

God's Covenant With Noah

Genesis 9

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

We'll be studying, loved ones, tonight, Genesis 9 and it's the covenant that God made with Noah and I'd like to start with a question; if you'd look at Genesis 2:17 I could put it to you very clearly: "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." So that's it: "in the day you eat of it you shall die." And then you see in Genesis 3:6 that's exactly what Eve did; "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate." So Adam ate; he did exactly what God said he shouldn't do, and God said that in the day he did it he would die. But look at Genesis 4:1, "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying 'I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.'" So Adam's still alive.

Why is Adam still alive when God said "in the day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you will die?" I agree with you that in many ways he did die, if you'll look at Genesis 3:7 where you can almost see all the signs of spiritual death, and psychological death, "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons." So undoubtedly they lost the sense of innocence and therefore of trust of each other, and that's what happens when spiritual death begins to operate in us; we begin to suspect one another and to be distrusting of each other, and to lose the sense of innocence. Then in verse 10, "And he said, 'I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.'" So he lost the sense of open, confident fellowship with God.

That's certainly what happens when you sin -- death comes in upon you and the heavens seem like brass and you can't get through to God. That certainly was a mark of spiritual death. And then back in Genesis 3:6, "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and it was a delight to the eyes, and the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate." And from then on they lived for food, and they lived for being happy -- for finding something that was a delight to the eyes. And they lived to be the wisest in the world, and they became enslaved to those desires instead of being free, and so that's a mark of spiritual death; where you're a driven person. It's good to listen for the footsteps of God, while we're talking on a night like tonight. Do you find yourself a driven person -- driven by desires for things that you know -- or driven for no reason at all? That's a mark of spiritual death, when you feel that.

Then in verse 14, "The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.'" That was Satan, of course, in the serpent, and man lived from then on under the hostile attacks of Satan, so in that way he experienced spiritual death. It even affected the marriage as you see in verse 16, "To the woman he said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.'" So the whole marriage relationship became unbalanced and became filled with strain, so that certainly became an indication of spiritual death. Verse 17, "And to Adam he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it', cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat

of it all the days of your life.” Adam lost the mystical rule over the earth that he possessed then. He was, because of his mystical fellowship with nature, to control nature – probably without even having to do anything physical; he could actually do it by faith. He lost that ability so he sensed hostility in his own environment.

Then in verses 22-24, “Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever’ – therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.” So Adam was prevented from approaching the tree of life; so he was restricted from receiving the Holy Spirit and certainly, that’s spiritual death. Then in Genesis 3:19 he began to weaken physically; “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Then in Genesis 5:5, his death; “Thus all the day that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.”

But I’d still ask you: why did God let him live 930 years after saying to him “In the day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you will die.” Loved ones, that respite that God gave to Adam was possible because of just one fact and the fact is 2 Corinthians 5:14, “For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died.” And that’s it; Christ had died for Adam and therefore Adam had died in Christ and with him, and God considered that as the fulfillment for the punishment that he had pronounced on sin. He knew that he had taken the sting out of the sin in Adam, so Adam was no longer a threat to what God had planned.

It was because Christ had died for Adam, and Adam had died in him, that God was able to give Adam respite of 930 years to have children in order to give them the chance of taking part in the great death that God had worked for them. Now you may say, “But wait a minute; Jesus did not die until thousands of years after Adam.” Loved ones, do you realize that that was only Jesus’ death in time and space, but that with God this is all one great, eternal moment. And as far as God is concerned, he put all of us into his son, and he destroyed us and remade us way before Calvary. Now you get that, among other verses, in 1 Peter 1. It’s a verse that many of us know, in connection with the term “the precious blood of Jesus by which we were ransomed.” 1 Peter 1: 18-20, “ You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake.” So Calvary was not a chance event that was forced upon God by the politicians, and it wasn’t an emergency reaction that God produced when he saw what had happened to all of us. Loved ones, the Father knew that you would be born and that I would be born. He knew your Granddad and your Grandma; he foresaw what would happen, and he put us into his son Jesus in eternity; and he destroyed us all there. That’s why Adam was permitted to live for another 930 years so that he would have as much chance as possible of accepting that re-creation that God had worked in Jesus for him, and would receive the Holy Spirit.

Now even though the lamb’s feast was spread before the world, and it was all ready, there were two events that were still untouched by Jesus’ death and they were working to prevent man ever having a chance to get to know what Jesus had done for them. You’ll find those mentioned in Genesis 3:17, “And to Adam he said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, “You shall not eat of it,” cursed is the ground because of you; in

toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.” In other words, when Adam rebelled against God he lost the mystical connection he had been given over the earth, and the earth plunged into chaos. If God permitted that to continue, the world of nature would utterly destroy us before we had any chance to ever learn what God had done for us in Jesus.

So the chaos and anarchy of nature was one of the problems; man was living now – not in an environment that encouraged him to see that he was crucified with Christ and raised to God’s right hand, but he lived now in an environment that opposed him and worked to destroy him. I don’t know where the dinosaurs and the pterodactyls fit in, but it’s something to do with that – the world suddenly became an unutterable hostile place, and God saw that man would never survive if that were to continue. And yet it was something that he says, later in the Bible -- he subjected the world to futility; he had to allow that to happen because in some sense he had connected the world with man, and the world in a sense had a free will of its own. He was able to use even that to indicate to man that there was something rotten in the world. But the world of nature was now working to destroy man before him having any chance of knowing what God had done for him in Jesus.

There was something else working, in Genesis 4:8, “Cain said to Abel his brother, ‘Let us go out to the field.’ And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.” Society had fallen into absolute anarchy; men were now mowing each other down. There was absolute distrust of everybody and suspicion of everybody now that there was suspicion of God and distrust of him. So the world itself -- the society of men -- was now working to utterly murder and exterminate every man on the earth, and that’s what happened. A few years later God looked at the earth and it was filled with violence, and he saw that the whole work that he had done in his son Jesus for us men and women -- to change us -- was never going to be known by us and therefore was never going to be entered into or through faith in our lives because society itself would destroy us all in a few years, and the world of nature was utterly chaotic and anarchic and was beginning, also, to have it’s affect on our lives.

Now those are the two things, loved ones that God had to deal with, and he was forced to deal with it in a rather radical way as you’ll see in Genesis 6:5, “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.’” Except for one man; there was one man who glimpsed what God had done in Jesus. Loved ones, you need to see that that doesn’t necessarily mean that when Abel offered the blood sacrifice that Abel even knew Jesus’ name. It doesn’t necessarily mean that he knew John 3:16. It doesn’t necessarily mean that Noah, who found favor in the eyes of the Lord, necessarily knew the details that we have -- all the facts of history that we have before us of what happened to Jesus, and therefore what happened to us. Because you remember [St.] Augustine says the New Testament is in the Old [Testament], concealed, but the Old Testament is in the New revealed.

So the Old Testament, the old covenant, contains the new covenant, but it conceals it; it has it in primitive terms. But undoubtedly they sensed that some mighty sacrifice, that’s why they used the blood in their sacrifices, some mighty death had taken place that enabled God to utterly change them and remake them. It’s because of that that Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord so except for Noah, God determined to destroy the world of nature and the world of society, and you get that in Genesis 6:11-14, “Now the earth was corrupt in Gods’ sight, and the earth was filled with violence.

And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, 'I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold, I will destroy them with the earth.'" Except for Noah, so it was like Adam's 930 years of respite; God found one little man, and his sons, and his wife that would form a little thread that would carry on humanity. Verse 14, "Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch."

You remember what happened; the flood covered the earth for almost a year. It destroyed everything; destroyed all the living animals, all the creatures, everything; and destroyed all human beings. Then after a year, God found Noah, and in Genesis 8:20, "Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar." God looked down and saw another Abel building an altar and offering the death of an animal upon it, and he knew that, still, human beings want to be changed. "They have something of my image in them and they still want to be remade. They sense what happened in my heart before the foundation of the world, and I see that; they want to be changed." And God saw that man still had that desire to be changed and to experience what God had done for them in Jesus.

Then in verse 21, "And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord said in his heart, 'I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done.'" That sentence is so strange – really what it means is, God said "I see Noah, and there must be other men and woman like him who want what I have done for them in Jesus. And I see the poor souls now are inheriting the evil tendencies from Adam, and in a sense they have not created this sin; it's part of them; they're evil from their youth up, and really in a sense, it's something they haven't control over – that original sin – though they have control over the sin that they now perform. But because I see them so helpless, and even though I should destroy the whole earth every generation, I will never again do it. I will find another answer to the chaos in society and in nature besides destruction."

And that's what Genesis 9 is about, loved ones; that is what the covenant with Noah is about; God's alternative to destroying the chaotic society and nature that had now become filled with anarchy and would have destroyed us before we had any chance to hear of Jesus. You can see the beginnings of it in Genesis 8:22, "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." God separated the orbiting of the earth and its place in space from man's spiritual state. Before that, in some way, man's spiritual state was connected up with the world. You see, God made man the crown of creation; he put him in charge of the garden to keep it, and so he had an authority over the earth. When he rebelled against God that authority went, and the thing went spinning chaotically, so the first step as an alternative to destroying the earth, was that God separated the orbiting of the earth [from man's spiritual state] and therefore the seasons; the summer and the winter, and the cold and the heat, and the night and the day -- separated that from man's chaotic spiritual condition. No longer would it be at the mercy of what man's state was. God made that an expression of his common grace.

And so, loved ones, that's why we have such an ordered world today; by rights due to our chaotic and rebellious attitude to God, it should be a tale told by an idiot -- it should be in chaos. I mean we should have a short night tonight and then a chaotic long day and then chaos as far as the seasons are concerned and the harvest would be chaotic and actually the whole world would be, really, in a way, it would be impossible to dwell in. But God, through his common grace, has separated that from man. You can sense that it is his desire to get that back eventually under

redeemed man, but this is one of his marks of common grace.

Now he ran a risk in doing that and you will see that risk back in 2 Peter 3:3, "First of all you must understand this, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own passions and saying, 'Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation. They deliberately ignored this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.'" But there are people who take the order of nature and say, "Look, there's nothing wrong between us and God; everything is going surprisingly well." And in fact the evolutionists would say, "All things are continuing as they were from the beginning." Of course Peter is saying, "No, they haven't -- there was a tremendous catastrophe at one time that changed things utterly and absolutely and affected the way we measure our aging of all things on the earth. But Peter is here saying, "No, there will be people who will mistake God's common grace for redeeming grace and will say, "It's an ordered world -- what's wrong with it? There are some things wrong, but on the whole, it's going right. Now surely that means that we are all right with our God." They mistake common grace with the fact that they are alive today, and that they are able to make money, and they are able to be reasonably happy. They mistake that for the sense of redemption or being right with God. But still, that's one thing God did; he separated the orbiting of the earth.

Now if you look back then to Genesis 9, loved ones, he went on further and he renewed the commitment and the command to Noah that he had given Adam. Genesis 9:1, "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.'" And that, of course, is our commitment: we're to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and not only in regard to our natural children, but especially in regard to the children of the kingdom; we're meant to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. It ties up a little with what we said this morning loved ones, there is no room for negativism in those of us who are here since Jesus died. Our commitment and commission is to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. That's it. And as different ones of us die and go to heaven, that's what we are to be concerned with; multiplying and filling the earth and subduing it; that's what God wants for us.

I was around the Lake of the Isles because Saturday was a magnificent day and of course the [ice] skaters are out like mad -- everybody is out. Really -- Minnesota has one day of spring -- do you realize that? Or maybe half a day and then its summer! And it just struck me how we have so much opportunity to have that outdoor service at Lake Calhoun which we'll begin in June, July and August -- to have that opportunity to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. There are souls there who have been prayed for, and who are waiting for the songs we sing, and the testimonies that we will give, and the speaking that we'll do at Calhoun, but that is what God has committed us to; "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." You noticed, actually, he did not include "subdue" because he then begins to elaborate -- because the subduing is different from what it was when he gave it [the command] to Adam. In Adam's day, it was subduing by faith; it was the kind of subduing that Mark was talking about in his prayers; the subduing that God wants to give back to us in Jesus; the subduing by the power of faith, by the mighty power of faith.

Loved ones, once you are in Jesus, there is no mountain that you cannot safely remove and cast into the sea. There is not. God has given you the power and authority as a believer over every sickness and over every sin. So there is a renewal, then, of the faith subduing that Adam had, but here, of course, it was not present, so then there is this subduing in verse 2. Then God had brought the stars and the planets into order by fiat, and separated from man's condition, now he had to do the

same with the animals, otherwise they would destroy man. But every time you think of St. Francis think of this; it wasn't St. Francis kind of subduing the animals -- that's really what we're meant to have. We're not meant to be antagonistic with our animals; we're meant to have a loving, mystical connection with them that brings them into the order of God's love, but that wasn't what was brought here because they weren't capable of it.

Genesis 9:2, "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered." That was one of the second best steps that God had to take. He brought the orbiting of the earth into order and separated it from man's state, and then he brought the animals into order under man, through fear. That's why the fish go so fast when your shadow falls on the water. That's why the deer want to run away; there is a fear built into them now that prevents them from destroying us men and women. It is not God's best. God's best is that loving faith-communion with animals that people like St. Francis obviously had.

Verse 3, "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you;" Probably man ate other than the herbs and the plants in the field before this, but now God recognized that. "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything." Except, you see, in verse 4, "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood." Because the blood in Hebrew was the sign of Jesus' precious blood, you see; the outpouring of life. That's what the significance of the blood was. The blood of Jesus is precious because it's his life poured out, it's his life given. It's not because of the blood, but nevertheless, because the blood contains the life of animals, God told the man, "No, you're not to eat of that blood because that signifies my son and that must be continued to be remembered until he is manifested and his blood is shed on earth.

Then in verse 5 God had to deal with a society which was so chaotic that it would have destroyed man again; "For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man." So God, in order to preserve us alive to give us a chance to receive Jesus and the [Holy] Spirit, made that fiat; that if any animal killed a man, then that animal would be killed; and if any man killed a man, then that man would be killed.

Then in verse 6, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed;" Why? Isn't it interesting -- "for God made man in his own image." Many of us question a little Schweitzer's liberal tendencies and his theology, and this tendency to make the chief tenant of his life the sacredness of life. Albert Schweitzer tended to say that, rather than to say Jesus, so sometimes we're skeptical of that, but you can see where he was coming from; he had grasped the fact that man is made in the image of God, and even if it's the most leprous creature, even if it's the most beggarly poverty stricken creature, even if it's the poorest creature in the whole earth, that is still part of God's image and you must not destroy it. That's, of course, why God initiated capital punishment. And I don't want to fight you, but that's why we should keep it; because once you allow men and women to dishonor the image of God, they will go on and consume each other completely. That was the beginning, [Martin] Luther says, of the sword; the power of the sword, or the civil authority. That was the first command and commitment that God gave to us human beings in connection with civil and political authority, and it was capital punishment. That unless you exercised that, men eventually will become so wild that they will utterly destroy you. Of course it comes home to your own heart, doesn't it; when -- I mean you have sympathy with the dear guy who was executed. There was a young lady up here this morning saying she knows him, and he was a Christian when he was

executed. But the fact is that it is ridiculous the way the media talks about the cruel punishment -- the cruel and unusual punishment that that dear guy receives -- he gave cruel and unusual punishment to eight or ten others.

When you become a child of God and you find yourself in that position, you rise up with the light. You do like Paul and Peter say, "Okay, I'm going to preach in your name and you can beat me because that's your right, but I'm going to preach." And so he's to say, "All right. You ought to execute me because that's what it says in the Bible, but I tell you now that I am going into Jesus' presence." So a child of God rises to what is in this dear book. And this dear book has ensured that we will live and continue to have a chance to receive Jesus as long as we observe these things. So loved ones, that's verse 6.

And then in verse 7, "And you, be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it." Then there is a great comfort here, loved ones, in verses 8 through 17, and I'll explain it to you in a moment; the great comfort for our children in these days of fear about nuclear disaster. Now I think we need to rise into it. I don't think we are, I think many of us are not rising into the comfort that is in these verses, because these verses are God's guarantee, "I will not destroy the earth again." Verse 8, "Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you.'" That is you, Noah, and all the people who will live after you, and the people here in Minneapolis tonight, "and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark." All the creatures that live in the world and depend on it for their sustenance, "I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." God promised that the earth would never be destroyed in that way, by a flood. "And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you for all future generations.'" It comes to your heart and it's amazing; God, back there, was saying it's a sign for every living creature that is with you at this moment and for all future generations. Of course to God, we were not thousands of years down the line; we were standing right behind Noah, so he made this sign with us.

In verse 13, "I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth." The rainbow, and possibly there was never a rainbow until then because undoubtedly the atmosphere of the air, the earth, and the air surrounding the earth, was changed at the time of the flood. Great amounts of water vapor obviously cascaded down, and possibly there was some kind of shield of water vapor that collapsed at that time. So it is very possible that the rainbow, which is the combination of light on the water vapor and the air, was initiated at this time. But certainly it was at this time that God regarded it from then on as the sign of his promise. "I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

It's interesting the way God regards the physical sign as important as himself in verse 14, "When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant" as God looks down and sees the rainbow. So it's good to remember when you see a rainbow after a shower, that God looks down and sees that rainbow and that he is as real as that. And light gives us that. It says, "When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again come as a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." That's how much he wants us to know how secure we are in the present world.

Every time you see a rainbow, God looks at that rainbow and he kind of remembers, "Ah, I remember." But really it doesn't mean that, you know -- as if he forgot -- it means that he remembers that we are grass -- he calls it to his mind again, "Ah, yes, I'm glad that I have secured the earth for them as a stable environment in which they have 70 or 80 years perhaps, to know about what I have done for them in Jesus. "I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that lives upon the earth. God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

And loves ones, that's something for us and our children, because you may say, "Ah, but he'll destroy it by fire" no, look at 2 Peter 3:5-7, "They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world then existed was deluged with water and perished. "But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." Not "until the day when a President or Prime Minister presses the wrong button" -- but "being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." That's after Jesus has returned, after the rapture, after all the books are set; the day of judgment and the destruction of ungodly man. Then at that time, it will take place in verses 10-13, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up." But it will be an act of God, a mighty act of destruction and judgment which will be preceded by all the birth pangs Jesus has told us about: rumors of wars, and famines, then the anti-Christ, then him coming and destroying the anti-Christ; all that has to come before this will take place.

Then you see that Peter exhorts us therefore [verse 11] "Since all these things have thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness" not -- how worried you ought to be lest somebody presses the wrong button or lest the missiles don't do their job -- not that, but what, "in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." Because it will be a mighty act of God whereby he destroys the earth and renews it again and there's a new heaven and a new earth. But loved ones, I think we should tell this to our children, and I think we, as God's children, should stop this anxiety and this worry. I think we should do all possible to maintain strength internationally, and we should do all that God guides us to do in negotiating and with arms, because it's all dependent on us fulfilling what God has given us to do; but there ought not to be fear in our hearts that human beings will blow the world up. It will not happen.

God will come at a time that will be plain before all of us and at that time, he will dissolve the earth and heavens in fire, but it will be preceded by all the acts that we know in connection with the last days. So could I encourage your hearts; I don't know if you're afraid of the mushroom clouds, or your own dear life is nervous every time you hear about what the Russians are doing, or you hear about what the Americans are doing, or what the French are doing, but there is no place for fear in us. God has put his rainbow in the sky and he has said, "Never again will I destroy the earth with a flood; when I eventually destroy it with fire, it will be after the rapture; it will be after all things are consummated in my son's coming. So I don't know if you sleep uneasily at night in bed, you shouldn't. You should sleep well; remember God's rainbow in the clouds -- remember that he has promised us our respite.

Loved ones, maybe we can look at the end of Genesis 9, because it really does lead into Genesis 10 which should be a very interesting chapter as you can see, but Genesis 9:18. It's the beginning of anthropology when they did the scattering of people all over the world. "The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem," who you remember headed up the Jewish race "Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan." Who obviously were some of the people that peopled the land of Canaan, the Canaanites. "These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was peopled. Noah was the first tiller of the soil. He planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and became drunk," he did not know the affect of fermented grapes, so he 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." And obviously the implication is that he made fun of it and kind of jeered about Noah and that's what it means, "he told his two brothers outside." He didn't immediately cover his dad, in a sense of honor, but Shem and Japheth, of course, regarded their father as really almost in the place of God to them, "Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, 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 slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers.'" That was Canaan, the son of Ham, "He also said, 'Blessed by the Lord, my God, be Shem;'" that is, the Jewish people "and let Canaan be his slave" the people who lived in Canaan. "God enlarge Japheth" the Persians and the Greeks and the Romans, of course, who did prosper, "and let him dwell in the tents of Shem;" because eventually they did. They would come and they would end up living under the Jews and sharing some of their blessing, "and let Canaan be his slave."

And that's, in fact, what happened if you look at 1 Kings 9:20, "All the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites who were not of the people of Israel -- their descendents who were left after them in the land" that's the land of Canaan, whom the people of Israel were unable to destroy utterly -- these Solomon made a forced levy of slaves, and so they are to this day. But of the people of Israel Solomon made no slaves; they were soldiers, they were his officials, his commanders, his captains, his chariot commanders and his horsemen."

And then let's look at Joshua 9:22, "Joshua summoned them and he said to them, 'Why did you deceive us, saying, "We are very far from you," when you dwell among us? Now therefore you are cursed, and some of you shall always be slaves, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.'"

These things were fulfilled in later years, and next Sunday I would like to try to begin the Biblical outline of what happened to man as they separated throughout the world.

Let's pray.

Dear Father, we thank you for peace and for reassurance. And we thank you, Lord, for bowing to us in our weakness and giving us such a beautiful thing as a rainbow. We thank you, Lord, it's found in the backs of so many car windows and the little air fresheners are made in the shape of it and it's so well known to us. Then we thank you, Father, for the sense of wonder we always feel and how we always point up to it and we tell our children, "Look, there's a rainbow."

Father, we thank you. Thank you for being so kind, so gentle and so good, so concerned about reassuring us that we need not live in fear of some disastrous, accidental destruction. But Lord, you have given us that promise that the world will never again be destroyed by flood, and then you have given us the perfect promise, and you will eventually destroy it by fire and renew it. It will

be an act of judgment after Jesus has come, after the anti-Christ has been destroyed; the time of the judgment.

So Father, we thank you for your goodness to us. Thank you for your great patience. Most of all, we thank you that all of us are in Jesus; destroyed and crucified, raised up to heaven and you're pleading with us, "Believe this, my children. Believe that I have changed you. Believe that and live that now, tonight. And no longer make excuses about your evil acts, and your parents, and your heredity, and your environment. Rise up into faith, my children -- I have remade you in my sight, and there is nothing that you cannot overcome, because I have destroyed all that would ever overcome you." Lord, we thank you for that. Thank you that we can sleep well tonight, in peace and rest, because of what you have done.

Now, the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us, now and throughout this coming week. Amen.