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Sermon Notes

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Something Old and Something New: God's Covenant with Noah Genesis 9:1-17

I. God's Covenant Faithfulness

- A. We make many promises... break many, too
- B. God NEVER breaks His Word
- C. God's commitment to His covenants = Salvation for US

II. A New Blessing for an Old Command (vs. 1-7)

- A. God's Blessing: Power for Fruitfulness
 - 1. Words of blessing
 - 2. Power behind the words

Illus. Isaac's blessing of Jacob... couldn't be revoked

- B. An Old Command Renewed
 - 1. Sin does not change God's purpose
 - 2. Sin DOES change God's methods
 - 3. God's goal:

Habakkuk 2:14 "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

- C. New Measures, New Relationships
 - 1. Re-establishment of human supremacy over creation
 - a. Fear & dread of man... protection for human race
 - b. "They are given into your hands..." vs. 2

2. New food patterns: not just vegetation, but also meat
 - a. perhaps because of reduced vegetation b/c no canopy
 - b. reflective of increased violence

3. Limitation: NO BLOOD!
 - a. called “lifeblood”
 - b. Leviticus, blood = life, purpose = atonement

Leviticus 17:10-11 “Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood—I will set my face against that person who eats blood and I will cut him off from his people. For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.”

- c. Christ’s teaching: linked His blood with our life

John 6:53 “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

D. Final Accountability

1. Accountability for our lifeblood
2. Accountability from animals
3. Accountability for the life of others
4. Establishment of capital punishment
 - a. escalation of violence before flood to be restrained

NOTE: Therefore capital punishment seen to be a deterrent

- “You must purge the evil from among you...” Deuteronomy 13:5
- “Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.” Deuteronomy 13:11... also 17:13, 19:20, 21:21

- b. increase of human governmental role
 - Cain’s punishment to be divine... “seven-fold vengeance”
 - Now humans to do it
- c. image of God means value
 - Murder is an attack on the image of God
 - Such an attack is utterly evil
- d. image of God means authority
 - “by man shall his blood be shed BECAUSE he is in the image of God”
 - image = authority

Genesis 1:26 “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule...”

E. Command stated yet again (vs. 7)

vs. 7 “As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.”

1. Human race hung by a slender thread
2. Four couples, one quite aged
3. Up until now Shem, Ham, & Japheth & wives had been barren
4. Now, the blessing of God would cause them incredible fruitfulness
 - a. Shem would have five sons
 - b. Ham would have four sons
 - c. Japheth would have seven sons

Noah had sixteen grandsons, plus certainly numerous grand-daughters... but none of them were born before they exited the Ark; new blessing for the old commandment

III. God's Covenant With Noah and Creation (vs. 8-11)

A. Definition of covenant

A covenant is an agreement between two or more parties binding them to certain actions & commitments on each other's behalf

Theologically: it is God's gracious way of dealing with us in our sin... He makes promises we don't deserve & puts up conditions we must meet

B. History of Covenants

1. Ancient Near East

- a. **political** covenants: treaty of the Great King
- b. **personal** covenants: e.g. Jonathan & David

2. Covenants in the Bible

- a. Hebrew: word comes from root **to bind**... a bond, a fetter
- b. two major types: conditional & unconditional
- c. conditional: Key word = IF... Sinai

Exodus 19:4-5 "Say this to the house of Jacob and the people of Israel... 'If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession.'"

- d. unconditional: Abraham & David

Genesis 15:5 "Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." He also said to him, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it." But Abram said, "O Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it." [Then God established a covenant with Abraham]

- Incredible Promises: numerous descendents, the gift of the land
- No conditions! No "IF"

2 Samuel 23:5 "Has the Lord not made with me an everlasting covenant?"

2 Samuel 7:11 *“The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you. When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you... I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever.”*

- Incredible promises: a line of Kings coming from David’s own body
- One future King, whose kingdom will never end
- No conditions! No “IF”

C. The New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31 *“The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant, with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”*

- Incredible promise #1: to change us from inside... new heart, new nature, new love, new obedience
- Incredible Promise #2: To be our God, and we will be His people
- Incredible Promise #3: All sins completely forgiven
- Conditions: that Jesus would give His blood to accomplish it

Matthew 26:27-28 *“Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’”*

D. The covenant with Noah (vs. 8-11)

1. Unidirectional... no covenant requirements

vs. 8-9 *“Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ‘I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you...’”*

vs. 11 *“I now establish my covenant with you...”*

2. Scope: covers all creation for all time
 - a. covenant made with Noah, his family and his descendants... all humans
 - b. covenant also made with creation

vs. 10 “...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.”

3. Promise: never again to cut off all life by means of a flood

vs. 11 “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.”

- a. clear evidence of the global nature of Noah’s flood... THERE HAVE BEEN MANY LOCAL FLOODS SINCE THEN
- b. clear evidence also: God’s faithfulness
- c. One more MAJOR judgment day coming... many smaller ones

Sodom & Gomorrah a localized judgment; fall of Jerusalem also

IV. The Covenant Sign: Permanent Symbol of God’s Faithfulness (vs. 12-17)

A. The Rainbow: What it is

- 1. Natural prism
 - a. white light broken into various wavelengths
 - b. RED, ORANGE, YELLOW, GREEN, BLUE, INDIGO, VIOLET
 - c. beauty of colors... “Let there be light... made even more beautiful...”
- 2. New atmospheric conditions... no longer a canopy
 - a. light moves through clouds in a new way
 - b. spectacular new sight for Noah & his family
- 3. Beauty, immensity
- 4. Always at the END of the storm

B. The Rainbow’s Immediate Significance: Covenant Faithfulness

- 1. Sign of God’s faithfulness
 - a. God wanted to reassure Noah & family

- b. Confidence under God's steadfast patience
- c. humans can't stop a rainbow any more than we can stop day & night
- d. TOTAL security under the sign of the covenant... similar to God's unconditional covenant with David

Jeremiah 33:19-21 "If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time, then my covenant with David my servant... can be broken and David will no longer have a descendent to reign on his throne."

2. Demonstration of God's sovereign power

- a. God totally controls the weather

vs. 14 "Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds..."

- b. God restrains Himself... rain will come, but not sweep away
- c. God's power is unlimited but in TOTAL control

3. God reminds Himself

- a. God never forgets His promises
- b. YET the rainbow is given for HIS remembrance

vs. 14-15 "Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant..."

vs. 16 "Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all the living creatures of every kind on the earth."

Sense of God's total commitment to His word and His promises... we may forget, but God NEVER will

4. Symbols of our present covenant

- a. Baptism
- b. Lord's Supper

5. Constant symbol of God's beauty & power

Ezekiel 1:25-28 “Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man.... Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. When I saw it, I fell facedown.”

Revelation 4:1-3 “After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.’ At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow resembling an emerald encircled the throne.”

C. The Rainbow’s Future Significance: The New Heaven and Earth

1. Reminiscent of New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:18-21 “The wall of the city was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.... The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.”

Jasper (clear), sapphire (red), chalcedony (greenish-blue), emerald (green), sardonyx (reddish-white), carnelian (red), chrysolite (gold), beryl (blue-green), topaz (yellow), chrysoprase (greenish-yellow), jacinth (purple), amethyst (violet)

***Red: sapphire Orange: chrysolite Yellow: topaz Green: emerald Blue: beryl
Indigo: jacinth Violet: amethyst***

2. No Lamp... the glory of Christ

vs. 22 *“I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.”*

3. The beautiful colors: aspects of the nature of God refracted through these gemstones
 - a. His truthfulness
 - b. His holiness
 - c. His compassion
 - d. His power
 - e. His knowledge

V. Application: Our Unchanging God

A. Our security: God’s covenant faithfulness

1. God keeps all of His promises
2. God has made a new covenant to us in Christ
3. BY HIS BLOOD... salvation

B. Our mission: God’s consistent plan

Habakkuk 2:14 *“The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”*

C. Our warning of final judgment: God’s unchanging holiness

2 Peter 3:3-7 *“First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this coming he promised? Ever since our fathers died everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation. But they deliberately forget that long ago, by God’s word the heavens existed and were formed out of water and by water. By water also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”*

**“God gave Noah a rainbow sign,
No more water, fire next time!!”**

D. Our promise of future glory: God's eternal home
the New Heaven and the New Earth