

## God Must Be Looking At The Rainbow

God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations:

I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I WILL REMEMBER MY COVENANT that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I WILL SEE IT AND REMEMBER the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

What a promise God has made.

We are now in the Lenten Season. Lent is a time for repentance, that is, a time of turning toward God. It is a time to remember our faults and not just our faults, but the faults of the world we live in.

The story of Noah and the ark is one of the most disturbing stories in the Bible.

A famous theologian, Walter Brueggemann, who has published lots of books says this:

"The flood story is among the best known biblical narratives. It is undoubtedly borrowed from a common religious tradition of flood accounts. However, in this text the flood narrative has been claimed to express the peculiar theological affirmations of Israel's faith." He said, "We will suggest that the focus of the story is not on the flood but upon the change wrought in God which makes possible a new beginning for creation."

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The important point in this flood account is the effect it has not just on us but on God.

This story reminds us of how God's mind is changed. Human kind and human behavior isn't changed but God is changed. God has decided something that effects the grief and trouble in God's heart.

God has decided "NEVER AGAIN" will God allow something like this to take place.

The changing of God's mind is a blessing to all of us.

I love the statement from God's Word, "When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

When the rainbow is in the clouds, GOD WILL SEE IT.

Just like we see it, God sees it too. For God, it is a reminder that the waters will never become a flood to destroy all flesh.

When we see a rainbow, we see how beautiful it looks. It also is a sign that a storm is over. It's great to see.

I would imagine we have all had different experiences of a rainbow.

Some time ago, I shared in a sermon an experience my friend and former classmate, Pastor Bill Meiers shared with me.

They had the terrible experience of losing his brother-in-law in his 50's to cancer. The family left the church where the funeral was held and went to his brother-in-law's farm to gather together. Suddenly they saw a beautiful rainbow that stretched across from the rural church to the farm where they were. It lasted for about a half an hour.

It was a moving experience for them. God's presence was with them.

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It's not just a beautiful sight but it is a reminder of a great promise God has made to us.

But again, it is also a reminder to God of the promise God has made.

God sees it and remembers the promise.

Author Thomas Troeger tells how some years ago the famous actor Orson Wells read from Genesis 9 on the Johnny Carson show.

"Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood....When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.'

When Welles finished reading, he preached a one sentence sermon

As Troeger says, "This may not be his exact words, but they are close:

"God is not going to destroy us, but it remains to be seen whether or not we will destroy ourselves."

Welles sermon reminds us of how much trust God has placed in us.

That is whether or not the human race will survive is in our hands.

As Troeger reminds us, God does far more than promise not to destroy us. "God supplies us with resources to move from brutality to compassion, from violence to peace. God gives the law to provide guidance for the moral life." "God calls us to a new way of being and acting that we can embrace by following Christ."

As we travel to the cross, we travel to where God changes our suffering.

In Jesus life and death, God is saying that retribution is not the final answer.

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Jesus resurrection is the promise of new life.

It is the fulfillment of the promise of the rainbow. As it is said, "God's desire for creation is a life and a future living in the peace and harmony that God desires for us. So this lent as God sees the rainbow and remembers God's promises let us repent not just for ourselves but on behalf of all people everywhere"

Next time you look at a rainbow, give thanks to God who not only will not destroy us but will move among us working to transform the world.

And remember as you look at a rainbow that GOD IS LOOKING AT IT TOO.