

Lesson Four: *The Noahic Covenant*
Genesis 6-9

Themes:

Genesis 6-9: Although God judges the world because of sin, He gives humanity a new start with the promise to preserve the world.

I. Covenant Theology

- a. Covenant: God's way of relating to creation
 - i. A *sacred* agreement *administered by God* containing promises and obligations that *permanently binds* two parties together (Gen 12:1-3).
 1. A covenant is *not* a contract.
 - ii. "A covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered" (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*).
 1. Key elements of a covenant:
 - a. Promises and obligations
 - b. Blood ratification
 - c. Familial provision (the inclusion of descendants)
- b. Two Major Covenants:
 - i. **The Covenant of Works**:
 1. Established by God with Adam, whereby Adam was designated the representative for all his posterity (Rom 5:12-21), linking those he represented with his personal actions, thus determining the future of his descendants. In accordance with the Covenant of Works Adam was promised life and the establishment of his posterity contingent upon his faithfulness to God's command (cf. *WCF* 7.2).
 - a. Type: Treaty covenant (Gen 2:15-17)
 - i. **Obligations**: God imposes obligations (2:17)
 - ii. **Benefits**: life (2:7) and God's provision (1:26-30)
 - iii. **Curse**: directed towards the servant (2:17; 3:16-19)
 - iv. **Loyalty**: an inducement for future loyalty (2:17)
 - b. Nature: Conditional (blessings are contingent upon obedience)
 - ii. **The Covenant of Grace**:
 1. "Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the Covenant of Grace, whereby He freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe" (*WCF* 7.3).
 - a. The administration of God's plan of redemption (Gen 3:15)
 - i. An eternal plan – Eph 1:11; 3:11
 - ii. A Trinitarian plan – Eph 1:1-6; 7-13a; 13b-14
 - b. One purpose, one plan, in different administrations

II. The Noahic Covenant

- a. Purpose: "The covenant with Noah provides the preservative structure by which God's purpose to redeem a people to Himself may be realized" (Robertson).
 - i. The Noahic covenant links God's creative and redemptive purposes.
 1. Recreation: 6:20; 1:24-25 / 8:3; 1:9 / 9:1; 1:28 / 9:2; 1:28 / 9:6; 1:26
 - ii. The Noahic covenant highlights the particularity of God's redemptive grace.
 1. Gen 6:8; Rom 8:29-30

- iii. The Noahic covenant highlights the familial nature of the covenants.
 - 1. The righteousness of one allows for the deliverance of all
- iv. The Noahic covenant is primarily a covenant of preservation.
 - 1. A deferred judgment (the flood as a shadow of the future judgment)
 - 2. Provision (9:3) and protection (9:6)
- v. The Noahic covenant has a “universalistic” aspect.
 - 1. God’s redemptive plan is universal (man and creation – Rom 8:22-23)
 - 2. The framework for world-wide evangelism (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)
- vi. The seal of the Noahic covenant underscores God’s grace.
 - 1. The Lord’s “battle-bow” is laid aside (cf. Rev 4:3)
- b. Type: Royal grant (promise covenant)
 - i. **Obligation**: the master has obligations to the servant secured by an oath he (the master) swears
 - 1. *I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done* (Gen 8:21).
 - a. New covenant: promise and law
 - i. Promise – God’s obligation to us (Heb 6:17-18)
 - ii. Law – Our obligation to God (Matt 5:48; John 14:15)
 - 1. The 2nd and 3rd use of the law
 - ii. **Benefits**: the provision of land and offspring (seed)
 - 1. Land: 8:21-22
 - 2. Offspring: *God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”* (9:1).
 - a. New covenant: land and offspring
 - i. Land – the new heavens and the new earth
 - ii. Offspring – those in Christ (includes Gentiles)
 - iii. **Curse**: directed toward others for the protection of the servant
 - 1. *Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man* (9:6).
 - a. New covenant: death
 - i. Born by Christ – the divine exchange
 - ii. Against those who reject Christ and His work
 - iii. Against those who break the covenant
 - iv. **Loyalty**: a reward is given for loyalty (initiated by God)
 - 1. *Thus, Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him* (6:22).
 - 2. *But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD* (6:8).
 - a. New Covenant: a reward and an inducement
 - i. A reward for loyalty – II Timothy 4:8
 - ii. An inducement for future loyalty – I Cor 9:24-27
- c. Nature: Unconditional
 - i. Fulfillment is not contingent on the recipient’s response (obedience), but on God who swears the oath.
 - 1. New covenant: unconditional and conditional
 - a. Unconditional – Titus 3:4-5
 - b. A conditional aspect – Hebrews 2:1-3

How are you responding to so great a salvation?