What was God’s first promise? Were the words given to man on the seventh day in Genesis 1 a promise? God declared, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.” Probably! In fact, God is still fulfilling that promise, even though that promise is now also under a curse.

**Waiting for the Lord:**

**To Keep His Promises**

**Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18, 8:6-18, 9:8-13**

3nd Mid-week Lent – 03.16.2022

But was that curse based upon a promise? After placing the man in the garden, He said to the man, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” You know how people comment when someone declares what they will do if the other does something nasty, “Is that a threat or a promise?”

Adam and Eve did eat the fruit they were not to eat. They did not die as God sacrificed an animal to make garment of skin to cover their sin. At that time, God also made the first promise of the One who would crush Satan’s head.

In today’s lesson from Genesis, there is another promise. It comes at the end of a horrific event. Can you imagine getting on a boat today, only to get off it a year later, and you and your family are the only people on earth? The only birds and land animals are the ones who shared that ark of refuge with you?

Do you trust God? If so, on the basis of that promise to Noah, you can stand squarely and solidly against the dire predictions of the global warming terrorists who claim that if we do not follow their prescriptions, all the ice will melt and flood waters will cover the whole earth, ushering in an apocalyptic age.

Ain’t gonna happen! You see, God made a promise – to all of creation, in fact. Once off the ark, God promised. “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”

When you see a rainbow in the sky it is the sign of God’s promise that no flood will ever destroy the earth. I know, the rainbow has been pre-empted by some people and has taken on a meaning that is not God-pleasing, but that only shows that sadly, man’s heart has not changed from the time of the flood.

From the time of the fall after God created Adam, those created in God’s image have seriously corrupted that image. Before God brought the flood, we read this: The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. (Gen. 6:5-8)

Noah, his family, and with them all mankind following them, were given a promise, a promise sealed with a sign. The rainbow is God promised sign that He would not destroy the world again by a flood. God’s love for those whom He continues to make in His image, is continually evident in the promises God makes. His promises show His desire to love and to save His created children.

Throughout the Old Testament, God continued to give promises. Abraham was given the promise that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through his offspring. Waiting for the Lord to keep His promise, He was finally given a son when his wife Sarah – who was far, far, far beyond childbearing age – gave birth to Isaac. Even though Abraham had been waiting so long, God told him to sacrifice to this son to Him. It was a test of Abraham’s trust of God. It was also an opportunity to renew God’s promise.

Last Sunday we heard about Jacob waiting for the Lord to keep His promise that he was physically consumed with his prayers, wresting with God – waiting for the Lord to keep His promise.

The people of Israel, on the night before they left Egypt, celebrated the Passover. God's promise had been given that they would be freed from their slavery that night. Each household slaughtered a lamb as God had instructed. They obediently put its blood on the doorpost and lintels of their homes, and ate the flesh of the Lamb with their shoes on their feet, staffs in their hands, ready to leave for the promised land. They were waiting for the Lord to keep His promise.

This Passover meal was a feast to be continued. It was evidence of their waiting for the Lord to keep His promise to send the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. In the keeping of that promise, God would free people from their slavery to sin that they might enter the promised Land of God’s eternal rest.

Throughout the Psalms and the Prophets God continues to renew His promise of a Savior. He promised His people that His Savior would come to free all people from sin and death. His promised Savior would be an everlasting King, ushering in a new kingdom, an eternal Kingdom.

Dearly beloved of God, you know how that promise was fulfilled with the sending of God's Christ. As promised, the Virgin gave birth to a Son, God enfleshed as the son of David. He was crowned with thorns, a scepter of reed placed in His hand. He was even robbed in kingly purple. Finally, led out to His throne, He conquered sin and death. He purchased a kingdom with His death in crucified flesh upon the cross.

As He had promised, He rose again on the third day showing the victory complete.

God’s people are still waiting for the Lord. We join with all the Old Testament saints who have gone before us, waiting for the Lord to keep His promise. As Noah and his family were brought through the waters of the flood to be His people by God’s mighty hand – according to His promise – you also have been brought through the waters of baptism to be His people.

You know God as The Promise Keeper. You know Him as the only one who has kept all His promises – doing so in His Son Jesus Christ.

Today we join all those who have gone before us – Old Testament saints, angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven – waiting patiently for the Lord to keep His promise. We wait to gather at Christ’s table, at His bidding, to receive the promised Body and Blood as we gather together. This holy meal strengthens us in our patient waiting for the Lord to fulfill ALL His promises.

Today we also join all those who have gone before us, waiting for Him to keep His promise to return on the last day. What a glorious day that will be! He will raise all the dead to new and perfected bodies. On that day He will grant to all believers in Him a place in His eternal Kingdom, to enjoy His presence for all eternity. Like I said, what a glorious day that will be!

But until that day, we are waiting for the Lord…waiting for the Lord to keep His promise. But we wait with expectant hope and eager anticipation. In the name of Jesus. Amen.