Section: Divine Covenants (Covenant Theology)

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

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**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q57 leads us to the Noahic Covenant**

* **Introduction**

Last lesson we focused on the Adamic Covenant (the Covenant of Works)—in this lesson move on in the Old Testament.

If you look at the Divine Covenants Timeline Layout image I gave you week one, you can locate where we are.

On the very left we see in eternity past the Covenant of Redemption.

Then we identify the beginning of creation, and see the Adamic Covenant.

Then, we come to the Noahic covenant, our focus for tonight.

Keep in mind, that *A divine covenant is an agreement between God and another party. It is initiated by God and may include obligations, rewards, and/or punishments from Him.*

We are still working within that definition.

I might add one in the future, but I didn’t write a catechism question for the Noahic covenant in the current version of the catechism. It’s not that it’s not important, it surely is; it just didn’t make the cut in the first edition of the catechism. So, if you look for a Noahic Covenant question in the catechism, you won’t find it. However, we still need to cover it in this Covenant Theology study.

We need to cover it in this study and know this in general *because* the Adamic Covenant we covered last week and the Noahic Covenant we consider this week define and explain the creation *as we know it*.

The world is full of sin and brokenness because of Adam’s broken covenant of works.

Our daily work is hard because of Adam’s broken covenant of works.

Childbearing is incredibly hard because of Adam’s broken covenant of works.

We all experience pain, suffering, hardship, and death because of Adam’s broken covenant of works.

We need saving grace for redemption because of Adam’s broken covenant of works.

We need new bodies and a new creation to live in because of Adam’s broken covenant of works.

This first creation is destined for destruction due to the broken Covenant of Works.

But, as we will see tonight, this creation is, *for a time*, being preserved *through the Noahic Covenant*, *in light of the Covenant of Redemption*, for the sake of God’s glory and the gathering of His chosen people.

Like the Adamic Covenant, we’ll see that the Noahic Covenant covers and speaks to all of mankind for the rest of this creation’s history.

Through the Noahic Covenant God is longsuffering and forbearing this wicked world so that His plan and promises can be fulfilled.

Through the Noahic Covenant God reiterates creational design and mandates and He declares important commands for all of creation in all times of this creation.

This covenant will help you understand why things remain as they are, for now. Like last week’s study, this covenant givens you important context to life as you know it.

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 these foundational covenants*.

Everyone should know these things. In these things we should see our sin and desperate need of the gracious Savior, and see the glory of God in it all.

* **Post-fall, pre-flood**

With that, in this Covenant Theology lesson, I’ll give you some of the important biblical facts about the often spoken of historical time and happenings with Noah.

Noah’s life is covered mostly from Genesis 5 through chapter 10, and we find the details of the Noahic Covenant in that section of Scripture. God interacts with Noah and speaks to the covenant a couple times in that section.

Now, to some degree, we all know of the historical account of Noah and the Ark.

But before we recap these happenings, let’s note here that mankind was not yet divided into different ethnicities and nationalities in the way that was to come later. But mankind *was multiplying*, and Genesis 1-5 gives us the account of the first generations of humanity—the generations of Adam until the time to Noah.

The fall of Adam and those he represented quickly and severely proved what we studied last week. Namely, that mankind was now cursed and sinful. Mankind experienced total defilement in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. Human nature was no longer without sin, rather its default was now of sin. Therefore, wickedness became mankind’s testimony.

In days of Noah, we read clearly in Scripture that mankind was in sin and not glorifying God.

**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…**

But, as we considered last lesson, remember that God promised a redeemer to come and be victorious.

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.

The only escape from God’s wrath—from the punishment mankind deserves for sin—is through the promised head-crushing seed of Eve.

**Genesis 3:15** God says:

“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.”

This is Messiah being promised. This is a declaration of victory based on the future work of Jesus Christ.

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

The world was broken, and sin was rampant in Noah’s days, and *the promised seed hadn’t arrived to complete His work yet*. So, God continues to progress creation to get to the fulfilment and victory of the mystery of this coming Messiah.

The Covenant of Redemption being the great and unchanging plan of God means God would not end this first creation until all the ones He chose to save in the Covenant of Redemption are saved. *Remember, all of creation is set in the context of the Covenant of Redemption divine plan.*

Why didn’t God end the world and life as we know it at the fall of Adam? Because of the Covenant of Redemption. In the same way, why didn’t God end the world and all of life as we know it in Noah’s time? Because of the Covenant of Redemption.

God was and is working out His plan to bring gracious eternal salvation to a chosen people from all the world through the work of Christ.

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. God covenanted in eternity past and promised to mankind in time, a plan that hasn’t been fulfilled yet in Noah’s time, so creation must be persevered, not fully eliminated.

* **A flood of wrath**

Yet, sin is a terrible display of disrespect and hatred towards God, so in Noah’s day, God saw fit to display His wrath. And not just His wrath, but also His grace. He would flood the whole earth *according to His wrath*, while He saved one chosen family so that all those chosen for eternal salvation still to be born could eventually be saved, *according to His grace*.

Out of all of those living at that time, God graciously chose to save Noah from the flood waters and commanded him to build an ark and gather what God instructed to be saved from the flood waters into the ark. With this choice of Noah, God establishes Noah as the figure head of the covenant in our focus this lesson.

**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.

After the flood, when the only humans remaining (Noah and his family), as well as the saved animals, were able to exit the ark, God’s commitment to both destroy and save was proven true. So, Noah built an altar to the Lord, a worshipful gesture.

* **The Noahic Covenant**

With the flood now over, God is ready to impose another covenant upon man. Like the Adamic Covenant, this covenant will also encompass all of mankind and have implications for the rest of creation. But unlike the Adamic Covenant, the blessings of this covenant are not *earned* by mankind.

God begins to declare how He will cause things to function post-flood, and He includes another declaration for His creational design for mankind to multiply and rule/steward the earth.

* **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 the intention 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.”

Pause for a moment.

We see here the beginnings of or a summary of what God is covenanting to in the Noahic Covenant. 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. Basically, God is saying “I won’t repeatedly wipe out nearly all of creation like I did with the flood, I will not issue creation-wide curses, creation-wide death sentences.” Instead, while this first creation remains, the normal (God designed) function of creation will continue—the earth will still spin around the sun as it should, seasons will come and go as they should, harvest will still be possible, et cetera, and mankind will not go extinct or be wiped away.

Later, we will see further that all of creation is covenanted to in this Noahic Covenant. In the upcoming verses *God said to Noah, “This is … the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”*

So, unlike some covenants we will look at after this one, God made this covenant with all of mankind—it is not limited to a particular group of people.

* **Creation mandates**

Then God turns to the men left on earth (each being the head of their marriage) and God repeats some critical creation mandates and issues further commands or clarity on how things should happen.

**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.

6“Whoever 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.

The creational design things here that are a repeat of things told to mankind in the early days of creation should be very familiar to you, as they should have been for Noah and his sons.

God gives some additional insight here as to the gift of foods, explicitly stating that it is proper to eat meat.

And, God raises up the value of human life and proper justice, which we’ll look at in a moment.

God was lifting up His design for mankind as a whole. Creational things that must be. “Be fruitful and multiply” and “Into your hand [the other created things] are delivered” (Subdue and rule the rest of creation).

As we saw these things in the creation account, we see them again, another declaration for His creational design for all of mankind.

Sam Renihan writes, “ …all of mankind is called to raise up and establish structured and successful societies, pursuing cultural achievement and growth. Man is not called to sit in the dirt and mope. We are called to work. Though the ground may sprout thorns and our brows may pour forth sweat, despite resistance and setback, curse and difficulty, God has called all mankind, men and women, to be workers.”

Male and female alike, according to their God-given roles and functions, must work, flourish, multiply, and rule.

For example, Scripture makes clear that married women have the glorious task of childbearing, being busy working at home, nurturing families and helping their husbands.

And Scripture makes clear that men are to have the burden of leading, protecting, providing for, and caring for their families and others God puts under their responsibility.

Men and women alike, working their God-given tasks, contributing to the expansion of and flourishing of mankind in this creation. We surely are to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and rule it.

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

However, these efforts will be a struggle. Mankind is still fallen in Adam; Children conceived of man and woman are all conceived in sin and go on sinning from the womb. And the creation is still broken; not functioning in the blessed way it was originally created. *Therefore, since man is still disposed to sin and unnecessary violence, consider for a moment the strong emphasis of God here on the value and protection of human life.* In this declaration over all of mankind, for all of creation, as long as it exists as this broken world, God is making clear what has always been the case—all the way back to Adam, that is human life has a particular value, and it must be respected and protected as such. So much so, that 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.

Verse 6 gets to the weight of this:

**Genesis 9:6**

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

Renihan’s comments on this section are helpful and clear, “All mankind, wherever they live, are held to this command. Man's commission is to be fruitful and multiply, as repeated in verse 7. Murder directly opposes and prevents the fulfilment of this commission. Thus, to control mankind's sinful nature and to prevent extreme bloodshed, those who murder are subject to death. This is an establishment of a system of legal and judicial retribution in society. Mankind has power, derived from God Himself through covenant in his kingdom, to punish those who harm society, in this case by murder. A death penalty, justly deserved and prescribed, is an act of God's judgment on the murderer and an act of deliverance for the society in which that murder committed his crime.

In the Noahic Covenant, human societies therefore have two basic and related jobs: to preserve life, and to preserve the family. Mankind is to be fruitful and multiply. Society, man looking out for man, should promote human fruitfulness and multiplication. And that multiplication takes place in the context of families. As a result, any society or government that corrupts the family or murders the innocent is a government in direct treason and disobedience to the God of the universe. They are abusing the sword entrusted to them by turning it on the innocent, rather than the guilty.

...

Countries have constitutions or similar founding documents. But there is a more fundamental constitution by which we all are to live, and that is the Noahic Covenant governing the common kingdom of mankind. As a society we must promote, preserve, and protect the life of individuals, and the life of the family. These are our most basic commitments. As a result, we must punish the wicked, we must put to death murderers, and we must seek, with God's help, to exemplify and manifest real loving thriving families in our own homes.”

* + - **Bearing the sword**

To all of this you may be wondering about who and how this justice (death penalty for murder) is to be seen through. We’ll take a brief aside to give an introductory answer to that.

Over the history of this creation, God has had more than one way various people groups were to punish the wicked and put to death murderers. 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** **1**Let 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. **2**Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. **3**For 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, **4**for 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. **5**Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

In the New Covenant, government (not an individual or a non-government group) is the party responsible for bearing the sword—that is, for example in our current consideration, 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.

Whatever your personal feelings or politics have been on this matter, you need to see clearly that God has commanded that the death penalty is to be used in the cases of the unjust killing of a human, and see clearly that it is the government’s role to see this through—not any individual or group acting apart from established governmental authority. We must be people who know and submit to God’s word and ways—not self, popular opinion, or politics.

To be clear, many governments, including our current one, do things they shouldn’t do and don’t do things they should do. Our government has reached far, far beyond what God has commissioned it to do, as well as not seeing through a proper, consistent, and just wielding of the sword. But that doesn’t change what God has commanded and designed for governments. *They are commanded* to act justly according to His design and the authority He has delegated to them. The responsible government parties will be held accountable to God for how they do this (or their lack thereof).

While more time should be spent detailing these things form God’s word, we must close this aside and get back to our main considerations.

* + **The value of human life**

See from our study so far in this whole series, that man and woman are made in God’s image—the beauty, wonder, and implications of that are great. We cannot be careless or viscous with human life—each person is God’s creation, God’s possession, God’s image-bearer. From conception onward, no individual, group, or government has the right to take a human life outside of God’s prescribed reasons. (Further laying out from Scripture and discussing these prescribed reasons for putting someone to death is beyond the scope of this lesson, but it is an important biblical study.)

**Genesis 9:5-7**

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.

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

From conception onward, no individual, group, or government has the right to take a human life outside of God’s prescribed reasons. Think then for a moment about the act of abortion.

* + - **Abortion**

Do you see the clear and weighty declaration of God about mankind in this Genesis 9 chapter of Scripture and do you feel the wickedness of how abortion spits in the face of God and wickedly kills a human made in God’s image?

There is no political reasoning that supersedes God’s design and command,

there is no personal or circumstantial reasoning that supersedes God’s design and command,

there is no governmental reasoning that supersedes God’s design and command.

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. Human value begins then, and their life should not be ended by abortion or any other form of murder.

So, in these portions of Genesis, we see another declaration for God’s creational design for all of mankind, and some added insight:

Be fruitful and multiply.

Work.

Manage the land and the animals.

Raise up and establish structured and successful societies.

Protect and value human life.

Execute justice justly.

These are not pre-conditions in the Noahic Covenant, but they are things mankind *must do* as the image-bearers of God. Since the Noahic Covenant covers and speaks to all of mankind for the rest of this creation’s history, these things are declared in the Noahic Covenant as they describe God’s creational design for all of mankind. Now then, let us further consider God’s promises in this covenant—not as rewards for work done by man, but as His gracious commitment for a creation undeserving.

* **The clear promise of gracious preservation**

As the passages continues, God declares His covenantal promises as the Noahic Covenant is formally established. In short, He promises the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. **This is a 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.”

This is significant…. You and I are living today because of this covenant.

All of creation has remained to this day because of this covenant.

God made this covenant with all of mankind—it applies to mankind today, as it did in the days of Noah. *God said to Noah, “This is … the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”*

The sun still rises, the grass still grows, food still exists because of this covenant.

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.

This covenant contains God’s gracious commitment for a creation *undeserving*.

*All who have been given life of any length didn’t have to (or don’t have to) earn the blessings of this covenant*. God has given all of us the benefits of it apart from us earning the benefits. All of mankind receives the creational preservation this covenant promises.

All of us fell in Adam, are conceived guilty, and come from our mother’s womb sinning. None of us deserve life at all, and once we were given life at conception, we all deserved instant and eternal punishment from God. Therefore, every person, elect or reprobate, who experiences **any life** is receiving life they don’t deserve.

Further, any person, elect or reprobate, who enjoy the other common gifts of God in living in this creation are receiving gifts they don’t deserve. A baby enjoying the nurturing milk from a mother, a child enjoying the thrill of playing in the rain, an adult enjoying the beauty of a faithful sunrise…on and on and on…the life and too-many-to-number common gifts we experience everyday come to us as undeserved and unearned benefits of the Noahic Covenant. *All of this is a reality, in time and space, because of the Noahic Covenant.*

Because the Noahic Covenant is ultimately an unconditional promise from God to grant life and some level of flourishing rather than wiping out mankind as a whole, it is considered *a* covenant of grace to all of us.

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

Be clear though, it doesn’t give redemption from our sin (eternal life), but it does give temporary life preservation. God’s choosing to save Noah and His family from the flood waters, in and of itself, saved their lives temporarily, but not their souls. Likewise, the Noahic Covenant, in and of itself, doesn’t save any souls, it does **not** make new the spiritually dead heart of man. This is not the covenant giving the elect eternal salvation—this covenant does not give eternal life, for eternal life only comes through the New Covenant, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Eternal life is only given to the chosen ones of the Covenant of Redemption as God effectually calls them into a different covenant, the New Covenant.

Sam Renihan writes, “This [Noahic Covenant—its promise of preservation] is promised irrespective of man's obedience. This is a covenant with obligations [mankind is called to multiply and subdue creation], but its promised blessings will not be removed. God will not flood the earth again. And the rainbow is God's visible promise to the world.

The sun will shine on the righteous and the wicked equally. God promises to persevere creation, not eternally, but never again will a flood destroy the earth. And note again, this promise is not conditioned on what God requires of us. Though He may pour out judgement on peoples and nations for their wickedness, the whole of mankind will not suffer for it. God will not destroy the earth by flood however tumultuous events in one place may be.

The reason and purpose for this promise of preservation is that it creates a stable platform for which God's plan for salvation can play out. The mystery of Christ will unfold in this theater of preservation. And, therefore, the people of God can know at all times whether before or after the advent of the promised seed that God will not destroy the earth until He has fulfilled every last promise to His people. This covenant is a comfort, therefore, that however insane life becomes, however much instability we see around us, God's promises will be fulfilled.”

That last line is powerful, again, “This covenant is a comfort…that however insane life becomes, however much instability we see around us, God's promises will be fulfilled.”

* **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. Creation remains cursed, mankind is still fallen, but it all is persevered for God’s plan and promise to be fulfilled.

In this Noahic Covenant we must see the goodness and patience of God. This Noahic Covenant contains another declaration for God’s creational design for all of mankind, so that through human preservation and reproduction the Seed promised to Eve will be provided. God has a plan to redeem and eternally have a specific people, *and that isn’t complete yet*. As we have taught here at Disciples, that’s exactly what

**2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)** is talking about. The verse says:

**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.

From the context in 2 Peter and the teaching of Scripture as a whole, the “patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” here is specifically talking about the chosen ones of the CoR. 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*.

In this, we see a powerful display of God’s patience and longsuffering. This is grand. Not even a wicked and blasphemous world will thwart His Covenant of Redemption plan—rather, all things that come about serve their role in His plan.

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

As I’ve mentioned here already, the Noahic Covenant benefit will end when God’s purpose for this creation is complete.

Note that in the Genesis 9 passage, this Noahic Covenant is called an “everlasting covenant.” It should be understood that (like many other words in Scripture) there are different ways that word can be used. Context and other factors (IE “Tota Scriptura” - All of Scripture’s teaching) are key in understanding how the word “everlasting” is being used in any given passage of the Bible.

For example, when the Bible refers to God as “from everlasting to everlasting” (Ps 90, 103, etc) it means that God is *without beginning and without end*—He is timeless and infinite.

*But*, that can’t be the meaning of everlasting when the Bible calls the Noahic Covenant “everlasting”—the Noahic Covenant surely is ***not***without beginning and without end—timeless and infinite. So, there are various ways the word “everlasting” is used in the Bible.

Now, 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.

We know that the promise made in it (“the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.” Gen 9:15), will no longer be needed when the earth is made new *as there won’t be any sin on the earth for God to judge/have wrath against*. All **un**repentant sinners will be in hell, under God’s active wrath.

So, this Noahic Covenant, and the benefits it provides, will end when God’s purpose for this creation is complete. And at that time, judgment will come for all those ever conceived of life.

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

**2 Peter 3:7** tells us

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

While the work and grace of Christ will prove those with saving faith *safe* with Jesus forever, the wickedness of the non-believers will be laid bare and they will be accountable for all the wrath they deserve from their fall in Adam and additionally that which they stored up during the unrepentant life they lived—those who did not repent and trust in Christ will be thrown into the lake of fire for eternal punishment.

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

Portions of Scripture, such as 2 Peter 3 & Romans 1 & 2, tell us that 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*. This clearly shows us that the Noahic Covenant does nothing to change a man’s heart.

…Think for a moment about how some in our modern society use the rainbow.

As we saw, the rainbow is the sign of this gracious preservation covenant—it’s to serve as a reminder of this 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 it 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*. The LG community and their supporters have taken the rainbow—this sign—and IN PRIDE, use it to flaunt and symbolize their wickedness.

This is both disgraceful and ironic.

The rainbow should remind them of the display of wrath God put forth in the flood and it should warn them of the wrath to come for those who are not repentant of sin, reconciled to God.

They should read the Bible and we should tell them of the Biblical truth so that they come to know of God’s promises, his wrath, and of the gospel of grace. They should repent of their wickedness and prideful twisting of God’s gracious preservation unto believing in and living for King Jesus.

When I think of those celebrating sin, I think of

**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!

The unrepentant (in this case, those denying God’s design for marriage and/or practicing sexual sin—and those approving of others who do these things) are desperate for Jesus. Yet, they choose sin over salvation. They choose self of Savior.

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

Back to our main point now, this Noahic Covenant perseveres this broken creation until God has fulfilled every promise to His chosen people of the Covenant of Redemption. This Noahic Covenant, as Scripture tells us, grants mankind temporary life (which we do not deserve), and it allows for the fullness of time to happen so that all the elect can be called out and saved.

That is, as a quick overview, the Noahic Covenant. Let us remember the goodness and patience of God though this. Let this covenant be a comfort to us however insane life becomes, however much instability we see around us, God's promises will be fulfilled.

* **These three foundational covenants**

Now notice something very important. With these lessons so far, we should see that we live in the first creation *existing as we know it because of the Covenant of Works and the Noahic Covenant*. 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. History has been what it is, is what it is, and will be what it is because of these foundational covenants. Everyone should know these things, see our own sin and desperate need of the gracious Savior, and see the glory of God in it all.

* **Babel: Sin abounded as mankind multiped again**

Now between the Noahic Covenant we looked at tonight and the beginning of the Old Covenant we’ll focus on next time, something very important happens. That is the account of the Tower of Babel. Let’s briefly consider this event *to prepare for next our next CT lesson*.

Even after the display of wrath in the flood, *because of the sin nature in man*, sin abounded as mankind multiped again. We when come to Genesis 11, the people were living in sin with pride and arrogance.

Read the account with me,

**Genesis 11:1-9 (ESV)**

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**

As a part of His plan and as a display of His power and hatred towards sin, 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. We read in…

**Genesis 11:9 (ESV)**

**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.

This is very important.

For the first time in the human race, there are now *definitively* different people groups/different ethnicities/different 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.

Before we close, let’s consider a bit of **APPLICATION** to be thinking about for your discussion time and personal pondering.

* **Application**
* **Worship, Sanctification, Evangelism**

So, How does this help us worship God / what does this mean for our sanctification / how does this lesson spur on evangelism?

Our God is amazing. He is perfect, wise, gracious, and just.

EVERY TIME you see a rainbow, remember our great God, and His plan to save His people!

The Noahic Covenant shows us how God will not abandon His plan to save the chosen ones. 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!* You were saved and you get to experience eternal blessing because God didn’t wipe out the creation all those years ago or any time since then.

So let us press on, growing in our conformance to Christ. Not living idly. Let’s be active in growing as believers in discipleship, because our great God is at work. Let us give all glory to God, knowing that:

**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.

Also, we see in the Noahic Covenant that God has promised patience, so that all of His chosen ones can be saved. So 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. People need the gospel. And God has commissioned us to share it-- verbally, lovingly, boldly. Let’s enjoy this call.

Finally, I told you upfront that these covenant theology “lessons will significantly benefit you in your understanding of God and His word.” So… What does the truth in this lesson mean for my hermeneutic?

* **Bible Reading and Interpretation**

As we said the first week, we must keep the Covenant of Redemption in mind as we read the Bible. If we try to understand the happenings we read about in the Old Testament without that foundation, we will struggle to understand it. Hopefully you see the blessing of having a solid foundation today. Hopefully, 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.

With that, we will bring the lesson to a close. In our next CT lesson we are going to look at the Old Covenant. It is very complex and interesting.

I trust you will benefit by the teaching we are bringing and hope you’ll make it a priority to be here to hear it.

Let’s pray…

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