

Genesis 9B (2011)

- Our focus as we ended last week was the covenant between God and Noah
 - The covenant was a one-way, suzerainty covenant God decreed to Noah and all Creation
 - The terms created a new dispensation or period of God's grace ruling over sinful men
 - Included in the terms was the allowance that men could eat animals for food
 - While animals for their part were changed by the covenant to now have the fear of men
 - Also, men would now rule over each other with the authority to shed a man's blood as penalty for taking life
 - Meanwhile, Noah's family would again fill the earth as Adam did once before
 - God took upon Himself one term
 - That He would never again destroy the Earth with water
 - Leaving open the right to destroy the Earth in other ways
 - The covenant depends only on God's faithfulness, and so long as God remains faithful to His term, the rest of the covenant will remain in effect as well
- The Noahic Covenant begins a new dispensation in God's plan for mankind, one that lasts until God's call of Abraham and the patriarchs
 - Like all covenants, this agreement came with certain features to help set the agreement apart and mark its establishment
 - This morning as we finish Chapter 9, we'll see one of those markers
 - And we also want to consider a question: what did the Flood ultimately accomplish on Earth?
 - It came in response to the extreme nature of man's sin on Earth, but what did the Flood achieve toward that end?

[Gen. 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;

[Gen. 9:13](#) I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.

[Gen. 9:14](#) "It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud,

[Gen. 9:15](#) 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.

[Gen. 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."

[Gen. 9:17](#) 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."

- Covenants usually include certain features to help mark or denote the covenant's existence and remind the parties to observe its terms
 - Some Bible covenants highlight these features more clearly while other examples given in Scripture skip over the details
 - Rest assured that every covenant included at least a few common, basic elements
 - One of those basic elements was a sign or token
 - Signs could be compared to a receipt or a signature
 - When I drop off my dry-cleaning at the cleaners, I have entered into a contract with that business
 - The terms of the contract are simple and mostly unspoken
 - The cleaners will clean my clothes without ruining them and I will pay their advertised fee
 - When I leave my clothes at the counter, the clerk will hand me a receipt for the clothes
 - This receipt is a sign of our contract
 - Every time I look at that receipt, I see visible proof of our contract
 - I also see a reminder to pick up my clothes!

- The sign is not the same thing as the agreement itself
 - For example, if I were to lose my receipt, the contract is still in effect
 - The receipt was merely a representation of the contract, not its substance
- Likewise, covenants use signs to remind the parties that an agreement existed between them
 - It wasn't the substance of the covenant, but it pointed to it
 - And these signs served the same purpose as signatures on modern contracts
 - The parties respected the sign of a covenant as a solemn guarantee from the other party
 - We can see this in another example, when Abraham receives his covenant and when Israel receives the Law
 - These covenants also had signs
 - Abraham's sign was circumcision
 - Israel's sign was the Sabbath Day
 - Both circumcision and the weekly Sabbath were reminders given to mark their respective covenants
- Now in v.12, the Lord declares the sign for the Noahic covenant will be a rainbow
 - In keeping with the nature of the covenant itself, the Lord selected an appropriate sign to communicate to every member of Creation
 - Signs should share certain characteristics if they are to mark a covenant properly
 - First, a sign should last as long as the terms of the covenant itself
 - It does no good if the chosen sign disappears before the covenant itself runs its course
 - Secondly, the sign should be visible to every party of the covenant, so that all who participate can see the reminder and understand its meaning

- Finally, a sign must stand out from the normal everyday
 - It serves no purpose to select as a sign something that doesn't draw attention to itself
 - If we select an everyday normal event as a sign, then it cannot communicate that something new has come into existence
 - The rainbow meets these requirements perfectly
 - The rainbow is everlasting
 - As long as the Earth remains and water falls from the atmosphere, rainbows will exist
 - The rainbow is universal
 - Every continent, every location on Earth sees rainbows
 - Every person and even every animal has opportunity to see this sign, and by God's word understand its meaning
 - Finally, the rainbow is uniquely associated with the end of a rain storm and the appearance of the sun
 - Since we know the arrival of rain was the cause of the Flood
 - And the promise of this covenant is that rain will never again bring a worldwide flood
 - The rainbow is a perfect way to communicate the covenant still at work, God relenting from ever bringing too much water
 - This also leads us to conclude that rainbows were entirely new in Noah's day, probably since rain itself was new
- With v.17 we reach the end of the covenant
 - God has instituted human government with its implied laws and penalties
 - God has stated that the acts of human government are ultimate acts of God in that they serve His divine purpose on Earth

- God has established that a life must be given for a life, and that shed blood is the way that life may be poured out
 - Yet men cannot take in blood as food
- All these terms foreshadow future covenants created by God
 - If we took time, we could identify similarities between this covenant and the Old Covenant and the New Covenant
 - As in the way this covenant established human laws and human rulers
 - But the Old Covenant established God's Law and the New Covenant brought God's Ruler
 - As in how this covenant showed us that crime against man required a man's life be given
 - But the Old Covenant showed a merciful God would make a sacrifice available for sin
 - And the New Covenant revealed a permanent sacrifice capable of removing all sin
 - As in how this covenant taught men to pour out blood of animals
 - But the Old Covenant taught that the pouring out of blood was an act of sacrifice to atone for sin
 - And the New Covenant taught that the blood of Christ was the necessary sacrifice to remit for the sins of men
- There are other similarities and connections, but the sum of it all is a greater point
 - God is at work to reveal His plan to men, but in small steps
 - And with each new revelation, God fills in a picture of His plan to address the sin of the Garden once and for all
 - The writer of Hebrews describes it this way:

[Heb. 1:1](#) God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

[Heb. 1:2](#) in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

- And this leads us to the second question for the morning: what has this Flood event accomplished in God's plan for the Earth and for men?
 - We get the answer in the course of the rest of Chapter 9, in a story of what happens immediately after the Flood

Gen. 9:18 Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan.

Gen. 9:19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

- Moses reminds us of the men who left the Ark
 - Shem, Ham and Japheth were Noah's sons
 - And Moses adds that Ham was the father of Canaan
 - This statement serves two purposes
 - First, it tells us that enough time had passed since the Flood that the first of Noah's grandchildren have now been born
 - Remember there were no grandchildren around when they entered the Ark
 - Consider how merciful God was to ensure that no children were forced to endure the Ark adventure
 - Secondly, it sets the scene for the rest of this chapter, since Canaan becomes a focus in the story
 - From these three men, the whole Earth was populated
 - We'll learn in the next chapter how these men spread out and what families came from them
 - But for now consider that the full diversity of humans we see today came from the same family
 - We can safely assume that Noah's children looked very similar
 - One wasn't caucasian, the other oriental and the other black skinned

- And yet these variations emerged from these families
- As we contemplate this fact, we find the Bible challenging us on our deeply held prejudices toward other people groups
 - Race is not a biological distinction
 - There is no marker for race in DNA
 - All men came from the same family
 - In the NKJ, Paul says it this way:

[Acts 17:26](#) And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

- So our attitudes toward others must be entirely blind to differences in physical attributes, since these differences are incidental
 - They came as a result of how these men migrated away from each other
 - And their physical isolation eventually caused their genetic differences to concentrate into different races, or nations of people
- But at the end of it all, we are no different to God nor should we be to one another
- Now that life is beginning to return to normal, Noah returns to farming

[Gen. 9:20](#) Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard.

[Gen. 9:21](#) He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.

[Gen. 9:22](#) Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.

[Gen. 9:23](#) But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness.

- Noah plants a vineyard, and eventually it produces grapes
 - From the grapes, Noah makes wine

- Clearly some time has passed since the Flood, several years at least
 - And it's from that vantage point that we gain enough perspective to assess the impact and purpose of the Flood
- In enjoying the harvest of his vineyard, Noah becomes drunk one night
 - This is the first mention of wine in Scripture, and it is not a coincidence that drunkenness follows closely
 - We could take a long side trip on this topic, but I won't do so here
 - Suffice to say that wine itself is never cast as the enemy in the Bible
 - Drunkenness is the evil we are told to avoid
 - And Noah's story is a great testimony to this truth
 - If we cannot enjoy wine (or any alcohol) without drunkenness, then we should refrain from it altogether
 - Noah's drunkenness leads him to pass out in his tent with his robes open or otherwise, exposing him to his children
 - In his nakedness, Noah is exposed in a shameful and sinful way
 - The sons eventually cover their father's body to lessen his shame
 - But not before one of the sons increases the shame through his own sinful response
- Before we look at the details of this story I want to remind you of an earlier moment in Genesis, in the story of Adam in the Garden
 - At the beginning of Adam's time on the new Earth, his life was simple and solitary, living only with his wife
 - He enjoyed God's provision, and Adam had a testimony of blamelessness and innocence before God
 - But he wasn't to remain that way

- In a moment of weakness, and influenced by the Enemy, Adam took a fruit of the field
 - And through its abuse brought himself shame before God and men
- In response to his shameful state, Adam and Woman tried to cover themselves – though their efforts couldn't satisfy God
 - And by his fall, men suffered a lasting penalty
- Now returning to Noah's story, the parallels jump out at us
 - We immediately see that God orchestrated these events to reinforce the basic story of man's sin and God's plan for redemption
 - Noah has become a farmer in the post-Flood age, though he was not a farmer before
 - Obviously, farming would have been a necessity for Noah and his family after the flood wiped out so much
 - Just as Adam was given the responsibility to tend the Garden in his day
 - Then Noah makes an uncharacteristic mistake: he becomes drunk
 - Noah's mistake was to partake of a fruit in excess
 - Obviously, this is similar to Adam's taking of a fruit in the Garden
 - And both are sins in that both are acts prohibited by God's standards
 - Drunkenness is a sin, according to the Bible, and it's a particularly insidious one
 - It breaks down the barriers erected by our conscience which God gave us to protect us from sin
 - It overrides our willingness to hear and follow the Spirit of God as He directs us
 - It tempts us into further sin

- And its consequences extend far beyond ourselves and into the lives of others
- Noah's experience reflects all these Biblical truths
- One son, Ham, sees Noah naked
 - Nakedness in our culture today is losing its sense of shame
 - People glory in showing their bodies, especially to an inappropriate degree
 - It's the ultimate sign of Christian immaturity and selfishness when we see a man or woman wearing revealing clothing, especially to a gathering of believers
 - Because it tempts others into lust and gains the person nothing with respect to their testimony
 - But in the day of Noah, and even into this day by and large, revealing the body was a particularly sinful and shameful act
 - To be seen naked brought shame on the person and upon the one who witnesses the indiscretion
 - For Noah, his son Ham will never look at him the same way again
 - And should Noah learn of Ham's discovery, the shame is magnified for both of them
- So it's particularly horrifying to hear that Ham goes outside the tent and tells his brothers what he saw – that his father is naked
 - Ham had a choice when he discovered his father
 - Having seen him, the damage had been done for Ham, but he still could have preserved his father's dignity
 - And he could have avoided drawing his brothers into the event
 - Instead, Ham gloats in what he finds
 - He tells his brothers what he saw, which spreads the father's shame deeper into the family
 - Secondly, by not covering his father, he invites his brothers to see it for themselves

- Fortunately for Noah, the remaining brothers do all they can to preserve what little dignity remains for Noah
 - They walk backwards into the tent and lay a coat on Dad
 - Though they knew of their father's shame, they didn't choose to see it themselves
- Clearly Ham's response is very different from his brother's
 - While he glories in His father's shame, the others do what they can to preserve dignity
- Here we see more parallels to the story of Adam
 - In the Fall of the Garden, there were three actors
 - One who was responsible for the shame of the Fall, one who tried to mitigate against it, and behind the scenes one who inspired it
 - Here we have a similar trio
 - First, we have Ham playing the part of Adam
 - He made a conscious choice to disregard his father's glory and brought shame to him instead
 - Then we have Shem and Japeth playing the part of Woman
 - Caught up in the events and unable to avoid the sordid affair
 - But they do what they can to minimize their father's shame and try to defend him as best they can
 - Finally, we have Satan working behind the scenes, both in the Garden and here
 - In the Garden he deceived the Woman
 - And here he deceived Noah, bringing the occasion of Noah's sin
- What is God teaching in this section?
 - First, that the power and enormity of the Flood still wasn't enough to wipe out the effects of sin on Earth

- It will require more than a Flood of water to do away with sin
 - For example, remember when Noah was described as blameless and upright?
 - Now we see vivid evidence he was anything but sinless
- Secondly, the root cause of sin – Satan – is still present and working in the sons of disobedience
- Thirdly, men cannot produce an acceptable covering to reverse the shame of sin
 - Even after Noah is covered by his sons, he is nevertheless still shamed by the act, and the covering didn't erase that shame
 - Only a spiritual covering can affect that change
- Finally, the dispensation of human governing won't be an answer to sin any more than the period of human conscience
 - Each new dispensation brings a new measure of control to mitigate against man's sinfulness
 - But at the end of the day they are not solutions