



Study #10

Genesis Chapter 9:8-17

Summary:

Genesis chapter 9:8-17 focuses on the covenant of the rainbow. This is a divine promise to never again judge the world by a flood, which God spoke directly to Noah and his sons. It is far reaching and stands until the end of the world. It is one of the most dramatic, visible and universal of God's dealings with men, yet unbelievers dismiss it as a natural phenomenon to be stared at, but they will not believe in God's covenant of mercy to men.



Key verse: 11

The 7 colours of the rainbow:

In a **primary** rainbow, the colors will be in the order of **red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.**

Or **ROYGBIV**. **Red** has the longest wavelength, with each color decreasing away from it.

There's a little song about Roy G. BIV. He makes up all the **colours** that you see where you live.

Observations – Lessons from Genesis 9:8-17.

God made a covenant of preservation with Noah

1. **It was a gracious covenant.** It was initiated by God Himself when he said to Noah, “and I, behold, I establish my covenant with you” (v9).
It is gracious because it revealed God's mercy to sinful man. God has a purpose of grace, not because of man's good nature, but despite it. It is God's lovingkindness freely granted to undeserving sinners. God's reason for showing mercy stated in Genesis 8:21 shows that He acted in mercy, “for man's sake,” to spare him. The reasoning as far as man was concerned was his hopelessness and incorrigible nature. His nature was so polluted by sin that God recognized that man would not be reformed through judgments. Without grace man must perish. He needed reformation by a bestowal of God's sovereign of mercy. Study verse 21 to see the line of argument – it seems to be contrary to logic (A non sequitur).
2. **It was a family covenant.** God made it with Noah and his seed. Noah was a representative head. By this method of dealing with Noah and his offspring, God set a precedent for dealing with families under the headship of fathers (See ch. 6:18, 7:1). This is a special characteristic of God's covenants. He chooses one representative head to bless all who come under his headship. The covenant-head of redemption is Christ. God bestows grace to sinners who believe in His Son and look to Him for mercy.
3. **It was a universal covenant as it included the preservation of all creation.** It included every living thing in the earth v10-16.

“The whole of the created universe, including the totality of humanity, benefits from this covenant. Not only Noah and his seed, but ‘every living creature’ lives under the sign of the rainbow (Gen. 9:10). This inclusion of the totality of the universe in God's redemptive covenant finds vivid recognition in Paul's expression [in Romans 8:22],

concerning the final expectation of the redeemed” [O. Palmer Robertson in Christ of the Covenants pgs. 122-123].

4. **It was a redemptive covenant. It was linked to the great commission to preach the gospel to every creature.** This covenant made with Noah to preserve the earth from immediate judgment and one day from the curse of sin, is the foundation for the world-wide proclamation of the gospel. Compare this covenant with the words of Psalm 19:1-4. Psalm 19:4 was cited by the apostle Paul in Romans 10:18. God’s preservation of the earth by His covenant with Noah, gives basis for the great commission to preach the gospel to every creature.

5. **It is a perpetual covenant as exhibited in the rainbow.**

The visible nature of the rainbow and its attachment to the rain falling on the earth would remind men, and God, of His promise to spare the earth from judgment by water v15-16. God called it, “the everlasting covenant...”

The scene recorded in Revelation 4:3 with the rainbow around the Lord seated on His heavenly throne teaches us of the eternal nature of God’s covenant of mercy. He will always deal with His people based on mercy. Heaven will glorify God’s grace and mercy to sinners.

The sight of the rainbow in the cloud was intended to bring comfort to men’s hearts. Henry Morris emphasised this point stating:

“In these verses the Lord seems to be repeating, over and over in various ways His great promise and covenant with all flesh. Such repetition was no doubt of great comfort and assurance to those who had been through such traumatic experiences during the awful year of the Flood and who apart from God’s promise, would have had little hope for the future.” The Genesis Record

Application: – How this applies to me.

1. **God deals with men based on His covenant of grace made with Christ our covenant head.** God reveals Himself as a covenant making and covenant keeping God. Every covenant teaches about God’s grace to our souls. Each covenant in the Bible is like a telescope. The further it is extended, the stronger the focus on the object. The covenants of Scripture progressively lead us to focus on Christ. He is our covenant-head and covenant-keeper.
2. **God is the initiator of our salvation.** It begins with Him and ends with Him. Apart from grace, we would be left in the hopeless estate of sin and eternal condemnation. For this we must praise Him. This must be the focus of our worship whether in prayer, praise or preaching.
3. **Our assurances and comfort come from God’s covenants to us.** God’s eternal purposes in our salvation are sure and certain. We can rest in the purposes of God to do us good. The sight of a rainbow in the sky, therefore, should fill us with assurance that God is in control of the earth and abides faithful to His creatures.
4. **God’s control over the earth means that we are to “subdue” the earth and use it for His glory.** Research into natural laws of science, and the various disciplines of study of the universe which God has created is God’s will for man. They are to be discovered, harnessed and used for His glory.
5. **The recognition of design in creation leading to a Designer is the proper Christian perspective.** When God is both Creator and Preserver of all things, then nothing happens by chance. We are predestinated by God’s purpose to show forth His praises (Eph. 1:11-12).

To do: **Turn your prayers into covenant prayers.**
 Use the rainbow as a discussion point for God’s mercy.
 Learn how refracted light becomes a rainbow.

“**Refraction** is the bending of a light or sound wave, or the way the light bends when entering the eye to form an image on the retina. An example of refraction is a bending of the sun’s rays as they enter raindrops, forming a rainbow. An example of refraction is a prism.”

