

Genesis 9:8-17 "The Covenant of Grace" (p.6)
Ajax Alliance Church. Sunday March 17th, 2024.

Genesis 9:8-17. [8] Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, [9]"Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, [10] 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. [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." [12] 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: [13]I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. [14] When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, [15]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. [16] 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." [17] 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." (ESV)

One of the most extraordinary and beautiful natural wonders is the rainbow. It intrigues everybody. And rainbows have fascinated people throughout the ages. There are many things you could consider about rainbows. A rainbow is a bent or curved line in the sky composed or consisting of seven colors...red, orange, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Kids were sometimes taught to remember those colors by the name Roy G Biv, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. Since only one color of light is observed from each raindrop because the sun hits each different raindrop at a different angle, an incredible number of raindrops is required to produce the magnificent spectrum of color as big as it is that is characteristic of a rainbow. Usually, a rainbow is seen when part of the sky is dark and there is rain in one part of the sky and the sun is shining in the other. And for the rainbow to be visible, the sun has to be behind the observer who is, in effect, facing the rainbow.

For Noah and his family, the tragedy of the flood is behind them, they are facing God and Genesis 9 presents a beautiful picture of God's grace. In effect, God's Son is behind the elements of the covenant promise that God gives. In Genesis 9:1-7, we see that the Flood is over. All around Noah and the inhabitants or the ark are the vestiges of a changed earth and death everywhere, of course, drowning all of humanity with the exception of eight people, and all the animals except those that were on the ark, devastating the earth. Noah comes out of the ark. He enters into the new world at the beginning of chapter 9. And in verses 1 to 7 of this chapter, Noah and his family are told what they were to do. They were to reproduce. They were to rule. They were to eat. And they were to execute those who took life, capital punishment. Now in verses 8 to 17, God says what He's going to do. The exhortation to Noah now becomes promise from God.

We read **Genesis 9:8-17** in **the context of a culture** that leads us to believe that the world is mostly the result of our decisions, our actions, and our choices. We have the world and its future in our hands. It is **up to us to make human history come out right**, or right will not be done. **God help us if this is our situation**, for **we have proved time and again** that our hands are bloody and we **cannot** do the right, **no** matter how hard we try (Van Harn, R. (2001). *The lectionary commentary : Theological exegesis for Sunday's texts* (17). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans)

Therefore, in **Genesis 9:8-17** **God offers "The Covenant of Grace"**. In it we see: **1) The Stipulations of the Covenant** (Genesis 9:8-11), **2) The Sign of the Covenant** (Genesis 9:12-16), **and finally, 3) The Summary of the Covenant** (Genesis 9:17).

God offers "The Covenant of Grace" as seen through:

1) The Stipulations of the Covenant (Genesis 9:8-11)

Genesis 9:8-11. [8] Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, [9]"Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, [10] 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. [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." (ESV)

Here starting in **Genesis 9:8**, we have **three discourses from God** to the **family of Noah**, the eight people that constitute the entire population of the earth humanly speaking. **We will spend just about all our time** on **Gen. 9:8-11** discussing the "**The Stipulations of the Covenant**" But **to illustrate the elements of the covenant**, I will be referring to the end of **verse 17** in this section. What **God says in these three speeches** to Noah, his wife, three sons and their wives is **essentially God's message to all humanity** because **all humanity** is constituted in those eight people. In God's first speech in **verse 8**, we hear: "**Then God said/spoke to Noah and to his sons with him.**" **The men** represent the women who are their wives, they are **humanity**. **God speaks directly to the whole human family, the whole human race.** (Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Lewis, T., & Gosman, A. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Genesis* (p. 327). Logos Bible Software.)

Notice exactly how it is rendered in **verse 9**: "**Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring** after you. **The main point of this chapter** is that **God is going to make a promise**. This is what I'm going to do, **God says**, I'm going to make you a **covenant**, a *berith*, a promise made by God to man. This is very important because **this** establishes that **God is a covenant maker** as part of His personal commitment to **humanity**. He is a promiser who makes covenants. **From now on** throughout the entire Bible, God is known as a **covenant** making God who is **faithful to keep His covenant**. **This covenant with Noah** is **the first explicit of 5 divinely originated covenants in Scripture** explicitly described as "everlasting." **The other 4 include:** 1) *Abrahamic* (Gen. 17:7); 2) *Priestly* (Num. 25:10-13); 3) *Davidic* (2 Sam. 23:5); and 4) *New* (Jer. 32:40). God makes it **with Noah's family** which constitutes **all of humanity**, so really it is a **covenant** or a promise that He gives to all humanity. Beyond that, even makes the promise to the animals, all creatures on the earth. And **the promise is a very simple one**, I'll **never** do what I just did again. I will **never** again drown the world in a universal flood. The word "**covenant**," *berithis* used seven times here. **The repetition** is powerful, it strengthens the **covenant**. **Verse 9**, "**I establish**," that is **imminent future**, that means

immediately I will **establish** this. **Verse 11**, "I establish," that's present. And then **verse 17**, "I have established," present perfect. **In these three verses God says: I will do it immediately, I do it, I have done it. God initiates, enacts, and completes the covenant. Why this covenant?** Well simply for the blessing of humanity from the mercy of God, for the goodness of life from the goodness of God, and for humanity 's enjoyment, from God's grace. (MacArthur, J. J. (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed.) (Ge 9:16). Nashville: Word Pub.)

When God says that "**I establish my covenant**" we must understand **first** that **the covenant is unilateral**. That means it's a **covenant** made by one, a **bilateral covenant** would be made by two. **This is a unilateral covenant**. That is **the promise is singularly on the part of God**. He's doing it **without** any consultation or negotiation with humanity. This is **not** a mutual agreement. God is **not** saying if you do this and do that then I'll do this and I'll do that. If you **don't** do this and do that, then I **won't** do this and do that. It is **not** like that. **It is: God Himself. Look at verse 11**, "I establish My covenant." **Verse 12**, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you." **Verse 17**, "This is a sign of the covenant that I have established." **Never** we, **always I**. **The promise, the covenant is unilateral. God determines to make this promise on His own, without consultation with humanity. The covenant belongs to God and He is offering it to humanity.** (Currid, J. D. (n.d.). *A Study Commentary on Genesis: Genesis 1:1-25:18* (Vol. 1, p. 220). Evangelical Press.)

- **Naturally speaking**, people love darkness **rather** than light and their ways, from God's standpoint, are only evil continually. **When God changes the circumstances of a life**, it is because He took the action. Therefore, **no one can boast** that they saw the wisdom of faith or they got their act together etc. **It is God who** opens the eyes and changes the life. **He shows an individual the error** of their ways, **enables them** to repent of sin and gives them the strength to move forward. **Nevertheless, God will judge and punish the unrepentant. The story of the flood is a prime example.**

Secondly, the covenant is not only unilateral, it is unconditional. He says, "I establish." **Verse 11**, "I establish." Again, in **verse 17**, "I have established." The word "establish" *qumin* Hebrew means **to erect, to make firm, to make stand solidly**. In other words, **I set this in concrete**. I establish. There are **no** conditions on the part of humanity to validate it or invalidate it. **Nothing** humanity does can cause Me to make it or break it. There are **no** conditions in humanity that make them deserve the covenant, **no** conditions in **humanity** that make them sustain the covenant and **no** conditions in **humanity** that can cause the termination of the covenant. **It is a covenant that is unilateral and unconditional**. God says that I'm doing it and that's it and **it has nothing to do with** what you do or **don't** do. In a sense, **God mediated His mercy through Noah** for the created order, and **later through Moses** for Israel. So, **Noah and Moses** were **subordinate types of the true Mediator to come, Jesus Christ** (Heb. 3:1-6). (Sproul, R. C., ed. (2005). *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version* (p. 23). Ligonier Ministries.)

- **When God acts to redeem a person** it is **not** because they got their act together. From God's standard, **our works** are as **filthy rags**, and **worthless** to merit salvation. It is **only the righteousness of Christ** that satisfied God's wrath. **Faith means clinging to Christ's righteousness** alone for eternal life.

Now that's pretty remarkable because the fact of the matter is, **humanity is as wicked as they were before the Flood**. But nonetheless, this is **not** a conditional covenant. **It is unilateral, it is unconditional, and thirdly, it is inviolable**. That's **negative**. The positive would be it's **secure...it's fixed**. That is, it can be **fully trusted** because, you notice, God says that it is **My covenant**, My covenant. **And He repeats that. Verse 9, verse 11, verse 15**, and elsewhere **between Me and the earth**, between Me and all flesh that is on the earth. It is **inviolable because it is a covenant made by the eternal God who cannot change and cannot lie**. **For the Christian these ancient benefits are ultimately realized through Christ** "by the blood of the eternal **covenant**" (Heb 13:20; cf. 9:15). (Mathews, K. A. (1996). *Genesis 1-11:26* (Vol. 1A, p. 410). Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

- **Satan and our own doubts will tell us that we don't deserve God's love**. And **on our own personal merit basis we don't**. But that is **not** the basis of God's love and promises. **It is based on God's character and word, not our failings**. **When we stumble into sin**, we must **resist** the temptation to flee from God's presence and the fellowship of His saints. **We need to confess the sin and cling to Him and His fellowship**.

Fourth, the promise is also **universal**. "I Myself do establish My covenant **with you**" that is with humanity. **God was speaking to the entire human race when He was talking to Noah and his sons with him**, and, of course, **their wives as well**. Listen to this, **no** other covenant in force directly applies to all humanity. **The Priestly Covenant, the Abrahamic, the Davidic, the New Covenant, they don't apply to all humanity**. **This is the only one that applies to everybody**. This one, listen now, is **the basis of common grace**. This is the covenant that is **the basis of God's goodness to all of humanity**. **No** one who will ever live on the earth from the first eight people after the Flood, **no** one who ever lives after that will be left out of this covenant. **This promise is universal**. Look at **verse 10**, "With every living creature." **Verse 11**, "With you and all flesh." **Verse 12**, "Between Me and you and every living creature that is with you for all successive generations." **Verse 15**, "With you and every living creature of all flesh." And **verse 16**, "Between God and every living creature of all flesh." And **verse 17**, "Between Me and all flesh that is on the earth." **Nobody** is going to ever be left out of this promise. **It is universal**. **Fifth**, it is **perpetual**. **Verse 12**, end of the verse, "All successive generations" And **verse 16**, "It is the everlasting covenant." **Not** everlasting in the sense of eternal, **but in the sense of lasting throughout all of time**. And we know **how long it will last**. Back in **chapter 8 verse 22**, "As long as the earth remains... **God will preserve the earth until the final judgment (2 Pet. 3:7,13); the earthly order will not end prematurely** (Whitlock, L. G., Sproul, R. C., Waltke, B. K., & Silva, M. (1995). *Reformation study Bible, the : Bringing the light of the Reformation to Scripture : New King James Version* (Ge 8:22). Nashville: T. Nelson.).

So, you have here **a covenant that is unilateral, unconditional, inviolable, universal and perpetual**. **Sixth**, and finally it is a covenant that is **physical**. As clearly indicated back in **verse 9**, He says, "With your descendants after you," that's the perpetual aspect of it, and then **verse 10**, "**and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock/cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as /of all that came out of the ark, it is for every beast of the earth**." This is why we can say this is a "**physical**" and **not just a "spiritual"** covenant due to **the inclusion of the animals**. This is **not** a covenant that's going to go on in the new heavens and the new earth. This is **not** a covenant for the next life. No. The fact...look at **verse 10**, **the fact that all the animals share in this covenant** indicates that it is a physical temporal covenant. **The Abrahamic Covenant is a spiritual one**. **The Priestly Covenant is a spiritual one**. **The Davidic Covenant is a spiritual one**. **The Mosaic Covenant** was, of course, a spiritual covenant,

demonstrating the **sinfulness** of humanity. **The New Covenant** is a spiritual covenant. **This is a temporal, physical covenant.** The animals are mentioned in **verse 10** and they're mentioned in **verse 12** under **every living creature**, and in **verse 15**, under **every living creature** of all flesh, that is all kinds of flesh, and **verse 16**, **every living creature** of all flesh, **verse 17**, all flesh that is on the earth. **This is so far-reaching that it physically covers all living beings, all living beings.** **God's assurance guarantees the continuation** of the world and of every living creature...it is the simple confirmation of what is (Westermann, C. (1994). *A Continental Commentary: Genesis 1-11* (p. 471). Fortress Press.).

So, **the covenant is unilateral, unconditional, inviolable, universal, perpetual** and has to be **physical** because it includes animals. **Now here's the covenant, verse 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."** (ESV) **God says I'm never** going to drown the world. **This was pledged** all the way back in **chapter 6 verse 18**. "I will establish My covenant with you, you shall enter the ark, you and your wives," and so forth. **I'm going to protect you.** That was kind of the first inkling that God was going to do something remarkable in saving them and sparing them. **God said that to Noah when he first came out of the ark (8:21)? Why should God repeat his promise?** Luther points out that **Noah and the members of his family** must have lived in great trembling. The sense of the awesomeness of the **yearlong experience** they had just gone through hadn't left them. **All around them** was evidence of fearful **destruction**. **God saw that these frail creatures of dust needed all the assurance he could give them** (Jeske, J. C. (2001). *Genesis* (2nd ed.). The People's Bible (96-97). Milwaukee, Wis.: Northwestern Pub. House.).

Please turn to Isaiah 54 (p.575)

Genesis 9 explains that **there will be** local floods, storms, volcanic eruptions, **all of the bits and pieces of that first cataclysmic Flood** will come but they'll be **localized**. **Never** again a worldwide disaster such as I sent. **I won't** do that again. That is My promise. We hear talk today from some quarters that the **so-called "global warming"** effect could endanger the world with a flood if all the ice caps of the earth melted. **Every time you see a rainbow, you can write off** that prognostication as **nothing** but foolishness. **The "global warming" that we need to be concerned about** is the destruction of the earth by fire in **judgment** upon sin (**2 Peter 3:10**). But **few are concerned about that global warming** (Butler, J. G. (2008). *Analytical Bible Expositor: Genesis* (p. 80). LBC Publications.).

Isaiah explains the promise from God in chapter 54:

Isaiah 54:9-10. [9]"This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you. [10] For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (ESV)

- **Isaiah appropriately used the term hesed ("steadfast love"), and called God's faithfulness** in preserving us from existence in a mindless, meaningless cosmos, hurtling to certain destruction or slowly dying like an untended fire, **his "covenant of peace."** (Gowan, D. E. (1988). *From Eden to Babel: A commentary on the book of Genesis 1-11*. International theological commentary (106). Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.)

Illustration: In modern times we define a host of relations by **contracts**. These are usually for goods or services and for hard cash. The contract, formal or informal, helps to specify failure in these relationships. **The Lord** did **not** establish a contract (with His people). **He created a covenant**. There is a difference. **Contracts** are broken when one of the parties **fails** to keep his promise. If, let us say, a patient **fails** to keep an appointment with a doctor, the doctor is **not** obligated to call the house and inquire, “Where were you? Why didn’t you show up for your appointment?” **He simply goes on to his next patient** and has his appointment-secretary **take note of the patient** who failed to keep the appointment. **The patient** may find it **harder the next time to see the doctor**. He broke an informal contract. **According to the Bible, however, the Lord asks:** “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!” (**Isa. 49:15**). The Bible indicates **the covenant** is more like the ties of a parent to her child **than** it is a doctor’s appointment. **If a child fails to show up for dinner**, the parent’s obligation, **unlike** the doctor’s, isn’t canceled. **The parent finds out where the child is and makes sure he’s cared for. One member’s failure does not destroy the relationship.** (In a covenant we see God’s **commitment to love** (Larson, C. B. (2002). *750 engaging illustrations for preachers, teachers & writers* (95). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.).

- **And the same goes for our commitment to one another as being a part of our Church.** **When we don’t see someone**, we find out if there OK, and encourage them to come back to the table.

God offers “The Covenant of Grace” as seen through:

2) The Sign of the Covenant (Genesis 9:12-16)

Genesis 9:12-16. [12] 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**: [13]I have **set my bow** in the cloud, and it shall **be a sign** of the covenant between me and the earth. [14] When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, [15]**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. [16] 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." (ESV)

This is the sign of the covenant, verse 12, 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/ successive generations. And there **He repeats** all the components of the covenant. **In times when contracts were not reduced to writing**, it was **customary, on the occasion of solemn vows, promises, and other ‘covenant’ transactions**, to appoint a **sign**, that **the parties** might at the proper time **be reminded of the covenant**, and a **breach** of its observance be averted (Skinner, J., 1851-1925. (1910). *A critical and exegetical commentary on Genesis*. (172). New York: Scribner.). **The sign** is **stated in verse 12**. It is **established in verse 13**. It is **guaranteed for the future in verses 14 and 15**. And **God will notice it in verse 16**. So, the **repetition** is part of the comprehensive character of this covenant and its attendant sign. **When God gave Abraham a covenant**, the sign was circumcision in **Genesis 17:11**. **When He gave Moses a covenant**, the sign was Sabbath, according to **Exodus 31:16 and 17**. **“The Sabbath, the rainbow, and circumcision** are, in fact, signs of the three great covenants established by God at **the three critical stages of the history of humanity: the creation ... the reestablishment of humanity after the flood ... and the birth of the Hebrew nation.**”⁷ Hamilton, V. P. (1990). *The Book of Genesis. Chapters 1-17*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (317). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.)

Here's the sign in **verse 13: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it** The sign, the oath, the mark, the symbol, the evidence that God has made a promise, this is the assurance, this is the guarantee, and this is a covenant made with all humanity, all animals, and so God has to have a sign that everybody can see, so He says, "**I have set my bow in the cloud**." The word "bow" here is **not** rainbow, it's **bow**, *qeshethin* Hebrew. It's the same word for a **battle bow**, a weapon of **death and destruction**. In Near Eastern literature there are often deities depicted with a **bow**, wielding **destruction**. And the Old Testament pictures God like that. **Exodus 15:3** says, "The Lord is a warrior." **Habakkuk 3:9**, "His **bow** is made bare." **Zachariah 9:14**, "His arrows are lightning." God is depicted as a warrior with a bow. In the Flood, God the Warrior shot His lightning arrows, pierced the earth, the earth broke open, exploded and then the sky fell, and certainly with it arrows of lightning and destruction. He bent His **bow** in wrath. But from now on, follow this, God has hung up His **bow** and He hung it in the sky where everybody can see it. Next time you see a rainbow, realize that's God's **bow**. He hung it up because this is not the time of judgment, this is the time of peace. God hung His bow as a sign of His mercy toward a world of sinners. Every sinner on the planet that sees the bow sees a sign of peace. This is a token of His promise, never to destroy the world again as He did until the very end of human history when the whole universe will be destroyed by fire, as **2 Peter 3** describes it. There will come a day when the universe will be **destroyed** and replaced by a new heaven and a new earth where there will be only the righteous and eternal peace and holiness. In the future, God will pick up His **bow** again. But for now, the **bow** is the sign of mercy, it's the sign of grace, it's the sign of peace. The great God who is a warrior has hung up His bow. When you look at the earth's surface and you see rugged, deep sea basins, rugged high mountain ranges, and strata and canyons, and polar caps and fossil-bearing rocks, and the general atmosphere, that's a reminder of the destruction of the Flood. But when you see the rainbow, that's a reminder that it will **never** happen again. Though humanity deserves it, back in **chapter 8 verse 21**, "I'll never again curse the ground on account of man even though the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth, I'll never again destroy every living thing." Humanity isn't going to be any different. Unredeemed, they will be fallen. Sin will bound. The problem will be the same. But God's won't execute His wrath until Christ returns. So, the rainbow then, beloved, is a symbol of grace, it's a symbol of mercy. The only time you see a rainbow is after a...what?...storm. It's when the storm is passed and the sun shines through. A rainbow is a picture then of grace after judgment. And when you see the rainbow, it's God who hung His bow after the judgment. God's eye of grace and our eye of faith meet when we look at the rainbow. Faith lays hold of the promise attached to the sign. You see, the merit is in what the sign speaks of. There is **no** faith in a promise and there is **no** assurance in a sign—the word and the sign go together. God makes a promise and attaches a sign to it. Now the rainbow is God's answer to Noah's altar. It is as if God says, "I'll remember, and I'll look upon it." (McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Ge 9:17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.)

- Perhaps the greatest twisting of a sign of mercy and grace is taking the rainbow and turning it into a sign of defiance **against** God's character. It's using the very symbol of peace and declaring open rebellion against God. **Romans 1**, specifies, that as an act of judgement, God gives individuals over to their sin of continual rebellion **against** Him. He allows them to suffer the consequences of a debased mind. Should there be **insufficient** correction to this rebellion, God gives a society over to the rebellion in judgement. They will face more and more sever consequences of that rebellion until Christ returns.

What's amazing, is that, **through God's mercy, this is the age of grace.** Verse 14 and 15, [14] When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, [15] 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. You say, "Does God need visual reminders?" No. But **this is His way to tell us** that He **doesn't** forget. "**Remember**", is familiar Old Testament covenant language, that God **never** forgets His promise, **God remembers His covenant** and God is faithful. And so in **verse 16**, [16] 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." (ESV) **Judgment will come again on the whole earth** in the end times (Zech 14:1-3; Rev 19:15) before there can be lasting peace and righteousness on the earth. **(We can) anticipate that in some glorious future day** the righteous will be beating swords into plowshares (Isa 2:4; Mic 4:3). **In the meantime, life goes on in a new order;** and **the divine provision of common grace** assures that the cycle of life continues and that people are preserved **alive for the time being** (Ross, A., & Oswalt, J. N. (2008). *Cornerstone biblical commentary: Genesis, Exodus* (Vol. 1, p. 79). Tyndale House Publishers.).

Please turn to Romans 3 (p.885)

The covenant that we have seen in Genesis 9 reminds us, too, of the ultimate work of the new covenant, when **God's wrath was propitiated** by his own Son on the cross, so that **all who are in Christ** find grace **instead** of wrath.

The Apostle Paul explained this grace to the Romans, and us, in Chapter 3:

Romans 3:21-28. [21] But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it-- [22] the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, [25] whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. [26] It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. [27] Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. [28] For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. (ESV) (cf. 1 John 2:2).

- **Christ, the greater Noah, saves His people from the waters of death by His faithful obedience and atoning sacrifice. Praise be to His name!. Every time you see a rainbow, it represents the victory of grace over judgment. What does this world deserve? Judgment. What does it get? Grace because this is the age when God has hung up His bow. The triumph of mercy over wrath, this is the age for us to go to the ends of the earth and tell them of God and His mercy, God and His grace.** (Hughes, R. K. (2004). *Genesis: Beginning and blessing*. Preaching the Word (148). Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.)

Illustration: There are **many people who carry the scars of the past within them.** There is a book by William Styron entitled *Sophie's Choice*. It tells the story of a young Jewish woman who survived one of the German death camps. She was **confronted with a choice as she entered the camp.** This choice is **not** talked about in the early pages of the book. It comes out only in the end. But when you get to it you know that **it alone explains the agony of the earlier pages.** **As Sophie entered the death camp she had two children with her.** **One of the guards,** apparently on a whim, told her she could keep one child but would have to let the other go off to the furnaces to **die.** **This marred the mother irredeemably, and in the end she committed suicide because she was not able to cope with the past.** **There are people who have wounds like that—people who have suffered loss and tragedy.**

Yet we know that **God is the God of beauty.** **God makes signs of beauty** to say, “I know that life is filled with tragedy. **Sin** is ugly. **But** I am the God of beauty. I am the God who is able to **overcome these things,** and **I call you away** from them to myself.” At the end of the Bible, **in Revelation,** we have a picture of God sitting on his throne around which is a rainbow. **Look forward to that** and let God's beautiful sign minister to your **soul** (Boice, J. M. (1998). *Genesis: An expository commentary* (389). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books.).

Finally, we see that God offers “The Covenant of Grace” as seen through:

3) The Summary of the Covenant (Genesis 9:17)

Genesis 9:17. [17] 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.**” (ESV)

Verse 17 is **a final recapitulation,** one last speech. **The whole Flood story** is a revelation of God's holy **wrath.** **God is a holy God,** so He must punish sin. But **the rainbow** is a sign that **God is also** a God of mercy and a God of grace and a God of patience and a God of peace. **There will be a final wrath to come** in which the universe will be **destroyed** by fire and **all unrepentant sinners will perish.** **between the Flood and that final time** is the period of grace and **the bow of God,** the bow of a warrior hangs in all its beauty over the earth **against the clouds of judgment** as the beauty of grace touching heaven at its arc and touching earth at its ends, **to tell all humanity that God is gracious to sinners,** **calling them to repentance and faith** to escape the judgement sure to come. **The sign of the “rainbow” should elicit in us** both awe and thanksgiving, **considering the “kindness and sternness of God”** (Rom 11:22). (Mathews, K. A. (1996). *Genesis 1-11:26* (Vol. 1A, p. 408). Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

Please turn to Revelation 3 (p.967)

The rainbow is a product of sunshine and storm, and **its colors** remind us of the “**manifold (many-colored) grace of God”** (**1 Peter 4:10**). The rainbow **appears to be a bridge between heaven and earth,** reminding us that **in Christ, God bridged the chasm that separated** humanity from God. **We meet the rainbow again in Ezek. 1:28** and finally in **Rev. 4:3** (Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the Old Testament* (Ge 9:1–17). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.).

Let's see the final depiction and its significance starting in Revelation 3:

Revelation 3:17-4:3. [17] For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and **I need nothing,** not realizing that **you are wretched,** pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. [18] I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and **white garments** so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. [19] **Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline,** so be

zealous and repent. [20] Behold, **I stand at the door and knock**. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. [21] The one who conquers, **I will grant him to sit with me on my throne**, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. [22] He who has an ear, let him **hear** what the Spirit says to the churches." [4:1] After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "**Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.**" [2] At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, **a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne**. [3] And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and **around the throne was a rainbow** that had the appearance of an emerald. (ESV) (cf. Rev. 10:1)

- **Like a loving father, Christ will reprove those whom he loves** (cf. Prov. 3:12), **calling them to repent before he intervenes in judgment. He stands at the door and knocks, not as a homeless transient seeking shelter but as the master of the house**, expecting alert servants to respond immediately to His signal and welcome His entrance (Luke 12:35–36; James 5:9). **To the one who opens the door in faith and obedience**, Christ will come in and will eat with him, which is a picture of close personal fellowship.

As John receives a heavenly vision of God on His throne and of **the slain Lamb**, whose triumph **qualifies Him** to open a scroll and execute God's **future purposes for history**, he sees the **destruction** of all his foes, and the **vindication** of those who trust in him. **As the Lamb who opens the scroll's seals**, John sees images of God's instruments of judgment and of the saints who will receive salvation. **The luminous colors**—jasper, carnelian, emerald (and **specifically the rainbow**)... **together signify the splendor and majesty of God** (Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (2469). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.).

(Format note: Some base commentary from <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/90-263/gods-rainbow-covenant>)

Closing Hymn:

Prayer Room Invitation:

047 Benediction

May that One, in whom we have redemption through His blood, The forgiveness of sins, **in accordance with the riches of His grace, Lavish on you** all wisdom and understanding. So that **you might keep your heart on the right path. In Christ We Pray. Amen**. (cf. Prov. 23:19; Eph. 1:7-8)