

The Covenant with Adam: Broken

I. Consequences of covenant breaking

- Adam and Eve failed the test. They broke the key stipulation of the covenant.
 - Adam's sin was more severe: unlike Eve, he had heard God's words directly, yet he did not protect his wife or contest the serpent (Gen 2:17–18 [which is before the creation of woman]; 3:6; 1 Tim 2:14).
- Consequences:
 1. Their sin immediately produces shame (Gen 3:7 and the fig leaves).
 2. God appears and demands an accounting (Gen 3:8–13). They lose the joy of God's presence and hide from him in fear (Gen 3:8).
 3. God pronounces them guilty, and lays the curse on them (Gen 3:16–19)
 - a. Their respective spheres of childbearing and work are now pain- and obstacle-ridden.
 - b. They will eventually die and return to the dust (3:19)
 4. God casts them out of the garden, forbidding them to return (3:23–24)
 5. Sin now runs amok in Adam's family (4:1–26)
- Where does the covenant with Adam stand after their sin?
 - It is still in effect: the consequences of Adam's covenant now affect everything Adam ruled over: his descendants and the entire old creation.
 - The lower creation feels the effects of humanity's sin (Jer 4:23–26; Rom 8:22).
 - Adam's descendants are now guilty, corrupt, and subject to pain and death (Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:22).
 - Everyone is still required to love God and neighbor, but nobody is able to fulfill these commands (Rom 3:9–18; 8:8).
- Yet there is a gracious delay in the final death (judgment day).
 - Adam & Eve experienced immediate spiritual death: guilt, shame, and the loss of communion with God.
 - But physical death was graciously postponed: God did not kill them immediately.
 - Ultimate death (the final judgment) is postponed still more (Rev 21:8).
- The consequence of Gen 2:17 ("you shall surely die) still looms: the entire old creation as a whole must die (Rom 5:17; 2 Thess 1:9; 2 Pet 3:7, 12).

II. Covenant with Noah and the delay of judgment

- The cataclysm of Noah's flood is the kind of sweeping judgment that we expected after Adam and Eve sinned.
 - And yet, the flood is not the end of the world, but a picture of how the world will end (Kline). It pictures the final judgment, which will be with fire (2 Pet 3:7).
- Yet God saved Noah and his family and the lower creation *through* this flood.
- The covenant that follows the flood solidifies God's commitment to delay judgment for a long time. Noah's covenant builds on Adam's broken covenant.
- Parties of the covenant: (1) God and (2) Noah, and all creation under him (9:9–10, 12, 17; "every living creature of all flesh" [Gen 9:15]).
- Terms of the covenant:
 - God promises not to do a worldwide cataclysm until the end of the earth's days. Normal seasons will continue (Gen 8:20–22; 9:11).

- This grace will continue regardless of human disobedience (Gen 8:21)
- God recommissions Noah to be fruitful and multiply (9:1, 7).

Sidebar: Noah as a new Adam (adapted from Van Pelt)	
Adam	Noah
A new creation: waters recede, dry land, vegetation appears	Same
God blesses humanity (1:28)	Same (9:1)
Command to increase and fill (1:28)	Same (9:1, 7)
Dominion over animal kingdom (1:26, 28)	Same (9:2), but added element of “fear”
Provision for food (1:29–30; 2:16)	Now meat is included (9:3)
Restriction from food: tree of knowledge (2:17)	Now blood is forbidden (9:4)
Humanity in image of God (1:26–27)	Same (9:6)

- The curse on the land and on procreation remains unlifted (Gen 3:16–19): during this time of delay, agriculture, culture, and procreation continue, but they will be frustrated because of sin (Van Pelt).
- Human beings will have a role in holding back sin: capital punishment (Gen 9:5–6). Another restraint: shorter lifespans (Gen 6:3).
- The sign of the covenant: the rainbow, which reminds us of God’s holding back the justice that he could inflict at any time (Gen 9:12–17).
- Purpose of the covenant with Noah: not to provide salvation from judgment, but to sustain this broken world as a platform for God’s great rescue plan.

III. Implications

- Every human is born with a death sentence over their head because of sin.
- God is slow to anger: his wrath patiently awaits the proper time. Every human being enjoys his “common grace,” where God sends rain on the just *and* the unjust (Matt 5:45; cf. Ps 145:9; Acts 14:16–17).
- But we must not grow lax, as though God will never judge (Jer 14:13; 2 Pet 3:4). We must urgently seek that non-Christians be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:20).
- As Christians, we are still under the covenant with Noah:
 - We must obey the commands God gave back then (e.g., regarding blood: Acts 15:20).
 - But we are also under God’s new covenant of grace: the fact that we have survived to the point of being saved is because of the common grace given by God’s covenant with Noah!
 - Distinction between common grace institutions (e.g., marriage, the state, culture) and special grace institutions (the church). Both are good; only special grace institutions are permanent.
- When you consider that everything in the old creation is hurtling toward judgment, how does that change your perspective on this world?