 29 ] If you really want to talk about it, you can come talk to me afterwards. But what I do want you to see is that there is a principle here that God has said, I will not judge the whole world. I am entrusting to humanity this role of enforcing justice as it comes to life.

And I believe that there is a principle there that we need to take seriously. Affirming the value of life, particularly human life, someone who is made in God's image is one of the implications that we see here.

And we need to think about this, that this is not just in capital punishment and thinking about murder cases, but there are broader implications for this as well. How do we think about those who are vulnerable or potentially whose life is not valued in our culture today?

What do we think about the unborn? What do we think about the aging? What do we think about those with severe disabilities or handicaps?

How are we to honor their life that God has given them, made in the image of God? how do we respond when human beings treat other human beings as if they are less than human in modern forms of slavery and sex trafficking?

[ 24 : 03 ] Or how do we even confront the very human and very fallen pattern that we have of being xenophobic, that is afraid of people who are different than us.

We look at them and we think sometimes how easy it is to think they're not as human as I am. And we don't see the image of God in them and we don't treat them with the dignity that we ought to do so.

God values human life highly because He has made us in His image and because He created the world to be a place where life would flourish.

So He returns in verse 7. And you, you, Noah, and your sons, the footnote says it's plural, you and your sons and your daughter-in-laws and their families, be fruitful and multiply, team on the earth, multiply life.

God is restoring this mandate to humanity while giving it constraints within a fallen world.

[ 25 : 22 ] But this is what God's plan is. His plan to fill the world with life has not been derailed even by this cataclysmic flood. God does this knowing that humans will sin, knowing that they will fail.

He sends His relief pitcher back out in the next game even after they've blown the save. So not only does God restore the form of creation, not only does God restore the flourishing of life and creation, but God restores confidence in His character and His faithful care for all of His creation.

this is what we see in verses 8 and following because not only does God then say I will not do this and then gives instruction for humanity to be fruitful and multiply, but then He says and I will make a covenant with you.

I will make a pact, an agreement with you. And it is not just with you, Noah, and your sons, but it is for all of creation. If you look at verses 10 through 17, the repetition over and over again of every living creature, of all creatures, of all things, God is doing this with the whole world and He's making a covenant with the whole world that He will not destroy them again in this kind of way, but that He will put a bow in the clouds so that He will remember them and so that they will know that He remembers them.

One of the most interesting things about the hurricane in the Bahamas was that two days after the hurricane, there was another front that came through and there was rain.

[ 27 : 11 ] And some of you may have experienced something like this. After a really traumatic event, when you come close to that again, it raises all of the fears that you experience going through the traumatic event the first time.

And it is interesting that when God wants to give a sign to His creation to say, I will not do that again, He does it in the context of when the clouds form and when the fear in your heart rises that this rainstorm is going to turn into that flood that destroyed the world, there will be a bow to remind you that I have made a promise that I will not do that, that I will care, for you.

The substance of the covenant is in verse 11. 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.

God will remember His people. Just as He remembered Noah in chapter 8, verse 1, when the floods were up and God saw Noah and He remembered him and He rescued him.

So also, God will remember His promise and He will take this bow and it's fascinating, right? The word for bow in Hebrew, in the ancient language, is the same bow for a weapon of war.

[ 28 : 43 ] God makes His bow to point not downward but upward. The image of judgment is no longer pointing down at His creation but it is pointing upward as if God is saying, where there is judgment, I will take it.

I will promise that I will not make you face this judgment again in this same way. So God has said, I will be faithful to care for my fallen creation.

So, we see what kind of God here. One of the most remarkable things is that when you look through this section, after verse 20, God is the only subject of the verbs in the entire section.

God said this. God says this. God promises this. God blesses them. God does all of these things. God is taking the initiative to do this.

When God makes this covenant to not destroy the world again, He's not saying, if you keep the law, if you obey me and follow me, if you do all of these things, God is graciously coming to His world that He has just inflicted a horrific judgment on and He's saying, I have not abandoned you, I have

not lost you, and I am unilaterally coming to you to make this covenant, to promise to you that I am not a God who simply delights in destruction, but I am a God who delights in giving life.

[ 30 : 25 ] I am the one who has come to bless you so that you may flourish and have life. What a great relief it is to know that this is the God that Abraham knew and experienced after the flood.

And this is the God who we still know today. He is active, not passive, but initiating to restore what is broken. He is working to accomplish His good purposes, and He is gracious to renew the context in which human beings would flourish.

And the question that this text points us to is, will you trust Him? Do you believe this God? Have you seen the rainbow? It stands in the storms of the world and the storms of your life.

The story doesn't end there. The section continues. Having looked at God, it then goes on to say, what will humanity be like after the flood?

What will happen? Particularly with Noah and his family. And so this is the second part of this passage that we see. Starting in verse 18, what we see is that we see humanity's divided destiny.

[ 31 : 52 ] So in verses 18 and 19 we see a little, very brief, little genealogy. The sons of Noah were Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

And by the way, Ham was the father of Canaan. You might wonder, why did that get stuck in there? Well, imagine that Moses is writing this to Israel as they're moving through the promised land and heading towards, or moving through the desert and heading towards the promised land.

Who lives in the promised land? The Canaanites. Who are the Canaanites? The descendants of Canaan. So, Moses is giving you a little marker. This is where those people came from.

So he's just kind of saying, hey, this is where they came from. And so, he gives this and he says, from this, right, these three men and their wives, from these families, then, the world will be refilled.

Pastor Greg dealt some last week with the question of how global or local the flood was. It's an ongoing conversation. It's not a hill for us to die on.

[ 32 : 56 ] But some of these, some of these passages make me think, maybe it was a global flood. I'll just leave it there and keep going. The story is going with a restoration of a new humanity and the spreading out, be fruitful and multiply, of humanity.

And so, the question is, and what kind of humanity will this be? And starting verse 20, then, we turn from this grand cosmic narrative to this very little scene, this very strange little story that tells us about the sons of Noah and what kind of men they were.

Noah is a man of the earth, sort of like a second Adam, a man of the soil. And, you know, interestingly, though, Noah is not the focus of this story. He grows vineyards, he makes wine, he gets drunk.

It seems like it's kind of disgraceful. But it's not a very strong, there's not a lot of commentary about Noah. It's simply the context for what happens with his sons. So, Noah does this, and there he is, asleep in his tent, in disgrace, one would imagine.

and Ham goes in and looks. And the word to see has a sense of searching, like he really wanted to see, like he was jumping up to see if he could look through the windows, except they don't have windows because it was tense, so he's peeking, see if he could get in.

[ 34 : 25 ] He really wanted to look on his father in his shame. And once he saw it, he went to his brothers, he's like, you see what dad did? It sure seems like whatever he was doing, he was either tattling or mocking his father in how he responded to this context.

Whatever it is, it's a violation of honoring his father. And you see that so clearly because you see the contrast between what he does and what his brothers do.

when Shem and Japheth hear this, look with me at it because it's so striking. Verse 23, they took a garment, laid it both on their shoulders. They walked backwards and covered the nakedness.

Their faces were turned backwards. This was repeated twice. They did not look. But they carefully covered him up in a way that honored him.

in distinction to what Ham did. And so, when Noah awakes, he figures it out.

[ 35 : 41 ] It's interesting. The story doesn't care how. No one knows. But he knows what happened. Right? And he looks at his sons and he lays down cursing and blessing.

Interestingly, the curse on Ham is not on Ham, is it? See verse 25? The curse is on his son, Canaan. One of his four sons, as we learn later on.

You can look in chapter 10, verse 6. You see that Ham had four sons, Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. So this was the youngest son of the youngest son. And this curse then has an explanatory

context that most of us wouldn't recognize.

Because when you look at the sons of Ham broadly, you recognize that from him, many of the greatest opponents of God's people in the Middle East came.

The nation of Egypt, the nation of Assyria, the nation of Babylon, and specifically the Canaanites who lived in the promised land. You can see that in verses 6 through 10 of chapter 10.

[ 36 : 58 ] What God says is, Canaan, you will be a servant. And what I think this is specifically telling is predicting and speaking into the future about what will happen as God is bringing his people into the promised land.

There is a focused salvation historical purpose for what this story is pointing to. Because it is pointing to the people that Moses is leading and then Joshua will lead into the promised land where these Canaanites live.

And he is saying, from this stock, from this account, from these historical curses, this is then the conflict that arises and the basis upon which we will see this conquest come.

The curse is predictive and it is elective, not merely punitive. Noah isn't just in a tizzy and getting mad at Ham because he's ashamed. There's a larger history because what we see in this is that there are two lines that come out of Noah.

And these are the lines that we've already seen in the history of humanity ever since Adam and Eve. As Adam and Eve fell into sin and then they had children, right, we had the line of Cain and we had the line of Seth.

[ 38 : 28 ] And we've seen this repeated over and over again. One is a line that is under the curse and is exemplifying the worst of sinful humanity. One is a line of promise, not because they are sinless, but because God is working through this line of promise to work his redemptive purposes.

And so we see the line from Seth to Shem to Abraham in just a few weeks. And we see the line from Cain to Ham to Canaan.

And we see these two lines of promise, the line of promise and the fear of judgment, both being realities in the future of humanity.

Now I need to spend two minutes here because there has been a line of interpretation about this passage in particular that the curse on Ham has been used by some in the church and outside the church as an excuse for a defense of a biblical justification for slavery of Africans.

How they got there had to do with the fact that many of Ham's children ended up living in seemingly North Africa and becoming the...

[ 39 : 55 ] And the way that this was played out in the thoughts of those who presented this was that these are the ones who are the sons of the curse and therefore because they're called to be servants, then we have the right as the church, as Westerners, as the seed of promise.

This is the thinking. It's not right, but it's the thinking. This has been justified. This has been used to justify racism against Africans and black people, and it's been used to justify slavery.

It is reprehensible, and it is incorrect. There is no excuse for it except for human sinfulness, which is not an excuse.

Because we see a number of things. One is that not all of Ham's descendants were cursed. Only Canaan was cursed. So to see this as a global curse on Ham's descendants is a misreading of the text.

Secondly, we see that what this story is doing is setting up the context in which Israel is going to enter into the land of Palestine, the promised land, later, and where the people came from whom they will be displacing.

[ 41 : 24 ] Now, that's a whole other question to yourself. I'm going to refer you. Pastor Greg, about a year ago, did a great sermon on Exodus 21 and 22 and dealt with this issue, so you can go there.

And you work it out because there are other questions that this raises, but what I want to say very clearly is that the curses do not have any enduring racial or social, political application for us today. In fact, what we see in the sweep of the Bible storyline is that God is always inviting people from every tongue and tribe and nation. And even in the Old Testament when he's prefer, when he's making Israel the center of it, he's inviting people in.

And when we see in Acts 2 the spread of the outpouring of the Spirit and the bringing in of people, and when we look at the vision of what's going to happen in the throne room when people from every tongue and tribe and nation are gathered around the throne of Jesus worshiping him, we recognize that there is no place in the church for that justification or that discrimination.

So I just need to say that because it's out there. It's out there in the history and we need to recognize it and we need to repudiate it and we need to be clear on what the Bible actually says about these things.

[ 42 : 50 ] That brings us back, however, to the fact that there are two lines. The history of humanity is divided. There are those who will face judgment and there are those through whom God will work redemption.

We need to be clear on the fact that this is true still today. If the flood couldn't cleanse the world or redeem humanity, what will?

The pattern of God's faithfulness is in the context of human fallenness. And His faithfulness is a redemptive one, but it comes in the context of recognizing the greatness of His judgment against sin.

So how do we know who God will be for us as we face God's judgment against sin in our own lives? Well, friends, this is the beauty of the storyline of the gospel.

This is why we read Jeremiah 31 earlier because this covenant said, I will not destroy. The new covenant that God promises through Jeremiah and Ezekiel and then establishes as Jesus comes is that God will not abandon His righteousness so the judgment will come on sin, but God will not abandon His purposes for His created beings to live.

[ 44 : 25 ] So how will He do this? Through the line of Shem, through the line of Seth, He will bring to Jesus. Look at the genealogy in Luke 3 and you will see this line coming all the way from Adam to Jesus Christ, God become man in the flesh who has come to stand in the gap between the death that we deserve and the life that God has intended for us.

He has come to take on flesh and to live as a man. He has come to take the judgment on our sin at the cross. He has come to gain victory over sin and death. By His resurrection from the dead, He has come to be our rescuer in whom many will be saved.

He has made a better covenant with His blood that is sure. and that if we take hold of this by faith, we can rest in the refuge of Christ and know that when the storm of judgment that will finally come upon all earth and upon all flesh, that we will have a rescuer and we will stand through that storm that God will not abandon His plan or His people but that He has come in Jesus so that we might be His.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank You for this hope even as we are sobered and recognize that, Lord, we are as much of the line of Ham as we are of the line of Shem.

Lord, that we have sin in our hearts that we cannot uproot and we cannot overcome simply by good works or by good will.

[ 46 : 34 ] Lord, that apart from Your redeeming work we are lost. Lord, we praise You for Your redeeming work. in Christ and ask, Lord, I ask today that as we come to Your table, Lord, that You would help us to celebrate, Lord, the redemption that we have in Him.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, friends, it is fitting for us to...raumu relationship that...