



The Covenant with Noah: Part 3...

Genesis 9:18-10:32

Two weeks back, we began looking at the covenant with Noah as a part of our move forward and away from the Covenant of Works with Adam in the Garden of Eden. You will remember, I hope, that when we began we more or less started in the middle of things in our study of covenant theology and then backed up to the Covenant of Redemption that occurred between the various members of the Trinity before the beginning of creation.¹ After that we moved forward to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and to the covenantal arrangement that God had with Adam in which God promised life to Adam and by extension to us on condition of Adam's personal and perfect obedience.² But, of course, Adam did not obey and so the terms of that covenant were set aside and God was pleased to make a new covenant...a covenant of grace in which he promised life and salvation by Jesus Christ to all those that trust in Him.³

Now that Covenant of Grace is made up of all the rest of the covenants mentioned in the Bible and starts with the *proto-evangel*⁴ in Genesis 3:15 and continues on through the covenant with Noah, the covenant with Abraham, the covenant with Moses, and the covenant with David all the way to the New Covenant. All of those covenants are simply different administrations of

outworkings of the one Covenant of Grace. Writer Michael Williams put it like this:

God's covenant with Noah is not a replacement of his first covenant. Rather than think in terms of a series of covenants, we might better think of the covenant episodes in Scripture as just that, episodes in a single, organic, ongoing story. The many parallels between the Noahic covenant and the creation story should not surprise us.⁵

That doesn't mean that sometimes these various covenant episodes don't point backward to the Covenant of Works with Adam. Still it does mean that overall they are always episodes of grace...that is, they are covenants involving God's gracious kindness in the redemption of fallen sinners and that each one of those administrations is pointing forward to God's ultimate fulfillment of the Covenant of Grace in Jesus Christ. Now I have said that many times since we started out study but it seems like the last couple of weeks I have been distracted by other things that have come up in our study and have not made the point as often as I should have.

Now this morning we are continuing with our study of the first administration of the Covenant of Grace...the administration found in God's covenant with Noah. We saw there that prior to God's covenantal kindness to Noah the world had grown enormously wicked. We also saw that God had determined to destroy the world in a deluge of water, a world-wide flood, and that Noah had found grace in the eyes of the Lord and that God had covenanted with him to save him and his immediate family by means of an ark. And the end result was that Noah built the ark God had commanded and he and his family were saved through the waters of judgment.

Now the wonder of wonder is God's gracious promise after the Flood in which He promises Noah and all mankind in an extraordinary promise of common grace that He will never, never again destroy the world by flood. Older commentators used to say that in the flood God turned His bow, His war weapon, downward toward mankind to destroy them but that afterwards He turned His bow upward in a self-maledictory oath toward heaven, toward the cross as it were, that should He ever break His covenant of peace with man He himself would suffer the wrath. If that interpretation were true then the rainbow would be a promise or self-maledictory oath in the same way the firepot and pillar of cloud were that passed through the animal parts in the episode with Abraham in Genesis 15.⁶

I have to say that would not surprise me. It is not by accident that many of these literary motifs are repeated over and over again. The Bible is rich with allusion and is written to be read as a whole. I have made have made mention of some of the repeated biblical allusions in past lessons...things like the fact that Moses himself was placed in an ark daubed with pitch and placed into the waters of Nile River only to be delivered from sure and certain death at the hand of Pharaoh. Now you have to imagine that the first time the Pentateuch was read, the readers thought to themselves, "You know this story about Moses going into the water in an ark daubed with pitch sounds a lot like the story of Noah." And you can imagine that pretty much the same sort of response must have occurred later on when the children of Israel passed through the waters of judgment in the Red Sea and the enemies of God were swept away in waters of judgment as God removed the wind he had sent and the waters crashed down upon Pharaoh and his chariots. The reader would have thought to themselves, "God is faithful to

His covenant and delivers His people by protecting them from their enemies as in the days of Noah.”⁷

I am making the point because you have the same kind of literary connections or allusions occur in the life of Noah as he is in many ways compared to his predecessor Adam. I touched on this particular fact last week when I mentioned a dozen or so obvious similarities. Allow me to just remind you of a few.⁸

- (1.) Adam the father of all humanity before the flood and Noah its father after.
- (2.) Both rule the animals: Adam by naming (2:19), Noah by preserving (7:15).
- (3.) God repeats the command to be fruitful, to multiply, and to rule the earth to each man. (1:28; 9:1)
- (4.) Both work the “ground” (3:17—19; 9:20).
- (5.) Both follow a similar pattern of sinning, the former by eating and the latter by drinking (3:6; 9:21).
- (6.) The immediate result of their sin is shameful nakedness (3:7; 9:21), connected with “knowing” (3:5; 9:24) and being clothed by another (3:21; 9:23).

I wanted to make the point that because you ought as Reformed people to begin to see the wonderfully complex unity of the story of the Bible. You ought to begin to see the great, collective unity of the Bible and by that I mean you ought to begin to see Jesus anywhere and everywhere in the text. Not just because I say so but because He said so.⁹ I had a brother come up to me after Sunday school last week and say to me, “You know I was taught to see and used to see the stories of the Bible as simply that...a bunch on independent, disconnected morality stories. But now I see that they are all connected as part of the fabric of God’s great redemptive story in Jesus and you know it just makes the Bible come alive.” I have to tell you I think he was really surprised when I grabbed him around the neck and hugged and kissed him...I didn’t really but I wanted to. There is no greater thrill for a Bible teacher or preacher to have someone say,

“You know I saw Jesus there is the text today and he was marvelous in my sight.”¹⁰

Now this morning we are looking in particular at the story of Noah as he and his sons step out from the Ark as the new Garden of Eden and press headlong out into the recreated world to subdue and take dominion over it. I am looking at Genesis 9:18 and following.

^{ESV} **Genesis 9:18**...The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem¹¹, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.

Now the first thing you ought to notice are the names of the three boys. Typically, Shem is considered the oldest.¹² Japheth is considered to be the middle son and Ham the youngest.¹³ You will notice that Noah has three sons just as Adam did. Now the birth order of the boys is not determined by the way they are typically listed in Scripture but rather from verses like Genesis 10:21 and Genesis 9:24.

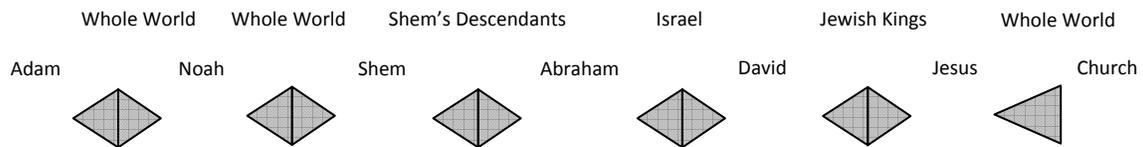
^{ESV} **Genesis 10:21**...To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born.

Now, I should say that in chapter 10 there is a rather listing of genealogical tables and their names are given there in a different order starting with Japheth, and then Ham and then last of all Shem. But I think that order occurs because Moses is trying to end the table with the most important of the three with regards to God's covenant.

Now just two other things about Genesis 9:18.

^{ESV} **Genesis 9:18**...The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.

First of all, you ought to notice the last verse...verse 19...in which Moses tells us that all of the people of the world find their origin in these three boys. That is, it is looking forward to the Tower of Babel story and ultimately to the story of Abraham. Now I want to make that point even though we won't actually get to spend any time going there. I want to make that point because it seems to me that the story of God's covenantal dealings employs the repeated use of what I like to call the "funnel principle". What I mean by that is this. The story of redemption starts off with one goes to many and the back down to one then to many again and so on till it is finally completed in Christ...something like this.



No doubt you could add countless other groups and individuals in between. But my point is that the same cycles or literary ideas occur over and over again and God sovereignly administers His unchanging plan of redemption.

Now the second thing I want you to notice in the passage we looked at is the short descriptive phrase that occurs right after the name of Ham...where it says that Ham was the father of Canaan. Now you ought to be able to see the importance of that name for the first readers or hearers of this sacred word because the first readers of this text would have been those children of Israel

poised and ready to enter the land of Canaan. Listen to how Eugene Merrill puts it.

According to universal, precritical tradition Moses wrote Genesis sometime between the Exodus (1446 B.C.) and the time of his death (1406), most likely in the plains of Moab on the eve of the conquest of Canaan...This is a most important point, for the historicity of the book, including Genesis 10, must be understood in light of the fact that Genesis is a historical record filtered through and nuanced by the circumstances in which its composition took place. It is therefore appropriate to describe Genesis as "sacred history" or an account of history with a preeminently theological slant and agenda. This by no means undercuts its reliability as "real" history but it does necessitate a sensitive hermeneutic, one that takes account of the human author's own special objectives and perspectives as he, led by the Holy Spirit, addressed his own generation about the meaning of their current situation and the historical events that brought them to where they were.

A people poised to undertake conquest of a land populated by others who had been there for centuries *ought to*¹⁴ have compelling historical and theological justification for doing so.¹⁵

All of that raises the question, "What kind of people were the Canaanites?"¹⁶

This particular pericope or section makes the point, and it does it by showing rather than telling,¹⁷ that the inhabitants of the land of Canaan were a people cursed of God.¹⁸ But why were they cursed? What was it about them that brought on God's curse? Was it a curse that could be broken or were they doomed as some sort of cosmic fatalism?

Notice how the story switches back after the initial introduction to Noah. Look at verse 20.

^{ESV} **Genesis 9:20**...Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard.

The thing we see in verse 20 is that Noah began to be a man of the soil...one modern translation puts it like this, "Noah was the first tiller of the soil"¹⁹ but that can't be right for clearly Cain tilled the soil before him.²⁰ Rather the emphasis is on the fact that Noah is a man of *soil*...(as per the NIV) that is, he is like Adam (the Hebrew word Adam means soil or dirt)...perhaps even that he is the new Adam and that he began to plant a vineyard. One writer puts it like this.

In Genesis 2 humanity is made from 'the dust of the earth', whereas Noah is described as a 'man of the ground'. This is the world of Noah whose obedience stands in marked contrast to that omnipresent violence that springs from the corruption of humanity's 'way upon the earth'. It is anticipated that this new, obedient Adam will provide relief from the accursed ground, which in fact occurs with his provision of wine, but with attendant problems.²¹

Now this particular fact seems to be referring back to the prophecy made by Lamech concerning Noah before Noah was born.

^{ESV} **Genesis 5:28**...When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son ²⁹ and called his name Noah, saying, "Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands."

Now I take that to be a reference to the fact that Noah would be the first to practice viticulture (the growing of grapes) and/or viniculture (the making of wine) and that his contribution would lessen the burden of toiling in the soil because of the gladness that wine gives.²²

Now comes the sad part. Look at verse 21.

^{ESV} **Genesis 9:21**...He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. ²² And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. ²³ Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁴ When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." ²⁶ He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. ²⁷ May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant." ²⁸ After the flood Noah lived 350 years. ²⁹ All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

Now I have to tell you that this particular passage has generated almost as much controversy as the "sons of God and daughters of men" passage in Genesis 6. Let me explain why by dividing the story up into three different parts.

Those three parts are:

- (1.) Noah's drunkenness
- (2.) Ham's sin
- (3.) Canaan's curse

Now the first part, the part describing Noah's drunkenness obviously makes the point that this new Garden of Eden where Noah and his sons have landed in the ark is transparently different than the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve lived and prospered. It is different because Noah and his sons have brought something into the Garden that Adam and Eve did not. They have brought with them fallen and depraved hearts. They have brought with them an inclination to do evil.

Noah tended vines and produced grapes and made wine and drank the wine and became drunk and exposed himself naked in his own tent. Now as far as I

can tell, Noah is the first person ever to make wine. And the text doesn't condemn him for making or for drinking wine. In fact, nowhere in the Bible does the Bible condemn the consumption of wine. Wine is considered to be a gift from God to cheer and make glad the heart. But there is a second part to that and that is that drunkenness is condemned everywhere else in the Bible...everywhere except here. And the text here doesn't make any statement regarding Noah's drunkenness. It doesn't spend any time whatsoever condemning Noah. It doesn't have to. This is one of those instances where the text shows rather than tells. Noah was clearly in the wrong. He had dropped his dignity and honor and inhibition. At least, for all his lack of inhibition, Noah had the sense to confine himself to his own tent. And it is hard to know what Noah was hoping to accomplish. Was he hoping to attract his wife with his nakedness or was he simply acting out in folly.²³ The thing we have to remember is that this is the same Noah that found grace in the eyes of the Lord. This is the same Noah that walked with God. This is the same Noah that Peter called, "a herald or preacher of righteousness".²⁴ But here he is, drunk, and unconscious flaunting his sinful folly in nakedness.

Calvin writes this:

I suppose that we are to learn from the drunkenness of Noah, what a filthy and detestable crime drunkenness is. The holy patriarch, though he had hitherto been a rare example of frugality and temperance, losing all self-possession, did, in a base and shameful manner, prostrate himself naked on the ground, so as to become a laughingstock to all. Therefore, with what care ought we to cultivate sobriety, lest anything like this, or even worse, should happen to us?²⁵

But this is one of those cases where I think we are to learn more than just that.

We are to learn the necessity of being watchful at all times. We are to learn the danger of doing anything that causes us to cast aside our inhibitions. We are to recognize that it is an easy thing to forget ourselves and that we are always prone to sin. The hymnist, Robert Robertson, was right when he wrote these words:

*Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.²⁶*

Of course, the picture of Noah is an inverted picture of Adam. Adam found himself naked after eating of the fruit of the tree and was ashamed. Noah made himself naked after drinking of the fruit of the vine and was unashamed.

Now the second part of the story involves Noah's son Ham. The text says:

^{ESV} **Genesis 9:22...** ²² And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. ²³ Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁴ When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him,

Now the various interpretations of what happened here are legion and many of them hinge on the last verse here...verse 24 where it says "When Noah awoke he knew what his youngest son had done to him."

The various positions, starting with the least likely, are that:

- (1.) Ham castrated Noah in an attempt to take over as patriarch of the clan. That would mean that when he went out to brothers, he told them what he had done and what his intentions were.²⁷
- (2.) Ham uncovered his father's nakedness by having intimate relations with his mother, Noah's wife and that the child born to that relation was Canaan. That would mean that Ham had usurped his father's role and had taken his mother as an additional wife.²⁸
- (3.) Ham perpetrated some sort of homosexual rape on Noah and then went out and told his brothers in order to bring shame upon their father. I think this possible but still less likely than the fourth view.
- (4.) Ham gazed upon his father in some sort of homosexual, voyeuristic way demonstrating his own perverse and deviant bent and then went out and mocked his father before his brothers taking great joy in his shame.²⁹

My own opinion here is that this last view is probably right. It seems to me that it is making the text say too much to have it say more. I don't think the sin was simply seeing his father naked but rather seeing him naked and savoring the sight in some sort of perverse way and then broadcasting his father's shame.

Listen to what James Montgomery Boice writes.

This does not mean that Ham merely stumbled in an accidental way into the tent where his father was lying and thus saw his nakedness, however. There would be no blame in that. Most likely, the sin was in the way he reacted to his discovery. He could have covered his father as his two brothers did, but instead he went and told them, apparently making fun of his father's drunken and uncovered state. It was an attack on his father's honor.

Moreover, it may have been a repudiation of his father's religion. Robert Candlish makes this point well: "Ham not only dishonored him as a parent—he disliked him as a preacher of righteousness. Hence his satisfaction, his irrepressible joy, when he caught the patriarch in such a state of degradation. Ah! he has found that the godly man is no better than his neighbors; he has got behind the scenes; he has made a notable discovery; and now he cannot contain himself. He rushes out, all hot and impatient, to publish the news, so welcome to himself!

The only thing that is worse than committing a specific sin is the devilish delight of finding out and reveling in that sin in others. This Ham did! His brothers, by contrast, grieved for their father and did what they could to remove the indignity.³⁰

So the first part of the story here concern's Noah's shameful drunkenness. The second part concern's Ham's shameful sin and the third part concerns Canaan's shameful curse. Look at verse 24.

^{ESV} **Genesis 9:24**...When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers."

Now whatever judgment is going to be invoked for what occurred in the tent between Noah and Ham will be worked in out in the descendants of Ham's youngest son Canaan. There is no end to the speculation as to why the curse was projected upon Canaan and not Ham. Some commentators are so bold as to suggest that it was really Canaan who perpetrated the crime and not Ham. But most argue that the judgment of Ham's sin is passed on to his youngest son simply because he was the youngest son of Noah in a sort of poetic justice. That is that Ham, the youngest son of Noah, will see his own perverted and deviant ways blossom in the life of his youngest son. I don't know about you but there are few things in this life that terrify me as much as knowing that my sin might find its ultimate extension in the lives of my children or grandchildren.

Oh, as parents and grandparents how careful we ought to be. How careful we ought to be with our words and actions. How careful we ought to be to mortify the sinful deeds of our lives in order that our children might not have to harvest the seeds that we have planted. I don't know how many times I have pleaded

with young men to guard their eyes and their thoughts...to avoid the lures of pornography not just because it will make them terrible lovers but also because it will bear fruit in the lives of their children and grandchildren that will lead to places they can't even imagine.

What is clear is that his descendants...that is, Canaan's descendants are going to be cursed and reviled by God and that is, I think, the principle reason that this account is given here in Genesis 9. You see Moses is trying here to connect what happened in that tent with the deviant and perverted sexual practices of the land of Canaan right before the children of Israel cross into the land to take possession of it. He is trying to warn the Israelites what to expect and to warn them against being lured by the practices of the Canaanites.

Look at what God says through Moses to the people in Deuteronomy 12:29.

^{ESV} **Deuteronomy 12:29**..."When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, ³⁰ take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods?--that I also may do the same.' ³¹ You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods. ³² "Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.

And he says the same sort of thing in Leviticus 18:24.

^{ESV} **Leviticus 18:24**..."Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, ²⁵ and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. ²⁶ But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none

of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you²⁷ (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean),²⁸ lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you.²⁹ For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people.³⁰ So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs that were practiced before you, and never to make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God."

But, of course, they did not listen. They did not obey and in the end they too were vomited out of the land for falling to the seductive song of the land of Canaan.

2 Kings 17:20 reminds us of that sad fact.

^{ESV} **2 Kings 17:20**...And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

Still there was and always has been a righteous remnant...Shem and Japheth fill that role in the story.

^{ESV} **Genesis 9:26**...He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.²⁷ May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant."²⁸ After the flood Noah lived 350 years.²⁹ All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

Notice the blessing here is not directed toward Shem or Japheth but toward the God of Shem. The curse was directed toward Canaan and the blessing was directed toward God for his mercy. And, of course, from here to the fulfillment of the new covenant in the redemptive work of Jesus the ongoing Covenant of

Grace is going to principally dwell in the tents of Shem. From his seed will come Abraham and Moses and David and the Lord Jesus Himself until the work of redemption is completed and the gospel extended to all the world.

Still, it is a remarkable fact is that God extended His grace to the very first inhabitant of the land of Canaan that the spies met when they entered the land...Rahab the harlot. And wonder of wonder she was married to the father of Boaz who himself married a Moabite woman and the blood of both flowed in the line that led to the Lord Jesus.

I want to make that point clear for a reason.

It has been one of the saddest affairs in the history of Christianity that some...and I can't bring myself to call them preachers...that some men have justified the oppression of the black race on the basis of the curse of Canaan. They do that because some of Ham's other three sons are clearly progenitors of some of the African people groups. But when they do that they reveal both their biblical ignorance and their sinful inclination. The judgment of Ham's sin, whatever it was, was passed on only to Canaan and God wrought His judgment Canaan's descendants in the occupation of the land by Israel. Whatever God intended to accomplish in His judgment of the Canaanites was accomplished there. Besides that, there is absolutely no reason biblically or anthropologically to think that the Canaanites were black...while there is every reason to think they were white or brown. For anyone to find justification in the mistreatment of any son or daughter of Africa anywhere on earth on the basis of the curse pronounced against Canaan is and was an insult to Almighty God and that is

true whether that mistreatment occurred in South Africa in the last century or in the American south the century before.

Let us rejoice together that whatever wall of separation was out there dividing people...whether Jew and Gentile...whether sons of Shem, Ham and Japheth has forever been crushed flat under the weight of the cross and that whatever distinction may have existed before no longer does and that now in the one covenant of grace there is only the one people of God.

It is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our sight.

Let's pray.

¹ The Covenant of Redemption is not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, nor is it spelled out in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Yet, the concept is rightly inferred from Scripture and accepted by a majority of Reformed scholars. The idea is that God the Father and God the Son covenanted together to bring about the salvation of the elect prior to creating the world. You can see it implicitly in passages like John 17. See below:

^{ESV} **John 17:1**...When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

² **WCF 7.2**...The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

³ **WCF 7.3**...Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.

⁴ The *proto- evangel* is the name given to the promise made to Adam & Eve in Genesis 3:15. The word means “pre-gospel” and is called that because it anticipates the future Messiah, Jesus Christ. It is the first foreshadowing or promise of the gospel in the Bible.

^{ESV} **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."

⁵ Michael D. Williams, *Far as the Curse is Found: the Covenant Story of Redemption*, (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2005), 93.

⁶ Williams, 98. Williams says this much better than I do. He writes, “The divine oath of self-malediction will become an explicit aspect of the covenant in Genesis 15 when in the form of a smoking firepot God passes through the bloody aisle while his covenant partner sleeps. Although the idea no longer has a strong following, older commentators often saw hints of the self-maledictory oath in the rainbow. According to this interpretation the rainbow is God’s oath, his pledge unto death that should man break the covenant peace, God himself will suffer the curse of the covenant. One could say that in the flood, God’s bow was aimed toward the earth in judgment. But once God placed his bow in the sky, the plane of the earth becomes the bowstring and the weapon is now pointed upward toward God, and thus God himself becomes the recipient of threatened covenant curse.

It would be nice to find a self-maledictory reference to Christ in the rainbow—the bow is aimed, as it were, toward the cross, where God takes the curse of the covenant upon himself. The real issue, however, is not discovering veiled references to Christ in the Noahic covenant, but rather discerning its contribution to the redemptive drama of Scripture.”

⁷ To examine this sort of redemptive understanding further, you might want to read: Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), 43-55. This section deals especially with Noah but the whole book outlines the principle of understanding the unity of God’s revelation.

You might also want to read:

Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006), 212-239. This section also deals especially with Noah but the whole book which focuses expressly on Genesis demonstrates the importance of literary allusion and the interconnectedness of the various stories included.

⁸ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2001), 127-128. Warren picked up the parallels from Warren Gage’s book entitled, *The Gospel in Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology*.

⁹ ^{ESV} **John 1:45**...Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

^{ESV} **John 5:46**...For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.

ESV **Luke 24:27**...And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

¹⁰ ESV **John 12:21**...So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

¹¹ ESV **Genesis 10:21**...To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born.

¹² ESV **Genesis 10:21**...To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born.

¹³ ESV **Genesis 9:24**...When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers."

¹⁴ Merrill has "must" which I changed to "ought to" to make the quote flow properly.

¹⁵ Eugene H. Merrill, "The Peoples of the Old Testament according to Genesis 10" in *Bibliotheca sacra* 154 no 613 Ja-Mr 1997, p 3-22.

¹⁶ U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on The Book of Genesis: Part II From Noah To Abraham Genesis VI 9 -XI 32* (Skokie, Illinois: Varda Books, 1989...This is an electronic version of the book originally published by Magnes Press), 148. Cassuto writes, "A preliminary announcement is made here in accordance with the established principle of Biblical narrative style, in order that the reader should be able to understand what will subsequently be told of Canaan in the story of Noah's intoxication."

¹⁷ A favorite phrase of mine rightly attributed to Leland Ryken in his work *Realms of Gold*. Ryken makes the point that really good narrative always follows the rule of "showing rather than telling" and this particular narrative really illustrates that point conclusively. See:

Leland Ryken, *Realms of Gold: The Classics in Christian Perspective* (Wheaton, Illinois: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1991), 200. He writes, "The style of the novel also engages us. It is an example of the art of simplicity. The sentences are terse and self-contained. Connectives are sparse. The tone is matter of fact. Like a camera, the narrator records details meticulously. He speaks a language that is concrete, sensory and vivid. No book ever obeyed the literary impulse *to show rather than tell* more effectively than this one. The style itself strikes us as an artistic achievement that merits the old word "beauty" and brings to mind C.S. Lewis's designation 'phrase-by-phrase deliciousness.'"

¹⁸ Cassuto, 143. Cassuto writes, "The theme of the division and dispersion of Noah's descendants is not only indicated at the beginning and at the end, as we have noted, but runs like a golden thread throughout the whole section, integrating all its parts into one organic whole. After the reference in the opening verses to the fact that from the three sons of Noah the inhabitants of the whole earth had sprung and spread abroad, comes the first narrative, the story of the intoxication of Noah, which portrays the special character of each of the three branches of mankind that stemmed from the three sons of Noah. This is followed by the second subsection, the genealogy

of chapter x, which details the offspring of Noah's sons and tells how all the peoples of the earth evolved from them."

¹⁹ RSV **Genesis 9:20**...Noah was the first tiller of the soil. He planted a vineyard;

²⁰ Cassuto, 158. He writes, "The verse does not come to tell us that Noah began to be a 'man of the earth', as several expositors have understood it. Other scholars have already pointed out that the verb *hehel* הֵחֵל, or in later Hebrew *hithhil* הִתְחִיל [both verbs signify 'he began'], can be followed by the participle, but not by a noun, and in any case it cannot have the definite article as in the present instance *'iš ha'ādhamā* (אִישׁ הָאָדָמָה) 'the man of the earth'). The correct interpretation is: Noah, the man of the earth, was the first [literally, began'] to plant a vineyard."

²¹ Robert W E. Forrest, "Paradise Lost Again: Violence and Obedience in the Flood Narrative" in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* no 62 Je 1994, p 3-18.

²² Some commentators argue that after the Flood, God lifted His curse on the ground. For instance, see Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing: Grand Rapids, 1990), 321.

From my own point of view having gardened a bit with my grandfather and father growing peas and watermelons and the like, I have to admit I am skeptical that the curse has been totally removed. If it has, I really, really would have hated to try to scratch out a living from the soil back then.

²³ The verb in Hebrew describing Noah being uncovered is reflexive which means he uncovered himself purposely.

ESV **Habakkuk 2:15**... "Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink-- you pour out your wrath and make them drunk, in order to gaze at their nakedness! ¹⁶ You will have your fill of shame instead of glory. Drink, yourself, and show your uncircumcision! The cup in the LORD's right hand will come around to you, and utter shame will come upon your glory!"

²⁴ ESV **2 Peter 2:4**...For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

²⁵ John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*, 9.21.

²⁶ Robert Robertson, "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" first appeared in his *A Collection of Hymns Used by the Church of Christ in Angel Alley, Bishopgate*, 1759.

²⁷ According to Waltke this position is chiefly held by rabbinical sources, pg. 149, footnote, 94.

²⁸ John S. Bergsma, "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse on Canaan (Genesis 9:20-27)" in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124 no 1 Spr 2005, p 25-40.

²⁹ Anthony J. Tomasino, "History Repeats Itself: the "Fall" and Noah's Drunkenness" in *Vetus testamentum* 42 no 1 Ja 1992, p 128-130. Tomasino makes the point that Ham repeats the role of Satan in the Garden of Eden by "telling" someone about nakedness.

Cassuto, 151. Cassuto writes and argues that the only sin was simply the seeing. "No evidence can be adduced from the expression, *and [Ham]...saw the nakedness of his father (v. 22)*, which is found elsewhere in the Pentateuch in connection with actual sexual relations (Lev. xx 17: *If a man takes his sister, a daughter of his father or a daughter of his mother, and SEES HER NAKEDNESS and SHE SEES HIS NAKEDNESS it is a shameful thing etc.*), for of Shem and Japheth it is said, in contradistinction to Ham's action: *their faces were turned away, AND THEY DID NOT SEE THEIR FATHER'S NAKEDNESS (v. 23)*, from which we may infer, conversely, that Ham's sin consisted of seeing only. Furthermore, the statement (*ibid.*), *and covered the nakedness of their father*, supports this interpretation: if the covering was an adequate remedy, it follows that the misdemeanor was confined to seeing."

³⁰ Boice, 320-321.