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The New Testament

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God blesses Noah and all living creatures.

A COVENANT WITH NOAH

Genesis 8:1—11:9

THEN, after it had rained for forty days and forty nights, it stopped raining. The water slowly began to recede, but it took a long, long time before all the water had gone away. Eventually, the Ark came to rest on the top of a very high mountain, Mount Ararat.

After forty days, Noah opened one of the windows of the Ark. He released a raven to see if the water had gone down enough. It flew back and forth, looking for dry land, but it was still too early.

He then released a dove, but it could not find any place to land, so it returned to the Ark. Noah thus knew that it was not yet safe to get off the Ark.

God spoke again to Noah and told him it was now time for him and his family to get off the Ark. They opened the doors and they all got out.

As soon as Noah left the Ark, he offered a sacrifice to thank God for protecting him and his family. This pleased God very much.

And so God made a promise to Noah and to all people upon the earth. He promised that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood. Promises such as these are called covenants. God gave Noah and us a reminder of this covenant: the rainbow. Every time we look into

the sky and see a rainbow, we can remember how much God loves us and how He made this special covenant with Noah and with us.

Having seen the great power of God and also His great mercy, men and women should have decided to follow God with all their heart and soul. But almost immediately they began to sin again.

Noah planted a garden and grew grapes in it. He made some juice from the grapes and let the juice sit for a few days before he drank it.

The juice turned into wine, and when Noah drank it he became very drunk. He did not know that this would happen, for this was the first time that anyone had ever tasted wine.

Noah fell asleep in his tent, and his sons entered the tent and one of them made fun of him. Noah punished the son for his disrespect, for he had sinned against God and against him.

Later, the people on the earth decided to build a great tower, the tower of Babel, to try to reach the heavens for they wanted to be like God. This was something that greatly displeased God. He punished those who had built the tower by making them each speak a different language so that they could no longer understand each other.



Mary and Joseph are filled with joy at the birth of Jesus.

JESUS IS BORN

Luke 2:1-20

AS the time for Mary to have her child approached, Mary and Joseph faced one more difficulty. The emperor of the Roman Empire, Caesar Augustus, had ordered that a census was to be taken over the whole world. All people were to travel to the cities and towns of their ancestors so that a record might be made of their names and what they owned.

Joseph and Mary belonged to the tribe of Judah, to the family of David. And so they traveled to the city of David, to Bethlehem, a small town not far from Jerusalem. This was a very difficult journey for Mary, for she was almost ready to have her child, but again she trusted in the Lord.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, Joseph went off looking for a place for them to stay, but there were so many people who had traveled there for the census that there was no place for them to stay.

Finally, Joseph stopped at an inn and told them that he had to find a place for his wife to stay, for she was about to have her child. The people who owned the inn felt sorry for Mary, so they told Joseph that he could take Mary to a cave outside the town where the animals were kept during the bad weather.

Mary and Joseph went to the cave, and Mary had her child there. They cleaned out a manger, the place where hay is placed for the animals, and they laid the baby Jesus in it.

Mary wrapped Jesus in a cloth to keep Him warm. They thanked God for the wonderful gift He had given them.

At that time there were some shepherds in the fields watching their flocks. An angel appeared to them and proclaimed, "You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to you and tidings of great joy to be shared by the whole people. This day in David's city a Savior has been born to you, the Messiah and Lord." The angel told the shepherds that they would find the baby wrapped in a cloth, just as Mary had done.

Suddenly the sky was filled with angels singing, "Glory to God in high heaven, peace on earth to those on whom His favor rests."

After the angels departed, the shepherds went in haste to visit the child and found everything as the angels had told them. They told Mary and Joseph what the angels had said to them.

All were filled with wonder and they gave praise to the Lord for all that they had seen and heard. Mary kept all of these things in her heart.