

The Covenant (Genesis 9:8-17)

INTRODUCTION

- You know those days, when walk outside after a rain storm, and you glance up and you may think: “Hey, light’s reflecting a prism effect off each and every drop of water and the colors that are given out form all the colors of the spectrum...”
- o Ever do that?
- o Ever just say “that’s pretty...”
- o What is really happening is this:
- o God is saying yet again: “I made you a promise.”
- Three things this morning:
- o The announcement
- o The Sign
- o The Fulfilment of the promise

TEXT

The Announcement (vv:9-11)

- READ (vv:9-11)
- o *“Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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.”*
- The announcement is...
- An everlasting covenant
- The narrative recounts three divine speeches [God said] in which the covenant is formally instituted and the “sign,” marking the event, is adopted. ^[1]

[PAUSE]

- What is a covenant?
- o An unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of the relationship.^[2]
- o Think of it as, “the obligation between a monarch and His subjects” ^[3]
- o God sets the conditions of the relationship
- § What’s the most important element?
- § It’s impossible for God to change or break the covenant
- § But, we can, and do...my idolatry
- o What’s that mean for us? [God’s character]
- o (Hebrews 6:13, 16-20) ¹³ “For when God made a promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself...¹⁶ For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. ¹⁷ So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the **unchangeable** character of His purpose, He **guaranteed** it with an oath, ¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹ We have this as **a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul**, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰ where **Jesus** has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” ^[4]
- Everything else is counterfeit

- o Guaranteed it and delivered on it at the cross – everlasting beyond this earthly existence
- o More on that to come

- (v:16) An everlasting covenant
- o For whom?
- o Noah and his offspring – everyone
- o God is saying to Noah, “I’m making you an unbreakable promise.”
- o And just so you can be sure, I’ll give you a sign

The sign (vv:12-16)

- READ (vv:12-16)
- o *¹² 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: ¹³ I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”*
- The bow
- o (v:12) it’s a sign for Noah and everyone after
- o It is a sign God Himself is actively fulfilling His promise
- o God doesn’t forget – reminder
- o This is the sign of the Noahic Covenant
- God’s in the “sign” business
- o (Exodus 3:12) “*He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”*”
- § Moses, this is the sign
- o (Isaiah 7:14) “*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”*’
- § Isaiah, this is the sign
- o (Luke 2:33-34) “*And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed.”*”
- § Mary Joseph, this is the sign
- o Where do you look for signs of God’s fulfilled promises?
- § Are you looking for something to drop on you?
- § Are you wanting God to bring a special circumstance?
- o John Calvin, when reading this text in Genesis said: “A sign is added to the promise, in which is exhibited the wonderful kindness of God; who, for the purpose of confirming our faith in His word, does not disdain to use such helps.” ¹⁵¹
- o God loves to help our faith

- We have incredible signs given to the Church

- The table/baptism
- o Confirming faith
- o Strengthening faith
- o We have the [I’ll call them] Sacraments

- § The English word "sacrament" is derived indirectly from the...Latin *sacrāmentum*...("hallow, consecrate, sacred, holy"). In Ancient Rome, the term meant a soldier's oath of allegiance, and also a sacred rite. ^[6]
- § It's more than just coming to acknowledge Jesus' work
- § It's proclaiming the faithful covenant keeping of our God through Christ that we might be strengthened in our faith.
 - The sign is to remember (vv:15 & 16)
 - o When you walk outside after the rain...remember
 - o Remember my promise is what God is saying
 - We need to be careful we look to God-given signs
 - A cross is not the sign given to the Church
 - o Cross means the finished work of Christ
 - o It really wasn't used that way for almost half a millennia
 - o And it's OK that we use it as an identifier, but...idolatry?
- § If this symbol disappears we don't lose the church
- § As the reformers said three marks of a church:
 - ō Faithful preaching of the Word
 - ō Regular celebration of the sacraments
 - ō Discipline
- § Lose any one of these and we stop being a church
 - o It's the table and baptism that are given as signs
 - The Table
 - o We do in "remembrance of Me"
 - o We do this to strengthen our faith
 - o To be reminded of the great promise of the gospel to us
- § God's unmerited grace, bringing
- § God's underserved mercy, which brings
- § God's unfailing and unending love
- § Jesus' glorifying the Father
- § Jesus' unconditional love for you
- § Jesus' paying all the payment, taking all the wrath for you
 - Baptism is a sign of entrance into the Covenant Community
- o **PICTURE**
 - o "The community of God's people.
 - o When we hear of God's grace in the testimonies of baptism, it strengthens our faith
 - o It also reminds us of the promise to make us new
 - o We've died and been buried, and raised
 - o Wonderful signs of God's grace that we remember how faithful our God is
 - o Just like Noah, he didn't need God to speak to him in the ark, the ark WAS God speaking a promise
- o **END PICTURE**
 - A note: Marriage
 - o The most manifest display of the covenant to an unbelieving world
 - o How married couples faithfully forgive and love reflects the gospel
 - Those are the signs of the New Covenant, but it's fulfillment – is Jesus
 - o **The fulfillment** – Jesus
 - (2 Corinthians 1:20) "*For all the promises [x2] of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory.*"
 - o Every promise finds its fulfillment in Jesus

- o Joy, peace, happiness, contentment
- o All only find their fulfilment in Jesus
- o Even our praise for God is acceptable because of Jesus
 - As Noah was rescued from judgment, Jesus has rescued us from judgment
- o Even that Scripture says we see dimly
- o Then face to face
- o He will deliver us (2 Timothy 4:18) *“The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom...”*
- o Jesus is our only hope for rescue
- o Because He promised
 - And because God sets the conditions of the covenant
- o Be assured He will fulfill it in spite of us
- o That’s why He says, “I will never leave you or forsake you”
- o It’s all on God
- o Now, you might ask, what if someone walks away, then they were never part of the Covenant Community to begin with
- o (John 6:39) *“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”*
- o God’s will is that Jesus keeps you – so it’s not your performance but Jesus that God needs. It is that gospel-driven truth that leads me to gospel-driven obedience.
 - Some questions
- o Does the promise of God [your complete forgiveness and acceptance] have a bearing on your day-to-day living?
- o What does influence your life most?
- o What would you change to have more joy?
- § When we find ourselves in a dark place?
- § What will we have at the ready to help us believe?
- o Two things the Elders keep communicating:
 - § Be people of the Word clearly hearing God speak
 - § Take advantage of what LEFC has to build your faith
- o Men’s
- o Women’s
- o Empowered
- § One of the reasons we have prayer after service is to encourage our faith
 - o Not because you may need huge healing
 - o Or some power encounter
 - o It can be just encouraging you to persevere
- o (John 15:11) ‘ *“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”* ’ – Jesus
- o Let’s pray

- ^[1] Mathews, K. A. (1996). *Genesis 1-11:26* (Vol. 1A, p. 407). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- ^[2] Grudem, W. A. (2004). *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine* (p. 1238). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.
- ^[3] Smick, E. B. (1999). 282 ברה. R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 128). Chicago: Moody Press.
- ^[4] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (and all other quotes unless noted)*. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.
- ^[5] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacrament>
- ^[6] Calvin, John (1999). *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis* (vol. 1, p.298). Baker
- ^[7] Grudem, W. A. (2004). *Systematic theology* (p. 1239).