A Covenant for All People

In the beginning, God created the earth to be a perfect place. He created it without sin. There, God and man could meet face to face. However, Adam and Eve decided to disobey God, and sin entered the world. Then later, when God looked at the world, he saw that the people were full of evil. They were bad and selfish. They fought with each other. They had bad thoughts all the time. It seemed that no one remembered the Creator and loving God who cared so much about them. God was very sad about this. He couldn't let the world continue like this. He had to destroy it.

However, there was a man who was different from the others. His name was Noah. Noah pleased God because he loved him with all his heart, and did what was right.

One day, God spoke with Noah and told him, "I'm going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I'm surely going to destroy both them and the earth... But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. . . Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

Noah did everything God told him to do. He built the ark as instructed. And when God said, "Go into the ark," Noah, all his family and all the animals obeyed.

Then it started to rain. It rained for 40 days and 40 nights. The water rose to cover the highest mountains and destroyed everything in its path. Every plant, animal and person that remained on land died. Only those who were in the ark, with whom God had made a covenant, survived. The flood lasted 150 days. Then God sent a wind over the earth and the water began to dry up. At last, the ark landed on Mount Ararat. The land slowly dried up.

One day, God spoke again with Noah and said, "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply

on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number on it" (Genesis 8:16-17).

Noah obeyed God. He and his family and all the animals came out of the ark. Then Noah built an altar and offered sacrifices in gratitude to God for his mercy and protection during the flood. God blessed Noah and his sons and said, "'I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.' And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant I'm making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.'" (Genesis 9:11-12)

(This Bible story is found in Genesis 6:5–9:17)