

Noah Builds an Altar

Key Verse: *“I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.”*

—**Genesis 9:13**, *New King James Version*

Selected Scriptures:
Genesis 8:20-22;
9:8-17

IN GRATITUDE FOR GOD’S

providential deliverance, Noah built an altar. There he commemorated the new beginning of mankind’s history. The flood had purged the fallen race; only righteous Noah and his family survived. The Lord had seen “that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” (Gen. 6:5, *NKJV*) Only

animals that were known to be Biblically clean were offered by Noah. He wanted everything to be just right going forward. His sacrifice yielded a soothing aroma to God who declared, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.”—Gen. 8:21, *NKJV*

We commend Noah for his heart’s desire for a fresh start. Yet we also note God’s estimation of humanity is that “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” Who has not been bullied or bullied others on the playground as a child? Who has not fettered their lips from speaking evil of others? Few, if any.

The rainbow demonstrates God’s knowledge and wisdom that far surpass human comprehension. “Ex nihilo”—out of nothing—is a term often used in theology to

describe the concept that God, out of nothing, created the universe. Paul affirms this: “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”—Heb. 11:3, *English Standard Version*

God designed the complexity of the atom, the building block of our universe, and all its variants. We marvel at the depth of thought that went into Creation. Consider water, essential to all life. By adding two hydrogen atoms to one oxygen atom our Creator made a substance that may exist in liquid, gaseous, and solid forms. Ice, the solid form, is lighter than liquid water and therefore floats. The impact of this property, foreknown by God, is that otherwise most of the planet’s water would remain frozen year-round. Water also gathers into clouds which, though weighing millions of pounds, float gracefully over the earth, watering the ground below.

As clouds shed their precious rain, sunlight shines through it. Drops of water refract the light and separate it into its various wavelengths, creating the image of the rainbow and its gorgeous colors. Is this coincidence? Certainly not! It is the well-planned design of God Almighty. “Known to God from eternity are all His works.” (Acts 15:18, *NKJV*) Rainbows are a symbol of hope. Their beauty inspires us. It confirmed to Noah that God would never again bring a flood to destroy the earth. God said, “The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” It is for “perpetual generations.”—Gen. 9:16,12, *NKJV*

This adds another layer of meaning for us. “We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” (II Pet. 3:13, *NKJV*) The land in which righteousness dwells is the land we pray for daily, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”—Matt. 6:10, *NKJV* ■