

CHRIST: Reclaiming the Creation [2 Peter 3.5-13]

Read Genesis 8.20 – 9.29 & 2 Peter 3.5-13

### ‘CHRIST IN GENESIS’: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS & SETTING THE CONTEXT

1/ Since what we are looking for here in our survey/summary study of CHRIST IN GENESIS are the [‘CHRIST-markers’](#) that point us to CHRIST who is to come, they will be easy to find in this study passage:

[1] Jesus provides His own personal commentary on the significance of the Flood in **Matthew 24.37-38** and **Luke 17.26-27** when He declared that the Flood judgments on the ungodly were a pre-enactment of His own Second Coming: **Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man ... until the flood came and destroyed them all.**

[2] So also, the aftermath of the Flood – after the earth had been ‘cleansed’ of the ungodly corruption, there emerged a ‘new creation.’ That is the subject of Peter’s New Testament interpretation and commentary in **2 Peter 3.5-13.**

[3] There will be another cataclysmic judgment on the whole earth to destroy all the ungodly inhabitants of the earth and the ‘corruption’ that has spoiled God’s ‘good’ First Creation. That will usher in The Day when Jesus will declare: **Behold, I am making all things new! [Revelation 21.5].** Jesus gave John visions of the Day of New Creation in **Revelation 21.1**: **“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth [First Creation] had passed away, and the sea was no more.”**

[4] So, when Peter says **“But according to His promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells,”** he is quoting the promise God made to Noah in our study passage, as we shall see. **“But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly”** and **“But the Day of the LORD will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed” [2 Peter 3.7, 10]** ... and then the New Creation will be revealed in The Day of Christ.

2/ So, [our last lesson](#) [the Flood judgments of God] was a pre-enactment of the destruction of the world that now is when Christ returns; and the present lesson is a pre-enactment of the New Creation that will follow and be ushered in by Christ when **“[He] makes all things new.”**

3/ THAT, in a nutshell, is what we want to look for and point out as we pursue this current lesson...

#### I / Genesis 8.20-22 | The Promise of Salvation [2 Peter 3.8-9]

1/ v 20 / Immediately upon disembarking from the ark that had saved them from the Flood-waters, **“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.** BTW, this is the first mention of ‘altar’ in the Scriptures – not that they had not offered previous sacrifices on altars before, but the altar had not been specifically mentioned. *The offering of burnt offerings on the altar was Noah’s confession that they had been saved by Yahweh’s grace and mercy by the merits of a substitute sacrifice – a clear pointer to CHRIST!* This is also God’s reason for instructing Noah to take seven specimens of ‘clean’ animals and birds on the ark – so some of them could serve as sacrifices and the others would serve to re-populate the ‘new’ creation.

2/ vv 21-22 / **“And when The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma [‘sweet savour’ / KJV], The LORD said...”** This is language expressing that Yahweh accepted the sacrifices both as an atonement for their sins and also as a thank-offering for His Grace that He had extended in saving them from His wrath. This same language is used repeatedly in **Leviticus** to express God’s pleasure in receiving His appointed sacrifices – *again ALL of which are types and pre-enactments of CHRIST’s all-sufficient sacrifice for our salvation!*

3/ Yahweh also recognizes that the same corruptions that necessitated the first ‘cleansing’ of the earth will again be perpetuated by succeeding generations of humanity: **“...for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth.”** Yahweh knows that in the succeeding generations to follow from that time until the end,

it will be *'deja vu all over again.'* [Remember Jesus' words in **Matthew 24.37-38** and **Luke 17.26-27.**] But He will restrain Himself from destroying all earth and humanity **'as I have done'** by flood-waters ... until the final judgments of the Last Day. Not that He won't finally destroy everything again, but He won't destroy by waters. He will restrain Himself for two reasons: [1] to extend 'common grace' to all of humanity and give them space for repentance; and [2] to save His elect through the Gospel of CHRIST before that end comes [**2 Peter 3.9**]. Thus, day and night and the revolving seasons continue **shall not cease** and have not ceased ... until The Day of CHRIST.

## II / Genesis 9.1-7 | A 'New Adam' and 'New Creation' Mandate

1/ v 1 / As you read these words, you need to hear all the echoes of the First Creation mandates that God had given Adam in the beginning. Not only here, but even also all throughout the Flood narrative, we hear those echoes in the Spirit [breath] of God, the waters, the gathering of the created animals, etc. It was as if God was 'beginning' again – which He was. But especially here: **"And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth""** [see **ch 1.22, 28**]. Here, as the 'new Adam,' God is blessing Noah as He commissions to 're-begin' this 'new' creation. This primary Creation Mandate is repeated three times: **8.17; 9.1, 7**. Again, you have to see here that Noah is serving as a pre-enactment of CHRIST who will come as God's anointed **'last Adam...second Man'** [**1 Corinthians 15.45-47**] to redeem God's people – to save and re-create a new 'humanity' made in His own image [**Ephesians 2.15; Colossians 3.10**].

2/ vv 2-7 / There are some expanded differences in this 'new' creation mandate and the first:

[1] With the new 'fear' being introduced into the creation by the traumas of the Flood, **"the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast...bird...creeping thing...fish..."**

[2] Also, all the creatures of the earth may now be eaten as prey: **"Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. As I have gave you the green plants, I give you everything."** [see **Genesis 1.29-30; 1 Timothy 4.3**]. [Later on, when the Law is given, there will be some distinctions among these as 'clean' and 'unclean' – that is, permitted or not permitted for them to eat.

[3] They were forbidden to eat flesh **"with its life, that is, its blood."** God intended for them to respect and value life – to preserve it – because He is the only One who can give life. If an animal is slaughtered, it must be drained of its blood before they ate it. *The God-created life is in the blood – respect that!*

[4] MOST IMPORTANTLY: God declares His vengeance will upon anyone who willfully sheds the blood of another human being. God delegated human governments and authorities to administer capital punishment with His authority [see **Romans 13.1-5; 1 Peter 2.13-14**]. **"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."** Since God is the only Creator of life and lifeblood, then we are accountable to Him for how we treat it.

3/ Mankind must not think that since God had destroyed the whole human race, therefore He has a low view or disregard for human [or animal] life. God's justice is pure and fair. His judgments are all deserved. He made that clear in **ch 6.5-17**. God places a high value and regard for all life. But He authorized this directive for governments and authorities to execute because we must highly value, respect, and protect life in all our relationships and institutions.

## III / Genesis 9.8-17 | The Covenant of Peace [see Isaiah 54.9-10]

1/ v 8 / Yahweh declares His Covenant of Peace in this promise He makes to Noah, to every living creature on the earth, and to the earth itself. He calls it His **'Covenant of Peace'** in **Isaiah 54.9-10**, but we'll get to that in a minute. Yahweh reiterates here what He had announced and promised in **ch 6.17-19**. There, He had decreed He would send the Flood **"to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die."** But the ark of salvation would **"keep them alive."**

2/ THAT is what the ‘**Covenant of Peace**’ is – Yahweh’s promise and commitment to save, redeem, and ‘**keep alive**’ those who are His people. Yes, He will give common grace to the whole creation, but it is for the purpose of fulfilling His ultimate and sovereign purpose of bringing in the New Creation in the end [2 Peter 3.18]. And He will keep it – Yahweh refers to His ‘**covenant**’ a perfect seven times in this passage.

3/ So, what is a ‘**covenant**’? Set your mind on this principle: God relates to us and works with us by covenants. It has been so since the beginning in the First Creation. Although the word ‘covenant’ doesn’t appear in the Bible until **ch 6.18**, God had also established a covenant with Adam – which Adam miserably failed to keep. And, ALL the covenants in the Old Testament are but the opening of the bud of the full flower of the New Covenant which CHRIST will establish by His own Blood [see **Hebrews 13.20-21**]. BTW, the basis of this covenant promise which Yahweh establishes here was the blood of the sacrifices that Noah offered to Him when he disembarked from the ark. God always saves by the blood of the sacrifice – *and CHRIST is the all-sufficient atoning, redeeming Sacrifice for sins for our salvation.*

4/ But a ‘covenant’ is a ‘promise’ – in truth, all throughout the New Testament, ‘covenant’ and ‘promise’ are used interchangeably to describe the same transaction. So, when it comes to God’s covenants, we must remember they are not bargains or negotiations, or what we would call a ‘bi-lateral’ covenant. God’s covenants do not depend partially on our keeping them in order for His covenant to be fulfilled. Because we have demonstrated from Adam on throughout until the end of human history that *we will fail*. God’s covenants are ‘unilateral’ – in other words, God must be faithful to keep His covenant/promise to us by His Grace. And CHRIST is the One who will fulfill all the conditions of obedience and give the promised ‘ **blessing**’ to us by His Grace [2 Corinthians 1.20; Ephesians 1.3-10]. So it is here.

5/ Now, to be clear, God’s covenants do require our obedience. A covenant always includes both God’s *conditions* to us [see **vv 1-7**] and His *commitment* to us [see **vv 8-17**] or, to put it another way, a covenant always includes both *stipulations and commandments for us to obey* and *God’s gracious promises that He will keep and fulfill*. But, in the end, only CHRIST will perfectly obey and keep all the *conditions* of the covenant in our place – as our Substitute. And God will ‘credit’ us with CHRIST’s perfect obedience and ‘ **bless**’ us in Him. [See **Romans 5** for a fuller commentary on this covenant of ‘ **peace**’ (Romans 5.1).]

6/ **vv 9-11** / So what does God promise in this ‘ **covenant of peace**’? His promise is: “**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.**” NOT that the earth will never again be destroyed, because it will in the Last Day before the New Creation – but not by a flood of waters [2 Peter 3.5-12].

7/ **vv 12-17** / Then God gives the rainbow as a visible sign of His ‘ **covenant of peace**’ so we can be both warned of His holy wrath against sin and His promise of Grace and mercy to save those who believe in Him. Three times over, God says that the rainbow is His ‘ **sign**’ of His covenant of peace, and that He also promises that He Himself will both ‘ **see**’ the bow and ‘ **remember**’ His ‘ **covenant of peace**’ He has committed Himself to keep. BTW: God uses the same word ‘ **bow**’ that referred to the common bow of warfare and death. He has just flexed and shot His ‘ **arrows**’ of death from His ‘ **bow**’ of wrath and judgment in the Flood. But this rain-‘ **bow**’ will be one of ‘ **peace**.’

8/ And we can be sure God will be faithful to ‘ **remember**’ His promised ‘ **covenant of peace**.’ He repeatedly says that He will ‘ **establish [and ‘set’] my covenant**,’ meaning it is set in place, sure, and secure. And that He will ‘ **remember**’ His promised mercies. THIS is the significance of the **Isaiah 54.7-10** promise! Israel will yet in those ‘ **future generations**’ [Genesis 9.12] go through seasons of time when they must be chastised and disciplined for their unfaithfulness. Think especially of their 400 years in Egypt and the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. There will be seasons when they will fear that God is deserting, forsaking, and abandoning them – hiding His Face from them. *And so will you and I!* But God reminds them of His ‘ **covenant of peace**’ that He established with them in **Genesis 9.8-17**: “**This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke [reject, utterly destroy] you. For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,**’ says The LORD, who has compassion on you.”

9/ This has been for me a most comforting promise in many ‘dark seasons of the soul’ of my own life experiences. Over the years, I have come to call it [‘My One Absolute’](#) – one true and faithful promise of God I know I can trust in. I have written a simple song of experience to express that encouragement.

#### IV / Genesis 9.18-28 | Blessing and Cursing in the ‘New’ World

1/ vv 18-19 / Keep in mind at least these two things as you read this section:

[1] Moses wrote this Book of Genesis hundreds of years after they transpired in real time. So he is seeing from the vantage point and writing from the perspective of *after these prophecies of Noah had come to pass in history*. It was all future when Noah uttered them, but by the time Moses wrote about them, they had become past and current history.

[2] That’s why Moses writes two times, **“Ham was the father of Canaan...Ham, the father of Canaan” [vv 18, 22]**. At the time these events happened, Canaan was already a young adult, but he hadn’t yet produced a sizable family – the nations that came from Canaan will be detailed in **chapter 10**. By the time Moses wrote Genesis before Israel entered the Promised Land which was inhabited by the Canaanites, the nations that descended from Canaan, and these blessings and curses had come to full fruition. So when Moses writes in retrospect that **“Ham was the father of Canaan,”** he is pointing out to the Israelites, the direct descendants of Shem [**ch 11.10 and following**], who and where the Canaanites had come from.

2/ vv 20-23 / **So, what happened in Noah’s tent?** Noah proceeded to pursue the ‘new creation’ mandate God gave Adam in the First Creation [**see ch 2.15**]. But as he farmed and cultivated, he imbibed too much of the wine he had produced: **“He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent.”** In all of Scripture and human history, drunkenness and nakedness has been a moral corruption.

3/ It is important to note here that Noah had **‘uncovered himself’** in his drunken stupor. Many other translations read it that way. It is important because there have been many speculations about what Ham may have done to or with Noah in his naked state – even to the point that he may have emasculated Noah or engaged in some kind of homosexual act, or even an incestuous act with his mother, Noah’s wife. But it doesn’t say that Ham uncovered Noah or his nakedness. While it is true that similar language is used for such forbidden acts, especially in **Leviticus 18 and 20**, there is no evidence of that here.

4/ What we are told is: **“And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.”** Ham is evidencing the tendencies and proclivities of a degenerated morality. He had no sense of moral decency or modesty. It appears that he was guilty of voyeurism of Noah’s nakedness – and not only that, but he went outside to Shem and Japheth and mocked his father’s indecency instead of seeking to cover his nakedness. *“There is thus no clear evidence that Ham actually did anything other than see the nakedness of his father. To Noah, however, such an act was serious enough to prompt the oracle on Ham’s descendants (who would be openly guilty in their customs of what many suspect Ham of doing). It is difficult for people living in the modern world to understand and appreciate the modesty and discretion of privacy called for in ancient morality. Nakedness in the Old Testament was from the beginning a thing of shame for fallen humankind... Their covering of their nakedness was a sound instinct, for it provided a boundary for fallen human relations.”* (Allen P. Ross).

5/ vv 24-27 / Noah saw then and foresaw the outcomes of the same influences in Ham’s son, Canaan. And, as we all know, that’s the ways the descendants of Canaan turned out. So, when he woke up and found out what Ham had done, he pronounced this curse on Canaan – that he would become subject to and the slaves of his brothers, Shem and Japheth, who had acted righteously toward their father’s indiscretion. Wickedness delights to indulge in its own sin and seeks to proliferate its practices. Whereas, **“...love covers a multitude of sins” [1 Peter 4.8]** – as Shem and Japheth discreetly did. **“Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father’s nakedness.”** But, for now, so far...

**This is another ‘pre-enactment’ of the New Creation yet to come ... in CHRIST!**