

## TRUSTING GOD'S PLAN, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN

"I Promise" Genesis 9:1-17

July 27, 2025

**INTRO:** Good morning and welcome to our ongoing sermon series, **TRUSTING GOD'S PLAN, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN**, from Genesis, the first book in the Old Testament. Thank you to Pastor Paul for the excellent job he did preaching last week on the theme, "*Out of the Ark Into a New World.*" This morning, we're going to look at the theme, **I PROMISE**. The promise I'm referring to is the promise God gives in Genesis 9:1-17. How important are promises? How many here had someone broken a promise they made to you? How many have broken a promise you've made? When a promise is broken there is always damage done.

How important are promises?

### **Fireman's Promise Built Faith in Those He Rescued**

In December of 2016, a ride at Knott's Berry Farm in California became stuck 148 feet in the air. There were 20 people on board, including seven children. Firefighters tried to reach the stranded passengers by using a massive ladder, but it was too short. Fire crews had no choice. They would have to lower each passenger from 148 feet in the air, harnessed to a single rope.

Fire Captain Larry Kurtz said, "It sounds scary, but ... we have very, very strong ropes that have 9,000 pounds of breaking strength on them." He was building the *faith* of those who were trapped. He was giving them information *that if believed* would dissipate their fears. It was up to each person to believe what he said and place their trust in the firefighter.

Let's zero in on one of the youngsters, and say his name was Luke. He's seven years old—old enough to feel terror as he looks at the ground 148 feet below. The firefighter looks Luke in his eyes, and with a steadying voice says, "Trust me, Luke. I won't let you go. Your life is *very* precious to me, and I will have you down before you know it."

Luke listens to him and thinks about the "very, very strong rope." He believes the firefighter's reassuring words and trusts him completely. This is his only hope of getting to safety. If he doesn't have faith, then he doesn't believe that the firefighter cares for him. He would then lose his only hope of reaching the ground. Faith, hope, and love are bound together.

Luke and all 20 passengers were lowered safely to the ground just before 10 p.m. that night.

*Source: Ray Comfort, The Final Curtain (New Leaf Press, 2018), pg. 199-200*

The validity of a promise is determined by the character of the one giving the promise. God always keeps His promises, for it is impossible for Him to lie. When you and I face the trials, difficulties, and heartaches of life isn't it comforting to know God doesn't let go?

**John 10:28–30** I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. **29** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. **30** I and the Father are one."

This morning we're going to look at what is referred to as the Noahic Covenant. A covenant is "a binding promise."

The nature of the biblical covenant is something in which God binds himself by solemn oath, sometimes enacted in a ceremony involving a sacrifice. Some of the covenants given by God were unconditional, such as the Noahic Covenant, which we're looking at today. Others required a response of obedience from those being given the covenant. Some covenants had a sign attached to them, like the Noahic Covenant, while others did not. When referring to the relationship between God and man, God is always the one who makes the covenant and communicates the expected response from man. Man does not make a covenant with God! (some taken from *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* by Lawrence O. Richards and *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* by Merrill F. Unger)

We're going to look at 4 things this morning as we dive into Genesis 9:1-17, each of which God is the one who is giving the direction.

**GOD BLESSED, GOD COMMANDED, GOD PROMISED, AND GOD GAVE A SIGN.** We're going to read this passage in unison. If you're able to stand, I welcome you to do so.

**Genesis 9:1–17** Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. **2** The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. **3** Everything that lives and

moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. **4** “But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. **5** And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. **6** “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man. **7** As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.” **8** Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: **9** “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you **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. **11** I establish my covenant with you: 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.” **12** And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: **13** I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. **14** Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, **15** I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. **16** Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.” **17** So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”

## **GOD BLESSED**

v. 1

**Genesis 9:1** Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.

What does the word *blessed* mean? We see this word used earlier in the book of Genesis before Adam and Eve had sinned.

**Genesis 1:28** God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

**Genesis 2:2–3** By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. **3** And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Genesis 5:1-2 is a repeat of what God had done in Genesis 1.

**Genesis 5:1–2** This is the written account of Adam’s line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. **2** He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them “man.”

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This is the first time this phrase is used since the inception of sin into the world. The Hebrew word (*barak*) means “to kneel” or “to bless.” The root and its derivatives are used 415 times in the Old Testament (OT). In OT practice, blessings were pronounced on the children or subordinates by heads of households or others in authority. Yet God is recognized as the only source of blessing, and in the OT blessings were offered in His name. God is the one, who not only gives life, but also enriches life. (taken from *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* by Lawrence O. Richards)

“To *bless* means to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*). In essence, the one who is blessed is given a rich and abundant life (Lawrence O. Richards).”

If you have come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, how have you been and how are you blessed by God? “*Count Your Blessings*” is a well-known hymn written by Johnson Oatman, Jr in 1897. This hymn reminds us, that, even during life’s troubles, God is at work, and it would do us well, to review God’s blessings.

When we read, “God blessed Noah and his sons,” it is a declaration of God’s grace and mercy being shown to them. Yes, Noah is described in Genesis 6:9 as “a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God,” but he was not perfect. He was saved because, “Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”

After God destroyed the earth and all those who didn’t get on the ark, by the flood, He started anew with Noah and his family. It is ALL because of God’s grace and mercy. He is blessing Noah and his family! How is God blessing you? Even in life’s difficulties and heartaches, how is God blessing you?

So, God Blessed Noah and his sons, secondly:

## **GOD COMMANDED**

v. 1-7

Much of what God said in Genesis 1 and 2 are repeated here, but there are some important differences. Let's work through this verse by verse.

**Genesis 9:1** Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, **"Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth."**

This is a new beginning, and Noah is viewed as the second Adam. The command given first to Adam is now given to Noah.

**Genesis 1:28** God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

It is interesting to note that the command "to subdue the earth" is not repeated. Who do we have who is vying for control of the earth? Satan has usurped this authority after Adam and Eve sinned (Arnold Fruchtenbaum).

**2 Corinthians 4:4** The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

**Luke 4:5-7** The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. **6** And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. **7** So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

**Genesis 9:2-3** **The fear and dread of you will fall upon all** the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. **3** Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

Why did fear and dread of mankind come upon all the animals, birds, and fish? God tells Noah and his sons that they now can eat all these that are listed. Compare this to what we read in Genesis 1:29-30.

**Genesis 1:29-30** Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. **30** And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

**"everything that lives and moves will be food for you:"** Prior to the end of the flood, both mankind and animals were vegetarians. The fear of man that God gives the animals will provide some protection for them. Many animals have a keen sense of smell can sense when there is danger in their environment. I enjoy hunting deer (other than fish, it is also the only meat I can eat), and when I hunt I observe the direction of the wind so that I am situated upwind from where I think they may be coming from. It only takes one scent of you and they may be spooked and run away.

These verses also show us that man retains his authority over the animal kingdom. **Genesis 9:3** Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, **I now give you everything.**

**Genesis 9:4** "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.

"Here, and elsewhere in the OT blood is equated with life, and that's why its consumption or shedding is prohibited." Victor P. Hamilton

The Hebrew language has two ways of stating a prohibition. One is much stronger than the other and is used to express a categorical prohibition, one that is permanently binding, which is the one used here. (J. Bright)

We see this prohibition incorporated into the Mosaic Law in the following passages. Leviticus 3:17; 17:10-14; 12:15-16; Deuteronomy 12: 20-24.

Drinking of blood is often connected with demonism. (Arnold Fruchtenbaum)

**Genesis 9:5-6** And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. **6** **"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed;** for in the image of God has God made man.

God now states that there will be severe consequences when a man sheds the blood of another man, or when an animal sheds the blood of a man. This refers to premeditated murder. In such cases the person who kills another will face both God's judgment and man's judgment. Why does taking another's life call for such a great punishment?

**"for in the image of God has God made man:"** anyone who takes another's life in this way is marring God's image. Even though, from Adam onward, sin has been passed down to all mankind, we still bear the image of God.

**Genesis 9:7** As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it."

God's command, given in the first verse of the chapter is repeated here. It is repeated for emphasis. If this command was not followed it would have been the end of the human race.

### **GOD PROMISED** v. 8-11

**Genesis 9:8-9** Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: **9** "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you

*"I now establish my covenant with you."* the word, *establish*" literally means "to make stand," "to raise up," "to erect." This is the Noahic Covenant. It is the fulfillment of Genesis 6:18.

**Genesis 6:18** But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.

\*To whom does God make this covenant?

**Genesis 9:9-10** "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you 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**

What God promises is for Noah, his sons, their descendants, and every living creature that was with him. All those that came out of the ark with Noah. The covenant was universal and included every living being, man and animal.

\*What was the covenant?

**Genesis 9:11** I establish my covenant with you: **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."

God promises that never again will He bring a universal flood to destroy the earth and all of mankind. He repeats the phrase, "*never again*," first as it relates to all of life being cut off, and second as it relates to the earth. This does not mean that humanity and the earth will escape the judgment of God, but that God will never again destroy the earth and humanity by a worldwide flood.

**2 Peter 3:8-10** But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. **9** The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. **10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

God blessed, God commanded (be fruitful and multiply, both animals and plants will be food, don't drink blood, capital punishment for premeditated murder), God promised (never again will I destroy mankind and the earth by a flood), and lastly:

### **GOD GAVE A SIGN** v. 12-17

Did God have to give a sign? His word would have been enough. Why do you think God gave a sign (could also be translated "token")? This is for our benefit.

\*To whom did He give the sign?

**Genesis 9:12** And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come:

This sign was the sign of the covenant for **Noah and his sons**, **every living creature**, and **all the generations to come!**

This remains a sign for every one of us. This tells me we better make sure we know what it is.

\*What is the sign?

**Genesis 9:13** I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

Picture of a rainbow from Honduras. The only other place we see a rainbow mentioned in the Old Testament is (Ezekiel sees the radiant glory of God as the brightness of the rainbow):

**Ezekiel 1:28** 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, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

In the New Testament (John's vision the "one seated on the throne"):

**Revelation 4:3** And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.

**Genesis 9:14-15** Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, **15** I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.

*"I will remember my covenant:"* this does not mean that God suffers from a lack of memory. It is similar to what we saw in Genesis 8:1 when Noah and the animals were on the ark and had been floating for five months.

**Genesis 8:1** But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum: The word *remember* does not mean remember in the sense that God temporarily forgot about the ark and its inhabitants; rather it means remembering in the sense of movement toward the object.

Derek Kidner: "When the Old Testament says that *God remembered*, it combines the ideas of faithful love (cf. Jer. 2:2; 31:20) and timely intervention."

*"never again:"* this is repeated from verse 11. Never again will God bring a flood to destroy all life. These verses tell us that God not only brings the clouds, He also sets the rainbow in the sky.

**Genesis 9:16** Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

*"everlasting covenant:"* this promise has no expiration date.

(hold up a can of vegetables) These beans have a "best used by date." Sometimes we have had cans of food in our house that was older than that date. What do you think we did with it? If it passed the smell and look test we ate it. One of our sons would refuse to eat anything that was past the "best used date." He would tell us, "It's overdue." So, we would try to make sure that he didn't see it. Now obviously, if it was way past the date, we would throw it out. This promise given by God has NO expiration date. Every time you look up in the sky and see a rainbow you should be reminded of God's grace, mercy, and that He ALWAYS keeps His promises.

*"between God and all living creatures:"* there are no exclusions to this covenant! This emphasized even further in the last verse concluding the description of the Noahic Covenant.

**Genesis 9:17** So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

*"I have established:"* God raised up and erected this covenant. It is all Him, no credit to man. What a truly amazing God we serve!!

**SO WHAT?**

\*Have I come to know and trust the God of everlasting promises?

\*When I see a rainbow do I take time to thank God for His promises and blessings?

\*Am I "Standing on the Promises of God?"

\*Tell someone every day a promise of God that you're standing on

