

The Covenant With Noah Pt. 2

Genesis 9:1-11

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Genesis 9

1 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. 2 The fear and terror of you will be in every living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your authority. 3 Every living creature will be food for you; as I gave the green plants, I have given you everything. 4 However, you must not eat meat with its lifeblood in it. 5 I will require the life of every animal and every man for your life and your blood. I will require the life of each man’s brother for a man’s life.

6 Whoever sheds man’s blood, his blood will be shed by man, for God made man in His image. 7 But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it.”

8 Then God said to Noah and his sons with him, 9 “Understand that I am confirming My covenant with you (Gen. 6:18) and your descendants after you, 10 and with every living creature that is with you—birds, livestock, and all wildlife of the earth that are with you—all the animals of the earth that came out of the ark. 11 I confirm My covenant with you that never again will every creature be wiped out by the waters of a flood; there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.”

Intro.

Let me remind you of a few things I said last week.

- I spent a good deal of time demonstrating that the Bible plainly teaches a worldwide flood that eliminated all non-aquatic life outside the ark—humans, animals, birds, everything—all gone.
- And this matters why? Because the covenant with Noah cannot be separated from the events that made it necessary. In other words, the covenant with Noah makes no sense if it is not based upon a worldwide flood that actually destroyed all life outside the ark.
- The real question before us is relevance. We know God made a covenant with Noah, but 4,500 years later we need to know if this covenant still matters, and how it matters.

God’s covenant with Noah

1. The covenant with Noah is clearly a renewal of the covenant of Creation (1:1), and that tells us that *God sees Noah’s salvation as a fresh start for His original creation.*
 - a. This tells us something about our fundamental purpose in life, that we are still created and called to be stewards of the earth under the Lordship of Christ.
 - b. Notice the command to be fruitful, to increase in number, to fill the earth is almost identical in language to Gen. 1:28.

Gen. 1:28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be *fruitful, multiply, fill* the earth, and *subdue* it. *Rule* the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”

Gen. 9:1 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be *fruitful and multiply and fill* the earth. 2 The fear and terror of you will be in every living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your *authority*.”

- c. Remember who we are. We are God’s special creation, made in His image, which means that in fundamental ways we are like God. If He is The Creator, we are sub-creators, purposed to take the materials of the earth, both animate and inanimate, and bring order out of the chaos of the natural world.
 - i. Cities, farms, roads, infrastructure
 - ii. Arts and crafts
 - iii. Literature and science, organized knowledge
 - iv. Governments and societies
 - v. Worship, work and play, all done under God. (In short, all that is meant by “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” The Lord’s Prayer is a prayer for grace that the Kingdom will arise in our hearts and flow out from our lives by the work of the Holy Spirit.)
2. The Noahic covenant, while clearly a renewal of Adam’s covenant, contains at least three big differences.
- a. (FBD)¹ Man’s authority over the animals is now an authority of fear, not relationship. (v.2) This is something new, different than before the flood.
 - i. This explains man’s longing to make pets of everything we possibly can. The flood changed much more about the world than geology and geography. It changed our relationship with the created world altogether. We lost something precious in our relationship with the animal world, and all mankind longs to get it back.
 - ii. And we will get it back! Isaiah tells us that as the gospel transforms the world and Christ’s rule is once again extended over the earth we will be reunited with the animal kingdom: “the wolf will live with the lamb” and “the calf, the young lion, and the fatling will be together, and a child will lead them” (Isaiah 11:6).
 - b. (SBD) But until that glorious future is realized, man is now authorized to eat meat, so long as the animal is properly slaughtered and its life’s blood poured out. (v.3-4)
 - i. This was an explicit change from the pre-flood world.

The pre-flood world was vegetarian

Gen. 1:29 God also said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This food will be for you, 30 for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the

¹FBD = First Big Difference, Second Big Difference (SBD), and the Third Big Difference (TBD)

earth—everything having the breath of life in it. I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

But now God says: “Every living creature will be food for you; as I gave the green plants, I have given you everything” (Gen. 9:3).

- ii. I won’t attempt to explain away our privilege to eat meat as some have done. Instead, I will say this. The New Testament explicitly identifies as ungodly those who “demand abstinence from foods that God created to be received with gratitude by those who believe and know the truth” (I Tim. 4:3).
 - iii. Btw, this verse is just one of many New Testament indicators that the covenant with Noah is still in effect. But there is a future coming in which the “lion will eat straw like the ox” (Isaiah 11:7).
- c. (TBD) Capital punishment is instituted for the taking of human life, whether the taker is man or beast. (9:5-6)
- i. Because human beings are made in the image of God, to strike down a person is like striking at God, and the striker must forfeit his life.
 - ii. This is the beginning of government, as either a person or a council must be appointed to enforce this rule.
 - iii. Capital punishment is not particularly Jewish or Christian. Rather, this rule belongs to every human society on earth and is therefore placed in the category of Natural Law.
- d. Notice how the Noahic covenant is under attack in our day.
- i. God is not creator.
 - ii. Man is not made in His image.
 - iii. The flood never happened.
 - iv. God did not make a universal covenant with all human beings.
- e. But more importantly, notice that each aspect of the Noahic Covenant is under attack.
- i. We’re told not to be fruitful, not to multiply. We’re told the earth’s resources are finite, limited and almost exhausted. Yet we serve an infinite God Who has demonstrated over and over His abundance and His ability to care for His people.
 - ii. We’re told not to rule over the animals. Specifically, we’re described by today’s philosophers as just another animal, with no more rights than the rest. In fact, a growing number of advocates are seeking to secure the same rights for pets as for humans.
 - iii. We’re told not to eat the animals that God provided.
 - iv. Capital punishment is denied—in fact, punishment of every type is increasingly denied.
3. The Covenant with Noah contains better promises than the Covenant of Creation.
- a. **Preservation of the earth:** No more destruction of the whole earth until the end of the world, and when that comes it will be something God does, not man. It will not be an accident (asteroid), nor will it be an environmental disaster (not by global warming).

(8:22; 9:11), nor will it be something man does to himself, such as nuclear destruction (Isaiah 45:7). The world will end only when God declares that “the hour of His judgment has come” (Rev. 14:7).

- b. **Every kind of living thing is included in God’s promises:** Notice the comprehensive nature of the covenant with Noah (9:8-10) God promises all living beings that He will preserve the earth through all time.
 - i. It is worth remembering that no matter who you are, God is in a covenant relationship with you.
 - ii. If you are a descendant of Noah then He Who Created the Earth and Who judged it once, has promised to preserve it until The End.
- c. **Recurring covenant sign:** The rainbow as sign of God’s promise (Gen. 9:12-17).
 - i. The rainbow was something new, something that did not exist in the pre-flood climate. The appearance of the rainbow indicates that following the flood the world’s climate was radically changed. The rainbow is proof the conditions for a world-wide flood no longer exist.
 - ii. Notice God does not call it a rainbow. That’s our word. Rather, He uses the Hebrew word for hunting bow, or war bow. Strangely enough, however, this war bow has become a sign of God’s grace.
 - (1) The bow is aimed, not at us, but toward the heavens; God is holding himself accountable for the covenant He has established with us. Later, God will make a covenant with Abraham, and in so doing He will pass between the halves of several slaughtered animals indicating His willingness to die should He fail to keep the covenant. This applies here as well.
 - (2) It stretches between heaven and earth as a bond of peace.
 - (3) It reaches from horizon to horizon as an indication of the breadth and reach of God’s mercy and grace to all.
 - (4) It is a reminder of the faithfulness of God’s promise to never again destroy the earth. This is crucial if you think of how the whole world is perpetually frightened over the possibility of impending doom.
 - (a) The ancient Aztecs of Central America are infamous for the untold thousands of captives and slaves they sacrificed each year. Do you know why so many were sacrificed? They were specifically attempting to placate the gods who once destroyed the earth by a flood.
 - (b) Archaeologists tell us that the world’s oldest agricultural sites are located on really high ground, 9,000 ft. (2.7k) or higher. Why? Early post-flood societies were hoping to escape the effects of any further floods.

- (c) Why would these ancient peoples continue to be frightened over the impending return of a flood? For the same reason the end of the world still frightens many—unbelief. Too many people, too many Christians, don't really believe that God will keep His covenant promises, or that He will bless those who call upon Him.
- (d) It is time that God's people declare themselves free from the fright monsters—the politicians and their pseudo-scientists who seek to frighten us into doing their will by constantly declaring the eminent end of the world. No! We trust in God and His promises and we are not afraid.
- (5) The rainbow is a testimony that God is still at work to bless and prosper His creation. So let us not be like the unbelievers, like those ancient Aztecs or their modern representatives who willingly sacrifice millions of unborn children in the name of preventing over-population, and who even now are advocating the early deaths of the elderly and the so-called unfit for the same reason.

Conclusion

When God told Noah how to build the ark He made sure to instruct him to put a door in the side (Gen. 6:16). Then, when it was time, God told Noah to enter through the door, along with His family and all the animals. And when they were all safely in, we're told that "the Lord shut him in" (Gen. 7:16).

In the New Testament Jesus speaks of another door of safety—Himself. "I assure you that I am the door of the sheep," Jesus says in John 10:7. "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved."