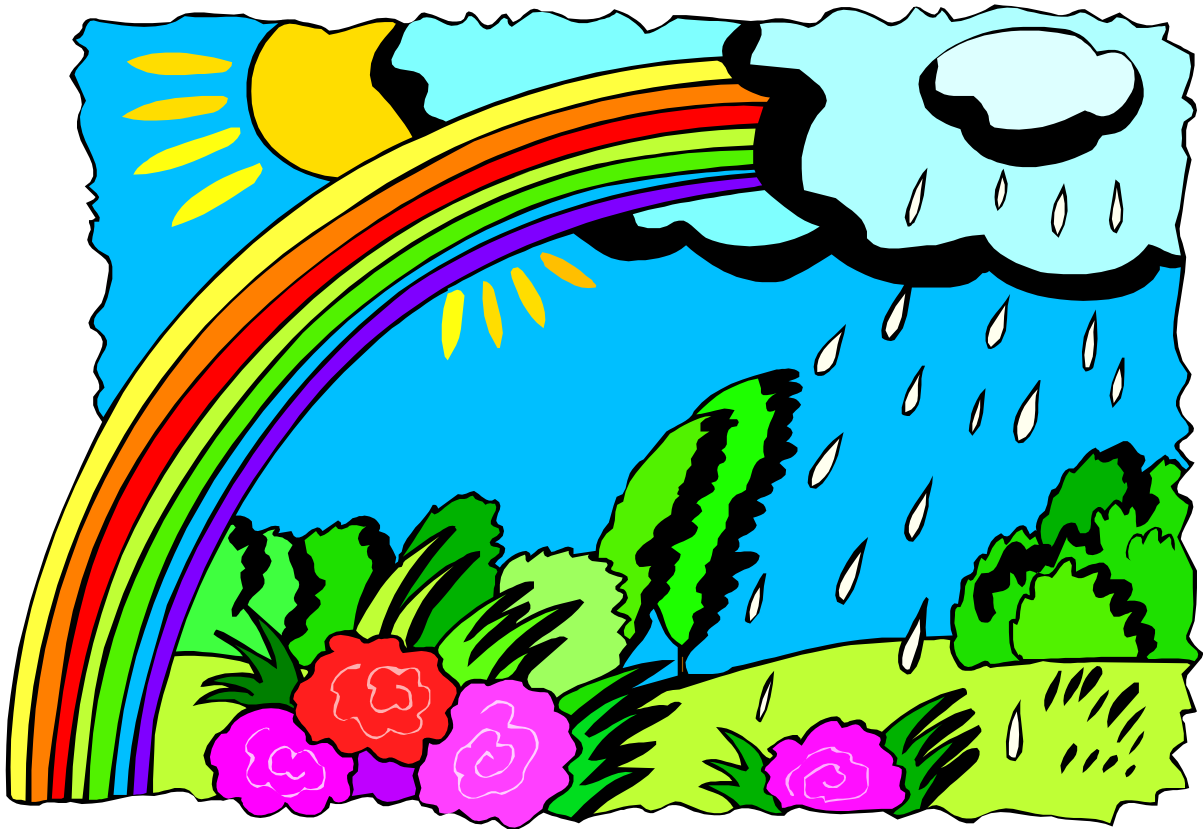


RAIN



Rain is a wonderful thing to enjoy whether we stay indoors and watch it fall or go outside and enjoy the feel of the raindrops hitting us. Rain gives life giving water to plants and animals in the wild and it fills our lakes so that we also have water. Rain washes everything clean and leaves the air feeling fresh.

Sometimes rainfall can be very heavy and floods happen. The gentle rain can become a powerful force.

What can we learn from God's creation of rain?

Just as we cannot count the raindrops that fall from above, we also cannot count the blessings God pours out upon us. Sometimes we feel sorry for ourselves because things are not going the way we want them to. We forget that God is in control of our lives and He does everything for our benefit. Rain reminds us that God showers blessings on us all the time whether we know it or not. The Bible teaches us in Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." We can see a picture of all the things God does for us when we watch the rain falling.

The rain washes everything clean and gives life to plants and animals. Our baptism does the same thing. When we are baptized our sins are washed away and we are clean. With our sins washed away because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, we are

given a new life - eternal life. Just like the rain which makes things clean and alive, the water of our baptism makes us clean and alive forever in Jesus. The Bible teaches us in Mark 16:16, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." The Bible also gives us a beautiful picture of God raining down blessings and salvation on everyone in Isaiah 45:8, "You heavens above rain down righteousness; let the clouds shower it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness grow with it; I the Lord have created it."

Rain falls on everyone no matter who they are. This is how God treats us. No matter who we are God showers us with His love and mercy as He calls us to come to Him in faith in Jesus. The Bible tells us in Matthew 5:45, "He (God) causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." God makes His love and mercy fall upon everyone - good or bad - so that they may turn to Jesus and be saved. We should not ignore anyone because of who they are or what they look like. God brought us to faith in Jesus even when

we were lost in our sins. We should treat others like our brothers and sisters and tell them of God's love for them so that they can believe in Jesus and be saved.

Just as the gentle rain can turn into a storm and bring flooding, God's offer of salvation through Jesus is a gentle message that has great power. The apostle Paul teaches us in Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." The gospel is a simple and gentle message that has the power to bring faith and salvation to everyone on earth! To reject the salvation that God gives us through His Son Jesus is to turn the gentle message into a powerful and destructive flood that can destroy us. God wants us all to be saved and that is why He sent his Son Jesus to die on the cross to take away our sins. If we do not accept this wonderful gift, we will not have forgiveness of our sins and eternal life. We will be like people caught in a great and terrible flood that can drown, even though they had the chance to escape the flood. In the days of Noah,

people all over the world had the chance to accept God's love and mercy but chose to ignore God. They were washed away in the great flood except for Noah and his family. They did not turn away from God's invitation for salvation and they lived.

