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**B0802 – January 13, 2008 – The New World Covenant**

The event we are turning to now is in Gen 8 and 9. I also recommend Ps 104 for some related background reading. We want to get into what happened after the Flood. This is the last event we'll look at for this part of the series. We will follow this chapter up with four appendices, one will be on some interpretive problems in Genesis, the other one will be on biological problems, the third one will be on astrophysics and that sort of thing, the age of the universe, the fourth one will be dealing with geological problems, not extensively but just the overall debate, where it's headed and what some of the issues are.

In Gen 8:20 after the Flood subsides we have an act of worship. "Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. <sup>21</sup>The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. <sup>22</sup>"While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, And summer and winter, And day and night Shall not cease." <sup>1</sup>And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. <sup>2</sup>"The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. <sup>3</sup>"Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as *I gave* the green plant. <sup>4</sup>"Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood. <sup>5</sup>"Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from *every* man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. <sup>6</sup>"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man. <sup>7</sup>"As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it." <sup>8</sup>Then God

spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, <sup>9</sup>“Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. <sup>11</sup>“I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.” <sup>12</sup>God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; <sup>13</sup>I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>“It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, <sup>15</sup>and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup>“When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” <sup>17</sup>And God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.” Then it goes on to describe the sons, etc. we’ll get into that information later in the series, the postdiluvian world and all that.

## **THE NEW WORLD COVENANT**

We’re going to look at the Covenant. We have the four key events of early Genesis, and these are indeed those which shape everything else that follows in the Bible. You have the Creation that deals with the origin of things, the Fall that deals with the origin of evil that appears in creation, you have the Flood that is an archetype of God’s judgment of sin and salvation for those who responded positively to His grace, and you have the New World Covenant which is an archetype of world security. The New World Covenant is, in a crude physical way, the promise of security, that the earth has a certain security that is bounded by God’s Word and this security is ushered in by Noah’s act of worship which involves a blood sacrifice.

We want to look at this event from three perspectives. The first way of looking at it is to go to 2 Peter and look at his commentary again because he sets the framework in which this event should be viewed. There’s a certain logical sequence to how Biblical writers view history, and what Peter does in this passage is that he says there was an old heavens and earth and the

present heavens and earth and these are separated by a high energy Flood event. And the Flood becomes the archetype of another future disruption that occurs at the second coming of Christ. So, the present heavens and earth are going to end and the final heavens and earth are going to be ushered in and there's complexity to this whole thing, there's the rapture, the Second Coming, the millennial reign of Christ and all that. We're not looking at all that, we're just telescoping it all for the sake of discussion into these two high energy interventions to see that there's symmetry to history so that the future heavens and earth becomes the final and ultimate new universe, perfectly secure from any further judgment. Salvation is finished, done, and the original purpose of creation is fulfilled. That's the final stage, but getting there through the process of history, God looks forward when He designs things, so the event of Noah and the Flood, and what came afterward relative to Noah's generation, that was salvation. Think about it for a minute, who passed through the portals of judgment? Who was left at the instant the flood ended? There were eight people, eight and only eight people at that point. Were they all saved? Yes they were. So you have an environment that is totally redeemed. And if you look forward to the millennium what's your starting population? Are they all saved? Yes. The demonic rebels have been put away, I haven't brought them up but there are strange things and it gets into very complicated passages of Scripture. Genesis 6, Colossians, Jude and Peter all mention some strange interbreeding that happened before the Flood. Gen 6 reports that the *beni elohim* went in to the daughters of men, and some Christian commentators try to smooth that over by saying that the sons of God are the godly Sethites, because in some cases that terminology seems to be used that way, but the problem there is usually people who know their Hebrew know that the construction there emphasizes kind, the emphasis is the sons who are divine, over against the women who are human. That's the sense of the construction. The question comes, "What in the world was going on before the Flood?" Weird offspring occurred in this period of time, and the only thing that I want to say to this, just to kind of stimulate some thinking on your part, is "Did we at that point in earth's history have an attempt at what we would now call in our generation genetic engineering?" Because you have a definite tampering with the gene pool. If demonic beings are manifesting in physical bodies and actually interbreeding with human females, producing these weird, freak offspring, what happened to the gene pool in those offspring? It's not totally clear. But we have evidence in the NT that when Jesus died on the cross it says He descended and made a

proclamation to spirits in prison, as the Apostle's Creed<sup>i</sup> says, "He descended into hell," and the Greek word there, *tartarus*, is a word used for a compartment in *sheol*, so He went to *tartarus* and made a proclamation, we don't know exactly what it was He proclaimed, some people say it was the gospel but the Greek word is *kerusso*, not *evangelium*, so we don't really know the content of that proclamation but when Jesus died on the cross His human spirit went to *tartarus* where He made this proclamation, to these demonic spirits that were locked away there in the days of Noah. Some theologians think that what He really was doing there is that He was going down and telling them that not only were they defeated but also that He was triumphant and that salvation was complete, and that basically they were doomed forever, they had failed to stop the incarnation. Think of it, if it helps you, like a great chess match, God and Satan in a chess tournament. It's like in the movie *The Search for Bobby Fisher* you have this young protégé of Bobby Fisher and he comes to the final match at a tournament and the kid he's up against is brilliant, he doesn't do anything but play chess, he's had great coaching and you reach this point in the match where it's the protégé of Bobby Fisher's move and he just stops and you can see he's moving the pieces in his mind, playing the whole game out in his mind's eye and he sees it all laid out but the other kid can't see it. And he makes his move and the game is over. There's nothing the other kid can do. There was something like 24 moves to go but it was over. That's a lot like the chess game between God and Satan. Satan's brilliant, he can see several moves in advance but God's omniscient. He already sees every move to the end of the game. So, throughout the OT even into the New Satan is trying to predict when the Messiah comes so he can checkmate God and he devised all kinds of plots and here's one of those plots. Well, this strange intermarriage may have been a Satanic chess move to destroy true humanity. If Satan could do that by contaminating the human gene pool so there were no true humans left on earth then there couldn't be an incarnation, a clever move. And if that's really what was going on Gen 6 it does sort of make sense that Jesus would go and proclaim the victory to those spirits that disobeyed in Noah's time and say, "Look guys, you tried to get Me, your partners in crime tried to get me but, sorry, games over, I win."

There's a lot to do with that, and we can't get into that because all I'm trying to do in this series is go through the basic events and grab the meat of the basics of the Christian faith in such a way that we will never as Christians be tempted to slink away into our little private religious thing and not openly

confess the authority of Scripture as the authority in every area of life. That's what this whole class is about.

I want to start with 2 Pet 3:7 just how Peter points out that "the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire," just as the first world was somehow tied up with water molecules, in other words water played a massive role in whatever was going on with our planet in this strange past. We don't really know, and when I get into the appendix and we deal with the geology problem we're going to talk about that a little bit. But there were some strange things going on with the universe prior to the Flood, notice the watery language Peter uses, he says "the heavens that existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water." So water, as it were, seems to be the original base substance and everything else seems to be derivative of water in that universe. Then he says in verse 7, "But the present heavens ... are being reserved for fire," so whatever the structure of our present universe it is such that when the judgment comes at the end of history it's a judgment by fire. It's not going to be the great freeze where the universe just keeps expanding until the heat is so dispersed that everything just goes dark and cold; no, it's going to be a hot end, dissolution down to the molecular level apparently in some way. So we're talking about cosmic phenomena here, this is not just a little local event you might read about in the newspaper, the statements about the judgment by water and the judgment by fire are statements about the whole heavens and the whole earth here, the whole universe, both in verse 5 and 7. That's Peter's commentary of the Genesis text.

## COVENANT

What we want to do is come to the first part of the present universe back in Gen 8 and look at what a Covenant is all about, because this is the first time that a Covenant is mentioned. Go back to Gen 9:9 and we will look at this new word; we've never seen this word before, because it's not in the text yet, it shows up here for the first time. In one sense there's no mystery to this word, it's just the word for 'contract'. The word for covenant comes from the word *berith* which means "to cut," it was used often, because of the way they made their contracts, they would cut an animal in half, put half here and half over there and walk between them, and there's a lot of discussion about the meaning of that strange event in Gen 15, and many thing that what it was,

was what we call self-malediction, in other words, “May what happened to these animals happened to me, if I break this covenant,” it’s a pretty heavy agreement when you make one of these contracts. Well, the covenant idea starts with Noah. This is the first one mentioned in the Bible. Since this is the first time it occurs, we want to think about it.

And I want to quote Dr. William F. Albright who taught for many years at Johns Hopkins, a brilliant archaeologist, noted by many to be the Father of American Archaeology. This is a guy who’s looked first hand at the evidence, the inscriptions and done years of analysis on ancient culture. This is a quote that is so stunning about the Bible that it’s a helpful tool in sharing your faith with people. He says, “Only the Hebrews, so far as we know, made covenants with their gods or God.” That’s a simple sentence, but let’s talk about it for a minute. Why do you suppose that’s true? Think of it, all the many religions on the earth and the OT, the Bible is the only one where there’s a contract that goes on between God and man. This is shocking! This is absolutely stunning information, and it ought to set off triggers in our thinking about why does the Bible show God and man in covenant, something that never happened anywhere else?

We’ll start with what are the prerequisites for any contract. Let’s think about an ordinary contract in the real world. Obviously you don’t make contracts with a process; you make contracts with a person. So what does this trigger in our thinking about the implications, why do you suppose the Bible and the Bible alone has God entering into covenant. What would be true of the pagan mind? What does the pagan mind try to do? It tries to erase the Creator-creature distinction, and when you do that you make god, if he exists, part of the universe, and he becomes one of us, he’s sort of like Dr. god and Mr. man, and he’s just like we are, there’s just a relative difference, there’s no absolute difference. That’s what paganism finally does; it cuts God down to our size, cutting Him from an absolute personal sovereign Creator down to a super hero so to speak, a superman. When that happens, remember the *Enuma elish* epic and how they conceived creation. Remember the observations we made? We said that there were two features to the pagan doctrines and religions of this time, and it’s still true. One is that the Creator-creature distinction is destroyed so god, if he’s still around, just becomes sort of like a super person but he’s a part of the universe. So instead of being the creator he becomes less than that, he becomes part of the Continuity of Being along

with angels, man, rocks, we're just sort of on a scale. The second thing we observed when we read that pagan Babylonian literature of the creation, we said something else happened? Do you remember that passage where we read about the gods and goddesses fighting one another, going at it for control of the universe? And we asked "Who's in charge?" I said it's like a committee without a chairman. So you can't tell for sure whether next year Marduk is going to be on the throne or some other god, because they're all competing for the throne, they're all big boys, they're all super people. So how do you know which one calls the shots? The pagan mind has a problem with this and to keep itself from falling apart usually what pagan influences do is they revert to another idea that they quickly bring in to save the day, called Fate, and Fate or the Tablet of Destinies comes into play to preserve some order. Whatever it is, as far as making a covenant, there's something missing or very weak in pagan thought. Either god becomes a process, like he does in modern thinking, in the beginning was gas, either He becomes a process or He becomes so weak that who wants to make a covenant with Him anyway. So right away there's something to start connecting in your mind. You want to see this. Without our faith, there is no God strong enough to make a covenant. What else do you have to have in order to have a business agreement between two people? Could two people that can't communicate make a business agreement? Companies are going global now, what's the problem with that, what's the big demand now in all these international companies? People who are multilingual, people who can go over there and talk their language. So if you don't have communication you're in trouble again. The second thing that paganism lacks is a God that verbally reveals Himself. We haven't touched much on this, but paganism, while they'll say they have dreams and visions, etc. they are minus public propositional revelation. For example, there's no thing that corresponds in any other religion to what went on at Mt. Sinai. No other religion on earth, none has a God who spoke in a valley of a mountain and one million people heard it. No other religion claims that, Buddha doesn't claim that, Confucius doesn't claim that, Daoism doesn't have that, Hinduism doesn't have that, no other religion has that, not a talking God, not a publicly talking God, yeah, he may show up in a dream or something, but I mean public talking, where you could take a tape recorder and hear Him and click the tape on, click it off and play it back. So the Bible relates back to who God is. You have to have a God who is the Creator, who has the power and the authority to enter into covenant agreement, if you don't have that it doesn't mean anything, and you have to

have a God who's going to talk to you in order to get the agreement. And those are fundamentals of our faith. Those are two things, before we go into the details of the covenant, I don't want to get submerged into the details of this, part of the discipline of going through this course is so that you will master the great outlines of our faith, the great basics, the great ideas that you can't compromise, the powerful ideas that collide on a deep level with the whole world system. And this is one of those great ideas. The God of Scripture is absolutely sovereign and He publicly speaks. If you don't have those preconditions, you cannot have a covenant, and this is precisely why the Bible alone has a covenant *making* and a covenant *keeping* God.

Let's go to another exercise here, with another part of this great idea of the covenant, the preconditions we could call it. We have number one precondition that He has to have absolute authority, He has to have power; number two precondition is that He has to publicly reveal Himself in order to get terms in the contract. And the third part of this idea is this: "Why do two businessmen lock into a covenant?" "Why, when you buy a car, do you sign an agreement?" Think about this, because this is the first time in the Bible we see a covenant. We don't see the word "covenant" with Adam and Eve. You see it with Noah. What was the intervening event between Adam and Noah? The Fall. What did the Fall introduce? A ruptured relationship. Why do you have treaties and business agreements? Think of a treaty. To monitor behavior. What do contracts do then? What's the whole field in law called contract law all about? It is to verify the faithfulness of the parties. Contracts always involve some form of verification. That's why you see the term in the Bible, "I am a covenant keeping God." He keeps his end of the bargain. Why do you think God Himself would demean Himself, as it were, to enter into a covenant with us? What advantage accrues to God, not to us, what advantage accrues to God by having Himself come in, and He comes up to us and He signs His name on a piece of paper with certain promises. What advantage is that for Him? Think about the argument for the rest of the OT. In prophet after prophet, in the rest of the OT, on into the New what is the issue again and again? Is God what? Is God faithful to do what He has promised? How do you measure God's faithfulness? Think of a contract, what does a contract give you that you can use as a tool to measure faithfulness? It gives you promises, it gives you terms, it gives you something to get your hands on as a yardstick to measure behavior. So the covenant is an enormously important thing.



This alone, this third part of the great idea, some of you are smart enough to reason this out and see the implication. I wonder how many people here have noticed once we introduced this idea of verification what that tells you that the Christian faith has to say about the Bible. If the Bible becomes a record of God's faithfulness to His contract, what does that say about whether the Bible is errant or inerrant? It compels a doctrine of inerrancy doesn't it? What does the Bible become? It becomes part of a legal piece of evidence to which the laws of evidence are applied. So the idea of a covenant immediately implies that the Scriptures have got to be inerrant. They have to testify. This also tells you why, when you turn to Matthew, you see the genealogies and go to sleep before you get out of chapter 1. What do you suppose all that stuff is about? Why, when you go through Leviticus and Numbers, this tribe was located here and there was this number of people here. So and so and all the way over to this, etc. and I'm not into taking census' what do I want all this stuff for; a land survey... land survey, ah, that's interesting. Is there a land survey connected to the mortgage on your house in some way? You'd better believe it is. You're paying taxes on the basis of it. Now why do you suppose those land records are in the Scripture that everybody says "Oh, they don't mean a thing." What do you mean they don't mean anything? Aren't they the legal records that say that group of people were promised that land and they lived in it and there the boundaries are! So this turns on a vast new light onto the whole testimony of the OT and NT. By the way, what do we call these, the Old and New what? Testaments. Legal documents. Now isn't it strange that so many Christians..., this was a big discussion back in the 70's, this went on in evangelical circles and I thought what is the problem, we had evangelicals all over the country rethinking the doctrine of inerrancy of the Bible. Excuse me! If the Bible has errors in it, how do I measure God's covenant performance? I can't, I've got to have a standard by which to measure. What happens in a court room, some witness comes in? The opposing lawyer always tries to make a witness look like a dork in the court. This guy can't remember what he had for lunch, for breakfast, he doesn't know what clothes he wore yesterday, and you're telling me you saw so and so bang the car into this other person? Come one, don't believe this witness. What's happening? We're demeaning the witness's capability of providing valid information. So what do you suppose Satan wants to do to the Bible? Destroy its credibility, because if I can destroy the Bible I have erased the tool that measures God's faithfulness. No promises, no confirmation, very

simple logic. All of that is just by way of preliminary remarks on how powerful this idea of covenant is. It exists in the Bible and the Bible alone, because only the Bible has a God who can make a covenant. It's very simple. And second, the Bible has to be that inerrant legal document that provides evidence of His faithfulness.

## **FOUR PARTS OF A COVENANT**

Now, let's go into the parts of the covenant, and wherever you go in the Bible, you look for these four parts, because I'm going to give an outline and you can follow this outline, not just in Genesis but anywhere in the Bible. Every time we do communion we talk about one of these covenants that follows this structure.

### **A. PARTIES**

The four parts of a covenant: obviously every covenant has parties to the covenant, who is signing on this contract. As you go through the Bible and you see different contracts, the first thing to ask is "Who's making this, and who's signing on the dotted line?" Look at the text in Gen 9:9 and ask the question, "Who's establishing the covenant?" Is Noah establishing the contract? What Noah did is he worshiped God, in Gen 8:20-22, but Noah's not making any covenant with God. You don't see that. No, God is. v 9. God makes the covenant, and who does He make the covenant with? Look carefully at who is included in the Noahic Covenant. "I Myself do establish My covenant with you," that's Noah, "and with your descendants after you," which is the rest of the human race. So the parties to the covenant, God and all present humanity, because all present humanity have the genes of Noah and his sons and daughters-in-law. I've established My covenant with you. Does this mean there are believers and unbelievers in the Noahic Covenant? You'd better believe it. This covenant is made with everyone, Christian and Atheist, it has implications as we'll see later. "I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you." What else? Gen 9:10, who else is included in the terms of this agreement: "and with every living creature that is with you," that comes out of the ark, "the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth." So all present humanity, and all animal life that descended from the ark, they are in a covenant with God. Those are the parties to the agreement.

That should tell us something about how God is concerned about the environment. This is an ecological dimension to the covenant here. It beats Earth Day, hands down. If I were a kid I'd just love Earth Day because I would love to talk about Noah and see how far I could push it.

## **B. THE SIGN**

The second part is: what is the sign of the covenant? This is crucial because in different covenants there are different signs. Communion service has a sign to it, that's why every communion service we go through the cup and the bread, this is the sign of the covenant, remember Jesus said that, "Do this in remembrance of Me." That's another covenant. But that wasn't the sign of this one. The sign of this one is in verse 12, the rainbow. "I set My bow in the cloud," the implication is it wasn't there before, another testimony to the fact that the old earth was a strange place, no rainbows. How do you get no rainbows? There may be some physics behind this because in order to get a rainbow you have to have a raindrop big enough to fall, and it turns out that the raindrop that's big enough to fall has a big enough diameter to create the optics necessary for light refraction. If you have a small, fine mist it doesn't make rainbows. You will not see that in a fine drizzle or a fog, you'll see coronas, you'll see all other kinds of what we call glories in the atmosphere, but you won't see that complete refraction over the spectrum. That occurs when and only when you have droplets of certain sizes. So there are some interesting physics about God signing His name with His covenant. But there's even something more interesting theologically. Turn to Ezek 1, this is the book you never open about half way through the OT, a very difficult book to interpret. Ezekiel, like Isaiah, sees a great Theophany, we're going to go right into the throne room of God through the eyes of Ezekiel. and in the last verse of chapter 1 he mentions the bow, and I want you to see where else the rainbow occurs. In v 28, "As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD." Let's go to Rev 4:3, it's a picture, this time not Ezekiel, but this time the Apostle John, but both Ezekiel and John have this experience of being able to view the very throne of God Himself, and both these guys report that when they had a chance to look at God's throne they saw the same thing. Rev. 4:3, "And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance," so it had a shading of

green in it. Well, what has Ezekiel 1 got to do with the signing in the way of covenant? Where is the archetype of the rainbow? Remember back in the creation narrative I said that man was made in the image of God both in body and in spirit. Then I said that it's not we should speak of anthropomorphism like man, we should really reverse that kind of speaking, and speak of ourselves as theomorphs, in that as images of God we are theomorphic. It's not that God is anthropomorphic, it's not that He's patterned after us, we're patterned after Him, it's precisely the reverse, we are theomorphs. So in the creation there are analogs to the prior forms that God has. We could go on and talk about animals, it's very interesting, angels always show up in animal forms. And you could make the case that animals are really designed after angels because animals are always described as pieces of angels. Angels have wings and the face of a lion and eyes and are like oxen, so the inference you have since angels were prior is that that form that we are taught by our pagan teachers that this is just an accidental result of natural selection, that's not an accidental form. The form of a cat, a mouse, a dog, a bird, is patterned after ideas in the mind of God. And He designed other parts of the universe like those things. Angels were designed like those things. So these forms that we observe are not chance-born forms, they're not accidental organizations of molecules; they are forms that come out of God's mind. What I'm getting at here is that the rainbow is seen at the throne of God. Now it obviously had been there probably forever, because God is forever. Therefore what is the source of the rainbow? Think. Think theologically. Where does the rainbow get its form from? It gets its form from the throne of God. The very optical phenomena that our eyeballs see out in the sky, and the rule to see a rainbow is always put your back to the sun and look, because it's always going to be 180 degrees away from the sun, on a rainy day. The rainbow is a physical analog to the glory of God on His throne. That's why it is a sign given to man and it's given to all men, everywhere, because God is God of all men everywhere. It's stunning to think of this. Next time you see a rainbow it should be a worshipful experience, because when you look at the bow in that cloud you only see pieces of it, usually. A rainbow actually is a circle if you get high enough in an airplane, but you can't see a circle when you're on earth so you only see what looks like a semi-circle. So you have just a piece, just a fragment of that bow. But when you think of that, think of what Ezekiel and John the Apostle are reporting. That's what they saw when they looked at God Himself. So this is His personal signature that is given into our atmosphere. The atmosphere, as it were, has been branded with His glory.

It's not just an optical phenomenon. You don't exhaust it by just saying "Ooh, that's interesting optics." No. Where did the optics come from? Why that color?

### C. LEGAL TERMS OF THE NEW WORLD COVENANT

The third thing is the **Legal Terms of the New World Covenant**. Just to illustrate the legal terms of the covenant let's think about the Mosaic Covenant. Most of the OT can be understood as the outworking of that covenant. Basically, in Lev 26 and Dt 28 you have the terms of the Mosaic Law Covenant and God says, "If you obey me I'm going to bless you but if you disobey me I'm going to curse you. And those chapters outline the blessings and the cursings for keeping or violating the terms of the Mosaic Contract. And if you want to experiment with this, just make a list of the blessings and cursings then take your list and start reading the prophets. What you'll find is that the prophets are warning the nation to come back to the Lord so He can bless them. They're like prosecuting attorneys and they're saying, "Hey guys, you made an agreement with God and you said 'We're going to obey you' but you're out there violating every term in the contract." Scholars have recognized in the structure of Deuteronomy, in Isaiah, in Hosea that there's a format being followed that was used in ancient court proceedings called the *rib* format from the word "lawsuit". And the prophets are like the prosecuting attorneys for God. They're bringing in the evidence, laying it all out before the nation and the witnesses and saying, "Hey, you've got to answer for this." And you look at the evidence and it's quite plain that their behavior is not measuring up to their agreement. So, that's what we mean by legal terms. Contracts have terms and normally it's all in the fine print but in Scripture it's quite plain, no hidden agreements, no alternative arrangements made in a dark, smokey room. It's all out in the open.

Let's look at the terms of the Noahic Covenant. In Gen 9 He is very clear on the terms, what the terms are, what the terms aren't. In verse 11 it says not that all flesh shall never be cut off, it says that "all flesh shall never be cut off again by the waters of a flood," very specific, "neither shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." Two things, the flesh and the earth, so every other weather disaster in history that will ever happen, whether it's the tsunami tides of India or where ever it may be, the Mississippi delta or wherever, there will never ever again be a geological disturbance that violates either of

those two terms in verse 11. So these two terms of the covenant establish a geophysical system of verification. If there were ever a geological disturbance that did this, that covenant would be broken. It is meant to be enforced forever, it will never be challenged and nothing can happen that will violate it. There are certain physical problems that we'll get into, that have stunning implications about the physics of the rest of the universe. But the point is that that covenant cannot be violated, and the terms obviously are quite clear. Let's see how that carries out. In Isaiah 54 this covenant is referred to as a basis for all other covenants. In other words, if God is faithful geophysically, then God can be faithful spiritually, and again I point out to you the Bible is not talking just about people's religious experiences. Don't retreat to that ground. You yield the entire external world to the pagans, and then you start talking about religious experiences in your heart as though God doesn't rule outside of your heart. Wrong. God is a public God. In Isaiah 54:8 look at the logic, this is embedded deep within the prophetic structures of the OT. Verse 8, "In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment; But with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you, Says the LORD your Redeemer." In the Hebrew there's two words for love, and one of them is *chesed* and it's that word translated "lovingkindness" and that word is more technical than that, it means faithfulness to a contract. Example: boy meets girl, boy falls in love with girl, boy in Hebrew loves girl, that's one verb. Boy loves girl, boy marries girl, husband loves wife, that word is different, it's *chesed*. Why is that? Because there's a covenant, different word. So there's a technical term used here in the OT, and again it's missed because people don't think about what we're reading, we're so familiar with it. Wow, wait a minute, the word everlasting lovingkindness is powerful in verse 8 because He says I will forever adhere to My covenants that I have told you about, everlasting, I never will break them. That's what's going on here. Now what does He use as a sign: Verse 9, this is what He's talking to Israel in Isaiah's day, "For this is like the days of Noah to me: When I swore that the waters of Noah should not flood the earth again, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, nor will I rebuke you." The eternal security of Israel is grounded on the continuation of the Noahic Covenant. So if this covenant doesn't hold, we're in deep trouble.

Let me pause and show you the ridiculousness of the *Accommodating* school of Bible interpretation. These people always want to localize the flood. Don't you see a problem with this? If the Noahic flood was local, there have been

some other local floods, right? What do we do with the whole structure of the Noahic Covenant? It goes down the drain. If it was a local flood in the book of Genesis then it's already been violated. You have to, if you're going to interpret the text seriously, you have to hold to a global Flood, there's no way around it. You tear down all the covenants, and this is a typical verse, verse 9, in the OT, where if you tear down one covenant you tear down them all. It's interesting that Jesus goes back to this, because as He talks about His second coming, what does He talk about "as in the days of Noah. Let's look at one other place in the OT and then another in the NT.

Turn to Psalm 29, this is a praise Psalm of David, but in the Hebrew language there's one special vocabulary word that is used in this Psalm that cannot refer to anything else other than the Flood of Noah. In Psalm 29 it starts out with praise, "Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the mighty," that's an address to the angels, "Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. <sup>2</sup>Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in holy array. <sup>3</sup>The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; The God of glory thunders, The LORD is over many waters. Now, just glance down at verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 and tell me, what is the emphasis? The voice of the Lord. V 4, the voice of the Lord, v 5 the voice of the Lord, v 7 the voice of the Lord, v 8 the voice of the Lord, v 9 the voice of the Lord. What does that tell you? It tells you that the God of Scripture is a publicly revealing, speaking God. Then it concludes in v 10, as it moves from worship to exhortation and practical application, because v 11 is the practical application of the Psalm. In v 10, "The LORD sat as King at the *mabbul*," the flood, and this is the word that is used exclusively for the Flood of Noah. "Yes the LORD sits as King forever." If the Lord can control the chaos of the Flood waters, can I have full confidence that He will give His strength to me. See the argument; it goes from the greater to the lesser. If He can globally control and restrain and promise things, then surely He can deal with my problem, He's got geophysical molecules by the billions that He's working on, magnetic fields, gravity and everything else, and I've got my little problem here. So that's the logic of these Covenants.

Keep in mind v 10 and what it tells you about the God of Scripture, and now turn to the NT, to Mark 4. If God's omnipotence can subdue the powers of chaos, what do you see in this little incident in the Gospel of Mark? Mark 4:38 it's Jesus in the boat in the Sea of Galilee. Here's an example of why if you don't read the OT you will never understand the NT. The NT has

subtleties to it that are closed off from anybody ignorant of the OT. You can get a lot out of the NT just reading it, I'm not knocking it, but I'm saying that the NT is addressed to people who are fully conversant with the OT. After all, who was it first written to? Jews. And they knew the OT cold. Now think of the Noahic episode, Psalm 29 and put this all together. v 38, "38Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" 39And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." Look at what happened? "And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. 40And He said to them, 'Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith?'" Now the rebuke wasn't that they were supposed to calm the storm. What's the rebuke? "Hey, I'm sleeping, it doesn't bother Me boys. That water is not going to do anything because you know who's here in the boat? The guy that made the promise back there to Noah, that's Me, those waves aren't going to do anything in Galilee because I control them." And that's exactly what the disciples realized because look at their reaction in verse 41, "And they became very much afraid and said to one another," why do you suppose they became very much afraid? As good Jewish guys, do you suppose they had read the story of Noah? They knew exactly. This is one of those passages where the deity of Jesus Christ is so clearly proclaimed if you have the eyes to see it. If you know your OT you know very well what's going on in this text. It's subtle, He's not going to say "I'm Noah's God here," it's much more subtle than that, because Jesus didn't go around saying that. When Jesus presented His person, the people looked at this Jewish carpenter and said, "Wow, this guy isn't like any man I've ever met, look at what He just did." Remember back in Ps 29. Who sits as King of the Flood waters? Now, did you see what He just did to the Sea of Galilee waters? He stopped them. All He did was speak, the voice, the voice, the voice? This is one of those fascinating passages in the NT that is just begging us to recall the OT.

#### D. THE FOUNDING SACRIFICE

Last and final section is the **Founding Sacrifice**. Every covenant is made with sinful man, and therefore every covenant is grounded on the sacrifice. Obviously in Gen 8:20 and 22 you have that great act of worship by Noah, also remember how many of the clean animals did Noah bring aboard the ark, not 2 but 7. Why do you suppose he had more clean animals than unclean? Because he had to use them right away, therefore he had to have a



greater supply of these animals to preserve their genes. So the last point here is that the Lord, notice the word in Gen 8:21, “And the LORD smelled” that sacrifice, and He was satisfied.” There’s another word in the NT used for ‘satisfied’, it’s called propitiate; propitiation, a big theological term but what it means is God smells. Did He smell the pleasantness of Noah? The pleasantness of the animals? Probably not, I don’t think the ark smelled too good right about then. God isn’t interested in smelling them, He’s smelling the sacrifice that was given to Him, that’s what makes Him satisfied, not their BO. So we have the sacrifice.

When you look at all covenants in the Bible they have these four elements, and it will help you to line up the study of the Scripture, thinking through, wait a minute, where’s the sacrifice here, and you can run this whole scheme through and by golly you’ll find it.

Well, we’ve looked at the Genesis text, next week we’ll go into the implications of this covenant for nature, and then we’ll deal with the implications of this covenant for man, because we’re dealing with a whole new world here and it’s going to be dealt with in terms of a covenant, or a contract, so we get more and more, as we go on in Genesis, more distinctively Biblical, and the elements of the Bible come much more sharply into focus.

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<sup>1</sup> I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy \*catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

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