

Faith in the Rescuing God

The Rainbow Covenant

'But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided' (Genesis 8:1).

God remembered Noah.

This is the **central verse** (Genesis 8:1) in the account of the flood. The chiasmic **structure** of the biblical account of the flood, clearly identifies the 'Remembering' as the primary point.

In a fascinating book called, '**The Memory Code**', by Lynne Kelly, we learn that ancient people, carried within their communities, storehouses of encyclopaedic knowledge. This was passed on through song lines, as people moved across the land and sang extraordinary amounts of crucial information into their memory bank, for the later benefit of other minds and hearts.

God's Blesses Creation with his Plan of Fruitfulness

A-Violence has invaded Creation (Gen. 6:11-12)

B-God speaks.

C-The floodwaters rise (40 days).

D-Waters triumph in victory (150 days).

E-God remembers Noah (Gen. 8:1)

D-Waters abate, ark to rest (150 days).

C-The floodwaters recede (40 days).

B-God speaks.

A-Peace is re-established for Creation. Violence is to be limited (Gen. 9:5).

God's Blesses Creation—once again—with his Plan of Fruitfulness

God remembers us. He remembers his plan. Made in his image, we are designed to remember the Lord. Proverbs 3:6 (GNT) says: *Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way.*

For God to remember a person, carries with it two important ideas:

1. **Faithful love.** It was just as true then, as it is true now, 'God is love' (1John 4:8) and loves the world (John 3:16). We [*only*] love because he first loved us (1John 4:19). This faithful love is more than a feeling. It is the passionate compassion of God, jealously protecting his Covenant partner as the Bridegroom, for the Bride.
2. **Timely intervention.** God's saving, rescuing love, is a love which acts. This is so in the rescue of Noah and his family, amidst a chaotic world of evil. It is supremely so in the *sending* of God's eternal Son, *to be 'the atoning sacrifice for our sins'* (1John 4:10).

Jesus remembered the criminal's prayer: 'remember me' (Luke 23:42-43). This is grace. It is the grace that rescues. Amid the flood, God rescues.

So, then, remember God's grace, when you see a rainbow. The rainbow sign is actually a warrior's bow (Gen. 9:13) that has been hung up in the rack. The weapon has been put away. The war is over. God is the Warrior, and he has defeated evil through the flood.

God remembers and secures us in His Covenant Grace

Then—as a sign of the terms of peace—the Covenant of Grace—reveals that God is victor over evil. He has established the new terms of Covenant life. From here onward, the rainbow is given (Gen. 9:17) as blessed assurance of future grace. It is a gift to secure trust. It prevents uncertain nervousness about creation, each

time it rains. Can you trust God's plan for creation? (1Peter 4:19). Are you secure in God's covenant faithfulness?

Jesus rescues humanity, for **faith** in his grace.

Noah's Respect For God's Warning Voice

Whenever we seek to interpret the message of the Old Testament, it is a helpful principle to see the way in which Jesus and the Apostles in the New Testament, make use of the passage.

What is very noticeable is that this ancient story is retold, as a warning:

'By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, **respected the warning** and built an ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith' (Hebrews 11:7).

Now, before we get to the warning bit, let us recall: The gospel message is absolutely wonderful news for covenant breakers, like ourselves. It tells us that even when we have turned away from the Lord, or been careless about his will for our lives, He has faithfully loved us. He deals with our sins, forgives us, and redeems us. As Jesus illustrated with the prodigal Father, God remembers us, and longs to be in union with and in friendship, with us. The Father, essentially has two wayward lost prodigal sons. One is a party animal, lost in riotous, wasteful living in a far country. One is at home on the farm, acting like a good boy, but is in fact lost in his sense of anger, lack of love, and in pride at his own righteousness. Both are loved. And God's grace is extremely great towards us.

Even so, the New Testament includes many warnings. A warning is there because there is danger present. As our bushfire warnings ring out loudly, so too do the gospel warnings.

One of the classic warnings is that of Paul, in 1Corinthians 6:9-11: ⁹ *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (See 1Thess. 4:1-8).*

Jesus takes up the account of Noah, and the flood to warn us all to 'be ready' (Matt. 24:37ff) for the coming of the Son of Man, at an unexpected hour.

*Dear God of Grace and mercy, our Holy Father, thank you that your judgments come upon human evil, ultimately working together for good. Help us to see that your strong hand upon the human race, is for the fulfillment of your great plan. May we by the Spirit, live to the praise of your glorious, saving grace, through the faith we find in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. **Trevor***