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Section: Divine Covenants (Covenant Theology)

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**HANDOUT NOTES**

**Q57 Leads Us to the Noahic Covenant**

* **Introduction**

The current world is defined biblically by the *broken* Covenant of Works and the *kind* Noahic Covenant.

History has been what it is, is what it is, and will be what it is for as long as God sees fit *because of the foundational covenants*.

* **Post-Fall, Pre-Flood**

The fall of Adam and those he represented quickly and severely proved what we studied last week. Wickedness became mankind’s testimony.

**Genesis 6:11-13** 11Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was *filled with violence*. 12And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 13And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”

* **But the Promise and the Plan …**

After the Covenant of Works was broken in the garden, God immediately proclaimed the gospel; He promised the means for man to be redeemed from this fall.

**Genesis 3:15** “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

But in Noah’s time, that promise hadn’t been fulfilled yet.

Until Christ’s work was done, until the New Covenant was formally established, and until all the chosen ones are gathered, this creation must be persevered.

* **A Flood of Wrath**

Sin is a terrible display of disrespect and hatred towards God, so in Noah’s day, God saw fit to display His wrath.

God graciously chose to save Noah from the flood waters and commanded him to build an ark

**Genesis 6:17-19** 17For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. 18But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female.

God saw through His plan and flooded the earth as a display of His righteous hatred towards sin, wiping out all living things not safe in the ark.

**Genesis 7:17-24** 17The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. 19And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. 20The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. 21And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. 22Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. 23He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. 24And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

* **The Noahic Covenant**

With the flood now over, God is ready to impose another covenant upon man.

* **The covenant blessings begin to come into light**

**Genesis 8:20-22** 20Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for theintention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. 22While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

God is promising that He will not repeat *worldwide* wrath and curses while the earth remains—that is while God is continuing to keep this first creation in existence.

* **Creation mandates**

**Genesis 9:1-7** 1And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. 2The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. 3Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. 4But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. 5And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. 6Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

7And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it.”

These are not prerequisite commands that earn the blessings of this covenant; rather, they are good and right instructions from God on how mankind should live and seek to flourish.

* + **God's judgment on murderers**

Human life has a particular value, and it must be respected and protected as such.

Those who commit murder—those who commit unjust killing of another human—are to be held accountable for their actions, equaling their own death as the penalty.

**Genesis 9:6** “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.”

* + - **Bearing the sword**

In Romans 13, we a learn of how God calls for the punishment of murder to be executed in our time; namely, through governments.

**Romans 13:1-5** 1Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been

instituted by God. 2Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. 5Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

In the New Covenant, the government (not an individual or a non-government group) is the party responsible for bearing the sword.

Government is the one with the authority and responsibility to justly hold accountable those who have truly committed murder, unto the criminal being put to death.

The responsible government parties will be held accountable to God for how they do this (or their lack thereof).

* + **The value of human life**

From conception onward, no individual, group, or government has the right to take a human life outside of God’s prescribed reasons.

**Genesis 9:5-6** 5“And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. 6Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.”

* + - **Abortion**

Abortion spits in the face of God and wickedly kills a human made in God’s image

Abortion is murder; it is the unjust killing of one made in God’s image. When God creates a new human being at conception, He gives that human life and a soul.

* **The clear promise of gracious preservation**

**Genesis 9:8-17** 8Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 9“Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, 10and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. 11I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” 12And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: 13I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, 15I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” 17God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

In time and space, it is because of this covenant that mankind has not disappeared, gone extinct, or been wiped out by God. Until God’s gathering of His elect is complete, this creation maintains under the promise of this covenant.

* **“A” covenant of grace (not “The” Covenant of Grace)**

The Noahic Covenant is ultimately to be seen as *a* covenant of grace to mankind because the benefit of the covenant is experience by all mankind without having to earn it.

It is not “*The”* Covenant of Grace (which we will learn more about later), but it is “*a”* covenant of grace.

The life and too-many-to-number common gifts we experience every day come to us as undeserved and unearned benefits of the Noahic Covenant.

* **This covenant does not redeem humans; it cannot save us**

It doesn’t give redemption from our sin (eternal life), but it does give temporary life preservation.

This is not the covenant giving the elect eternal salvation; this covenant does not give eternal life

* **Creation Is Persevered for God’s Covenant of Redemption Plan**

This Noahic Covenant perseveres this broken creation until God has fulfilled every promise to His chosen people of the Covenant of Redemption.

**2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

This verse is about God’s plan to save all of His chosen ones, not bringing about the end of this creation until all the elect are given life, then given new life in Christ Jesus.

Not even a wicked and blasphemous world will thwart His Covenant of Redemption plan.

* **Judgment and the end of this first creation is coming**

The Noahic Covenant benefit will end when God’s purpose for this creation is complete.

When the Bible refers to the Noahic Covenant as an "everlasting covenant," it means that God will not revoke/end the covenant for the whole remaining extent of this first creation’s existence—from the time it was covenanted, the Noahic Covenant lasts as long as the creation lasts. *In that way* it’s an everlasting covenant.

End will come to this first creation, and it will not be by a flood of water, but by fire.

**2 Peter 3:7** … the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

* **They exchanged the truth about God for a lie**

The rainbow is the sign of this gracious preservation covenant.

The rainbow should remind us of the display of wrath God put forth in the flood, it should remind us of the promise He gave to temporarily preserve this creation, and it implicitly warns of the wrath to come for those who are not united to Christ by faith. But mankind is so wicked that unbelieving people twist God’s gracious preservation and use it to indulge in sin and even mock believers and God.

**Isaiah 5:20-21** 20Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! 21Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!

Let us pray for them and preach to them. And let us repent of our own sinful ways as well.

* **These Three Foundational Covenants**

This first creation is destined for destruction due to the broken Covenant of Works; but for a time it is being preserved through the Noahic Covenant in light of the Covenant of Redemption, for the sake of God’s glory and the good of His people. This is how the world is defined biblically. All the world should know these things.

* **Babel: Sin Abounded as Mankind Multiplied Again**

Even after the display of wrath in the flood, because of the sin nature in man, sin abounded as mankind multiped again.

**Genesis 11:1-9** 1Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. 2And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. 3And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. 4Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” 5And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. 6And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. 7Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.” 8So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. 9Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

* **Mankind formally divided**

The Lord broke up their efforts to build a pride tower by creating the variety of languages, tribes, and people groups, spreading them all throughout the world.

**Genesis 11:9** Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

For the first time in the human race, there are now definitively different people groups/ethnicities/ nations. Still one race of mankind, all created in the image of God, both male and female, but now distinct ethnicities/groups. This sets the stage for what God does in the Old Covenant—which we get into in our next lesson.

* **Application**
* **Worship, sanctification, evangelism**

If you are in Christ, living all these years later, you were born (dead in sin) and reborn (saved from sin) because God has patience to see His plan through. We should worship God for this!

**James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Let’s go proclaim the gospel with boldness, because Scripture tells us that God will save His people, and this creation will remain until that has happened.

* **Bible reading and interpretation**

The promise that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh makes more sense in light of the Covenant of Redemption.