

SESSION 2

GOD'S PROMISE OF PRESERVATION

Leader pages on pp. 106-109

THE POINT:
GOD PROMISED TO PRESERVE HIS CREATION.

GENESIS 9:1-13

¹ God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

² The fear and terror of you will be in every living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your authority.

³ Every creature that lives and moves will be food for you; as I gave the green plants, I have given you everything.

.....
⁴ However, you must not eat meat with its lifeblood in it.

⁵ And I will require a penalty for your lifeblood; I will require it from any animal and from any human; if someone murders a fellow human, I will require that person's life.

⁶ Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed, for God made humans in his image. ⁷ But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it."

.....
⁸ Then God said to Noah and his sons with him,

⁹ **"Understand that I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you,**

¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you—birds, livestock, and all wildlife of the earth that are with you—all the animals of the earth that came out of the ark.

¹¹ I establish my covenant with you that never again will every creature be wiped out by floodwaters; there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth."

¹² And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all future generations:

¹³ I have placed my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

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MEMORY VERSE



KEYWORDS

Placed under (v. 2)—It is God who determined the relationship of humanity to all the creatures on the earth. The Hebrew term *nathan* means to be given.

From any animal . . . from any human (v. 5)—The sacredness of human life requires the penalty be enforced whether the culprit is another person or an animal.

A covenant for all future generations (v. 12)—God's covenant with Noah will be in effect for as long as human and animal life exists on the earth.

My bow (v. 13)—The sign of the bow confirms the Noahic covenant. The term *qesheth* appears three times in this chapter (vv. 13,14,16).

HOW DOES GOD KEEP HIS PROMISE TO PRESERVE CREATION?

Can you name a “new beginning” in your life—a time when you started over in some way?

Sometimes new beginnings come when we move to a new place. Others experience a new beginning after graduation from college, when they marry, or take a new job. These new beginnings often bring excitement and great anticipation. Other new beginnings tend not to bring joy. The death of a family member, a failed marriage, an unexpected medical diagnosis, or even a natural disaster can leave us sad and devastated.

New beginnings, whether we view them as good or bad, are transitions. We all face various transitions in our lives at some point, but God will give us the grace to move forward in these transitions, no matter our circumstances.

The Book of Genesis records how God judged the world through a great flood, but through Noah and his extended family, God preserved His creation and provided a fresh start. God’s instruction to Noah reinforces for us God’s continued care for His creation. He reaffirmed His covenant with humanity, affirmed the value of human life, and promised to preserve His creation.

Reiterates the Blessings of Creation // Genesis 9:1-3

Genesis 1–2 highlights how God created the world, created humanity in His image, and commissioned us to rule over His creation as His image bearers. Although sin flawed us, God’s plan of redemption and His purpose for humanity to steward His creation was restored.

Genesis 6–8 records the tragedy that came when humanity became so sinful God determined to destroy the world through a great flood. Nevertheless, He chose to preserve His creation through Noah and his family using a large ship—an ark—that Noah built.

As Noah and his family departed the ark after the flood, he offered a sacrifice of gratitude to God (Gen. 8:20). God accepted Noah’s sacrifice and declared He never again would destroy the earth by flood as He had done (Gen. 8:21-22). The stage was set for the next step in God’s plan.

God blessed Noah and his family with the words, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” Do those words sound familiar? They should! They first appeared in Genesis 1:28, when God first blessed humanity and gave us authority to rule since we were created in His image and with His characteristics.



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The close parallel in language stresses how God was beginning again. He was starting from scratch but His purpose for us hadn't changed. God was reaffirming the covenant He had made with Adam in Genesis 1–2. He now continued with Noah what He had begun with Adam.

Do you struggle with believing God still has a purpose for you after a failure or a personal defeat you experienced? It can be difficult to believe sometimes. However, remain hopeful because His Word assures us that His plans and purpose are perfect and designed specifically for each of us. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jer. 29:11 NIV).

Life on earth after the flood featured some changes. When God first created life, He established plants as food for all living creatures, and people and animals lived in harmony with one another (Gen. 1:29-30). Now, animals would fear people (Gen. 9:2). Humankind was still to rule over the animals, but the relationship dynamics changed.

God also told Noah humanity now was free to eat living creatures, not plant life only. Notice how similar the language is regarding the creatures in Genesis 9:2-3 to Genesis 1:

- "Every living creature on the earth" (9:2; 1:24)
- "Every bird of the sky" (9:2; 1:28)
- "Every creature that crawls on the ground" (9:2; 1:28)
- "All the fish of the sea" (9:2; 1:28)
- "Green plants" (9:3; 1:30)

This command gave people new freedom by expanding their potential diet, but God's command to steward His creation remained. He wanted Noah and his descendants to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth as He instructed.

HOW DOES THE COMMAND TO BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY, APPLY TO OUR LIVES TODAY?

Reaffirms the Value of Human Life //

Genesis 9:4-7

God considers human life valuable. Since we are created in His image, it is important that we do as well. God prohibited the eating of meat with the blood still in it. When people or animals lose too much blood, they die. Leviticus 17:11 states a reason for the prohibition: "The life of a creature is in the blood."



DIGGING DEEPER THE FLOOD

Genesis 7-8 describes the great flood of Noah's era. Water came from two different sources—one below and one above. Exactly what is meant by all the sources of the vast water depths is unknown; but appears to refer to a massive outflow of pressurized water from underground sources that burst out of the ground with devastating effect. No known phenomenon in nature corresponds to this description. And, exactly as God indicated, the rain fell forty days and forty nights. God's word to Noah is once again shown to be trustworthy. After the rain ceased and the Ark came to rest, Noah eventually sent out a dove. When the dove returned to Noah from its second venture with an olive leaf, this confirmed the lower elevations were now above water. Hence, the image of a dove with an olive branch in its mouth has become a universal symbol of peace.⁴

What peace do you find in knowing that God will never destroy the earth by water again?

Blood sustained an animal's life, so God did not want His people to eat it. He took seriously the taking of life—even the taking of animal life by humans. Draining the blood appropriately showed a certain respect for God's creation.

God's reestablishment of His covenant also included a prohibition against murder. God had given human beings life, and other humans had no right to take it from them. The text provides a reason: "For God made humans in his image." Human life is precious in God's eyes.

Here are some lies our world believes about what makes people valuable:

- **Appearance.** Value lies in how we look.
- **Wealth.** Value lies in the size of our bank account or financial portfolio.
- **Power.** Value lies in our degrees, professions, or positions on the corporate ladder.
- **Fame.** Value lies in how famous we are, and how many followers and likes we have on social media.

In contrast, God's Word says we're valuable because we're created in His image." I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well" (Ps. 139:14).

God restated His charge to Noah and his family: "Be fruitful and multiply" (v. 7; see also v. 1 and



1:28). Interestingly, the word translated "spread out" is the same Hebrew word translated "swarm" in Genesis 1:20 and 1:21. There, it described the great quantity of creatures God created to fill the seas. God expected His creation to multiply to such numbers on the earth as well. As they did, they could better fulfill His command to rule the earth as His image bearers.

WHAT ARE SOME DAY-TO-DAY OPPORTUNITIES WE HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE WE VALUE ALL HUMAN LIFE?

Reminds Us with a Sign

// Genesis 9:8-13

God's promise to preserve His creation involved a covenant between God, Noah, and Noah's descendants. The language of verse 9 stresses God's personal initiative in the covenant and His lasting promises.

The covenant between God and Noah's family also included all living creatures on earth. Note the specific language in verses 9-10:

- "you" (Noah and his family)
- "your descendants after you" (those born from Noah's descendants)
- "every living creature that is with you"
- "birds"
- "livestock"
- "all wildlife of the earth"
- "all the animals of the earth that came out of the ark"

God's words stressed the comprehensive nature of the covenant. Perhaps He intended His specific words to emphasize this fact to Noah.

God said He never again would bring destruction to the earth by a great flood as He had done. Floodwaters would not rise to the level they had during Noah's day! God established the rainbow as a sign of His covenant with creation. This sign provided a visible reminder of God's promise never to destroy the earth again by a flood. When

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people saw a rainbow, they would remember God's promise and take courage. Again, God stressed the comprehensive nature of His covenant, and as in verse 9, the language stressed God's personal initiative in the establishment of this important sign.

HOW DOES THE PROMISE OF GOD'S RAINBOW ENCOURAGE YOUR CHRISTIAN WALK?

God has promised to preserve His creation until Jesus comes again. The following truths highlight aspects of that promise:

1. **God's original covenant with Adam remains in effect.** God established a covenant with Adam and confirmed it with Noah after the flood. He still expects us to steward His creation well.
2. **God places a high value on human life.** As God's image bearers, we are to join Him in preserving the lives of others. Life is a gift, and human life is especially precious.
3. **God's covenant extends to all creation.** As we steward God's creation, we must remember that God has included other creatures in the blessing of His covenant. We must manage His creatures respectfully considering that truth.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Genesis 6: 14-16 God gave comprehensive instructions to Noah to make an ark. It was to be:

- Made of gopher wood with rooms covered with pitch inside and out.
- The dimensions of the ark as mandated by God were to be "450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.
- Noah was to make a roof and finish the sides of the ark within 18 inches of the roof.
- The ark was to have a door in the side of the ark and have lower, middle, and upper decks.⁵

What a massive edifice the Ark would become, and its dimensions made it "the largest ship known to be constructed in ancient times." A life-size replica of Noah's Ark, located in Williamstown, Kentucky, provides a glimpse into what life for Noah and his family may have looked like. Each deck explores aspects such as the scope of the ark, the different animals, potential living arrangements, and pre-flood and post-flood comparisons.⁶

Biblical Truth: The immense structure exemplifies the awesomeness of God and the magnitude of His fulfilled promises.

How does the intentionality of the ark encourage you that God has intentionally designed you for His glory?

LIVE IT

What actions can you take to demonstrate your responsibility as a steward of God's creation?

Reflecting on the life Noah, we see that God is a loving and compassionate God. Despite the disobedience and sin of the people, God spared Noah and his family to continue His purpose for humankind. God established a covenant and the sign of the rainbow to remind us of His promise to not destroy creation by water again. God remains a covenant keeper with all the promises He has made. God has promised to preserve His creation.

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- **Consider your responsibility to God's creation.** Take some time to evaluate your stewardship of all that God has entrusted to you.
- **Affirm the value of human life.** Today's world often manifests a low view of human life. How can your life testify to human life's value?
- **Participate in ministries of compassion.** How might God use you and your God-given gifts to serve others?

DAILY READINGS

1. RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE MIDST OF WICKEDNESS // GENESIS 6:8

Genesis 6 begins with mankind multiplying as God had instructed them. Several verses later, Scripture records man's corrupt and wicked ways. God was grieved and set out to "wipe mankind from the face of the earth." Amid mass corruption and God's decision to destroy the people, Noah finds favor with God, and God spares him and his family members. Today, the earth is filled with corruption, violence, and wickedness. We cannot read or watch the news without experiencing the lostness of our world. Noah's righteousness can encourage us to follow God while surrounded by extreme wickedness. God has eyes to see even one person who loves and serves Him.

Continue to serve God in the midst of wickedness. You are not alone. He sees you.

2. PRESERVED FOR A PURPOSE // MATTHEW 28:19-20

Countless books have been written about purpose. Some of us have a purpose in our jobs. We work in offices to complete tasks important to an organization or to sustain a way of life. Others have a purpose in families. We are children caring for aging adults or adults raising children. Our roles can be fulfilling and vital, but we must maintain sight of the larger picture. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus tells the disciples to go into the world and make disciples. God created us to make His name known on the earth and to spread His love to others.

Don't allow the jobs you hold or the roles you play interfere with God's plan of salvation for all men.

3. STUDY AND BE DELIGHTED // PSALM 111:2-8

Would you trust a stranger with your life? It would be hard. Trusting someone without knowing their motives or character would be challenging. Trust is earned over time and built through relationships. If we desire to trust God, we should spend time with him. Psalm 118 invites readers to study God's word and delight in Him. The writer describes

God's great works, compassion, and enduring righteousness. His instructions are trustworthy, and His covenant endures forever. As we study the Bible, we know God intimately. It is easier to submit, surrender, and trust Him to keep us.

Commit to studying God's word. It is easier to trust God when you know Him.

4. EVERYONE WILL SEE // LUKE 3:6

The enemy desires to keep us from knowing God and receiving His love. In the garden, he tempted Eve to sin against God's commands. On the mountain, he tempted Jesus to go against God's word. Satan is masterful at putting a wedge between people and God's love. Some don't understand the selection of Israel as God's chosen people. Knowing God and experiencing Christ's redemption is not reserved for certain people and restricted from others. The genealogy presented in Luke 3 documents that Jesus's lineage includes Israel's patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, Luke makes it clear that everyone will see salvation.

The Bible is clear that Jesus comes to save anyone who believes in him.

5. IT'S IN THE GENEALOGY // LUKE 23:3-38

For years, I skimmed over the genealogies. They were lists of names I could not pronounce, and I did not know much about the individuals in them. The more I study and learn about the people in the Old Testament, the more I enjoy the genealogies. Next week, we will look at how God blessed all the nations through the children of Israel, and Luke's genealogy connects Jesus to Adam. Read the genealogy and identify the individuals you know. Think about how they contributed to God's story. Remember how God provided for the Moabite widow Ruth. Boaz served as her kinsman redeemer, and their child was Obed. Obed is in the lineage of David and Christ.

Experience God's faithfulness by reading the genealogies.