

# God's Covenants

## The Covenant of Preservation

### Key idea:

In His grace, God gave His covenant promise to preserve creation and humanity, renewing the covenant of creation and establishing human government to restrain evil and promote the common good through this age until the final judgment.

### Key text:

Genesis 6:17–18

I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. <sup>18</sup> But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark — you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.

Genesis 9:1–11

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. <sup>2</sup> The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. <sup>3</sup> Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

<sup>4</sup> “But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. <sup>5</sup> And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. <sup>6</sup> “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man. <sup>7</sup> As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.”

<sup>8</sup> Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: <sup>9</sup> “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you <sup>10</sup> and with every living creature that was with you — the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you — every living creature on earth. <sup>11</sup> I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

### **Key points:**

1. The early chapters of Genesis are the story of the two lines of seed/offspring prophesied in the covenant of redemption in Genesis 3:15.
2. By the time of Noah sin had spread its influence so deeply and broadly that it was undermining God's purposes in creation and destroying everything.
3. God declared that He was going to judge the earth with a flood to wipe out everything, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and he and his family were saved.
4. God made a covenant of preservation with Noah and creation. This covenant is built upon and renews the covenant with creation, promising to sustain creation so that the covenant of redemption may be fulfilled.
5. God's covenant with Noah promises to sustain creation, establishes the beginning of human governments, and undergirds God's common grace which sustains and blesses fallen humanity despite its sin.

### **Questions for discussion/application:**

1. What part of Sunday's text and teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. What are the two main lines of "seed/offspring" in the early chapters of Genesis? What are the differences between these two lines? What literary devices does the author use to show us the character of these two lines?
3. According to Genesis 6:5, how much does sin spread within each human? How much does it spread across humanity and creation? What does this tell me about sin? What does it indicate about the required nature of any cure for sin?
4. Genesis 6:8 is the hinge between God's decree of judgment and the account of Noah and his family. What does it tell us about Noah? Why is it important that this is the first thing I am told about Noah? Why is it important that this comes before the statement in verse 9 that Noah was a righteous man?
5. What are some of the links between the covenant with Noah and the covenant of creation in Genesis 1? What does this teach me about God's covenant?
6. Since this is the first covenant after the covenant of redemption, what does its link with the covenant of creation tell me about the purposes of redemption?

7. Bret mentioned “common grace” on Sunday. What is common grace? In what ways is it “common” as opposed to “special” or “saving”? How much have I ever thought about this doctrine?
8. Why does God provide human government? Is government part of His common grace or His saving grace? What does this tell me about the nature, goals, and limitations of human government?
9. Christians are citizens of both the city of God and the city of man. Why is it important for me to understand this? What responsibilities do I have to the city of man? What responsibilities do I have to the city of God?
10. Can I think of examples of Christian groups that have tried to completely separate the two cities/kingdoms and isolate themselves away from their unbelieving neighbors and culture? What is the danger of doing this? Can I think of examples of Christian groups that have tried to merge the two cities/kingdoms and isolate themselves away from their unbelieving neighbors and culture? What is the danger of doing this? Which one is a bigger temptation for me personally?
11. Whom can I pray for, share what I have learned, and invite to church this week?

**Preview of next week: The God of Generations (Deuteronomy 4:9)**