

Genesis 038
The True Promise Keeper
Genesis 9:7-17
March 30, 2021
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Well, good morning, everybody.

All right. Let's take our Bibles and open them to Genesis 9:7.

Happy Memorial Day, everybody. The title of our message this morning is 'The True Promise Keeper.' I do not know if you remember that movement that swept our country called Promise Keepers. Does anybody remember that interesting time? The truth of the matter is, though, there is only one promise keeper, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the Lord makes a promise, you can take it right to the bank because that promise will materialize. This comes up in our study in the Book of Genesis. Genesis 1-11 is the beginning of the human race, as we have talked about, featuring Creation—what the world was like originally before sin entered the picture—and then the Fall: Genesis 3-5.

What went wrong? Why is our world so different from the Garden of Eden? Genesis 3-5 explains that, and it gives hope that there is coming One who is going to set things right. He is revealed in Genesis 3:15, and the New Testament identifies him as the Lord Jesus Christ.

From there we moved into the Flood and we saw events before the Flood. Genesis 6 is the Flood itself. Genesis 7 is the receding of the Flood waters. Genesis 8 is the post-Flood events.

Right now we are in Genesis 9, which also deals with events following the Flood. Essentially, what is happening in Genesis 8:20-9:17 is the first covenant that God enters into with mankind, called the new covenant: God's covenant to the earth through his intermediary Noah.

It started at the end of Genesis 8 with promises. And promises from God are enough. They are enough for me, because God cannot lie. But what you will find in the Bible is that God typically takes His promises and He ratifies them into the form of an official covenant.

The best analogy I could give you is a contract which is legally binding. God obligates Himself to act and to do things a certain way, and those promises move into provision. We saw the recreation theme in Genesis 9:1-2. Man becoming carnivorous in Genesis 9:3. Stay away from the blood, Genesis 9:4.

Then we saw the origin of human government in Genesis 9:5-6. The issue of human government is so significant and there is so much confusion about it. We spent three Sundays talking about the institution of human government.

You might recall Genesis 9:6, which says,

"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man" (Genesis 9:6).

Prior to this statement, God avenged justice for murderers Himself. That is what the Flood was all about. Now He sets up in the post-Flood world a divine institution to avenge justice: God delegates that authority to government.

This is the beginning of human government, and God put into the hands of the government the sword. That becomes the justification for capital punishment for those that commit murder. We walked through the various objections to capital punishment and showed them to be wanting. Capital punishment for murder is something that God expects human government to follow today.

Now we come to Genesis 9:7, which is the end of this paragraph on human government, and it repeats what is in Genesis 9:1-2.

When you study the Bible, you want to pay attention to how a paragraph begins and how a paragraph ends. Those are the bookends, and if you can understand the bookends, you can understand the in-between. The fancy word I learned for this in seminary was 'inclusio.' (I paid a lot of tuition money to learn fancy words, and no one else will listen to me so you guys are stuck with it.)

There is an 'inclusio.' The 'inclusio' is Genesis 9:1-2 and then Genesis 9:7: that is the goal. What is in between is the means.

What God wants is the perpetuation or the furtherance of the human race in its post-Fall, post-Flood condition. In other words, the Creator Himself has built into the fabric of fallen creation certain things that are necessary for fallen creation to perpetuate itself. These are what we call the divine institutions.

Notice what it says there in Genesis 9:7,

"As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it" (Genesis 9:7).

It is hard to do that when everybody's murdering each other. So God created an institution called government to hold back the hand of the murderer, so that the human race could continue on even in its fallen state.

One of the things that we try to emphasize here about the Bible is that it is a book about how to get to heaven, and it is about spiritual issues, but not exclusively. The Bible will develop for you, if you let it, a biblical worldview. It will comment on every area of life. The last three sermons that we have done have dealt with God's perspective on human government.

The Bible, if you let it speak, will talk about politics. It will talk about literature, it will talk about industry. It will talk about money management, music, science, and art. The Bible is just as inspired when it deals with those subjects as it is when it says in John 3:16,

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16).

Many people will just gravitate towards John 3:16 and that becomes their Bible, but the truth of the matter is there is more in the Bible than John 3:16. There is a whole worldview that the Lord wants us to have, and it was in that spirit that we offered our remarks on human government—not to be political, but to be Biblical.

Human government becomes one of the great divine institutions which the Creator has given to the human race so Genesis 9:7 could be accomplished.

What are the divine institutions? Number one, marriage and the family. Number two, the divine institution of labor: "He who does not work should not eat." (That is all early Genesis material.) Number three, the institution of human conscience: people have an internal barometer of right and wrong, even people that do not know Jesus personally have that barometer. That is in Genesis 3:22. Number four, the institution of human government, which we have been studying. There is one more institution on the horizon. It is the institution of nationalism.

That last one relates to some of the songs that we were singing earlier about patriotism, the American flag, our fallen heroes. Does that kind of thing need to be sung in a church? I think God would say, "Yes," because He Himself, as we will see, created individual nations.

These divine institutions, as you look at them, are all under attack today. Why are they under attack? Because the world hates God, and if the world hates God and God gave these things for our own good, it becomes like a child rebelling against their parents. Everybody is trying to change these, alter these, rewrite these, water these things down, but God gave them for our own good.

So Genesis 9:7 provides for the repopulation of the human race to take place. This now moves us into the third dispensation in our study of the Book of Genesis. We cover a little bit here about dispensations, because we generally teach seven dispensations.

(Now, I know it says eight there, but the Tribulation is sort of the final seven years of the dispensation of law. That is why we have eight there.)

Really there are seven and we cover these things here a little bit in the Book of Genesis, because in the Book of Genesis you have the first four major dispensations taking place.

Now, what in the world are we talking about when we use this phrase 'dispensation'? Are we using some phrase that the Bible does not use? Well, if you are reading out of the King James Version and you are reading out of Ephesians 1:10, you will read these words in your English translation,

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:" (Ephesians 1:10, KJV).

Then if you are reading from the King James Version in Ephesians 3:2, you will see the word 'dispensation' again in your English translation.

"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:" (Ephesians 3:2, KJV).

The idea of dispensation is a biblical idea. It is in the Bible and the word translated 'dispensation' is the Greek word 'oikonomia' (οἰκονομία), which is a compound word—two words combined into a single word: 'oikos' (οἶκος), meaning 'house'; and 'nomia' (νομία), from from which we get the word 'nomos' (νόμος) in Greek, which means 'law' or 'rule.'

Dispensation literally means 'oikonomia': "house rules." What we believe the Bible teaches is that human history is divided up into increments or time periods when different rules govern it. It is not something that we have forced into the Bible. It is something that we have observed from the Bible.

For example, you saw a huge change of rules when we moved from Genesis 1-2 into Genesis 3. In Genesis 3, the rules changed: Death has now become a reality; pregnancy has become difficult. It is now very difficult to eke out a living. That was never happening in Genesis 1-2.

What happened between Genesis 1-2 and Genesis 3? The rules changed because the Fall of man took place, introducing new principles. Now, do not get me wrong: the plan of salvation is always the same from age to age.

Genesis 15:6 says that Abraham believed God and it was credited to him for righteousness. Salvation is always the same—by faith alone—in what God has revealed. Abraham, looking forward to a Messiah that would come, not knowing his name, trusted in that Messiah and he was saved just the same way we are, despite the fact that Abraham was living in a different dispensation than we are. We are still saved the exact same way.

It is just that we are looking backward to what Jesus did for us. We are saved by faith, and we do know His name. The plan of salvation is a constant. The plan of salvation is always the same. God saves human beings individually through the same method.

But having said all that, although there is this constant concerning the plan of salvation, other rules in the Bible change. We believe that the rules change about seven times. That is what a dispensation is: house rules; times in history where certain rules governed.

Basically here is the way it works: God puts man through a test; man will fail the test. When man fails the test, God will bring in some form of cataclysm or judgment. Then God will usher mankind into the next, usually a superior or a better dispensation, only to have man mess that one up. Then He will put him in a better environment. Man will mess that one up.

By the time you get to the end of the Bible, you see that man is a total failure, and the glory goes to who? The glory goes to God. This is one of the reasons that the doctrine or the teaching of dispensations is unpopular: because it does not give man enough credit, because man keeps failing.

But the way it is supposed to work is that we are supposed to look back through the eons of time, and we are supposed to give glory not to man, but to God Himself. That is why God is putting humanity through its paces as you move through the Bible.

We are on the treadmill. We are doing our thing, going through our paces, and then God will change the rules again. Man is doing his thing, and he is on the treadmill and he is going through his paces.

By the time you get to the end of the Bible, man is fully tested in every environment, proving himself to be a failure, giving God the glory. If we are a failure in every dispensation, then we surely need Jesus Christ as our Savior. If we were successful in every dispensation, there would be no need for Jesus for our salvation because we would have things figured out—which, obviously, according to the Bible, we do not have figured out.

The first dispensation we have covered is the dispensation of innocence. Genesis 1-2. The test there was probably the easiest job description that has ever been given to somebody. The only prohibition that was placed on our forbearers was just not to eat from the tree of knowledge.

Of course, it is like a kid when you tell him, "You can do anything you want in the house, but do not put your hand in the cookie jar." We know how that story is going to end.

Adam and Eve put their hand into the cookie jar, metaphorically speaking. They did what God said, "Do not do," and that brought in a judgment. The judgment was the Fall of man and the curse to the created order because of the Fall. Then God put man through the second dispensation, which was just prior to the Flood: the dispensation of conscience.

Conscience, you will recall, is one of those divine institutions. Man was told to live according to the dictates of his conscience. He knew good and evil, and yet, what happened before the Flood? Every inclination of man's thoughts was perpetually wicked.

He violated conscience. Man fails test number two, and God brings in a cataclysm called the global Flood.

Then he ushers man into the third dispensation, and now we are studying dispensation number three, the dispensation of human government. Man's responsibility here is to spread out and repopulate the earth.

God actually gave man a gift called the institution of human government to restrain the sin nature during this era. We are going to discover, as we move into this dispensation,

a third failure: that man is going to—quoting those great theologians Led Zeppelin—build a stairway to heaven.

They are going to reject spreading out, and they are going to come together in a one-world government. It is the first United Nations meeting. They are going to build a one-world government that excludes God under an Antichrist-like figure named Nimrod.

God is going to again bring in a judgment following this failure, and He is going to confound their language so the builders of the tower cannot cooperate. Then man will be ushered into the dispensation of Israel under promise.

As you go through the Bible, you will see a failure there, so God puts Israel under the law. There is going to be a failure there, and then there is going to be our dispensation. We would not mess this up, would we? We have grace. We have the riches of Jesus Christ.

Yet when you look at the end of Paul's writings, at the end of his life, he says that evil men—not in the secular world, in the church—will wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. To prevent the church from completely and totally embarrassing itself, God is going to have to snatch us off the earth into heaven. That is the Rapture or the translation of the church.

Then mankind will come to the dispensation of the kingdom. They cannot mess that one up, could they? Jesus is ruling and reigning with a rod of righteousness from David's throne in Jerusalem, no human need is unmet, everything is perfect for a thousand years, and then Satan is released from the abyss for one last hurrah. He gathers an army which is as large as the sand of the sea shore to rebel against the holy city.

God brings in another cataclysm. This time it is in Revelation 20:7-9: fire from heaven. Then, finally, that dispensation ends, and God finally puts man in an environment where he cannot mess anything up: the eternal state, which is Revelation 21-22. No more tests. Thank God for that.

The eternal state looks a lot like Eden, but it is different from Eden because, in the eternal state, there is not going to be a tree of knowledge. The tree of knowledge was necessary for the test, which man failed, but now that man has been tested and has been put through his paces and has shown himself to be a complete failure, no matter what environment he is in, God is now free to start anew with a new heavens and the new earth.

No more quizzes, no more tests, no more failures, no more cataclysms. We are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. That is how human history ends.

Now, if you talk like this in a typical church today, people are not going to want to hear this because this is negative. It is pessimistic. "You guys that teach dispensations—you are so pessimistic. You are pessi-millennialists. You are down on everything."

I am not down on anything. I will tell you what I am up on: I am up on God. I do not have a lot of confidence in people, but I have a lot of confidence in Jesus. I hope you leave here being a flaming optimist because of who you are connected to by faith.

What then, is the story of the Bible? It is from a garden to a city with a cross in between. How would you summarize the Bible in a sentence? That is how I would summarize it: from a garden to a city with a cross in between.

The plan of salvation (faith alone in Christ alone) is a constant throughout the dispensations, and I bring this up because we are now entering dispensation number three: The dispensation of law.

Now we move away from provision into covenant and sign. Here we learn a little bit more about the covenant. We see covenant promise in Genesis 9:8-11. We will delve into what a covenant is a little bit as time permits, because that is a big deal.

Then we will see the sign of this particular covenant in Genesis 9:12-17. We will learn, fourthly, if time permits, of the fact that every time God enters into a covenant, there is a sign attached to it, one of which we are going to celebrate next week at the Lord's Table, because we are partakers—not taker-overs, but partakers—in something called the New Covenant.

Notice, if you will, this covenant promise. Notice Genesis 9:8-11.

"Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying,..." (Genesis 9:8).

So, God is speaking again. God wants to articulate something, and the reason God is speaking again is because He is going to articulate something called a covenant, without which you cannot understand the Bible.

Notice if you will, Genesis 9:9, which has our key word.

"Now behold, I myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you;" (Genesis 9:9).

Here we see our word: 'covenant.' It is the Hebrew word 'berit' (בְּרִית). You will notice that this covenant is not just with Noah; it is with the whole world because God says, "your descendants after you." (More on this when we get down to Genesis 9:12.).

Take a look at Genesis 9:10.

"and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth" (Genesis 9:10).

You will notice that this covenant, the Noahic covenant, that we are studying is so extensive that it even contemplates the animal kingdom. If you go back to Genesis 9:2, you might remember that God put into the hearts of the animal kingdom a fear of man.

God is already dealing with, in this covenant, the relationship between God and man and animals. It is a comprehensive covenant; they are all included.

Notice, if you will, Genesis 9:11. Here is our magic word again.

"I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth" (Genesis 9:11).

You will notice again the word 'covenant.' You will notice how God originally made some promises at the end of Genesis 8, and now we are given more details about these promises. This is very common in the Bible.

At the end of Genesis 8, God said,

"...I will never again curse the ground on account of man...I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done." (Genesis 8:21).

Now we are getting the concrete details of that: He is never going to send a global deluge, which, by the way, destroyed—it is right there in Genesis 9:11—"all flesh." For those that seek to reduce the flood just to a local event, like somebody's bathtub overflowing in Mesopotamia—that is not an accurate picture of what the Bible teaches.

The Bible teaches a deluge which instantaneously covered the earth, fossilizing much of the pre-flood world into a state of fossilization instantaneously. It is a judgment that they were not thinking about, even though they were warned about it, and it came on them in an instant.

It becomes a prototype, a prefigurement of what is yet future, because God will judge this world again. He will not judge it by deluge. There is a different means of judgment coming. He cannot judge it by global flood or deluge because He would be violating what He obligated Himself not to do in this new covenant.

It is very clear that this world will never be flooded again the way it was prior to the flood. I like a lot of the things Arnold Fruchtenbaum has to say in this section.

He says,

"That means there will never again be a universal flood, and God will never again destroy the mass of humanity with a universal flood. The next time God destroys the mass of humanity, it is going to be by fire (Isa. 24:5-6, 2 Pet. 3:10)."¹

By the way, that will not happen until after the kingdom takes place for a thousand years.

¹ Fruchtenbaum, A. *The Book of Genesis*, 188.

"This promise again indicates the Flood was universal, not local. The language states clearly what had just happened: all flesh (except those on board the ark) and the earth had been destroyed."²

People frequently ask me if I believe in global warming? The answer is yes. True global warming is coming to planet earth. 2 Peter 3:10.

Following the millennial kingdom, it says,

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

"Well, gee, Pastor, where are you going to put the Big Bang? Do you believe in the Big Bang?"

I believe in the Big Bang. It is just at the end. The poor evolutionist has gotten the whole thing backwards. They have their Big Bang at the beginning.

The truth of the matter is that everybody today is looking for safe investments. There are only two—because the fire is coming, and there are only two things that are going to survive the fire.

What is an investment? An investment is something you put the three T's into: time, talent, and treasure, which all of us have to varying degrees. Where do you take your precious time, talent, and treasure and where do you invest them? If 2 Peter 3:10 is a reality, you invest them into something safe that will withstand the fire.

Biblically speaking, there are only two things that are going to survive the fire. The first is the souls of people, because the Book of Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us that God has put eternity into the hearts of men.

If you invest in a person, you are making an eternal investment. The person that irritates you, the person that you lose your temper with—that is a soul for whom Christ died who is going to spend eternity somewhere. You are going to invest properly into them when you see them as they are.

The opportunities that the Holy Spirit gives us to evangelize the lost—you are going to take that open door because you are making an eternal investment, pouring your life into your children and your grandchildren to prevent them from being swayed by the principality and power of this world is an eternal investment because their soul is eternal.

There is only one other safe investment, and that is the Word of God. Jesus said in Matthew 24:35,

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

² Fruchtenbaum, A. *The Book of Genesis*, 188.

The grass withers and the flower fades, the prophet Isaiah says, but the word of our Lord lasts forever.

This is an investment that you are taking this morning, because you could be doing any number of things, but yet you are coming into an environment where you know that the Word of God is taught and you are investing your time and your energy into this. You are making an eternal investment.

The more the Bible stops being a relic on your coffee table and becomes something that you open to receive daily nourishment from; the more a father leads their children through discipleship in Scripture reading and Scripture memorization—the more it is an eternal investment. How important it is that we make eternal investments!

One Dallas businessman was quoted as follows: "I have spent my whole life," he said, "climbing the ladder of success only to discover that the ladder was leaning against the wrong wall."

If you can get that image in your head for a minute, that is how so much of our lives are trivially spent, even as Christians, in investing what little time we have on the earth. Our life is like mist that appears for a little while, and then it is gone; and we waste so much time, effort, and energy on things that are just going to burn anyway. How we need to refocus our energies and our abilities and our resources into things that are actually going to stand the test of time!

You will notice here the word 'covenant.' Let's talk just for a minute about the definition of 'covenant.' We saw 'covenant' in Genesis 9:9. We saw 'covenant' in Genesis 9:11. As I mentioned before, it is the Hebrew word 'berit.'

If you look for just a moment at Genesis 6:18, you will find the word 'covenant' used for the first time by way of an announcement; it had not been ratified yet.

God said there,

"But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you" (Genesis 6:18).

There, God announced His covenant with Noah, and now it is in Genesis 9:9-11 that this covenant, this contractual agreement, is entered into. This must be a subject that God wants us to understand, because the word 'covenant' appears seven times in this passage. Did you know that in Genesis 9:9-17 you will see the word 'berit' appearing seven times.

It must be something that is significant. God must want us to understand this concept of covenant.

Here is one of the things I would love to communicate to you today: the concept of a covenant where God obligates Himself to act is completely and totally unique to the Bible. William Albright, an expert on the ancient Near East (which was the basic area

where Israel was and is today), like very few human beings understands the ancient Near East culture.

He says in his book 'Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan' that only in Israel do you have a concept of covenant between God and man. He writes,

"Contracts and treaties were common everywhere, but only the Hebrews, so far as we know, made covenants with their gods or God. Being prevalingly caravanners and so ethno-political intruders in the West, the early Hebrews were in constant need of contractual and treaty protection."³

Now, I found this particular quote in the writings of Charles Clough, and he gives a balancing comment.

He says,

"Of course, we Biblicists insist that it was God that made the contracts with man, not the other way around."⁴

Albright seems to get that a little backwards here in his quote, but the quote is powerful nonetheless, because you do not find anywhere else in the ancient Near East any other people group—he studied them all and is an expert on the subject—to whom one of the gods made a covenant. It is totally unique to the Bible; it is foreign to what is outside the Bible.

If you understand the word 'covenant,' you will understand the Bible. Once God enters into a covenant, you know the promises would be enough, but now He goes through the ratification ceremony and He obligates Himself to act. God will move his hand in history to keep his covenant, or else God looks bad.

He would look like a welcher, which is an impossibility, because God cannot lie. Numbers 23:19: God is not a man that he should lie. Titus 1:2: God cannot lie. Hebrews 6:18: It is impossible for God to lie.

Take for example, the Exodus. Today when you ask a Jewish person what is the greatest redemptive event in your history as a people or as a nation, they will unequivocally say it was the Exodus. Other than the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am hard pressed to find anything of greater redemptive power than the Exodus: God took a people that had been enslaved for 400 years—that is a long time—and brought them out.

Why did God do that? Because God made a covenant with them. That is why it is right there in Exodus 2:24, as God's hand is getting ready after 400 years to move a nation.

It says in Exodus 2:24,

³ Albright, William F. *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 106-08.

⁴ Charles C. Clough *Social-Political Implications of the New Covenant*, 277

"So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Exodus 2:24).

You mean to tell me that the greatest redemptive event in Jewish history took place because of a covenant? That is what I am telling you. God spoke it to Abraham, and now, 400 years later, God moves His hand. That is how the Bible works: it reveals the covenants early and the rest of the Bible is God finishing what He obligated Himself to do.

How about the nation of Israel being regathered today? Why is that happening? You will find the answer in the Book of Ezekiel 36:22, which says,

"Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Lord God says: "It is not for your sake, house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went."'" (Ezekiel 36:22).

Why would God, after 2,000 years of worldwide dispersion, reach out and start recycling the Jews back into their land despite their unbelief? Because if God did not do that, His name would be profaned because He would be violating His own covenant.

Genesis 9 is the first time we have the reference to a covenant. Now, this is not an Israel covenant. Israel does not exist yet; this is the new covenant, and the human agent is Noah. The covenant is found in Genesis 8-9. You will see in Genesis 9:9-11 that the Hebrew word 'covenant,' which means 'contract,' is with the whole world, not a nation. It is pre-Israel.

It is unconditional, meaning if someone does not do well, the promises still exist because they are coming from God to man. The promise is that there will be no more Flood judgments. The earth is going to endure, and government has to exist on the earth to impose justice, even with capital punishment.

The sign of the covenant is the rainbow.

What is the purpose of this covenant? It is to restrain and preserve so that Genesis 9:7 can continue, so that the human race can be perpetuated. Is it binding today? Well, have you seen the rainbow lately? Then it must be in place today because the rainbow is the sign of the covenant.

Eventually, we are going to get to Genesis 15, and I am going to entitle that sermon 'The Ultimate Real Estate Deal.' It is the absolute ultimate in terms of a covenant because God obligates Himself there to do three things for the nation of Israel: land, seed, and blessing are yours forever.

As long as the sun and the moon and the stars exist, those promises will exist because God has contractually bound Himself unconditionally, as we will see, to those three things for Israel. That is why you cannot get rid of Israel. That is why the theology of replacement theology, that God is through with the Jew and the church has eclipsed

Israel's place—you cannot have that, or else God would be going back on His word in the Abrahamic covenant.

What God does as you continue to move through the Bible is He develops each of those promises. The land will be better explained in what is called the land covenant in Deuteronomy 29-30. The seed will be better explained in what is called the Davidic covenant: 2 Samuel 7:12-16. The blessing will be better explained in what is called the New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Then we will come, eventually, to the Mosaic covenant, where God will set out the condition. (The Mosaic one's conditional; the other ones are unconditional.) The condition has to be met for Israel to enjoy what she owns, because there is a difference between ownership and possession. I could have a wonderful beach house in the Hamptons, but I never get over there to enjoy it because I am too busy working.

Well, you have to fulfill a condition first to enjoy the beach house: quit being such a workaholic. If you fulfill the condition, then you can enjoy what you own. But if I never make it to the beach house, I still own it. I just do not enjoy it. Do you see that? The Mosaic Covenant gives the nation of Israel a condition that has to be met for any generation to enjoy what is already theirs.

It revolves around Jesus. The whole thing points to Jesus. He is the condition that has to be met by a generation of Jews for them to become the enjoyer of what is already theirs. The goal of history is how God is going to put Israel through this time of distress to help her realize this. It is so interesting that I could explain God's whole program in the end times without making a single reference to the Book of Revelation, because the plan is already explained in terms of these covenants if you understand them.

That is why I am saying when you see this word 'covenant'—and this is one of the first usages of it, in the covenant with Noah—that is a big deal. That is why it says 'covenant' seven times in just the span of a few verses.

Look at the covenant sign. What is the covenant sign? Look at Genesis 9:12.

"God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations'" (Genesis 9:12).

Every covenant has a sign. Notice the expression "for all successive generations." The Noahic Covenant and the principles of human government and the principles of capital punishment that we have studied the last three weeks are still in effect today.

What is this particular covenant sign? It is right there in Genesis 9:13-14.

"I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud" (Genesis 9:13-14).

What is the covenant sign? It is the rainbow. Rainbows are connected to rain. Do you see all the cutting edge stuff you get here? Do you all agree with me on that? Rainbows are connected to rain. Why have we not had a rainbow thus far in the Book of Genesis? Because there has not been any rain yet.

Genesis 2:5-6 talks about how a mist, in the pre-Flood world, used to come up from the ground and water the earth. That is why Noah seemed so crazy to the antediluvian race. He was preaching about a coming deluge. They had no concept of what rain was.

Now the flood waters have broken forth. The Flood is over. Rain is now a reality as we know it today. Thus, the rainbow starts to show up.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum says this,

"In 9:14: And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, meaning when it rains, the bow shall be seen in the cloud. The rainbow is associated with rain, and there was no rain before the Flood; therefore, no rainbows had been seen before this time."⁵

This word 'bow' is very interesting. In Hebrew, it is speaking of a battle bow. It contains the idea of God hanging up His battle bow in the sky. Why would He hang up His weapon? He is hanging up His weapon because He is saying there is going to be no more judgment via deluge—judgment via deluge, or flood, is now off the table.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum comments on this word 'bow.'

He says,

"The Hebrew word for bow is 'keshet,' the same word used of the battle bow. It is as if God hung up his battle bow on the cloud as a sign of peace in the place of being a sign of war..."⁶

One of the wonderful things about God is that He is a peace activist. He goes into situations where there was prior conflict and He resolves the conflict. If you are a blood-bought saint, He has already done that for you, because before you got saved, according to Romans 5:10, you were God's enemy.

In fact, John 3:36 describes our sorry state before Christ as the wrath of God abiding on us. It was like the sword of Damocles, which could fall at any moment.

How different it is when a person trusts Christ as their Savior and the wrath of God against our personal sin is satisfied. God's righteousness has been transferred to you. The state of conflict is now called off, satisfying God's nature of holiness against the sin in your life, and freeing up His other attributes—mercy, grace, love; they are the only attributes He can express towards you, because His wrath has been satisfied.

How different it is when a person trusts Christ and the state of warfare is called off.

⁵ Fruchtenbaum, A. *The Book of Genesis*, 189.

⁶ Ibid.

This issue of the rainbow is mentioned three other times outside the Book of Genesis. Let me give you the references: Ezekiel 1:28; Revelation 4:3-4; and Revelation 10:1. If you look at all of those passages, you will see that the rainbow used outside of Genesis has to do with the glory of God and whatever God gives to represent His character.

In Acts 13:10, in the New King James Version, you will see Satan described as a perverter. One of the things to understand about Satan is that he is not a creator. He is not as powerful as God is. He cannot create something out of nothing through his spoken word.

What he will do is take a design of God and corrupt it and twist it into something that it was never intended. That is called perversion. We typically use the word 'perversion' in the realm of sexual immorality.

Look at what Satan has done in our world with sexuality, which initially was a beautiful gift that God gave to mankind to be exercised under proper guidelines from the Creator. The sex drive is a gift from God, just meant to be followed or used within His parameters, which He has the right to give because He is the Creator. One man for one woman for one life—heterosexual monogamy.

Do not get mad at me for saying it. It is not my idea. I happen to think it is a good idea, but I did not originate that. That is God's idea.

How Satan has taken something that is so beautiful and twisted it all sorts of different ways. Sexuality becomes whatever feels good: homosexuality, group sex, pornography—what is all of that? It is a perversion.

Since the rainbow represents in the Bible the glory of God, it is no small wonder that the rainbow has largely been hijacked today. Did you know that? I run out of initials to describe all of these people: LGBTQU, and there are even more that I cannot even remember.

Did you know that if you go to fill out a profile on Facebook, there are about seventy genders for you to pick from? I do not see seventy in the Bible; I see two.

Is it any small wonder that when the LGBTQU people gain some kind of legal victory or political victory—it does not seem to be slowing down, as far as I can tell—they want to take the White House, or the Empire State Building and they want to turn it rainbow? Some have told me that they only have six colors in their rainbow; the Bible has seven. I do not know if that is true. You can be a good Berean and look that up. That would be interesting if it is true.

We are astonished because they took God's rainbow, and yet why be astonished when you understand Acts 13:10 describing Satan as 'the perverter'? If Satan is the perverter, it stands to reason that the rainbow, which is supposed to reflect the glory of God, would be changed into something that God never intended, used for purposes of promoting a perversion or an abomination.

You will come now to Genesis 9:15. Look at this,

"and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh" (Genesis 9:15).

What does this mean: 'remember'? Is it like my wife saying as I am going on my trip, "Remember to pack such and such." So I take a string and tie it around my finger. I wake up in the morning and—oh, yeah—there is a string on my finger. I have to remember to pack my shaving cream or deodorant or whatever.

Is that what 'remember' means here? That is not what 'remember' means. God is not some sort of senile old man that cannot remember where his cell phone is. "Where are my car keys?"

By the way, you do not have to be old to experience that one. People look at pastors as if they have the answers to all of life's problems. The fact of the matter is, we do not even know where our car keys are half the time.

Look at Genesis 8:1. We have run into this verb 'remember' before.

"But God remembered Noah and all the beasts..." (Genesis 8:1).

What does that word 'remember' mean?

Arnold Fruchtenbaum says,

"The word remember does not mean remember in the sense that God temporarily forgot about the ark and its inhabitants; rather it means remembering in the sense of movement toward the object."⁷

It is now time for God to move towards the object. What object? The covenant. It is now time for God to make good on what He said He was going to do. That is what is meant here by 'remember.' It is the notion of movement towards. It is why, according to Exodus 2:24, the Exodus happened as we mentioned before.

"Gee, pastor, this is just a bunch of scholarly stuff. It has no application in my life."

This has every application to your life, because Noah is not the only person in human history to receive a covenant. You have, metaphorically speaking, a covenant also. It is called eternal security. It is in John 10:27-29, where it says,

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish;..." (John 10:27-29).

It actually says, "never perish forever," according to the original language.

"...and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John 10:27-29).

⁷ Fruchtenbaum, A. *The Book of Genesis*, 175.

You are in the Son's hand and you are in the Father's hand. You are in the double grip of grace. The way this is set up in Greek with the dual negation rules out the idea of losing one's salvation as even being a possibility for you as a Christian. To lose your salvation is exegetically and linguistically impossible.

You may be in hot water in all kinds of areas of life; you may be in a lot of trouble. From the human perspective, you may have messed a bunch of things up. I say, "Welcome to the club."

You may think that somehow in your errors, mistakes, setbacks, frustrations, and defeats that somehow God has negated His promises to you; and I want you to understand that God cannot. God has to remember—not in the sense that, "Oh, now I remember what I said," but in the sense that it is just a matter of time before He moves His hand consistently to accomplish what He said He would do in your life.

You can try to wiggle and get yourself out of the double grip of grace, but you are not going to be very successful because of the nature of God. God is the true promise keeper.

I love what 2 Timothy 2:13 says, because it reveals a truth in all of our lives, but then it reveals what God said in light of that truth.

"If we are faithless,..." (2 Timothy 2:13).

Has anybody run into that condition in their life? Anybody running from God?

"If we are faithless,..." (2 Timothy 2:13).

I love how the verse does not end there.

"...He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13).

If you could run so far from God that God could never make good on His promises to you, then He is completely and totally unfaithful to His promise, which would vitiate and violate everything we know about God as revealed in these covenants. That is why it is only the Hebrews that had a covenant with God—and you, metaphorically speaking, in a similar way, have one as well in that double grip of grace. I hope this encourages you.

Genesis 9:16,

"When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth" (Genesis 9:16).

The covenant with Noah is everlasting. That is why that rainbow keeps showing up in the sky. The Hebrew word for 'everlasting' is 'olam (עֹלָם),' which is the same word to describe God Himself.

Psalms 90:2 says,

"Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Psalm 90:2).

What is God? He is 'olam (עולם).' He is forever. He is eternal. When God says, "I have given to the earth an eternal covenant," God cannot break it just like He cannot break his word to you in your metaphorical covenant of eternal security. That is why we call it the doctrine of eternal security. Why do we call it eternal security? Because it is security forever.

"Yeah, but, Pastor, I think I can lose my salvation."

Really? How do you lose something eternal? How does that work? I mean, if you could have it and then mess it up and lose it, how could eternal life be eternal? That does not make any sense.

All of this is a tremendous revelation concerning God and His character. It is a revelation concerning the remainder of human history.

Genesis 9:17 says,

"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" (Genesis 9:17).

Every covenant has a sign. Noahic Covenant: rainbow. Abrahamic covenant: circumcision. The rainbow is not the reality; it is the sign. Circumcision is not the reality; it is the sign. For the Abrahamic Covenant, the reality is in Genesis 15; the sign of the reality is in Genesis 17, as we will see.

Mosaic Covenant had the sign of the Sabbath. What is the sign of the new covenant that we partake in? It is the Lord's table. It is in Luke 22. Every covenant has a sign.

This week we finished the Noahic Covenant. Now we are going to move into post-Flood sin. "You mean the sin nature did not get fixed through the Flood?" No, it did not. "You mean Noah is not going to persevere in good works to prove his salvation?" No, he will not.

And yet, God is faithful. More on that next week.