

## God's Covenant of Grace with Noah

*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. Genesis 6:8*

Said Grace is detailed briefly in this study of *Genesis 6:5-9; 9:1-17; 8:20-22*, and emphasizes the particular, universal, and distinctive grace of God's covenant with Noah.

And is a picture of the salvation from sin and eternal death obtained from God by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

This study is meant to help explain the salvation experience of every Christian, who has in like manner been delivered from the deserved wrath of God by an identical grace from God through Jesus Christ.

*For by grace are ye saved through faith. [ added emph.]*

*Ephesians 2:8a*

## PREFACE

This story of Noah and the ark has been a perpetual mainstay for teaching children especially in Sunday Schools and Vacation Bible Schools. Unfortunately most children are taught that Noah was given the task of building the ark and chosen to save irrational creatures and eight members of his immediate family because *Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.*<sup>1</sup> In other words, it is taught that Noah was blessed because he was good. In this fashion many children grow up with the false notion that the way to please God enough to be used by Him for the good of others, and the way to be saved from God's wrath against one's sin, is to be good. This mainstay for teaching children then becomes a great untruth that must then be unlearned—a thing very difficult of accomplishment, also a necessary requirement for one to be saved.

Perhaps the reader of this Preface was similarly taught this misguided optimism, or, what is worse, even taught it to others. Those who fall into either group are somewhat hard to unteach. But one must unlearn many untruths in order to come to the truth of God's saving grace. Many pastors and teachers, who are supposed to be guardians of Christ's gospel, have been taught at an early age this false notion about service and salvation. Hence, they remain

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<sup>1</sup> *Genesis 6:9*

ignorant of the very grace they think to preach and for which they contend. Because they were taught at an early impressionable age this subtle and corrupting “works for salvation” untruth, it remains deeply ingrained. An underlying subconscious trust in self has hidden the truth of God’s grace. Even when faith in Christ is professed, can a trace of self-achievement for one’s faith and astute choice of Christ coexist and remain? Any trace of pride becomes the defiling bit of self-trust that nullifies any approach to God. God’s grace requires in its very exercise a complete forsaking of self—self-choice,<sup>2</sup> self-faith, self-decision, self-repentance, self-conversion, or any other self-work. But with the indwelling sin in all men there delights a relishing in one’s own good, and that one’s good has earned something for its goodness. This deeply ingrained works orientation becomes a lingering trust in oneself as somehow responsible for coming to Christ. All this keeps some from ever really being saved. Their failure to understand what the grace of God really is causes a false profession of Christ. For any who have had a true conversion through true

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<sup>2</sup> Self-choice refers to the fleshly error that bases one’s salvation upon the “good” choice one has made by coming to, or choosing to receive, Jesus for oneself. Self-choice voids the Biblical reality that *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God*, thrice repeated in the Bible (*Rom. 3:11; Ps. 14:2-3; 53:2-3*). Only by grace did God *draw* or *call* any of us *natural fools* to choose Christ. (See *Jn. 6:44; Rom. 8:30; I Cor. 2:14; 1:18; Ps. 14:1-3*, respectively).

faith and then regressed, this self-trust thwarts real maturity.

Some might be thinking, "What is so important about God's Covenant with Noah." To answer that question will require the person so wondering to read and consider this study. This brief exposition from the Scriptures concerning God's Covenant of Grace with Noah has the truth of salvation by grace in it. Salvation is wholly by grace. That means Noah and the reader can only be saved by God's bestowal of a favor that comes only from Him. Nothing saved Noah except God's favor. His faith did not save him. His *perfect generations* did not save him. His *just life* did not save him. *His walk with God* did not save him. Grace alone saved Noah, grace alone saves any who are saved, and only grace will save the reader of this Preface. May God through the bestowal of His grace grant the faith to believe this grace, because this grace is the only vehicle for faith to come. That kind of trust in God's grace from the Gospel work of Jesus Christ is the faith through which one is saved. No other faith except one trusting in God's grace alone is genuine saving faith. May God open eyes to receive this truth about Noah and the grace of God, and thus bring glory to Him.

*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*<sup>3</sup> *Genesis 6:8*

*For by grace are ye saved through faith.*  
[added emph.] *Ephesians 2:8a*

<sup>3</sup> The translation used is The Authorized Version, and the Modern Language Bible where noted.

## GOD'S COVENANT OF GRACE WITH NOAH

On what basis was Noah saved from the flood? The answer to that question is extremely important, because for whatever reason he was saved from the flood, so all men are saved from sin. As Peter said of Noah's salvation from the flood,

*...eight souls were saved by water.*

*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

[added emph.]

*I Peter 3:20b-21*

If the parenthesis above in *I Peter 3:21* is omitted, the real sense of Peter is accented. Therefore, the sense of it would be,

*In the ark a few, that is eight persons, were saved by water [as it lifted Noah up from among the judged multitudes].*

*Baptism is a similar figure of salvation...in as much it references the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Noah's salvation was a figure (sign, picture, metaphor) just as baptism is a figure of salvation because it portends what the resurrection of Jesus Christ performs.<sup>4</sup> Water baptism buries the believer with Christ's death and raises him up with Christ's resurrection. Thus Peter authenticated Noah's experience as a type of spiritual salvation. Salvation from sin today parallels Noah's salvation from the wrath of God.

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<sup>4</sup> *Romans 4:25*

According to Paul and the writer of Hebrews, Noah was saved by grace through faith,

*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Hebrews 11:7*

*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.... Romans 4:16*

Anywhere saving faith is present, saving grace preceded it. Salvation is wholly by the grace of God, faith being only a means and not the source of salvation. When man is saved by grace, faith had to be the instrument or vehicle through which grace worked. Correspondingly, Paul portrays faith as the product of grace,

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that [faith] not of yourselves: it [faith] is the gift of God:*

*Not of works, lest any man should boast.*  
[added emph.] *Ephesians 2:8-9*

Furthermore, true saving faith in itself renounces all merit. Even any merit which believing faith might suggest is voided because of what it believes and by its very nature. Saving faith believes that God saves only ungodly persons (and no other kind of persons) by His unconditional grace:

*Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*

*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*

[added emph.] *Romans 4:4-5*

Only the person who trusts in unconditional grace is in reality saved. Consequently, the person who has salvation through faith has no grounds for boasting, because of faith's gracious origin from God and because of its very temperament. Recipients of grace *believe on Him that justifies the ungodly*. That means justifying the ungodly is the crux of faith's persuasion, namely: God only justifies ungodly persons, and none other kind. That is the theme of true faith which saves sinners; any other faith is the devil's kind.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, some mistakenly think otherwise; some think baptism, or church membership, or good deeds of this or that kind in behalf of God or our fellowman is a part of procuring salvation. But good works only and always follow the grace, as does the faith. Both faith and good works of all kinds are the result of a work of grace already performed in the wicked heart of man by the Spirit of God.<sup>6</sup> The faith as well as the good works are testimonials of a greater work of God's grace already performed in the heart.<sup>7</sup> All this was the experience of Noah also, because he was saved the only way any man is ever saved, wholly by unconditional grace.

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<sup>5</sup>James 2:19 <sup>6</sup>Titus 3:5-6 <sup>7</sup>Ephesians 1:19

Accordingly, grace is the predominate element of this Noachic Covenant. Therefore, we shall look at:

**I. Particular Grace**, the grace which Noah received and no one else, *Genesis 6:5-8*.

**II. Universal Grace**, the grace that all mankind received after the flood, *Genesis 9:1-17*.

**III. Distinctive Grace**, the distinctiveness of, or differences between, the two displays of God's grace before and after the flood, *Genesis 8:20-22* with *6:5-8*.



## I. THE GRACE NOAH RECEIVED WAS A PARTICULAR GRACE

<sup>5</sup> *And GOD 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.*

<sup>6</sup> *And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*

<sup>7</sup> *And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

<sup>8</sup> *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*  
*Genesis 6:5-8*

### In God's Eyes Only

Grace characterized all of God's dealings with Noah—from first to last. Noah did no more or less than just receive the favors from God as God chose to bestow grace upon him. Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD, does not at all mean that Noah was seeking it or looking for it. The Hebrew word for *found* is matsah, which means "to obtain, to acquire, to receive." But note especially that this grace was obtained or acquired in the eyes of the LORD. God's graciousness led Him to look on Noah favorably. It was only in the estimation of God that Noah was found to have been acceptable

to God. That appraisal of Noah was established in and by and of and through, and was altogether from grace. No other person could have found a reason for God to have been pleased with Noah, because the favor was only *in the eyes of the LORD*.

This grace was an unearned and undeserved favor from God, period! The Hebrew word for *grace* is from the root, chanah, and denotes a free and spontaneous willingness to bestow good on another person who is destitute of it. This bestowal of good is either in the way of kindness or compassion, hence it includes “to show favor, mercy, or pity.” God had mercy and pity toward this one man among all the inhabitants on the earth apart from anything either good or bad in Noah. And this merciful consideration was only according to God’s own estimation, and was within the limits of His own sovereign grace. God could just as easily and just as correctly bestowed this grace, favor, and mercy upon any one of the millions of other men on earth at that time. In so doing God would have remained just as gracious and just as good as when He saved Noah. This grace was confined or limited to Noah exclusively “by God’s eyes,” that is, by God’s specification and was not determined by man’s examination. That is the real grace of God—no merit, no worth, no works—just bare and plain, unadulterated, unvarnished, and sovereign, grace.

## **God's Grace Shows No Respect of Persons**

Several years ago as I discussed the Greek and Hebrew words for grace in the Bible, and how their theological meaning required a Sovereign bestowal, a professed Christian said, "Why, I cannot believe that kind of grace, because God is certainly no respecter of persons." He revealed an unlearned aptitude concerning, and a somewhat blind ignorance of, the grace of God, because the kind of respect of persons to which he referred is definitely not involved in God's sovereign choices relative to His grace. It is exactly the opposite of respect of persons. God grants grace for no outward or inward reason in any person, but only in regard to His own will. It is only His pleasure that determines grace to any man. Nothing either good or bad determines grace given. If any thing in any man determined who received grace from God, then that would indeed be "respect of persons." God has absolutely no regard for the face of any man, or the work of any man, or the foreseen faith of any man, but grants saving favors to some men simply because it is His sovereign decision to do so, based solely upon His own preferences and desires outside of any seen merit or demerit in any person.

### **First Things First**

There exists a very strict and close parallel between *Genesis 6:8-9*, and *Ephesians 2:8-10*. There is a chronological and theological order in both passages. Notice the parallelism in the following:

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*

*Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

*Ephesians 2:8-9*

*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*

*Genesis 6:8*

That is the experience of salvation by unconditional grace, which produces the subsequent works in one's life by God's same powerful grace, which reference to works is in the verses immediately following both references to grace:

*For we are his workmanship, created unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

*Ephesians 2:10*

*These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.*

*Genesis 6:9*

As Paul wrote that salvation is *by grace* and not *of works*, so Noah's salvation from the flood was *by grace* and not *of works*. Paul wrote that Christians are not saved because of *good works*. To Paul good and pious qualities are the consequences of *grace* received, not the cause of it. As *works* are a result of *grace* received, and saints are a *workmanship, created unto good works*, so Moses wrote that Noah's *just life, perfect generations, and walk with God* also was the result of *grace* received. Works follow grace always; and that was Noah's experience.

Noah was not chosen to salvation from the flood because of his *just works*, his *perfect generations*, or his *walk with God*. To Moses, as in the New Testament (Covenant), all of these pious qualities were the consequences of grace received, not the cause of it. Noah was a *workmanship*, *created unto good works*, which *workmanship* took the form of a *just life*, *perfect generations*, and a *walk with God*. Just as *Ephesians 2:8-9* must precede *Ephesians 2:10*, so *Genesis 6:8* must precede *Genesis 6:9*. Just as *grace* precedes *works* in Paul's teaching, even so God's *grace* preceded Noah's works in Moses' doctrine. Before the Law, under the Law, and after the Law, works follow grace, or grace precedes works. That is the way of salvation both now and forever.

### **Not the Righteous**

Not only did God not save Noah because of his good works, but saving grace was granted him in spite of his works, because all human works are only evil in God's sight. *All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, Isaiah 64:6*. In addition, Noah was not even the most righteous person on earth when God saved him. Noah was no better morally than the other men in his generation, but was a sinner, guilty of moral crimes against God and man, as are all men. Noah was wicked in God's sight along with everyone else in his generation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Romans 3:23*

Solomon's wisdom observed that *there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not* [added emph.].<sup>9</sup> Noah was a *just* man,<sup>10</sup> but not a perfect and sinless one. Furthermore, since unaccountable and unchargeable children died in the flood;<sup>11</sup> and as there was, therefore, a host of less guilty individuals on the earth in Noah's day who nevertheless fell under the judgment of the flood,<sup>12</sup> so does the grace of God in excluding Noah from that judgment become even more conspicuous. "Salvation by grace" means salvation in spite of, or without regard to, what is really merited. Noah merited condemnation along with all the rest of humankind. Before receiving grace, he was no better than any other man, woman, boy, or girl, or even especially any infant.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, he alone *found grace in the eyes of the LORD*. Only Noah's faith and works after receiving God's grace marked him separated from the rest of the sinners in the world, and that faith marked him not as deserving grace but only as receiving grace. Noah's faith was a gift that came with God's grace, as per *Ephesians 2:8-9*.

### **Sinners Only: The Way of Jesus**

And was not this the way of our Lord Jesus Christ? *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners*

<sup>9</sup> *Ecclesiastes 7:20*    <sup>10</sup> *Genesis 6:9*    <sup>11</sup> *Genesis 7:23*

<sup>12</sup> *Romans 4:15; 5:13*    <sup>13</sup> Cp. *Luke 13:1-5*

to repentance.<sup>14</sup> While on earth, Jesus saved publicans, harlots, thieves, and countless men and women as guilty as the religious leaders. *Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you* [to the chief priests and elders], *That the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.*<sup>15</sup> Men are not saved because some are more moral than others, but because God chooses to bestow His sovereign and unconditional grace on some sinners, while passing over others. Grace is the only requisite for salvation. Nothing else will cause it. God simply showed favor to Noah above any other person on the earth for His own reasons within Himself. As Paul testified,

*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,...*

*Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will* [added emph.] *Ephesians 1:4,9,11*

God chose to grant grace to Noah in the same way He grants grace to any man, not because of any good quality within Noah, but only because He discriminated among men for His own reasons, for which He has no obligation to explain to anyone. Amen!

<sup>14</sup> Luke 5:32 <sup>15</sup> Matthew 21:31

*The secret things belong unto the LORD our God.*  
*Deuteronomy 29:29a*

*Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,*

*Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.*  
*Isaiah 46:9-10*



## II. NOAH'S COVENANT CONTAINED UNIVERSAL GRACE,

### *Genesis 9:1-17*

While Noah received a special and particular grace from among all other men before the flood, the entire earth received a common and universal grace after the flood. Unlike Noah's particular grace, this universal grace did not involve personal salvation but only a physical salvation of life on the earth. This grace for all the inhabitants of earth—from Noah to eternity—is called the Noachic Covenant. This grace was referenced in Jesus' word, *he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*<sup>16</sup> As with Noah's sovereign and personal grace, this grace was similarly altogether unconditional. All conditional favors from God are not grace at all, but of works. Grace is in itself free from all qualifications or restrictions, else it is not grace but is works.<sup>17</sup>

### This Universal Grace is a Practical Grace,

#### *Genesis 9:1-7*

<sup>1</sup> *And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.*

<sup>2</sup> *And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.*

<sup>16</sup> *Matthew 5:45* <sup>17</sup> *Romans 11:6*

<sup>3</sup> *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.*

<sup>4</sup> *But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.*

<sup>5</sup> *And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of every man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.*

<sup>6</sup> *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*

<sup>7</sup> *And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.*

*Genesis 9:1-7*

In order to insure that man's sinful actions would not require His intervening judgment again, God laid down several practical necessities for man to follow. However, none of these requirements rely solely upon man for either their fulfillment or for the benefits that follow their observance. By His grace God's judgment is to be restrained toward man so he can remain on earth. He will use capital punishment and other of these necessities as His tools to affect that. Therefore, these are merely the means through which God's grace will work until His program with this world is completed. All of these were and are absolutely needful for man to exist upon the earth because of the corruptions of his heart; but God will, by His grace, provide what is needful to guarantee their realization. If left to himself, man would utterly destroy himself from off the earth; therefore God

made provision in this covenant for dealing with the realistic dangers facing all of mankind as a result of man's depraved nature. God in declaring these principles was promising to restrain wickedness on the earth in order that man could exist without constant intervening and devastating judgments from God.

First, **God expedited the repopulation of the earth** after the devastating flood, *verses 1-4*. He pronounced a blessing upon Noah and all the future inhabitants of the earth by granting them grace to *multiply and replenish the earth, verse 1*. He gave all living things a natural fear of men in order to help mankind dominate and manage the animal kingdom, *verse 2*. He graciously gave *Every moving thing that liveth* for food for mankind in order to sustain man in a sin-cursed earth, *verse 3*. But He restricted man's eating of blood because of the principle of life contained therein, *verse 4*. His grace was thoughtful of man's likelihood of losing respect for life if not restrained to some degree concerning *the life of the flesh*—the blood of living creatures. This prohibition was actually an act of His restraint of sin by His grace.

Secondly, **God allowed for man's own corrective agency for the violence** that so often characterizes mankind. He instituted capital punishment, *verses 5-7*. No other means can so consistently restrain the violence and

natural brutality in man as does this strategy, when it is swiftly and justly carried out. God expects, yea has commanded, that man take the lives of those who trivialize the life given by God. *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man.* That is the free grace of God which is speaking thusly. God's love toward mankind obliged God to establish the death penalty for murderers.

It is an act of God's grace toward us that he has relegated some of His authority over all life to mankind. This is for the good of society overall that men be put to death for taking the life of another man, *for in the image of God made he man.* Through capital punishment God's image in man—though presently scarred and defaced—will be respected as far above the other living creatures of the earth. In all of these instructions and allowances, God is granting a universal grace to all men. His grace is reaching down to sinful men in order to provide man with an environment that will sustain and bless mankind. Even man's depraved and sinful nature is allowed for in this covenant of grace. God will energetically restrain evil because of His grace toward mankind. He is not at all required to allow for man's innate wickedness, but chooses to do so out of a gracious disposition toward mankind. He will restrain and limit sin on the earth, and will do so directly

through the principles of this Noachic covenant of grace so that sinful man can continue to live upon the earth in his fallen and corrupt state.

**This Universal Grace is a Promised Grace  
to the Entire World, Genesis 9:8-11**

<sup>8</sup> *And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,*

<sup>9</sup> *And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;*

<sup>10</sup> *And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.*

<sup>11</sup> *And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. Genesis 9:8-11*

All mankind is included in this covenant of grace. It is *with your seed after you* that God promised never to destroy the earth again with a flood. That embraces all men who shall ever inhabit the earth. The universality of this grace is that it encompasses all living creatures with a promise of grace to sustain and to maintain earth as a suitable environment for all the living creatures who exited the ark with Noah. This is in marked contrast with the personal and individual grace of Noah's salvation before the flood. This promised grace is not particular but universal in scope.

**This Universal Grace is Pleasurable  
to God and Man, Genesis 9:12-17**

<sup>12</sup> *And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:*

<sup>13</sup> *I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.*

<sup>14</sup> *And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud;*

<sup>15</sup> *And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.*

<sup>16</sup> *And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.*

<sup>17</sup> *And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.*

*Genesis 9:12-17*

In order to remind of this covenant of grace, God placed the rainbow in the skies after it rains. This pleases both God and man. That God has been so gracious to allow men to re-inhabit the earth after so dismal a failure is worthy of this special sign in the heavens. What is so pleasing as the beauty of the rainbow as a cue to spark remembrances among men of the universal grace

of God? It is universal grace by which mankind is sustained on the earth because man is violently wicked and innately depraved. The rainbow is the token that serves as a symbolic reminder to God and to man of His promise never again to move in judgment upon the earth with a flood. Until the end of all things God's grace will always restrain the wickedness of men's hearts in such a way that He will not have warrant to condemn all flesh again as He did in the flood. This is pleasing both to God and to man. On the one hand God delights in mercy, and on the other hand man delights in life on the earth under this universal grace of God. The rainbow symbolizes what is the pleasurable grace of God, and what are the promises and practicalities of this Noachic Covenant of universal grace.

### III. NOAH'S COVENANT REVEALS DISTINCTIVE GRACE

*Genesis 8:20-22*

<sup>20</sup> *And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.*

<sup>21</sup> *And the LORD smelled a sweet savor; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.*

<sup>22</sup> *While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*

*Genesis 8:20-22*

There are distinctions or differences involved in the two displays of God's grace before and after the flood. The personal and universal aspects have been profiled in the first two points above; however there are other greatly pronounced distinctions. These variations are obvious as the details of God's grace are compared in *Genesis 8:20-22* with *6:5-8*. Basically, they have to do with **Man's Unchanged Condition** from before the flood, and **God's Altered Disposition** after the flood.

#### Man's Unchanged Condition Needed Grace

The flood did not change man at all or in the least of ways. God's judgments never alter man's



condition. They may on occasion change man's position, but they will not nor can they ever change man's inner dilemma of inherited sin. Men today are just as wicked as men were before the flood. Only the acts of outward wickedness are somewhat lessened because of God's restraining charity through this covenant of grace with Noah. That is the result of the Universal Grace as just noted in the previous heading. Mankind has not become better because of an improving evolution that was somehow caused by the judgment of the flood. This is observable in a careful comparison of *Genesis 6:5* with *8:21*; notice,

**God's Analysis before the Flood, *Genesis 6:5*, every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.** [added emph.]

**God's Analysis after the Flood, *Genesis 8:21*, the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.**  
[added emph.]

*Genesis 6:5* was God's analysis of man's condition before the flood, (top line above); while *Genesis 8:21* is God's summary of man's condition after the flood (bottom line above). The word common to both verses is *imagination*, yatser, "frame, meditation, thought." The marginal reading carries the original idea of the Hebrew word, the "whole imagination." The Hebrew word signifies not only imagination, but

also the entire being of man, his purposes, choices, desires, emotions.<sup>18</sup> Man's basic being, his Adamic nature, his depravity, did not lessen one whit after the flood. His *imagination ...was...evil* before and after the flood. He continued on as *evil* in his fundamental nature as ever he was. The judgment of the flood changed nothing in man's innate sinfulness of heart.

The differences between God's two analyses of mankind concerns consciousness of sin and inborn sin. Before the flood in 6:5 the additional word ***thoughts*** refers to man's "conscious awareness" of the terrible evil of which men were guilty before the flood. This made the antediluvian race more accountable, hence their judgment in the flood. They were "conscious" of their wickedness; they were sinners against the light of the knowledge of God's righteousness.

Another difference in God's analysis of man after the flood was the addition of the phrase ***from his youth***. That phrase refers to man's evil characteristics as a result of just being a son of Adam, which is quite sufficient grounds for God's just punishment.<sup>19</sup> That had not changed. This describes man's continuously evil mind, will, and

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<sup>18</sup> Gesenius    <sup>19</sup> *I Corinthians 15:22*

emotions, as not being the result of his environment or of any increasing or decreasing evil disposition, but due to an innate problem within himself. This reference to mankind's *youth* "is not the mere habit-hardening or world-hardening of manhood into old age, as contrasted with the comparative innocence of childhood; but the seeds of the evil lie deep, away back in his very infancy."<sup>20</sup> Because of the inborn and natural evil within man, God's grace was man's only prospect for continued life on earth, else mankind would again be destroyed from off the face of the earth. For this reason God has provided the sacrifice of His Son to deal with innate depravity, for without that blood there would be no basis for the freeness of God's grace to men. Judgments from God change nothing in man; only God's work of grace remedies man's sinful nature.

### God's Altered Disposition Provided Grace

God had an altered disposition toward man after the flood because of a difference in His consideration. He changed His attention from man to Himself, from sin to sacrifice, from the chaos of man's hopeless depravity and continuous evil to the cross of Christ's redemption. Again, a distinction is observable when God's reaction to what He considered before and after the flood is compared; notice,

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<sup>20</sup> Lange

## God's Consideration before the Flood,

Genesis 6:5-7

And God saw...the wickedness of man.... And it repented the LORD....

.... I will destroy man whom I created from the face of the earth. [added emph.]

## God's Consideration after the Flood,

Genesis 8:21

And the LORD smelled a sweet savor; and the LORD said in his heart,

I will not again curse..., neither will I again smite.... [added emph.]

Noah built an altar and offered sacrifices to the LORD immediately upon exiting the ark. This was essential for God to be able to allow sinful man to dwell again on the earth. His grace must satisfy His justice. The sin of man's continual life on earth, and the constant violations of His Holy Law must be paid for in the death of sufficient payment. In the offering of these sacrifices God *smelled the sweet savor* of His Son's payment for man's sin. *The LORD smelled a sweet savor of Christ..., the savor of life unto life.*<sup>21</sup> These clean animals were symbolic of Jesus' spotless and undefiled life under the Law,<sup>22</sup> and as they were totally consumed as *burnt offerings* God was satisfied with *the travail of His soul*<sup>23</sup> in behalf of those who would

<sup>21</sup> Genesis 8:21 with I Corinthians. 2:15-16

<sup>22</sup> Hebrews 7:26 <sup>23</sup> Isaiah 53:11

replenish the earth. The peculiarity of God's consciousness after the flood was the "smelling," or sensing and discerning the work of Christ Jesus as the Savior of the world. He it is Who bought the world and all who are in it. He owns it all through His shed blood and will provide God, the Father, with all in the end, both good and evil.<sup>24</sup>

Contrast that with God's consideration before the flood: **God saw the wickedness of man**, and that was all He **saw**. If God sees (perceives, scrutinizes) sin He must judge sin, condemn sin, and remove sin. God cursed and smote the earth and all in it, because he looked upon the wickedness of man. But after the flood, God saw nothing except the righteous Son of God dying on a cross, which payment met sufficiently His own Holy Law's requirement for sin's dismissal. That provision was by His grace in order that His grace might be extended to all the earth. By that universal and distinctive grace man is allowed to dwell in His creation. Though a sinner and a thorough rebel against His government, God's grace grants to man a place while He bestows a particular grace on some. Hence, this Noachic Covenant is founded upon the death of Jesus Christ, and is a provision of His grace particularly to His chosen, and universally to all men, through the cross.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *I Corinthians 15:24-28* <sup>25</sup> *John 3:16; I Timothy 4:10*

**Jesus' Blood Moved God from  
Judgmental Grief to Joyous Grace,  
Genesis 6:6, 8:21**

**God's Mindset before the Flood, Genesis 6:6**

*Then it was grief to the Lord ever having made man on the earth; He felt grieved at heart.*<sup>26</sup>

**God's Mindset after the Flood, Genesis 8:21**

*And as the Lord discerned the pleasing fragrance, He said within Himself: I will never again curse the ground for man's sake....*<sup>27</sup>

Before the flood God was filled with grief at His consideration of man's wickedness. But after the flood, and because of His grace supplied to mankind, God was filled with the pleasurable sensation of smelling what was a delight to His Being. He saw all the love, and mercy, and compassion, and perfections, and rightness of His Son's works as Savior. It charms God to see the beauty of His own attributes and character displayed in such loveliness. The Old Rugged Cross displays a beauty in which God delights when considering. Compare how the wickedness of man *grieved him at his heart* (KJV), before the flood, with what was ahead in His plan when He discerned the pleasing fragrance of Christ Jesus.

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<sup>26</sup>Gerrit Verkuyl, The Modern Language Bible; (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1945), p. 5.

<sup>27</sup>Verkuyl, op. cit., p.7

At the omniscient and omnipresent sight of Jesus' cross, God's heart spoke to all men, *I will not again curse, I will not again smite, because man's only hope is in My Son's work of redemption on the cross.*<sup>28</sup>

### The Way of Grace for Us Sinners

This is the way of God with sin, both in His dealings with the antediluvian world, with His dealings with Noah, and with us. God's dealings with Noah is *the like figure* of our spiritual salvation.<sup>29</sup> The difference between the antediluvian world and us is the difference between grief and grace. The one punishes, the other pardons. The one scrutinizes wickedness in man, the other enchants God with His own Glory in His Son. Distinctive grace creates the pardon, the enchantment, and the difference. Through the same payment that delighted His heart in Noah's time, God today and forever *discerns a sweet savor of life unto life* when He considers the work of His Son, Jesus Christ. The distinctiveness of grace is that man must be its recipient if God is to be averted from judging our sins. The condition of man's *imagination* is one that is totally enveloped in sin and filled with violations of God's Law. That warrants God's swift and just punishment. The flood changed nothing, but God's consideration was changed. Only as God made provision for

<sup>28</sup> The spiritual "gist" of *Genesis 8:21-22*. <sup>29</sup> *I Peter 3:21*

wicked mankind through the death of His Son can any hope of saving grace be ours as evil humans. In Noah's day God looked ahead into the sufferings of His Son in order to grant grace, but today He looks directly into the scars of Jesus' body seated at His right hand. Ours is simply to believe the payment sufficient and that the grace is forthcoming. Through Particular and Universal and Distinctive Sovereign Grace, God has sufficiently supplied the payment and made the choices; now, it is ours to respond in acknowledgement, obedience, and worship. Amen.