**THE COVENANT WITH NOAH**

“*This covenant with Noah, though it is rooted in God’s grace and is most intimately bound up with the actual covenant of grace because it sustains and prepares for it, is not identical with it.” –* Herman Bavinck

**Genesis 4-11 - From Adam to Abraham**

1. These chapters of Genesis unfold God’s commitment to his promise and his people (3:15), tracing the division of humanity into two divergent lines that have quite different relationships to God through his covenant.
2. The covenant with Noah appears in the context of the unfolding of these two lines and manifests God’s attitude to both: viz. grace in salvation vs. wrath in judgment

**Genesis 6:1-7:17 – The covenant with Noah before the flood**

Two important words are used for the first time in Scripture: “*grace*” (6:8) and “*covenant*” (6:18)

1. The principle of *the unconditionality* of the covenant as the sovereign and gracious interposition of God.
2. The principle of *the particularity* of the covenant in God’s gracious choice of Noah for salvation from judgment.
3. The principle of *the continuity* of the covenant from parent to children in the generations of believers.
4. The principle of *the* *reciprocity* of the covenant in Noah’s faith and obedience.

**Genesis 8:20-9:17 – The covenant with Noah after the flood**

1. The covenant with Noah is *a divine administration*: it is “*my* covenant” in that it is conceived, devised, determined, established, confirmed, dispensed, and fulfilled by God alone– not Noah, nor God and Noah jointly. It is “intensely and pervasively monergistic” (Murray).
2. The covenant with Noah is a divine administration of *common grace, universally bestowed*.

In it, *God promises*:

1. To sustain the natural order and defer worldwide judgment until the end of history
2. The regular uniformity of nature in its normal processes and orderly conditions
3. The continuation of marriage and procreation (family)
4. The restraint of evil and the administration of proportionate justice (state)
5. Narrowly religious and redemptive promises to the chosen line are noticeably absent in Genesis 9. “(The covenant with Noah) *guarantees those earthly and temporal blessings which were absolutely necessary for the realization of the covenant of grace*.” (Berkhof)
6. The covenant with Noah is certified by the sign of *the rainbow as the pledge of God’s promise*
7. This sign is an action instituted *by God* (not man) and has a *Godward* reference
8. Thus, the rainbow-sign attests to God’s covenant with Noah as being:

*Unilateral* – *Unconditional* – *Universal* - *Unbreakable*

**Genesis 9:18-11:32** – Shem’s line continues the line of promise and leads to Abraham. Out of the mass of sinful humanity under judgment, Abraham is singled out as the head of a family through which the redemptive plan of God will be effected. Our next topic is *God’s covenant with Abraham*.