

## *The Rainbow Gospel*

Genesis 9:12-16

June 2, 2024

Welcome to June! It's only one day old but by the time today is over, it will double in age. June traditionally has been a month for weddings as we'll discover during our announcements today. Historically, it's been a time to celebrate God's special design for marriage which is the foundation of the family and ultimately of society itself. It's no surprise then that June has been hijacked by the devil to celebrate a corruption of God's good gifts. Even the name, Pride month, is an abomination to God and pride is one of the things God hates. Throughout the Bible, pride is one of the most heinous of sins and arguably the root of the original sin of trying to be like God. Pride goes before every fall in some way or the other as we think we know more than God. We are told twice in the New Testament that, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6). To blatantly defy God by designating any month as pride month or to celebrate this wicked sin of arrogance in any way is an affront and primary insult to God. And then to compound it by celebrating sexual acts that He calls perverse is even worse.

During this month, God willing, we're going to reclaim it. We'll be talking a bit about **God's** plans and **God's** ways as opposed to those of the world. Today, we're going to talk about the rainbow gospel and in the Sundays to come we'll be talking about godly manhood and womanhood. Not as an attack on anyone but to be true to Jesus Christ and to God's holy will revealed through His Holy Word. Please open your Bibles today to Genesis 9.

Say rainbow. Just like June has been hijacked to celebrate evil, so too has God's amazing creation of the rainbow. Unlike rocks, trees, or animals that exist for many years, rainbows are unique brief appearances of light that has been refracted into its various colors. White light consists of all 7 colors combined but after passing through the prism of raindrops, the individual hues appear and do so in a holy arch. Which begs the question, where do bad rainbows go to be punished? To Prism. It's a **light** sentence, but it gives them time to refract. Few people on earth are not awed by the appearance of a rainbow and just this week, I saw one the day my mother-in-law passed into glory but other beautiful photos of spectacular double rainbows showed up on Facebook. To remind ourselves of the rainbow's true origin, please stand if you are able as we read from Genesis 9:12-16 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: 13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. 16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

You know the context. The flood and its aftermath have finally subsided and Noah and his family have come out of the ark. The very first thing he does is make a sacrifice and worship the God who protected them over the past year. And in response to Noah's worship, God does what we just read about. He makes a covenant, a binding agreement between Himself and human beings to never destroy the earth again by water. The covenant was not just with Noah but with all generations that would follow him. That includes you and me, even non-believers. It even includes the animals. Every time God sees a rainbow, it is a reminder of His steadfast promise. And here 4,400 years or so later, He's still keeping that promise. And always shall.

There are many supposed experts today who say the global flood never happened. They say it's a fairy tale. And yet, the evidence for it is overwhelming. To paraphrase Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis, what would you find if there had been a global flood? Billions of dead things buried in rock layers, laid down all over the earth. What do we have? Billions of dead things buried in rock layers, laid down all over the earth. We see layers of sedimentary rock all over the planet with fossilized animals of all types. We find seashell fossils on top of Mt. Everest. We find massive erosion in places like the Grand Canyon. The geologic evidence for a global flood is overwhelming, we could go on.

But we also have the actual stories of this cataclysmic event in the memories of almost every people group on earth. I'm reading a book now called Echoes of Ararat that describe over 300 stories of Indians in Canada, North and South America, all with different variations of a flood story with amazing agreement to what Moses wrote for us here in Genesis. These stories predate the arrival of the white man with the Bible. Coincidence? I don't think so! That doesn't even include stories in Asia, China, Africa, and Europe. We also have genetic evidence linking all of us to a common male and a common female ancestor, Noah and his wife. Just like the Bible tells us.

The flood really happened just like the Bible says, and the rainbow is a symbol of God's grace. We deserve to be destroyed for our sin. Do you think we are less evil now than they were before the flood? Take a look around! Turn on your TV! Look at the internet! Look into your own heart! And one day God will say enough already and call it quits. But He won't send a flood. According to 2 Peter 3:10, it will be fire to purge and cleanse the earth and prepare for a brand new one. More on that another day.

But today, let's think about this gift called the rainbow with seven beautiful colors. Here in this year of the Great Commission, you and I can use the real rainbow to point someone to Jesus. Here's how. Say black. Rainbows usually appear after a storm when it was very black. Black is the absence of all light, not the presence of colors. And it is our condition in the absence of God. Our sin is black as night with nothing

good. Like the black storm clouds, it prevents us from seeing and enjoying God's light. But as the storm clears, the rainbow appears.

Say red. Red is the first color on the outside of the rainbow and of course red reminds us of Jesus' blood. Salvation has to start there. As we recognize the blackness of our own sin, the total darkness of life without Jesus, we must confess it and repent of it. We turn from it and toward God. And Jesus' red blood appears on Calvary's cross to erase our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Without the blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. Even Noah's sacrifice involved the shedding of blood that foreshadowed Jesus' sacrifice years later.

The next color is orange. Say orange. Orange reminds us of the brilliant sunrise at the break of each new day. As we come to faith in Jesus' Christ, not just a new day, but a brand new life begins to dawn! We are, like each day, born again! Our old life of sin and darkness is past as He begins to enlighten every aspect of our being. He quickens our hearts and enables our eyes to see Him and everything else in a totally new and different light. Things we couldn't understand come into focus and life begins to make sense as His wisdom spills out on the landscape of our being as orange sunlight does in our valley each morning. What was once a meaningless gloomy wasteland last night becomes a beautiful life for Jesus in the morning!

Say yellow. Yellow reminds us of the golden streets that await our feet. The golden streets of that new Jerusalem become our heart's desire. Although we are living now on earth, our eyes are fixed on heaven. And living with our eternal end in mind helps us to endure the difficulties of our days here. Just as the initial orange sunrise yields to more golden hues, as we mature in Jesus, we encounter troubles and even persecutions. We experience pain and suffering. Our labors make us weary. But the yellow sunshine reminds us of the heavenly rest that awaits us beyond the sunset. Marathon runners can push through when they visualize the finish line in the distance. When's the last time you visualized your finish line in heaven? The golden streets? The throngs of redeemed loved ones: spouses, parents, children, aunts, uncles, friends waiting to show us around? 2 Cor 4:18 reminds us, "fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." As we share Jesus with others, we can lead them through the red blood, into the orange sunrise of new life, and help them envision the yellow streets of their future home, if they so choose.

Next comes green. Say green. Green is one of God's favorite colors. He used it to shade every one of the over 3 trillion trees in the world in addition to almost every other grass, moss, bush, flower, and plant on earth. Chlorophyll tints each leaf and blade and demonstrates to us that life is present. When leaves turn brown in the middle of June, we know that life has left the plant. Green is the color of life. All animal life depends on plant life and all plant life depends on sunlight. The same sunlight that

produces rainbows and decorates the entire planet. As we turn from sin's darkness and receive Jesus' red blood, the new day dawns and we begin to look forward to the yellow interstates of heaven. But in the meantime, our new green life has already begun! Life that is truly life! Life more abundant and free! Life that is so much more than mere existence. And this life is evergreen! Yes, there are dry seasons, periods of discouragement and drought, but because the King dwells within, there is life in our green castles! There is life in our trees! Jer 17:7-8 promises us, "... blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." And everyone said? Green is the color of life!

The rainbow's green gives way to blue. Say blue. Blue too is one of God's favorites for he uses His blue crayon to color both the skies and the oceans. The earth seen from space is a blue planet. Blue is the color of freedom. No other creation demonstrates freedom as much as the blue sky in which birds freely fly and the blue waves in which fish freely swim. This blue color represents our freedom in Jesus! Many people resist the Savior because they think following Him will stifle them, confine them, or restrict their wild wonderings. We are never truly free until we are in Jesus. If the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed! It is the harsh taskmaster of sin that enslaves the soul and body to habits and addictions that destroy and cause pain. Sin is a prison that demands our full involvement in whatever it desires. How many of you know how good it feels to be free of those sin chains? Amazing grace my chains are gone! We can swim freely in His blue oceans of grace and fly without fear in His blue skies of mercy. Praise God for the blue of God's rainbow that reminds us of the freedom in Jesus!

Ironically, blue is the rainbow color left out of pride flags reminding us that when we serve sin, there is no freedom. Instead of God's perfect number 7, the pride flag has man's number, 6 colors. It falls short of God's completeness and His holiness, which along with true freedom can only be found in Him.

The next color is indigo. Say indigo. Indigo is a blue so rich and deep that it's hard to appreciate it fully. It is the color of blueberries and many grapes and reminds us of the fruitful life of a believer. One of the things that God commanded Noah to do when he came out of the ark was to be fruitful and multiply! And he did. And one of the things Jesus commands His followers is to go and bear much fruit. When we are born again, we are grafted onto Jesus' vine and begin bearing His fruit. An obedient Christian life is a fruit-filled life. It is a life of love and joy. Of peace and kindness. Of patience and goodness. Of gentleness. This fruit puts a smile on the face of our Gardener but it also blesses many others and puts smiles on their faces too! Who doesn't like that kind of fruit? Even those of us that are on a low-fruit diet can enjoy those types of Jesus fruits! Fruit of faithfulness and self-control. We begin to bear the fruit of righteousness

and holiness, fruit, Jesus said, that will last! The life of a Christian is one that leaves an eternal legacy of good indigo fruit.

Without a dividing line, the rainbow's indigo melts into violet. Say violet. What a great name for a mother and for a lane to live on. Purple was one of the main colors of the tabernacle where God dwelt. It was a color the high priest wore. It was also the color of the robe they put on Jesus before His crucifixion. Violet is the color of royalty! The color of kingship and queenship! To which every believer is destined! 2 Tim 2:12 assures us that, "if we endure, we will also reign with him." In 1 Cor 4:8 Paul tells us, "Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings!" And Rev 5:9-10 says, "...with your blood [Jesus] you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made us kings and priests to serve our God, and we shall reign on the earth." If you're a Christian, say, "I'm gonna reign!" As you share the gospel with others, you can point to both the purple of Christ's robe and the one they too will wear as they reign with Him in glory if they believe!

That's all seven colors but let's remember today that the rainbow is but a small part of the electromagnetic spectrum that our eyes can see. This spectrum continues on into infrared on one end and ultraviolet on the other, both of which our eyes cannot see. This reminds us that there are depths of God's fullness and riches of His grace we will never be able to comprehend even in all of eternity. Rom 11:33 proclaims, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" We will continue to see new colors of God's grace that will inspire fresh praise 10 million years from now and forever!

Rainbows appear only four times in the Bible: in Genesis where we just read, in Ezekiel 1:28 when he catches a glimpse of God and says, "Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around [God]." And twice in Revelation: once in chapter 10 when a rainbow appears above the mighty angel who many believe is Jesus, and in chapter 4:3 where John says, "the One who sat [on the throne] had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne." Rainbows belong to God. They are His and His sign of His covenant to us and shouldn't be hijacked, especially by those who do evil.

Finally, we can understand rainbows as God's signs to us of His new covenant for all rainbows are a combination of two of His creations that Jesus used to describe Himself, light and water. He is the light of the world and He is the living water. In Jesus, and in Jesus alone does the true rainbow of God's beauty and fullness appear. The black of our sin disappears with the red of Jesus' blood, the orange of our new birth, the yellow of heaven's streets, the green of our true life, the blue of His freedom, the indigo of fruitbearing, and the violet of our royal robes. To God be the glory this June, every June, and evermore for God's gift of the Rainbow. Go tell someone else about it!