

Introduction (Gen 9:1-17)

We had our house painted in preparation of selling it. I took last Friday off and was home when Steve, the painter, came over to paint the storage room downstairs. He was very careful about getting everything set up. He taped all the baseboards. He took off all the electrical coverings. He got everything ready before he ever painted anything. As we talked, he said the key to painting is getting everything set up. The preparation makes painting go smoothly and quickly. I find that getting things properly set up is true in most things in life. A home has to have a good foundation before you start building on it. Once the foundation is poured and everything is in square, the building goes up fairly quickly. Last week I got everything set up for today. Last week, I poured a covenant foundation in preparation of building on it this morning.

Two weeks ago we finished Genesis 8, where Noah and his family, got off the ark and made an altar and offered burnt offerings from each of the clean animals. We looked at the priority of worship, the act of worship, and the response to worship. Last week I introduced covenants, and I covered some of the key elements of a covenant. We launched out of Genesis 6:18, where God told Noah that He was going to establish His covenant with him. This morning, we are going to cover the fulfillment of God's word to Noah. We will start with Genesis 8:20 and we will finish with Genesis 9:17. I believe that the various parts of the covenant that God established with Noah will make more sense this week.

Before we get into the passage this morning, I wanted to make one point. In Genesis 6:18, God told Noah He was going to establish a covenant with him. In our passage today, God fulfilled that promise to Noah. God always does what He says He will do. Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" This is a wonderful truth. When God says that He will do something, He will do it. We have God's written word to us that He will fulfill. When you see a promise in God's word, you can trust God to fulfill that word.

(Gen 6:17-18) "Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. {18} 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."

My daughter, Kathleen, is here with us this morning. In April 2000, at the age of six, she was diagnosed with Acute Myeloma Leukemia. At that time they did not have a cure for AML and the doctor said she probably had three to eight weeks to live. The diagnosis and outlook was not good. Our family all worked together to support Kathleen as she went through chemotherapy at the Children's Hospital of Atlanta. As I sought God for a word about the situation, He answered me in one of my quiet times out of Psalm 41:1-3, "*How blessed is he who considers the helpless; The LORD will deliver him in a day of trouble. The LORD will protect him and keep him alive, and he shall be called blessed upon the earth; and do not give him over to the desire of his enemies. The LORD will sustain him upon his sickbed; in his illness, You restore him to health.*" Kathleen had considered the helpless. She had taken care of Darius Brendon and Lavergerae Monique Sandtazia Scott, our two foster babies. Kathleen did more than consider, she was a mother to them. She pushed them around in baby strollers, fed them, and changed their diapers. This promise said that God would protect her and keep her alive, sustain her on her sickbed, and restore her to health. I clung to that promise, and I knew that Kathleen was going to survive. God always does what He promises to do.

This morning we are looking at God's Covenant With Noah. We will not see all the elements that we looked at last week, but we will see some of them. Specifically, we will look at the Blood Sacrifice, the Blessing, the Oaths and Vows, and the Sign of the Covenant.

1. Blood Sacrifice (Gen 8:20)
2. Vows and Oaths (Gen 8:21-22, 9:8-11)
3. Blessing (Gen 9:1-7)
4. Sign of the Covenant (9:12-17)

1. Blood Sacrifice (Gen 8:20-21)

(Gen 8:20) “Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.”

We saw in Hebrews that covenants required a blood sacrifice. The writer of Hebrews said, “even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood.” The first covenant is not the covenant with Adam and God, or the covenant between Adam and Eve, or the covenant with Noah. The first covenant is the covenant God made with Moses. But, all of the covenants were inaugurated with blood sacrifices.

(Heb 9:18) “Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood.”

When God was giving instructions to Noah about the coming flood, He told him to bring seven pairs of all the clean animals. God knew that He was going to cut a covenant with Noah, and He knew it required blood sacrifices, and God provided the blood sacrifices that would be used in the covenant. When God tested Abraham and told him to sacrifice Isaac, He provided a lamb in the thicket for the sacrifice. In God's New Covenant with us, God provided the blood sacrifice, His precious Son, Jesus Christ.

2. Vows and Oaths

(Gen 8:21-22) “The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, “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. {22} While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

When God smelled the soothing aroma from the burnt offering, He said to Himself, “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. Then, He said that as long as the earth remains, there would be seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night. The principle of sowing and reaping will continue until we have a new earth. Many people do not understand the principle of sowing and reaping. It is a principle that affects every area of our lives. If you sow peace, you will reap peace. If you sow grace and forgiveness, you will reap grace and forgiveness. If you sow bitterness, you will reap bitterness. If you sow financially into the kingdom of God, you will reap financially. Some people do not have much because they do not sow much. In 2 Corinthians 9, Paul teaches us that he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. It is a spiritual principle and God vowed that this principle would be in place while the earth remains.

(2 Cor 9:6-7) “Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. {7} Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

God also vowed that there would be days and seasons as long as the earth remains. We are in the spring season right now and the pink, purple, red, and white blossoms on the trees are absolutely beautiful. The different colors of greens on the trees as they are budding are beautiful. Spring is a beautiful time of year. These seasons will continue while the earth remains because God vowed that in the covenant He made with Noah.

I don't think that seasons just apply to the time of year. I believe there are seasons in our lives. Karen and I are excited about entering a new season, a new chapter in our lives. If you are not crazy about the season that you are in, take courage, this season will end, and there will be new seasons in your life. Be patient, and make the most of the current season. Learn the lessons that God is teaching you in this current season. Be encouraged, a new season is coming for you. These were not the only vows that God made with Noah. Let's pick it up in Genesis 9:8-11.

(Gen 9:8-11) “Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, {9} ‘Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; {10} and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. {11} 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.’”

God vowed to Noah and every living creature that He would not cut off all flesh by the water of the flood. He also vowed that there would never again be a flood to destroy the earth. In Houston last year, they had 52 inches of rain in four days. There was massive local flooding. If you had the same kinds of rains, and even harder, in every place on earth, there would be global flooding, as in the days of Noah. But that is not going to happen because God vowed that He would not do that again. It does not mean that there will not be some local flooding from hurricanes and storms. There are hurricane seasons and in those hurricane seasons, the weather conditions are favorable to storms and there may be some local flooding.

I want to look at Numbers 15:2-5 for just a minute. It relates to burnt offerings and vows. “*Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the land where you are to live, which I am giving you, {3} then make an offering by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering or a sacrifice to fulfill a special vow, or as a freewill offering or in your appointed times, to make a soothing aroma to the LORD, from the herd or from the flock. {4} ‘The one who presents his offering shall present to the LORD a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil, {5} and you shall prepare wine for the drink offering, one-fourth of a hin, with the burnt offering or for the sacrifice, for each lamb.’”*

The ark had just landed on Mount Ararak and Noah had just entered the land where he was to live. He made a burnt offering just as Numbers instructs us to do. It says that with the burnt offering, there is to be a grain offering and wine for a drink offering. The bread and wine are the covenant meal, which is an important part of a covenant. Our text does not say that Noah offered a grain offering and a drink offering, but I believe that Noah presented these offerings along with the burnt offering, and that it was a soothing aroma to the Lord.

Before moving on, I want to make one more point on vows and oaths. God will keep His word. He will keep His vows and oaths. And, He expects us to keep our vows and oaths. In Numbers 30:2, we read, *“If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”* God expects us to keep our vows and oaths. When we give somebody our word, we need to be true to our word. People need to be able to trust that we will do what we promise. Notice what James, the half-brother of Jesus said in James 5:12, *“But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.”* God will hold us accountable for the vows and oaths that we make, so we need to be careful about what we vow.

3. **Blessing** (Gen 9:1-7)

God established His covenant with Noah with a blood sacrifice and with vows. We also find the covenant blessings. Let's pick it up in Genesis 9:1.

(Gen 9:1-7) “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. {2} The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. {3} Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. {4} Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. {5} Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. {6} Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man. {7} As for you, be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.’”

God blessed Noah and his sons and told them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. That was the same blessing that He gave to Adam in Genesis 1:28. When we studied Genesis 1, we saw that there were four purposes that God had for men. All four purposes start with R. First, we were made in His image so that we could **Relate** to Him. God created us for relationship with Him. Second, He created us to **Represent** Him. We were created in His image but we cannot reproduce God. We can only reproduce men, who are made in the image of God. We are to be transformed into the image of God. God is interested in our spiritual transformation. Transformation takes place when we renew our minds with God's word. The third purpose was to **Reproduce**. We were to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. I believe that this is not just in the physical realm, but in the spiritual realm. We are to preach the gospel and spiritually reproduce and fill the earth. At the Connection Church, we want to help those who do not know God come into a relationship with God and get connected to Him. The fourth purpose was for us to **Rule** over the earth. We are stewards of the earth, and all the creatures on the earth. God expects us to be good stewards. We should recycle. We should be careful about pollution. We should try to use clean energy. We should protect the animals and birds and fish. This is all part of Ruling over the earth.

(Gen 1:28) “God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

In the area of ruling over the earth, God made some changes. Adam and Eve were vegetarians. They were not allowed to eat meat. In God's covenant with Noah, He told them that just as He gave them all the plants, He was now giving them animals to eat. To protect the animals, God put a fear and terror of man in all the animals, birds, etc. Up until now, the animals were not afraid of man. Men did not eat the animals and so they were not a threat. Now, men were going to kill the animals for food, so God put a fear of man in the animals to protect them.

God gave some conditions also. He said that we were not to eat the blood with the animal. He said the life is in the blood and we were not to eat the blood. Many years ago when we had a goat farm, there were some people that would come and get two or three goats for a baptism or special occasion. They would slaughter the goats at our farm. They saved all the blood and cooked it with the goat. God specifically told us not to do that. Many people are unaware of some of the principles that God gave to all men to live by.

God also established some laws to live by. He said in verse six, "whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man." The command, "thou shalt not murder" was established long before the Ten Commandments. God established that law in His covenant with Noah and all men in Genesis 9.

God blessed Noah, and the blessing is a very important part of a covenant. In our New Covenant with Christ, we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). We are to regularly remember and thank God for the blessings we have. The blessings that God gives us are to be passed on to others. God told Abraham that all nations would be blessed through him (Genesis 18:18). We are to bless others in our lives. We need to bless our coworkers, our employees, our neighbors. We are to bless the cities that we live in. We are to be known as a people that bless others. Blessing others should be a characteristic of each of our lives. Learn to bless others. Take a minute and pray God's favor and blessing on them.

4. **Sign of the Covenant** (Rainbow) (Gen 9:12-17)

The fourth part of the covenant that we see is the sign of the covenant. Let's pick it up in Gen 9:12-17.

(Gen 9:12-17) "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; {13} I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. {14} It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, {15} and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. {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.' {17} And God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.'"

We saw last week that the purpose of the sign was to remember. I find it interesting that God said that the rainbow would cause Him to remember the everlasting covenant that He made with every living creature on the earth. I generally do not think that God needs reminders. Karen and I use reminders all the time. She posts sticky notes at night of things that she needs to do the next morning. These sticky notes are reminders so that she does not forget to do them.

My sticky notes are electronic. I create tasks in Microsoft Outlook of the things that I need to do, and I assign due dates. Every day my task list is displayed on the right hand side of my screen, and I am reminded of things that I need to do. I need reminders, but I don't normally think of God needing reminders. The sign He made was for all successive generations. It is a perpetual sign.

In New Mexico, we have the prettiest rainbows that I have ever seen. After it rains we sometimes see double or triple rainbows. We often see full rainbows. The colors in our rainbows are strong and vibrant. The reminder God gave us is very beautiful and colorful.

One of the vows that I made in my wedding was to love Karen. We did not write our own vows, but used the wedding vows in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer. The vow I made said, *"In the name of God, I, Bill, take you, Karen, to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow."* Every morning, when Karen wakes up, she hears a reminder of that vow. The first thing she hears from me when she wakes up is how much I love her. It is important for spouses to know that we love them. We need to regularly communicate and demonstrate our love to our spouses. My regular reminders are a sign of the covenant that I made with Karen and the vows that I made to her before God.

One of the things that I look at on people, both men and women, is their left hand. I look to see if they are wearing a wedding ring. A wedding ring is a reminder of the covenant that we made to our spouse before God. Like the rainbow, wedding rings are beautiful.

One of the reminders that we have of the New Covenant is the Lord's Supper. Jesus said that the bread is a reminder of His body, which was broken for us, and we are to eat it in remembrance of Jesus. He said the wine is a reminder of the covenant we have in His blood. As often as we drink it, it is to be a continual reminder of the wonderful covenant He has made with us.

(1 Cor 11:24-25) "and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." {25} In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

When we consider what Jesus has done for us in establishing a New Covenant with us, we should consider the blessings, the vows and oaths, the exchanges, and all the elements of the covenant. It should cause us to be humble and grateful that God has chosen us and made a covenant with us. We should regularly thank Him for all the blessings we have in Him. We are going to finish this morning with the Lord's Supper. Kathleen is going to lead us this morning.