

STORM CLOUDS AND RAINBOWS GENESIS 9:8-17

Introduction

God had just sent a flood that destroyed the earth and every living thing on it, with the exception of Noah, his family, and the animals that were in the ark.

Life as Noah had previously known it was drastically changed!

Before this time a water canopy is believed to have enveloped the earth. That water canopy was now gone.

Before this time there had been no thunder clouds or rain.

But now that the water canopy was gone, thunder clouds and rain would be regular.

It is understandable that Noah might wonder what to expect every time he saw a thunder cloud in the sky from this point forward.

So, God made a covenant with man that He would not destroy the earth with a flood again.

Note that He didn't promise never to send a thunder cloud or storm, only that He would not destroy the earth with a flood.

There would be many thunder clouds and accompanying storms, but along with them would come the promise of God. **(Vs 14)**

It has been said that for every thunder cloud we see, there is a rainbow. But you have to be in the proper position to see it.

My family and I saw this illustrated a number of years ago (1998) when we were vacationing in Winter Park, Colorado which is over 9000 feet above sea level. We were there during the off season in the late summer. We had been visiting some of the scenic sites around Denver and were headed home when we found ourselves driving up into a cloud while the sun was shining bright. We saw one of the most beautiful rainbows that you have ever seen. We took a picture of it and my mom has that picture hanging in her dining room. Now, driving up into the rainbow we could see it. But when we got through the cloud and turned around looking back behind us the rainbow wasn't there!

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My wife and I saw this illustrated again when we were at Niagara falls for our 25th wedding anniversary in 2004. The clouds of mist that were thrown up by the force of the falls had a constant rainbow during the day. Whether you could see it or not depended on your vantage point. If you were on the U.S. side in the morning you could see the rainbow, but not on the Canadian side. If you were on the Canadian side in the evening, you could see the rainbow, but not on the U.S. side.

There's a great lesson to be learned from this and from what God says here in the Scripture. When the shadows of life's storm clouds fall on us, if we get in the proper position, facing the LORD, we can see God's promises shining through.

I. STORM CLOUDS COME INTO EVERY LIFE!

(Vs 14 "It shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth...")

A. Because There Had Been A Fundamental Change On The Earth, Storm Clouds Were Going To Come!

1. God Uses The Storm Clouds For His Purposes.

Nahum 1:3—"The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet."

a. Storms Can Be Beneficial.

b. Storms Can Be Destructive.

2. God Limited What He Would Do With Those Storm Clouds. (This was God's Covenant with man!)

B. Because There Has Been A Fundamental Change On The Earth, Storm Clouds Of Trials Will Come In Our Lives!

1. What God Created Was Perfect And Good!

2. But Then, Sin Affected Paradise!

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3. God Uses The Storm Clouds Of Trials For His Purposes! (Romans 8:28)

Let's Take The Example Of Joseph.

His brothers were jealous of him and that jealousy grew into hatred, as it usually does.

He was first placed in a pit and later sold into slavery.

He had a right to say, "My life is a hard one, filled with many clouds." But his troubles had only just begun.

As an innocent man, being lied about and thrown into prison through no fault of his own, he had a right to think that God had forgotten him.

But, of course, God never forgets, and He didn't forget Joseph.

In due time, God brought Joseph into a highly exalted position.

Take The Example Of Daniel.

He knew God's will for his life and went about to obey it, even though he was captive in a foreign land.

What was the result?

He was hated for it and plotted against by others!

He was cast into the lion's den to be killed because of nothing more than his faithfulness to his God!

A dark cloud settled over Daniel's life and he could have wondered what God was doing. He could have despaired, but he didn't.

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We know that God remembered His faithful servant and prevented the lions from harming him.

Take The Example Of The Apostle Paul.

The storm clouds began to cover him on the day he met Jesus on the Damascus road and never really cleared up until God called him home to glory.

Paul was persecuted unmercifully for Christ's sake. He was beaten three times, he was stoned and left for dead. Other things are detailed out in **2 Corinthians 11:23-30**.

He suffered mentally, physically, and spiritually what very few have ever suffered for the Lord.

One storm cloud after another seemed to always be there, but he endured it all for Jesus, knowing that *"all things work together for good to them that love God."*

As you read of Paul's life in Acts and in the Pauline epistles, you'll find there was not a complaining spirit to be found in the Apostle Paul.

4. God Limits What He Will Do With The Storm Clouds Of Life! (Romans 8:35-39)

C. What About Us?

Our storm clouds of trials may seem light compared to these examples and they are light compared to what Christ went through for us.

2 Corinthians 4:17—"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;"

But they are not light when we are going through them!

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God knows exactly what we are going through...He has His purposes ...and He will deliver His own either **from** the storms or **through** the storms!

Sometimes God delivers us **from** the trials but usually he delivers us **through** the trials.

No follower of Christ ever escapes the storm clouds, but thank God, He provides the rainbow—His promises!

Those storm clouds will not destroy us!

STORM CLOUDS COME INTO EVERY LIFE!

II. STORM CLOUDS COME ONLY BY GOD'S PERMISSION!

(Vs. 14 "...when I bring a cloud")

A. God Knows What Is Best For Us!

He knows that all sun and no clouds only creates a desert.
If we never saw the clouds, we would never see the rainbow.

God builds our lives by adversity as well as by prosperity!
More character is built in sorrow than in success!

B. God Is The "Divine Weaver!" (by William Sutcliffe)

*My Life is but a weaving between my Lord and me;
I cannot choose the colors He worketh steadily.
Ofttimes He weaveth sorrow and I in foolish pride,
Forget that He seeth the upper, and I the under side.
Not till the loom is silent and the shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why.
The dark threads are as needful in the Weaver's skillful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned.*

C. We Ought Not To Fear The Storm Clouds!

1. God Was In The Cloud At the Mount of Transfiguration!

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Luke 9:34—"While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud."

2. God Was In The Cloud Before The Children Of Israel!

Exodus 16:10, "...The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud."

3. God Was In The Cloud Before Moses!

Exodus 19:9, "...Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud..."

4. Sometimes God sends the storm clouds in order for us to be closer drawn to Him!

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III. THE SAME GOD WHO ALLOWS THE STORM CLOUDS TO COME ALSO SENDS THE RAINBOWS!

(Vs. 14 "...The bow shall be seen in the cloud.")

What did the rainbow represent? (The Covenant Promises of God!)
Thank God we have the Promises of a God Who cannot lie! Amen!

A. There Is The Promise Of Help In Troublesome Times!

Psalm 46:1—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

"Rock of Ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee."

B. There Is The Promise Of Deliverance!

Psalm 50:15—"And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

He knows all about the clouds that overshadow our pathways.

2 Peter 2:9—"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations. . ."

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C. There Is The Promise Of His Presence!

1. Jesus said, "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
Cf. Hebrews 13:5b
2. **2 Timothy 4:14-18**
3. Paul said, "*No man stood with me, but all men forsook me.*" That is a cloud if I ever saw one.
4. Then Paul said, "*Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me*" There is the rainbow!

D. There Is The Promise Of A Certain Storm Free Future Coming Our Way!

Revelation 21:4—“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

In the midst of our tears, remember that the time will come when God's loving hand shall wipe away all our tears!

In Revelation 4:3 we read, "*...and there was a rainbow round about the throne...*"

On earth we see only part of the rainbow, but in heaven we will see the whole!

Conclusion

In heaven everything will be complete. The storm clouds may hover over us in this world and we don't understand why, but up there we'll understand it all.

The storm clouds may come and it may get dark, but be assured that our loving Father is still there in the midst of our storm! So remember:

Storm Clouds Come Into Every Life!

Storm Clouds Come Only By God's Permission!

The Same God Who Allows The Storm Clouds To Come Also Sends The Rainbows (Promises)!