

Covenant Established • Genesis 9

Ryan Perz • December 3, 2023

If someone were to ask you why you believe God is real, what would your answer be?

There is no silver bullet answer, but I think there are 4 legitimate answers, today, that I could give”.

- Human beings are alive and have food
- Murder is universally wrong
- Rainbows exist
- People seem to stay stuck in doing wrong things

*These are all found in our text

- › When I read the Bible, it helps me to make sense of our world— the more I read and study, the more sense it makes.

This is the final scene of Noah’s narrative/post-flood scene.

Main Point: After the flood, God continues to provide and make peace, and man continues to sin against his creator.

God continues to provide and bring peace to his creation (1-17)

We sometimes hear, or say “God is a God of second chances” —it’s proven true here in the way God provides.

The way that God provides for his creation comes down to 3 things: Life, Family, and Law.

—God *blesses* the family (v1). The institute of marriage and having children is foundational to building society.

—God *gives* so that life will be sustained (2-3); including a curse on the threat that animals will have on human life (v3)

—God sets out law (4-5)

(V4). After the flood, it becomes acceptable to eat animal meat. Yet it is still regulated—becomes part of the Levitical law (Lev. 17:11).

(V5). A law to protect human life.

- Even though the voyage in Genesis has been short, it has been violent.

—Murder of Abel (Gen. 4)

—Lamech celebrating murder and violence (4:23)

Genesis 6:11 ESV

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence.

- The flood was God showing his unlimited power in taking human life.

The wrong takeaway for Noah and his family is that life is disposable and cheap.

It's like watching film that has tons of violence and death. Maybe you are wired differently than I am, but if I watch too much of that...even though it's film, in my mind life seems cheap and disposable.

Here is a clear foundation: life is never disposable and cheap.

- So God institutes law with high consequences (5-6).
- This becomes the basis for civil law and government (to protect life...not solve every problem).

For followers of Christ, there is a step further in the Law of Christ—loving our neighbor. It's not just physical life, it's what happens in the heart and the tongue.

Matthew 5:21–22 ESV

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.

James says that it's not rocks, swords, arrows, or guns that kill...but the tongue.

James 3:6 (ESV)

And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness.

James 3:9 ESV

With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

Calvin: "No one can be injurious to his brother without wounding God. Were this doctrine deeply fixed in our minds, we would be much more reluctant to inflict injuries."

...Even those injuries that come from the weapons of a bad heart and tongue.

God's Preservation

- V8-17 now focus on the Covenant that establishes preservation.
- This is the first explicit mention of Covenant (though I think one was implied with Adam in the Garden)

Covenants form the backbone of the Bible. They help keep the unity of the Bible together and centered on Christ.

Definition of Covenant: A chosen relationship based on oath-bound promises, witnessed by God.

Examples: Powerful Kings in the ancient world made with weaker nations; marriage is by nature a covenant (Mal. 2:14)

Scope and Sign

1. Scope of the Covenant (8-11, 17)

The scope of this covenant is with every living and breathing thing, across all times and places.

It's a covenant of preservation.

Evidence: You woke up, ate food, and drove to church.

“God pledged in this covenant that humanity will not be annihilated until the promises of Gen 3:15 is realized.” (Thomas Schreiner)

*In other words, this covenant is based on a prior promise; the nature of biblical covenants is that.

They build on each other.

- › *Proving that this is the same God, same eternal plan and purpose.*

Notice the “never again” promise (v11)

Have you ever had a “never again” only to go back? “I’ll never say that again. I’ll never again look at that, or drink that.” Often well intentioned but said through feeble lips and with weak wills.

- › But when God says “never again”, it’s a permanent, sturdy “never again”.

2. Sign of the Covenant (12-16)

- Most covenants share two things in common: A head (mediator), and a sign

E.G. Abraham—circumcision; Moses—Law (Sabbath); New Covenant—Christ (Spirit)

Here the head is Noah, and the sign is the Rainbow (Lit. = Bow).

Some have robbed the rainbow as a celebration of rebellion against the Creator’s design. But going back to the roots, it celebrates one thing: God’s grace.

Mankind continues to sin against his Creator (18-28)

- This last section actually has two main lessons.
- First, the flood has not eradicated the problem of sin.

Two examples:

—First, Noah’s drunkenness (v21)

- This certainly comes as a surprise—nothing in the narrative has pointed to any blemish in Noah’s character.

There is even a warning here for the godly - those who walk with God, fall under his constant grace and favor, especially for those who have experienced the powerful display of God's recent work...

Stay watchful. Be vigilant.

- › Often the greater the blessing, the greater watchfulness needed over our own hearts and souls.

—Secondly, Ham's disrespect (v22)

- We must keep in mind a few things. Ham is no child or teenager—he is a grown man (over 100 years old possibly).
- This is not an accidental look; but an opportunity to mock, ridicule, shame, and even undermine his father.

When Noah comes to...we hear the only words he speaks: curse and blessing/prophetic pronouncements.

- The curse falls on Ham's son, who is the father of Canaanites. (10:6)
- These folks occupy the Promised Land and will be the enemies of God.
- The descendants of Ham will be Israel's most bitter enemies: Egypt. Philistines. Assyrians. Babylon.
- Second point: there is a distinction between the godly and ungodly—between offspring of serpent & the offspring of woman.

Canaan is cursed. Just like Cain. Just like the serpent.

—Ham's offspring follow the pattern of the "seed of the serpent"

—Shem and Japheth are blessed...which sets up for the next major figure: Abraham.

The story does not end very happily; at least as far as Noah is concerned.

At the end we see Noah act just like Adam: sinning in a garden and laying naked and exposed.

New Family. Yet same old problems. This is nowhere near Paradise.

*Noah walked with God. He had faith. He had the blessing of God and was used greatly by God, but also had the same Adam-like tendencies.

*It's sad to see Noah's abuse and misuse of God's blessing.

***Noah might be a hero of faith, but he is no Savior.*

- › If we are honest and self-aware, looking at Noah's life should remind us of us.

How many times have I misused God's blessing?

How many moments of weakness are in our flesh?

How often do we take God for granted?

Conclusion:

As we close, I want to come back to the covenant sign— the rainbow.

That sign—every time a rainbow appears, it's a witness that *God is faithful* to his promises!

In the ancient world, the bow was the warrior's weapon.

The bow is "set in the cloud" (v13-14).

The visual is God laying aside his battle weapon of judgment and bringing peace.

The Flood teaches us: God is the final judge, and also the ultimate peacemaker.

God is the ultimate *peacemaker*.

This is where we set our hope at the beginning of Advent.

- › With the coming of Jesus Christ, it's not just a bow set in the clouds that brings peace, *it's God's beloved Son sent to this earth.*

Christians are people who have peace — not just wishful thinking about it, or sappy “holiday” songs...but real Good News substance.

Romans 5:1 ESV

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you have been justified, you have the most vital thing: Peace.

If you don't have peace with God, I urge you to look to Jesus.

He came to bring peace on earth by reconciling sinners to God.

He can reconcile you.

As we look to our God of Peace, may our souls Find Rest in a Prince of Peace.