

The Noaic Covenant
September 25, 2011
Lynchburg, Virginia
Gen. 6:5-8, 12-13, 17-18, 9:1, 6-17

EXHORDIUM

We are walking our way through God's covenant, learning about how God deals with His people and consequently, how we are to respond to Him. We see that the fact that God deals with us through covenant is a reflection of His very essence, the fact that He is the Triune God, three in one, in a totally unified diversity.

He created man to be in unity with Him and with all creation. But man fell into sin, rebelling against God's authority and thus plunged man into a division and strife. This strife was apparent in the beginning in the strife between Adam and Eve but was especially revealed in the murder of Abel by Cain.

And so man was estranged from God and grew more evil. So, God determined to destroy both man and beast and inaugurate a recreated Earth. But in doing so, God did not forget His promise to Eve that her seed would crush the seed of the serpent. And so God's covenant dealings with mankind moved forward even through the deluge of the flood.

Noah is the representative of the seed of the woman. He was a son of God but it was not the case that Noah deserved God's favor. Verse 8 tells us that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God was gracious to Him and so Noah was saved by grace, not by works, lest he should boast.

EXEGESIS

Gen 6:5-8 **5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.**

When man fell into sin, the result was catastrophic. We can understand this as even we, who have the Spirit of God, still struggle within ourselves with evil thoughts as well as righteous ones. But in Noah's day, the thoughts of man were evil continually.

It 'repented' the Lord that He had made man on the Earth. What does this mean? If God had determined to make man and knows all things, how can He feel sorry, or regret, or have a change of mind about His creation?

Calvinists could have a problem with this text and try to massage it to get it into the shape that fits their doctrine. I can understand this, being a black coffee Calvinist myself. But none of us, Calvinists included, have to answer for God's Word. Our duty is to believe God's Word. If the Bible says that God was sorry that He had made man, we must believe that this is true.

The Word for repented here is something like a sigh. God heaved a sigh about His creation of man. Perhaps we can relate to this as we sigh and wonder how things could have turned out the way they did or the way they have. We might call this regret. We did not foresee the results of our actions and are thus confounded. But God is all wise and can foresee the results of all of His actions. And yet He still sighs.

We may relate to this in this way. Sometimes we do everything right and we still end up in a heavy sigh. We treat someone well only to have them ill treat us. We say the truth only to have someone accuse us of telling lie. We make all the right plans and seek multiple levels of counsel only to have the whole plan blow up in our faces. At such times, we sigh a heavy sigh.

Sometimes we intend to scrap the whole project and start over. God nearly does this. But He doesn't quite start over. He stays faithful to His Words to Eve. But it is clear even here in the beginning that God was going to have to make it all work because man simply was not capable of following through.

Man's sin affected all of creation. The flood destroyed man and beast and creeping thing. Most of the marine world would have been able to survive but no doubt there were huge die offs in the oceans, rivers and lakes as well.

Gen 6:12-13 12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. 13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

There are dire consequences for sin. God decides to destroy mankind.

Gen 6:17-18 17 And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. 18 But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

The flood was not the result of the devil. God brought the flood and killed all the people and animals.

But God establishes His covenant with Noah and saves Noah and his family. The result of God's covenant with man is salvation.

Note that God's covenant with Noah included his wife, sons and their wives. God's covenant extends to the children of believers.

Gen 9:1 9 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

God blessed Noah AND his sons. The creation mandate is repeated, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

Gen 9:6-17 6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

The image of God was not destroyed in the Fall. God tells Noah that there must be atonement for blood because man was made in God's image. To murder is to destroy the image of God. This helps us to understand what the image of God is. God's image has to do with diversity and unity. All murders reveal a strike at the heart of the image of God.

7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

This is so central to what God is doing on the Earth. Our role to fill the Earth with godly offspring is no small one. We sometimes joke about our church growth program, having babies. But it is no joke. Surely faithful children are a great blessing from God. And we can be greatly blessed whether we have one child or many. And we do not mean to demean anyone who is not able to have children. Such marriages and such women can be blessed in many other ways. But the Scriptures make no apology that a fruitful womb is a great blessing from God. So, we should take this seriously.

Taking this seriously means not only that we need to be serious about having children but that we need to be serious about making sure they are faithful children. And by faithful, I don't mean loyal to us, or simply obedient or respectful. Faithful children love Jesus and do what He says. So, we need to take our responsibilities to them seriously as well. This includes discipline, education, religious training, and most especially laughter in the home. They need to understand that being a Christian is an intensely good and joyful grace from God.

8 And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, 9 And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; 10 And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. 11 And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the

earth. 12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

Just as man's sin affected all of creation, so does God's covenant. God establishes His covenant not only with mankind but also with every living thing, birds, cattle, and all animals on the Earth.

The bow in the cloud is for a token of the covenant between God and the Earth. This fits well with John 3:16, for God so loved the world. God does not only love men. He loves His entire creation. And thus, He will save His entire creation.

14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: 15 And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

The rainbow is for God to remember.

The rainbow is for us to remember that God remembers.

17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

EXHORTATION

We need to keep in mind that God has a good memory. And we also need to keep in mind that His good memory is selective. He has said of us, “I will not remember your sins against you.” He has also said that He will remind Himself of His covenant with us, His promises to us, every time He see the rainbow in the cloud.

One of our most besetting sins is having a poor memory. We forget what God has done for us and are discouraged about our current situation. We forget what God has told us to do and so we go headlong into foolish and sinful decisions. We forget that God is all-knowing and everywhere present and think we can get away with our secret sins.

We forget many things. But more often than not, our sin in this area is more a failure to remember. We do not make the effort to remind ourselves who God is, what He has said, who we are and what promises God has made to us.

But God remembers and we are to be like Him. We need to remind ourselves often. We do this every week in this service but we need to do it more often than that. We need to remind ourselves every morning that we are in God’s grace and need His grace for our day. We need to remind ourselves that the Holy Spirit is with us and thus, we must walk in the Spirit today. We must remind ourselves that we are made in the image of God and are thus required to dwell in unity with our spouse, children, parents, and church family. And we do all of this in an attitude of great thanksgiving, praising God for His goodness to us.

So, work on your memory. It will do wonders for your joy.

Also, look at the underside of the rainbow. God see the rainbow as it travels down to the earth and He remembers to keep His promise to the Earth. This promise is that He will not flood and destroy the Earth but it also includes God’s promise to bring a savior to save all of mankind. And that promise includes you, all who have faith in Jesus. So, when it rains look at the rainbow and remember that God is reminding Himself to be faithful and then remind yourself to be faithful to Him.