

### God's Grant, His Command, His Covenant and His Sign.

Noah had been safely preserved in the Ark and successfully released the hundreds of creatures God had put in his care. He had worshiped God by sacrificing one or more of each of the clean animals. This pleased God and He responded with a promise. No more worldwide floods. This promise was marked by a visible sign in the heavens, a rainbow. (How like Him!) The earth would enjoy long term stability so men could count upon the predictable cycle of seasons and day and night.

God rewarded Noah several ways for his obedience of faith. He eased the curse upon the ground that God had imposed upon Adam for his disobedience. The remark God made on this occasion is revealing. Men's hearts are so naturally evil the curse did little to deter them from developing into ungrateful rebels. Implicit in this remark is that history would soon repeat itself and wickedness and its consequences would indeed flourish and infest the whole earth. How striking that, knowing this, He blessed mankind relaxing the curse. What mercy! He would not abandon man but seek to reach man down though many ages by many means, incrementally bestowing grace, while revealing more of Himself.

[He first divided men to prevent open defiance. He called one man, Abram to father the faithful and to father a nation (Israel) as God's chosen people. He delivered that nation from captivity in Egypt showing His great power. He gave them the holy Law and a priesthood to represent Him as He "tent"ed among them in the wilderness. He brought them into the promised land displacing wicked peoples before them. He sent judges when the priesthood failed. He established a kingdom and a dynasty that His Son will head up. He sent prophets and later His Son. They rejected Him and crucified Him, but He rose again and ascended to heaven. He sent the Holy Spirit, set aside Israel temporarily and established the church. And here we are today 43 centuries later. He is still at it, calling sinners to repentance. The Son will soon return for His Bride then begin to take possession of His Kingdom on earth. He will destroy many rebellious nations and individuals at His coming and will bind Satan 1000 years. He will establish law and order and reign that 1000 years. Those born have the opportunity to accept Him as their Savior King. Some will hide out in feigned obedience until Satan is released. He will lead them in open rebellion to be destroyed by fire from heaven. The days for repentance will be finally ended. What patience! What longsuffering! He's calling now. Have you responded?]

**Meat to Eat. But the life is in the Blood.** God added meat to their menu, permitting us to freely eat meat, the flesh of animals. Though men could now slaughter animals for food He strictly commanded that they (we) NOT eat the blood. The kill was to be bled so the blood would not be eaten with the flesh. This command is so fundamental it has been re-instituted at least twice since then. There should be no misunderstanding. It was first repeated after about 1000 years, in the Law of Moses.

Leviticus 17:11 *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for*

*the soul.*

14 *For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.*

It was reiterated to Christians by the Spirit in a showdown meeting regarding the application of the law of Moses upon Gentiles, Acts 15:20. This was distinct from the Law of Moses for the prohibition against eating blood dates back to the Creation (as did forbidding fornication and forbidding idolatry). Christians are to observe these today. Don't eat food prepared containing blood. Some is on the market today. Avoid it. Some cultures use blood in cooking. If offered some, politely refuse it.

**Murder.** What a high value God puts upon life! We should too. At least two murders are reported in scripture to have been committed before the Flood. Perhaps there were many more in the rampant sin that led to God's judgement. Though permitting consumption of the flesh of animals, God marks out **human life** as uniquely valued above animal life. Anyone, or any animal, that dared kill a human being is to be killed. (Certainly cannibalism is forbidden.) While murder was a sin before this there were no sanctions (no punishment) for sins. From this time on Man was assigned the responsibility to carry out God's decreed execution of a murderer. But not just any man was to avenge the death of a family member or friend. This would result in total chaos as retribution after retribution multiplied. "Man" (the race) was given the responsibility to execute a murderer. Doing so righteously and methodically would require diligent care to apprehend the killer, determine guilt, authority to condemn to death and execute the guilty murderer. In other words...

**Government.** This is when God put the responsibility and authority to govern in the hands of Man. We soon see it perpetuated in kings and authorities in the nations which set up laws and a judicial system to enforce them. (The Code of Hammurabi is one noted example.) The nation of Israel was given the Law of Moses, first enforced by the priesthood, then by judges, then by prophets, then by kings. Despite the evil collaboration of the Jews and Romans to crucify Christ and persecute believers, the apostles exhort believers to honor, pray for and to be subject to those in authority. They declare them to be servants of God to maintain order; Romans 13:1-; 1Peter 2:13; John 19:11; Tit 3:1. Many people today, especially Humanists, object to capital punishment as inhumane and uncivilized. (Their objections seem inconsistent with their exaltation of mankind as their god. Wouldn't the murder of one of these "gods" logically be a capital crime?) But the Lord Himself never objected to the right of the government to execute a criminal even though He was the victim of the greatest miscarriage of justice in history. God has put the authorities in place to maintain order in a godless, sinful world.

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Note that God's stated purpose for capital punishment isn't for deterrence nor for vengeance. It is because Man is

made in God's image, "for in the image of God made He man." Human beings are God's representatives on the earth. To kill a human being is a personal affront to God. An assault on a man is an attack on God, whether physical or verbal. That is why animals who kill humans are to be destroyed as well. (And it is why the sin of railing is so serious.) God values life more than anyone else. He gave His Son as a sacrifice to redeem sinners, like you and me.

**Nimrod.** After a century or two Nimrod, the son of Cush and the grandson of Ham, rose to power. He built a reputation as a mighty one on earth, then a mighty hunter before the Lord (note, not "for the Lord".) Apparently he was a brutal, cruel man. He set about building an empire, founding Babylon then building a string of prosperous and powerful cities along the Euphrates. Ruthless men like Nimrod soon twisted a God given institution, *government*, into a vehicle for self aggrandizement, the exercise of despotic power and a means of personal enrichment at the expense of others. Corruption (and unresponsiveness) in government still seems to be the perpetual complaint of citizen everywhere. In too many countries and counties it the game that has to be played to get along. Don't participate in that game. Walk uprightly, as good citizens, pay the required taxes. And obey all laws and regulations insofar as possible while remaining subject to the authorities, but if not them, the Highest Authority.

Acts 5:29 *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. We ought to obey God rather than men*

Otherwise we shouldn't meddle in the affairs of this world's government. Here we are just pilgrims, aliens and ambassadors for Christ.

1Peter 4:15 *I need hardly say that no one among you must suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a criminal, or for interfering in matters which do not concern Christians.*

(Twentieth Century New Testament, and original Greek) Ultimately the Faithful and True will come and put down all that is not of God and put all under His rule in the kingdom of God. He will rule uprightly and will enforce and reward righteousness on the earth. He will reign for 1000 years. Soon after that He will cleanse the earth with fire and Righteousness will **dwell** upon the earth **forever**, Revelation 19 – 22.

**The World after the Ark.** The sin nature was passed on from those in the ark to all of their offspring including you and me. They all had lived in the former world and could carry with them the knowledge of the evil they couldn't help but have observed there. While they had consciences, as we do, conscience distinguished good from evil, right from wrong, but is powerless to prevent sin. See Hebrews 5:14.

In Romans 1:16-32 the apostle Paul gives a faithful account of what happened with the descendants of Noah's sons. It is not a pretty sight. But it explains how the world got to be what it is today. It is the sordid story of the **decline of civilization** into depravity. The state is reached where:

Romans 1:32 *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the*

*same, but have pleasure in them that do them*

It didn't take long. But since then sin has festered on earth—well over four millennia. And it will for at least seven more years until Christ's Millennial reign. What a longsuffering God we have! (And what a hope we have!)

2Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

But also read Romans 3:3-30. Bless God with your repentance, trust, faithfulness and walk with Him.

**Noah's fall.** Noah himself succumbed to temptation or at least to intemperance. Here was the head of all mankind drunk and exposed in his tent. What an insult to the dignity of this man of God, this father of us all, one delegated to govern mankind, unable to govern himself.

Ham discovered the state of his father and reacted inappropriately. When Noah awoke and sobered up he responded by pronouncing a prophetic curse upon one of Ham's sons (probably the youngest). He also pronounced a prophetic blessing upon Shem and Japheth, which described the relationship between Israel (descended from Shem) and Canaan (descended from Ham) that would ensue about 1000 years afterward. The fulfillment is found in the rest of Scripture. Note this curse named Canaan only, not other sons of Ham. We aren't told why. Many have mistakenly taken this curse to apply the African blacks and even to justify their enslavement. But the Africans are more likely descended from Cush, Ham's firstborn. Note the Egyptians, the Philistines and the Canaanites, all prominent in Israel's history, are descended from Mizraim Ham's second son.

**Our roots.** From which son did you come? Chapter 10 gives some details about where the offspring of the various grandsons of Noah settled when they were dispersed. Moses gives special attention to the peoples that affected Israel. But this Table of Nations gives an overview of how the earth was populated after the flood, although there have been numerous migrations and much intermingling ever since. Secular genealogical records generally corroborate the Biblical ones.

Generally those from Ham and Shem remained in or relatively close to the Middle East, interacting with God's chosen people. Those from Japheth moved outward to the north then to the west and to the east. They settled Europe and Asia, (and ultimately the United States). Only one or two generations are named, if any. On the other hand, two of Ham's genealogies (Cush and Canaan) and one of Shem's through Eber's sons, (the father of the Hebrews) are named. Note the reference made to the dividing of the world in the time of the tower of Babel. The line from Eber to Joktan is followed out in chapter 10. **Noah's** age at death is recorded, but not that of others until Shem's line to Abram is given in chapter 11.