

Covenant and Promise

Introduction

A. This morning we are continuing our mini-series on Genesis 6-9 considering the truths of the flood and how they point us to Christ - we are going to cover four main topics as we go through the story of the flood

1. Sin and judgment
2. Salvation and re-creation
3. Covenant and promise
4. Continuing necessity

B. Review

1. We started the flood account four weeks ago and examined three truths about sin and four truths about God's judgment
2. Three weeks ago we started the second section by looking at salvation and re-creation and saw how the plan of salvation is typed in the flood and points us to the work of Christ
3. Two weeks ago we continued looking at salvation and re-creation and saw how the purpose of salvation is also typed in the flood and calls us to live out these purposes in our lives as well
4. And last week we finished looking at salvation and consider the last purpose of salvation: obedience

C. This week we will be moving on to our third topic of the flood: Covenant and promise

1. The flood account is the first place that the word covenant is used in the Bible - God makes a covenant with Noah that promises a preservation of mankind and the earth
2. And the covenant God made with Noah is perhaps one of the most well known promises in the Bible, probably because the covenant sign is so well known - the rainbow
3. So, I want to spend this morning considering the concept of God's covenant and then considering this covenant specifically
4. As with the rest of my messages on the flood, I want to consider specifically how all of this has to do with Christ - what does God giving Noah a rainbow have to do with our redemption in Christ
 - a. This is why we need to do some background on covenant - first we need to give ourselves the right lens for looking at the truths in this covenant - Then I want to look at this covenant specifically and understand how it fits into the bigger picture of God's covenants

D. **Genesis 6:18, 8:20-22, 9:8-17** - *But 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... Then 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. And 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. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." ... Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and 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. I 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." And 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: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I 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. When 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." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."*

E. Proposition and Outline

1. Proposition - The Noahic Covenant, as do all of God's covenants, calls us to see Christ and glorify God for the work that He has done in Christ
2. Outline
 - a. What is a covenant?
 - b. Why does God use covenants?
 - c. What is the purpose of this covenant?
 - d. What is our response to this covenant?

I. What are covenants?

A. A covenant is a ¹magnificent, ²sovereign ³promise of God sealed by ⁴sacrifice that recognizes a new ⁵relationship between God and the recipient that is often represented by a ⁶sign and requires a ⁷response from the recipient based on this relationship

1. There is a lot of discussion and disagreement about the exact definition of covenant in the ancient world, or in the Bible, or even as regards God's covenants, but I don't have any desire to wade into a complicated, abstract and academic debate here this morning
2. So, I'm not going to claim that this is a perfect definition, but I think it is a useful definition for thinking through God's covenants - my definition is based on seven things we always or almost always see in a covenant and helps differentiate covenant in our mind from similar things like mere promises or even contracts
3. I've defined God's covenants as having seven important parts and I want to consider each of those momentarily as we consider what a covenant is

B. Promise - What is the role of promise in covenant?

1. When we think of covenant, promise is probably the first thing that comes into our mind because a promise is at the heart of all of God's covenants
 - a. In the Noachic covenant God promises not to destroy the world with a flood again
 - b. In the Abrahamic covenant God promises Abraham and his descendents a land and a son
 - c. In the Mosaic covenant God promises to be the people's God and to bring them into the land
 - d. In the Davidic covenant God promises to set a son of David on the throne of Israel forever
 - e. In the New covenant God promises to reconcile sinners to Himself
2. As we consider the role of promise in covenant, though, we must recognize that the promise is extended from God to the recipient and the recipient would not otherwise be entitled to it except by the promise of God
 - a. Humanity did not deserve not to be destroyed by the flood, but God graciously granted it
 - b. Abraham did not deserve to be given a land and a son, but God graciously granted it
 - c. So, a covenant promise is an act of God's grace - so covenant is a manifestation of grace
3. So, at the heart of each of God's covenant is a display of God's grace where He binds Himself to do and/or to be something on behalf of the recipient
 - a. In a covenant, the promise is what God has bound Himself to do - in covenants usually both sides are bound by something, and the promise is what God has bound Himself to do
 - b. The recipient had no right to demand these things before, but now, because God has bound Himself by promise, the recipient can expect that God will take these actions
 - c. The role of promise in covenant is to declare what God will do

C. Magnificent - How are covenant promises magnificent?

1. God's covenants are not merely promises that God haphazardly makes to different people - instead they are magnificent promises that form the backbone of redemptive history
 - a. That is, God might make a promise to a certain person, like promising Hannah a son, and we don't call that one of the covenants of God
 - b. This is because that promise was primarily to Hannah and concerned Hannah. Assuredly God used the son, Samuel, to bring about His plan and serve the people of God, but it is only a small story in God's great narrative. The promise to Hannah is not a central part of the Bible like the promise to Abraham or the promise to David is. The promise to Hannah is not one of the covenants of God, as I've defined it, because the promise to Hannah is not a magnificent promise in this sense.
2. In contrast to mere promises, we can talk about the entirety of the Bible in terms of God's covenants
 - a. The first section of Genesis is centered on the covenant that we are considering this morning - the Noachic Covenant
 - b. The second section of Genesis is centered on the Abrahamic Covenant
 - c. Exodus through Joshua is centered on the Mosaic Covenant
 - d. Judges through Kings is centered on the Davidic Covenant
 - e. The Prophets are centered on the necessity and promise of a New Covenant
 - f. The post-exilic writings are centered on the tension and anticipation of a New Covenant
 - g. And the New Testament is so named because it is the fulfillment and exposition of the New Covenant
3. So, God's covenants are magnificent, world-changing promises that form the backbone of all redemptive history and are thus the framework upon which salvation is built
 - a. God's promise to Hannah is assuredly magnificent in the sense that it was a very good promise of God to Hannah and was only fulfilled by God's power

- b. But God's promise to Hannah is not magnificent in the sense that I am trying to portray here - a world-changing promise that forms the backbone of redemptive history
- 4. We see a glimpse of this magnificence even in this first covenant in Genesis - God tells Noah that His salvation will be predicated on God's covenant
 - a. This is why God announces His covenant in Genesis 6 even though the covenant is not made until Genesis 8 and 9
 - b. Genesis 6:18 - *But I will establish my covenant with you and you shall come into the ark...*
 - c. God proclaims that covenant is the backbone of salvation
- 5. A covenant is a magnificent promise of God that brings about salvation

D. Sovereign - How are covenant promises sovereign?

1. The second term that I have used to describe God's promises is sovereign - A covenant is a magnificent, sovereign promise of God
 - a. We could actually add infinite adjectives to the word promise to display different truths about it
 - b. But, I thought that sovereign was such an important adjective that it should be added to the definition
 - c. I already briefly hit this just while I was talking about promise, but God makes promises not as an equal but as a sovereign - His covenant is not made between one citizen and another but is made between the High King and His servant
2. We'll discuss this more below, but God makes covenants as YHWH, the LORD
 - a. We see that in Genesis 8 this morning - in Genesis 8:20 the name of God switches from Elohim (God) to YHWH (Lord)
 - b. YHWH is the name of God in Genesis 15 when God makes His covenant with Abraham
 - c. YHWH is the name that God reveals to Moses and the name that God gives at the head of the Mosaic covenant
 - d. YHWH is the name that God uses when He reveals His covenant to David
 - e. The ancient Hebrews considered God's name to be too holy to pronounce, so they replaced it with another word that they deemed to be substantially similar - adonai which literally means master or lord
 - f. So, the recipients of this name understood it to mark God as sovereign over His covenant - the promises that God is making in His covenant come from God, are controlled by God and are measured by God
3. So, the promises are not made between equals, but are made between a great superior to one who is not worthy - God is sovereign over His covenant, He is the Lord of His promises

E. Sacrifice - What is the role of sacrifice in covenant?

1. The fourth idea I have associated with covenant is sacrifice - all of the great covenants of God have a sacrifice associated with them
 - a. Noah sacrifices clean animals after the flood and God smells the pleasing aroma
 - b. Abraham sacrifices a heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtledove and a pigeon through which God walks
 - c. Moses and the Israelites sacrifice the Paschal Lamb which God sees
 - d. Solomon makes the great sacrifice at the dedication of the temple when God's promise to David is first referred to as a covenant
 - e. Christ sacrifices Himself as the Paschal Lamb to bring us to God
2. But how are sacrifices related to the covenant? Why are they not two separate ideas? I see three ways in Scripture that sacrifices are integral to covenant
 - a. A sacrifice solemnizes the covenant promise
 - b. A sacrifice justifies the relationship
 - c. A sacrifice purchases the promise
3. A sacrifice solemnizes the covenant promise
 - a. One role of sacrifice in covenant is to show how serious God is about keeping His covenant
 - b. In ancient covenants, the parties would sacrifice animals and walk between them in order to call a curse upon themselves if they did not fulfill the terms of the covenant - if they failed the covenant they testified that they should be slaughtered like the animals
 - c. We see an excellent example of this in the story of Abraham - Genesis 15:7-9, 17-21 - *And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ... When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram.*
 - d. God walked between the pieces in order to demonstrate His devotion to His promise

4. A sacrifice justifies the covenant relationship
 - a. God's holiness would prevent Him from entering into relationship with anyone who does not share His perfect holiness
 - i. To be holy means to be set apart from all that is not holy
 - ii. So, God, by nature, cannot enter into relationship with any who are not perfectly holy
 - iii. But the sacrifice of the covenant solves this problem - the sacrifice justifies God's relationship
 - b. This aspect of sacrifice can clearly be seen in the Mosaic covenant
 - i. The Mosaic Covenant emphasizes the relationship of God and the people Exodus 20:2 - *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."*
 - ii. And this sacrifice is also sealed by blood in Exodus 24:3-11 - *Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.*
 - c. The sacrifice of the covenant justifies the covenant relationship - it appeases God's holiness and allows Him to enter into covenant with sinful men
5. A sacrifice purchases the covenant promise
 - a. This third aspect can be seen clearly, I think, in the Noahic Covenant
 - b. Genesis 8:20-21 - *Then 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. And 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."*
 - c. Notice when the covenant promise is given - it is after God smells the pleasing aroma of the sacrifice - the sacrifice purchased the covenant promise - God was pleased to make the promise because the sacrifice had purchased it
 - d. This might call into question the graciousness of God's promise as I described above - but if God Himself provides the sacrifice, then the promise is no less by grace, if anything, it is more by grace
 - e. Thus it is clear why every covenant sacrifice except the last is merely a prefiguring of Christ's sacrifice - when God Himself provides the sacrifice He is again testifying that all of His promises are by grace

F. Relationship - What is the role of relationship in covenant?

1. By nature, a covenant establishes a relationship between the two parties - if nothing else there is the relationship between God as Lord and the recipient as servant in every covenant
2. But, God always uses covenants to establish a special relationship between Him and the recipient
 - a. God becomes humanity's protector and preserver in the Noahic Covenant
 - b. God becomes Abraham's friend in the Abrahamic Covenant
 - c. God becomes in a special way the Israelites' God in the Mosaic Covenant and they become His people
 - d. God becomes the Father of the Davidic kings in the Davidic Covenant and the kings become God's son
 - e. God becomes our Father in the New Covenant and we are called God's children
3. Relationship is a special mark of a covenant - the covenant promises are not meant to be enacted in a void, but are there to establish a relationship between the two parties
 - a. This is a major difference between a contract and a covenant
 - b. A contract, as we would understand it now, is merely a list of responsibilities both parties are supposed to fulfill - any relationship that might happen is only for the purpose of fulfilling these responsibilities, the contract could be fulfilled just as well without any real relationship between the parties
 - c. But a covenant, on the other hand, is focused on creating a relationship between the parties. Thus the promises and responses cannot and should not happen outside of a relationship being enacted between the parties. The promises and responses are designed to bring about this new relationship.

G. Sign - What is the role of sign in covenant?

1. Signs serve two purposes in covenants
 - a. A sign reminds both parties of the promises and responses detailed in the covenant and calls both parties to abide by them
 - b. A sign teaches the recipient of God's promises about the covenant promises
2. We see the reminding aspect clearly in the Noahic covenant
 - a. Genesis 9:14-16 - *When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I 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. When 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."*
 - b. When God saw the sign, He would be reminded about the promises He made to Noah
 - c. And when Noah saw the sign, He would be reminded of the promise God made to him
 - d. So, a covenant sign should remind us of the terms of the covenant
3. We also see the teaching aspect in the Noahic covenant
 - a. Genesis 9:12-13 - *And 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: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."*
 - b. The sign of the covenant was that God would hang His bow in the clouds.
 - c. The word for bow is literally battle bow - the bow you would use to shoot arrows at your enemies
 - d. So, there is great symbolism in the sign - God is hanging up His weapons. He will not execute His wrath anymore. Noah does not need to be afraid of another flood because God has put down His weapons.
 - e. The sign not only reminds us of the terms of the covenant but it also teaches and describes those terms to us.

H. Response - What is the role of response in covenant?

1. The last aspect of covenant I want to cover is response and response flows naturally from the previous points, especially relationship
 - a. If a covenant recognizes a new relationship, then by nature there are responses that the recipient must make - As a baseline, the recipient must live as part of this new relationship
 - b. Also, since the covenant contains a promise to the recipient, the recipient must live in accordance with the promise made - so, response is not an external fact inserted into the covenant but is integrally related to the nature of the covenant
2. So, God, as the Lord of His covenant always requires a response from the recipients of His covenant
 - a. This response may be explicit - as is the case in the Mosaic Covenant
 - i. In the Mosaic Covenant God clearly lists out many ways in which the people must act as the recipients of His covenant - their response is to live according to these explicit commands
 - b. Or this response may be implicit - as is the case here in the Noahic Covenant
 - i. We don't see God explicitly commanding Noah to do anything in relationship to His promise
 - ii. There is no explicit response in the covenant, but this doesn't mean that there is no response
 - iii. At the very least, Noah's response must be to trust God's promise and believe that God will preserve the world, in other words, Noah should get off the Ark and go on with life - He shouldn't cower in fear in the Ark wondering when the next flood is going to come
 - iv. Maybe it even meant that Noah could disassemble the Ark and use it as a precious resource after the flood - right after the flood there would be no old growth trees ready to provide good building materials, but Noah could take apart the Ark and build a shelter for himself and his family and provide some firewood to burn sacrifices on
 - v. So, the response is not explicit, but it is implicit - Noah must trust God and act according to the promise, otherwise the promise will have very little value to him
3. It is clear, especially from implicit responses, that the responses do not in any way earn the promises
 - a. The recipients response is not a payment that earns the promise from God
 - i. The people living according to the Mosaic covenant did not earn their right to be God's people
 - ii. Noah living by faith in God's promise did not earn humanity's right to not be destroyed by God
 - b. But, on the other hand, if the response is not made, the benefit of the promise is forfeited
 - i. If the people would not live as God's people they explicitly forfeited their rights as God's covenant people
 - ii. If Noah would not believe God's promise He would continue to live in perpetual fear of God's wrath and fail to fulfill the New Creation that God was doing after the flood
4. So covenant always requires response from the recipient. This is merely an acknowledgement that the relationship of the covenant is real and must be lived in.

II. Why does God use covenants? (Why not just save us without all this fuss about covenants?)

A. Because God is a Covenant God by His very nature - His name is YHWH, the LORD of His Covenant

1. When we come to Genesis 8:20-22, God's name YHWH reappears
 - a. It hasn't been wholly absent from the flood account, but the flood account uses the term Elohim (God) much more predominantly than YHWH (Lord)
 - b. But, when the sacrifice and the covenant appear, God's name as YHWH becomes preeminent
 - c. YHWH appears 3 times in two verses while Elohim does not appear at all - the sacrifice and covenant promises are given by God as YHWH
2. So, what does the name YHWH indicate?
 - a. John Frame (Doctrine of God) - *The name yahweh is also mysterious. Since it appears in verse 15, which immediately follows verse 14, we get the impression that it stands in place of the formula "I AM WHO I AM." The name seems to be related to the Hebrew verb meaning "to be," whether by etymology or by mere resemblance, but that relationship remains obscure. Its pronunciation is problematic, too. At an early point in the transmission of the Bible, the Jews decided that God's name was too holy to be uttered, and so they replaced it in Scripture reading with 'adonay, which means "Lord." ... Certainly the translation "Lord" is appropriate for God's name, since (1) the Jews read 'adonay for yahweh, (2) the Septuagint (the early translation of the Old Testament into Greek), often quoted in the New Testament, uniformly uses kyrios, meaning "Lord," for Yahweh, and (3) the New Testament writers also follow this pattern regularly.' (...) So the simple, obvious point I wish to make in this section is this: the name Lord names the head of a covenant. His essential relationship to us is that of a great king who has delivered us from death and calls us to serve him by obeying his written word.*
 - b. YHWH is God's personal name, as we see in Exodus 3
 - i. Exodus 3:15 - *God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.*
 - c. God's name is YHWH and, if John Frame's exposition is right, God's personal name tells us of His covenantal nature. Making covenants is a central part of God's nature - God is the LORD indicating that He must be Lord of something. Covenants represent this aspect of God's character, if God is the Lord He displays His Lordship by making covenants as the Lord.
3. God makes covenants because God is LORD, it is integral to His character to make covenants because in covenants God displays His character, His Lordship

B. Because covenants display God's glorious plan to us

1. God's purpose in all of redemption is to display His glory
 - a. This is displayed all over the Bible, but one clear place we see this is Isaiah 48
 - b. Isaiah 48:9-11 - *"For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.*
2. Since God's purpose in all of redemption is to display His glory, it only makes sense that covenants, which are the backbone of redemption, are designed to display God's glory
 - a. Ezekiel 16:62 - *I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD,*
 - b. The phrase 'know that I am the Lord' is used when God wants to display His glory
 - c. God wants all of the earth to know that He alone is the Lord and He wants His covenant people especially to know that - Covenants make redemption not a hidden thing but public and glorious
 - d. So, God makes covenants so that the recipients of the covenant can see what He is doing and can glorify Him - This is why God does not merely save us, but He saves us through covenant so that we can see His glory while He does it
3. In other words, salvation isn't merely about the end product, it is about the story
 - a. This really answers a big question about Christianity - why did God wait so long to send the Savior and why is all of the history of the Old Testament important to a Christian? It's because God is not only saving us, but He is telling us a story about salvation and He is telling us a story about His glory
 - b. And covenants are the backbone of that story, God's covenants provide the pathway of God's story and are the vehicle through which He is displaying His glory
 - c. Why are the history of the Davidic kings important to the Christian - because they are a part of the story of salvation - they are the outworking of the Mosaic and the Davidic covenants
 - d. Why are the gospels important to the Christian - because they are part of the story of salvation - they are the implementation of the New Covenant
 - e. Why is the ancient history in Genesis important to the Christian - because it is part of the story - it gives us the history of all of the covenants

C. Because covenants prepare us for Christ and His salvation

1. A special way that covenants display the glory of God is by preparing us for Christ and His salvation
 - a. In other words, the glory of each covenant is primarily in the fact that it points forward to the last covenant - And, I am persuaded that each covenant does this in two ways:
 - b. First, each covenant helps prepare the way for Christ
 - c. Second, each covenant helps teach us about Christ
2. Covenants prepare the way for Christ in history
 - a. This is a covenant's purpose as part of redemptive history
 - i. So the question we are answering is 'why are covenants important in the story of salvation?'
 - b. The covenants are important in the story because each covenant advances us toward Christ somehow
 - i. The Abrahamic Covenant denotes the line that Christ would come from - He is the promised seed
 - ii. The Mosaic Covenant sets apart a law that Christ would follow and a sacrifice that Christ would be - He is the obedient one who was obedient even to the point of death
 - iii. The Davidic Covenant sets apart a king that Christ would be - He reigns on the Davidic throne
 - c. Each covenant is a way that God is faithful to His first promise to bring a savior - the covenants are how God brings about this purpose
 - d. So, in the story, the covenants are important as the means by which God brings Christ into the world and makes Him our Savior
 - e. The path from the promise at the end of Genesis 3 to the fulfillment in the Revelation goes through the Noahic, the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, the Davidic and the New Covenants
3. Covenants point us to Christ now
 - a. This is a covenant's purpose as part of revelation
 - i. Covenants are not only important in the story, they don't only bring Christ because then their purpose would be fulfilled and they would be unimportant now
 - ii. Covenants are also important as we read the story, they are important to us as a part of God's revelation
 - iii. So the question we are answering here is why are covenants important as we read the story of salvation?
 - b. The covenants are important as we read the story because they each teach us about Christ
 - i. Here I bring up one of my favorite words again - typology
 - ii. The covenants not only bring Christ into the world, they also teach us about who Christ would be
 - iii. In other words, the covenants are all typological of the final covenant
 - iv. As we see how God brought Christ into the world we learn who Christ is and what He has done
 - c. Each covenant teaches us a little bit about Christ
 - i. Christ is a greater Noah who will save His family from God's wrath
 - ii. Christ is a greater Abraham through whom all the families of the earth will be blessed
 - iii. Christ is a greater Moses who mediates God's covenant for His people
 - iv. Christ is a greater David who will sit enthroned over God's people forever

D. Because covenants call us to respond to God and to each other covenantally

1. God uses covenants not only to display truths about Himself - His character, His glory and His purpose - but also to teach us how to relate to Him and to each other
2. Covenants are useful because they teach us how to relate to God
 - a. In other words, the response part of a covenant is important - God makes covenants with us to describe His purposes and His glory but then also to instruct us how to relate to Him based on that
 - b. God makes covenants with mankind so that it is clear exactly how they are to approach Him as the sovereign, holy God - the covenant details the stipulations and the requirements for approaching Him and also describes the relationship they are supposed to have
 - c. So, God uses covenants because, in covenant, God teaches us how to relate to Him
3. Covenants are useful because they teach us how to relate to each other
 - a. God uses covenants not only to describe how we are to relate to Him, but also how we are to relate to each other - God has related covenantally to us so we ought to relate covenantally to each other
 - b. Why do we relate to one another in marriage covenantally as husband and wife? - because this is a reflection of how God relates to us - and we ought to show the same determination to keep this covenant as God shows to keep His covenants
 - c. Why do we relate to one another in the church covenantally as members? - because this is a reflection of how God relates to us - and we ought to show the same determination to keep this covenant as God shows to keep His covenants
 - d. God uses covenants to demonstrate how we should relate to each other as His children, we are to be imitators of God - we are to relate to each other covenantally as God does and to be diligent to keep our covenants as God is

III. What is the purpose of this covenant?

A. How does this covenant prepare the way for Christ? (Purpose as Redemptive History)

1. We have already briefly considered the promise given in the Noahic Covenant - preservation - but before we tie this to how this prepares the way for Christ, I want to examine some interesting wording used in this covenant
 - a. In the Noahic Covenant, God says that He will 'establish' His covenant with Noah
 - i. Genesis 6:18 - *But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark*
 - ii. Genesis 9:9 - *"Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you,*
 - iii. Genesis 9:11 - *I 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.*
 - b. The reason I point this out is that this is not the standard wording used for a covenant
 - i. When a covenant is made, the wording is usually 'to cut' a covenant - this emphasizes the fact that when a covenant is established it is sealed by a sacrifice
 - In Genesis 15 God cuts a covenant with Abraham
 - In Genesis 21 Abraham cuts a covenant with Abimelech
 - In Genesis 26 Isaac cuts a covenant with Abimelech
 - In Genesis 31 Jacob cuts a covenant with Laban
 - In Exodus 24, God cuts a covenant with the people
 - ii. Only two times in Genesis is the wording 'to establish' a covenant used
 - It is used in the flood account
 - It is used in Genesis 17 when God reconfirms His covenant to Abraham
 - c. The word 'establish' literally means to raise up or to prop up - it might be properly translated to confirm or to uphold a covenant
 - i. So, it is always used in Scripture when God promises to fulfill a covenant He has already made
 - ii. God made a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15 and He promises to uphold it in Genesis 17
 - iii. God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Genesis and He promises to uphold it in Exodus 6:4
 - iv. God made a covenant with Israel at Sinai and He promises to uphold it in Ezekiel 16, despite Judah turning away from Him
 - d. So, the wording in the Noahic Covenant appears to point back to a previous covenant, but what previous covenant is it pointing back to?
 - i. This is the first time in Scripture the word covenant has been used, so it is a little bit of a head scratcher
 - ii. But, I would propose that God is pointing back to the promise He made in 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.*
 - e. The promise of God in Genesis 3 has all the parts of a covenant
 - i. Promise - God would provide a Savior for man instead of relinquishing them to the power of sin
 - ii. Sacrifice - God sacrifices animals to provide clothing for Adam and Eve
 - iii. Sign - God symbolizes His triumph over the serpent by making the serpent go on its belly
 - iv. Relationship - God and man now relate as Savior and saved
 - v. Response - Adam believes God and names his wife Eve - mother of all the living
 - f. So, although Genesis 3 does not specifically use the word covenant, I believe this is the first covenant of God and God's covenant with Noah is a confirmation or an upholding of this covenant
2. So, in light of this, the Noahic Covenant primarily preserves the human race until the Savior appears and thus upholds God's promise to Adam and Eve - this covenant upholds God's previous promise to Adam and preserved our hope for a Savior
 - a. God promises to keep mankind and the earth around until His purposes were finished
 - b. God could have chosen to utterly wipe out mankind, but this would nullify His promise to Adam
 - c. But instead God upheld His covenant by promising Noah never to utterly destroy the world until He had fulfilled His promise
 - d. The Noahic Covenant prepares the way for Christ by preserving the human race until Christ came and until the elect are all found in Christ

B. How does this covenant point us to Christ? (Purpose as Revelation)

1. If the flood and the Ark are great types of sin and judgment then the covenant that is associated with them is a type of the New Covenant - the promise, the sacrifice, the sign and the response all teach us about the New Covenant
2. The promise is a type of the covenant in Christ
 - a. As we consider what the promise of the Noahic Covenant within the picture of the flood, we could say that after God's wrath, God promised to preserve those whom He saved in the land
 - b. This is a picture of the New Covenant
 - i. Like Noah, Christ has brought us safely through the flood of God's wrath, we considered this three weeks ago
 - ii. And now, like the covenant with Noah, God has promised to preserve us in the land forever
 - iii. We no longer have anything to fear from God, His wrath is past
 - c. So, it says in Romans 8:1 - *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
 - d. And in II Peter 3:5-7, 13 - *For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly... But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*
 - e. After the flood of God's wrath is past, there is no more condemnation and there will be new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells and like Noah we will be preserved there by the power of God forever
3. The sacrifice is a type of the covenant in Christ
 - a. There are three things emphasized about the sacrifice that Noah makes after the flood
 - i. The sacrifice is of clean animals, is a burnt offering and is a pleasing aroma to God
 - b. All three of these things point us to the sacrifice of Christ
 - i. The sacrifice of clean animals points us to the sacrifice of Christ as an unblemished, sinless offering - I Peter 1:18-19 - *knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot*
 - The clean animals prefigured the cleanness, the sinlessness of Christ
 - So, the sacrifice of clean animals is typological of the sacrifice of our sinless Savior
 - ii. The sacrifice as a burnt offering points us to the sacrifice of Christ as a propitiation for sin - I John 4:10 - *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*
 - The burnt offering was the only offering that was brought into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat to make atonement for the peoples' sins
 - It is a different word than the sacrifices made previously in Genesis - Cain and Able's sacrifice is called the grain sacrifice, a secondary sacrifice in the Mosaic Covenant
 - But it is the burnt offering, the offering that propitiates wrath that seals the covenant, the burnt offering is typological of the sacrifice of Christ as our propitiation
 - iii. The sacrifice as a pleasing aroma points to the sacrifice of Christ as purchasing every promise of God - Hebrews 13:20-21 - *Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*
 - Noah's sacrifice pleased God and prompted Him to make a gracious promise
 - In the same way, the blood of Christ, the blood of the eternal covenant has pleased God and now, by that blood, He will grant us everything good so that we may do His will
4. The sign is a type of the covenant in Christ - God's anger has been turned away so that He has hung His bow no longer to destroy - Since sign and promise go together, I've already discussed this under the promise
 - a. But, as we look at the rainbow we should be reminded that God will never destroy the world in a flood again, but we should also see that sign and realize that in a greater way, God will never spend His wrath against our sin again either because it has been spent in Christ - God has hung up His bow
5. The implicit response is a type of the covenant in Christ - the most basic way we must respond to God is to believe and act according to His promise - I dealt with this two weeks ago, so again I won't belabor the point
 - a. But, Noah's basic response to God's covenant was to believe and act according to God's promise
 - b. So, like Noah, as God makes His covenant with us, promising us salvation in Christ, promising us new heavens and a new earth in which to dwell, we should believe and act according to those promises - we should have faith in God's faithfulness - we should know, believe and act on the promises of God

IV. What is our response to this covenant?

A. Thankfulness for God's preservation and faithfulness

1. As we look at the Noahic Covenant, we should clearly see that God has kept His promise and has preserved mankind until Christ has come
 - a. So, as we study this covenant, our first response should be simple, heartfelt thankfulness
 - b. I Corinthians 1:4, 9 - *I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ... God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*
 - c. God has been faithful to His word and has blessed us greatly in Christ so we should respond in thanksgiving for what He has done
2. But our thankfulness does not end there - we don't only thank God for what He has done in redemptive history but we also thank God as we see how the Noahic Covenant prefigures the promises in Christ
 - a. Like the Noahic Covenant, we are promised to inherit a land that will not be destroyed by God
 - b. Hebrews 12:28 - *Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken*
 - c. God's promise of eternal preservation will ultimately be fulfilled in the new heavens and earth and we should be eternally grateful that we have received that kingdom in Christ
3. So, let us meditate on the Noahic Covenant and let our hearts rejoice before God in thankfulness

B. Faith in God's continued faithfulness to His promises

1. The Noahic Covenant calls us to faith in imitation of Noah - Noah received the promise of God and left the Ark and planted a vineyard - as we will see next week - Noah believed and acted on the promise of God
2. And the Noahic Covenant calls us to faith because we see that God has been faithful to His promises - God promised not to destroy the world in a flood and God has not destroyed the world in a flood - His past faithfulness ought to increase our trust in His continued faithfulness
3. Heb. 10:23 - *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.*
4. We considered faith in God's faithfulness two weeks ago, so I'm not going to expand on this point greatly
5. But, like children, let us see God's faithfulness and be moved to believe every word that He says

C. Recognition and proclamation that this covenant is soon to end

1. As I have studied the Noahic Covenant over the past several weeks, one of the things that has struck me most is that this covenant is very temporary - the language is very broad, but there is a clear end point to this promise - This promise only lasts as long as the earth remains
 - a. Genesis 8:22 - *While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."*
 - b. And, as we have considered the purpose of this covenant is to preserve mankind until the promise of Genesis 3 is fulfilled, we can rightly anticipate that the end of this covenant is rapidly approaching
 - c. Christ has come and the elect are being brought in - Soon the earth will no longer have any need to remain - once God's elect are gathered, the earth and the Noahic promise will cease
2. Peter proclaims the rapidly approaching end of this covenant in II Peter 3
 - a. II Peter 3:5-13 - *For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 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. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*
3. If this is true, then we ought to earnestly proclaim the end of this covenant and call all people to run to a better covenant in Christ
 - a. This is what Peter proclaims in II Peter 3 - those who foolishly rest in the persistence of this world are soon to be destroyed, but those who patiently wait for God's promise will inherit the promised land
 - b. So, let us proclaim to each other and to a watching world that this world is temporary and we ought not to love the things here or store up treasure here or to find our life here
 - i. I John 1:17 - *And the world is passing away along with its desires*
 - c. Instead, let us proclaim that *our citizenship is in heaven and from there we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body by the power that enables Him to subject all things to Himself!* (Philippians 3:20-21)