

Lesson 6 | October 9, 2022

God's Covenant with Noah

Study Text: Genesis 8:20–9:29

Central Truth: God desires us to live in covenant relationship with Him.

Key Verse: Genesis 9:8–10

And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed [descendants] after you; and with every living creature that is with you (KJV).

God told Noah and his sons, "I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants, and with every living creature on earth" (NLT).

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to describe the aftermath of the Flood, including God's great covenant and Noah's relationship with his sons.
- Students will appreciate God's promise to never again judge the world with a flood wiping out all life.
- Students will be challenged to live lives worthy of God, who has given us the new covenant through Jesus Christ.

Introducing the Study

Say: The giving of one's word, and keeping of one's word, is a foundation of human society. Only through trusting one another can people live in confidence and security.

When trust is broken, people live in mistrust, suspicion, and fear toward one another. God's trustworthiness—and our faith that He keeps His promises—is the foundation for our relationship with Him.

Opening Activity—A Good Name

Ask. Of all the people in your life, whom do you trust the most? How long have you known that person? Are there people you trust more, simply because of their family name?

Say: You can't put a price on a good name. When you have built up people's trust in you by a lifetime of keeping your word, even your children and other members of your family may benefit when people associate them with you. Believers can be confident that God will keep His promise never to flood the earth again. **They can also be confident that the promises of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are powerful and true, and they can share these promises so others may benefit.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Do you know people by their actions? When you think of hot tempered, who comes to mind. When you think of people walking away from God, who comes to mind. When you think of holiness, who comes to mind? Noah showed his thankfulness to God for His deliverance soon after leaving the ark. Life on earth would be renewed and multiplied. **God wanted no one to doubt that He would never judge the world in the same way again, promising no additional curse on the ground, no repeat of the Flood, and a return to the rhythms of the natural world. Noah and his family, like believers today, were given “great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4) on which to build their lives.**

[2Pe 1:4 KJV] 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Can we take God at his word?

Part 1—Worship and Blessing

A Pleasing Sacrifice

Genesis 8:20–22

[Gen 8:20-22 NKJV] 20 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. 21 And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart [is] evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. 22 "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease."

Say: When God commanded Noah to prepare for the Flood, His instructions were detailed and complete. After departing from the ark, Noah had animals available that were fitting for sacrifice, beyond those needed to repopulate the world. God followed Noah's worship and thanksgiving with the assurance that a judgment by flood would not happen again. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Off the ark after spending over a year inside (see Genesis 8:13–14), Noah wasted no time before paying tribute to God for His saving power (verse 20). As Abel had done centuries before, Noah brought an animal sacrifice, and offered it before God on an altar (see 4:3–4). This first altar recorded in the Bible probably consisted of a mound of earth, as God sanctioned later in Exodus 20:24. In

Genesis 7:2–3, God had told Noah when he loaded the ark to take along seven pairs each of animals and birds fit for sacrifice; some were now given back to Him as Noah thanked God for preserving both his family of eight and representatives of all other life as well.

Resource Packet Item 1: A Lifestyle of Thanksgiving

Distribute the information sheet and draw attention to the blessings God has given us. Emphasize that giving thanks must become a habit for every believer in Christ.

These offerings, brought by a righteous man in faith, were followed by two promises by God. First, He would not curse the ground again as a response to humankind's sin (8:21). Rather, the grace shown to Noah would be extended to the entire race, even if they committed the same sins of heart as before the Flood (see 6:5–6). Second, God would never again wipe away all living things. These sure promises, recorded for all time, were used even as the guarantee of further promises God later made to His people (Isaiah 54:9–10).

God made a third promise that served to complete the first two: the rhythms of the day and year would remain in effect as long as the earth remains (Genesis 8:22). Inside the ark, during a rainstorm lasting weeks, it was difficult even to mark the passing of day and night. Further, the Flood disrupted the annual cycle of the natural world and agricultural season. By adding His promise to restore and maintain these natural rhythms, God stated that "as long as the earth remains" (NLT) human life would not endure an additional curse, universal destruction, or even a disruption of the seasons.

Discuss

? As a class, list reasons why a lifestyle of thanksgiving is appropriate.

? God will not send another Flood, yet universal sin remains. How does God deal with sin now??

Multiply and Honor Life

Genesis 9:1–7

[Gen 9:1-7 NKJV] 1 So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. 2 "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move [on] the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. 3 "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. 4 "But you shall not eat flesh with its life, [that is], its blood. 5 "Surely for your lifeblood I will demand [a reckoning]; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man.

From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. 6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. 7 And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth And multiply in it."

Say: Humankind's relationship to the animal world was both renewed and altered after the Flood. God confirms the place of human beings to rule over the animal kingdom, but now adds His blessing that meat could be consumed as food. But human beings, made in His image and likeness, are not animals and must not be killed (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In Genesis 1:28, humankind was commanded to multiply and to govern over other forms of life. God repeated and renewed the mandate in Genesis 9:1–2,7, with two additions. First, the Hebrew word translated “bring forth abundantly” (verse 7, KJV) is the same as that used to describe the swarming sea creatures in Genesis 1:20. Second, the relationship of humankind to the animal world takes on a more serious tone as God describes the “fear and terror” that would now grip the other creatures in their encounters with people (9:2, NLT).

Part of the fear of animals toward people would arise from God's blessing on consumption of meat (verse 3). This blessing came with conditions, however. “Every moving thing that liveth” (kjb) did not include animals found dead or killed by other animals (see Exodus 22:31; Leviticus 22:8). Also, the blood—symbolic of life, the gift of God—must be drained out before the meat was eaten (Genesis 9:4). The blood was reserved for God and would be used later in the sacrificial system, which pointed to Christ. Also, as the following verses show, it was a sign of the sanctity of human life.

If a person—or an animal—took a human life, God would require the person's or the animal's life in return (verse 5). Even if the guilty party was a near relative, who could garner the sympathies of other family members, he or she would fall under the same judgment. By saying that “human hands” (verse 6, NLT) would exact the penalty for murder, God was previewing the concept of human government and its place in maintaining order and punishing wrongdoing (Exodus 21:12; Romans 13:4).

Because God created human beings in His own image, we must honor, and not destroy, human life. This image, although marred by sin, is still present in each human being, and must be treated with dignity and honor. Hence, murder is an act, not only against another person, but against the God who created him or her.

Discuss

? Why do you suppose God did not openly sanction meat as food up to this point?

? God's image remains in human beings despite sin. What does that tell us about the importance and durability of that image?

Part 2—This Is the Covenant

The Covenant Confirmed

Genesis 9:8–11

[Gen 9:8-11 NKJV] 8 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: 9 "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, 10 "and with every living creature that [is] with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. 11 "Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

Say: God, in His holiness, must punish sin. Yet, He is also a God of grace, who forgives and brings restoration. God's people live in the light of His promises, from His promise never to flood the earth again to His promise to save all those who place their faith in Jesus Christ. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The promise God made in Genesis 8:21 never to again destroy all life is echoed in 9:8–11. The same God who judges also promises grace. In Genesis 6:17, His language is emphatic: **"I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth" (KJV). In 9:9, He says, "I, behold, I establish my covenant with you" (KJV). Human beings, and all other forms of life on earth, are promised that no flood of the same proportions will ever happen again, resulting in universal destruction (verse 11).**

Every human being since the time of Noah, and every other type of creature as well, has lived under the same wonderful promise. Further, human beings and animals were made free in God's promise to obey His command to repopulate the earth, without fearing that God will repeat this act of judgment.

God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire. He will one day destroy the earth by fire.

Discuss

? How does the identity of the person talking affect your confidence in the promise they make?

? What are some Bible promises you can share this week with other believers? With those who have not given their lives to Jesus Christ?

The Covenant Remembered

Genesis 9:12–17

[Gen 9:12-17 NKJV] 12 And God said: "This [is] the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that [is] with you, for perpetual generations: 13 "I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. 14 "It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow 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; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 "The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that [is] on the earth." 17 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."

Say: Written contracts, signed and witnessed, serve as proof of agreements between human parties. God made a unilateral covenant—a promise to be accepted and believed—with all life on earth. The proof of this covenant comes in the form of the rainbow. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

God provided a token, or visible symbol, of His covenant with humankind and all other life (Genesis 9:12–17). Noah and his entire family had clung to the word of God for more than an entire year before leaving the ark (see 6:18). But the vivid memories of the Flood would remain for a lifetime and would be passed down for generations to come. To remind people of His covenant promise to never send another universal flood, God made the rainbow as a visible sign.

God promised to remember His covenant (9:15) “for all generations to come” (verse 12, NLT). The repeated language of this passage points not only to God’s promise to remember, but also points to His desire that His people remember His covenant grace. In the same way, Christ has given us two ordinances, water baptism and the Lord’s Supper, perpetual reminders of the new covenant made possible by His death and resurrection.

Resource Packet Item 2: United With Christ in Baptism

Distribute the work sheet and allow students time to fill in their responses. *Ask: How can the memory of your baptism serve as a motivation for holy living?*

Discuss

? God could have given His Word and nothing else concerning His promise. Why did He add the physical sign of the rainbow?

? Why is it important to remember and to teach the biblical meaning of the rainbow, especially when the rainbow is now being used to symbolize a sinful lifestyle??

Part 3—A New Beginning

Sin Covered

Genesis 9:18–23

[Gen 9:18-23 NKJV] 18 Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham [was] the father of Canaan. 19 These three [were] the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. 20 And Noah began [to be] a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. 21 Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid [it] on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces [were] turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

Say: The believer's walk with God is not automatic; it must be nurtured and maintained. Even after the matchless experience of building the ark and being kept by God's grace through the Flood, Noah became careless in his spiritual life. Two of his sons, however, responded with love and grace. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Every human being on earth has descended from Adam. Every human being has also descended from Noah. And every human being is a descendant of one of Noah's three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Genesis 9:18–19). Given God's command to repopulate the earth, each family spread out from the ark's landing place (verses 1,7).

Great spiritual victory may be followed by great temptation or failure. Verse 20 describes the life of Noah following the Flood. Called a "husbandman" (KJV), "farmer," or a "man of the soil" in other Bible versions, some have suggested that he was returning to work he had performed prior to the Flood. Specifically, he planted a vineyard.

Perhaps celebrating harvesttime in the renewed world, Noah drank too much wine, became intoxicated, and lay in his tent naked (verse 21). This is the Bible's first recorded example of drunkenness, and the shame that often comes from the lack of self-control which results.

Ham, upon entering the tent and seeing his father naked, chose to bring ridicule and disrespect upon him by spreading the report of Noah's shame to his brothers (verse 22). Shem and Japheth, instead of viewing the scene themselves, backed into Noah's tent and draped him with a robe (verse 23). Their devotion to their father did two things: First, it served to cover the sin and failure of Noah in a way that resembled God's own grace in dealing with Adam and Eve (3:21). Neither Shem nor Japheth would look upon Noah in this state, nor would others be allowed to. Second, Shem and Japheth's commitment to honor their father—even when he had fallen—exposes the wrong attitudes and actions of Ham in comparison.

Resource Packet Item 3: Dealing With the Sins of Others

Distribute the work sheet and divide the class into groups. Have each take a passage to read and discuss. Then, have one person from each group share how God wants us to deal with those engaged in sin.

Discuss

? List some of the ways that alcoholism and other substance abuse pulls people away from God.?

? Where do you think Shem and Japheth learned to deal with their father's failure in this way? Why did Ham react in a different, and sinful, way??

Cursing and Blessing

Genesis 9:24–29

[Gen 9:24-29 NKJV] 24 So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. 25 Then he said: "Cursed [be] Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren." 26 And he said: "Blessed [be] the LORD, The God of Shem, And may Canaan be his servant. 27 May God enlarge Japheth, And may he dwell in the tents of Shem; And may Canaan be his servant." 28 And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. 29 So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

Say: Noah reacted bitterly to Ham's disrespect and ridicule in sharing his failure with his brothers. Noah cursed Ham's family, placing them below the families of his other two sons, Shem and Japheth. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

When Noah became sober again, he discovered what Ham had done (Genesis 9:24). It was apparent to him that he had been covered in a way he hadn't been prior to becoming intoxicated. When he awoke, he knew that Ham had broadcast his shame.

He then cursed Canaan, Ham's son (verse 25). **It may appear cruel or senseless for Noah to curse Canaan rather than his father Ham. However, Canaan may have witnessed Noah's shame before Ham, and reported it to Ham; or Canaan may have otherwise participated in Ham's sin. Verse 18 specifically points out that Ham was Canaan's father, and this seems to support this idea.**

Noah's pronouncement against Canaan was not a magical formula. God is able to elevate and lower people as He pleases (see Luke 1:51–52). **Noah wanted God to put Canaan's family into a position of servitude to their extended family.**

Noah doesn't only pronounce a curse, however. He also pronounces blessings—calling on God to grant largeness of life to his other sons (Genesis 9:26–27). He emphasized the curse on Canaan as a benefit to Shem and his descendants. He blessed God himself—"the God of Shem" (verse 26, NLT). Shem's family would include the people of Israel, who carried God's truth in the Old Testament and were the earthly ancestors of Jesus Christ.

Japheth was also blessed (verse 27). **Noah wanted God to expand his territory; Japheth's vast number of descendants covered Europe and much of Asia. Noah's wish that Japheth would "dwell in the tents of Shem" (KJV) is believed by some to be granted when non-Jewish people believe the gospel and benefit from the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a descendant of Shem. In addition to the other blessings pronounced on Japheth, Noah repeats the statement that Canaan be in servitude to Japheth as to Shem.**

The end of Noah's life is recounted in verses 28–29. His lifespan of 950 years meant that he lived until the patriarch Abraham was 58.

Discuss

? Was Noah justified in pronouncing a curse on Canaan? Why or why not?

? What biblical evidence can you think of that God acted on Noah's blessings??

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: Noah and his family, along with a grand collection of God's other creatures, had lived through an event unlike any witnessed since the beginning of time. Now, God wanted to make certain that the entire world knew He would never again do the same. He promised people and animals that He would put no additional curse on the ground, He would not send another worldwide flood, and would uphold the natural cycle of the days and seasons as long as the earth remained. God's grace gave faith and confidence to humans and animals for rebuilding the world after the Flood. His continued grace in promising salvation to all who accept Jesus Christ gives us the confidence to believe Him for changed lives now, and for eternal life later.

Living It Out **Ministry in Action**

- Take time this week to thank God for His grace toward you and toward those who do not yet know Him.
- Pray that God will help your love for Him to be seen by those around you.
- Look for opportunities to share the love and promises of God with unbelievers you come in contact with.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

God's Covenant With Abraham.
Genesis 17:1–9

[Gen 17:1-9 NKJV] 1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I [am] Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. 2 "And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." 3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. 5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. 7 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. 8 "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." 9 And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.

Tuesday:

God's Covenant With Israel.
Deuteronomy 5:1–10

[Deu 5:1-10 NKJV] 1 And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. 2 "The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 "The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who [are] here today, all of us who [are] alive. 4 "The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. 5 "I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain. [He] said: 6 'I [am] the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 7 'You shall have no other gods before Me. 8 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image--any likeness [of anything] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the earth beneath, or that [is] in the water under the earth; 9 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth [generations] of those who hate Me, 10 but

showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Wednesday:

The New Covenant Promised.
Jeremiah 31:31–34

[Jer 31:31-34 NKJV] 31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- 32 "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day [that] I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. 33 "But this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Thursday:

New Covenant by Christ's Blood.
Luke 22:14–20

[Luk 22:14-20 NKJV] 14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With [fervent] desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 "for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide [it] among yourselves; 18 "for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke [it], and gave [it] to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 Likewise He also [took] the cup after supper, saying, "This cup [is] the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."

Friday:

Christ Mediates the New Covenant.
Hebrews 8:6–13

[Heb 8:6-13 KJV] 6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 7 For if that first [covenant] had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded

them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new [covenant], he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old [is] ready to vanish away.

Saturday:

Blood of the Everlasting Covenant.
Hebrews 13:20–21

[Heb 13:20-21 KJV] 20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen.