

# Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 4, The Noahic Covenant

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This is Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus in his teaching on Biblical Theology. This is session 4, The Noahic Covenant.

We come now to the Noahic Covenant, which, as we said at the outset, is a renewal, arguably, of the Adamic Covenant.

The idea that there was an Adamic Covenant is an old idea, and it would seem to be the case on the basis of what we read in Genesis 9. In Genesis 9, we know the Lord is making a covenant. It's called a berit olam in Genesis 9.16, an everlasting covenant, and we'll talk about the meaning of that. So there is a covenant being made and put into effect, as we noted with the verbs, to give, and to cause to stand, to put into effect.

And this opens up by echoing Genesis 1:28, as indicated here. So, in these two passages, God blesses somebody and says to them, what does he say? He says, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. So those two things are exactly parallel, and that alone would invite us to consider, well, if this is being said in a Noahic Covenant, that would suggest that when it was said before, it was also being said in a covenantal context, namely an Adamic covenant.

Interestingly, the third part of it has dominion, where you would expect that you get something different. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast. I would suggest, I have suggested, that it's in the same place because it serves the same function.

But before the fall, the man and the woman could have dominion over the animals and all that in an unchallenged way. Before the fall, you couldn't imagine that an animal would eat a human being. After the fall, the principle of anomia or lawlessness is introduced into the world.

The world now has the devil as the god of this world and his angels. It's a fallen situation. Human fulfillment of the cultural mandate would not go on unchallenged.

As we remember, even Adam would be challenged by the thorns and thistles that the land produced. And so, I think the Lord here is putting the fear of humans on animals to help facilitate the rule so that animals generally will shy away from humans and humans can do the things they want to do in the landscape. Obviously, this isn't always true.

Sometimes it backfires. If you're walking through a pine forest in the south and you frighten a rattlesnake, it might bite you because it's afraid. Sometimes it doesn't seem to apply at all.

It's hard for me to imagine a great white shark being afraid of anybody. But on the whole, it works. And so, I think that's why it's there.

We've talked about the renewal aspect in terms of the verbs to establish a covenant; I would say put into effect but alluding to the existence of some prior relationship. If we look at what I would call the form criticism of the covenant, just as we did with the Adamic covenant, and you got to understand form criticism isn't bad, isn't a dirty word or phrase. A lot of scholars use it in a way that would undercut the historical truth of the Bible.

Hermann Gunkel, the German scholar late in the 19th century, came up with form criticism. When he did what he thought was a form of criticism of Genesis, he used it to characterize the literary form of the patriarchal narratives as sagas and legends. So, things that never really happened.

And so, what he did then was to take literary categories from the medieval period in Europe and imply, impress those, or impose those on the Genesis narratives. That's not a good form of criticism because it's not recognizing the genres for what they really are. These patriarchal narratives, arguably, are narratives of things that happen.

They're not legends told around a campfire and passed down by oral tradition. That's another argument, but the point is that form criticism simply tries to understand the literary form of the passage's genre. That's exactly what we did with Genesis 1, and we saw from that that it had the elements of a covenant relationship, which I think gives some warrant for calling it a covenant.

Not everyone might agree with that. But in any case, in Genesis 9, it is called a covenant. And if we do the form criticism of it, we see that it has the elements that you would find in a covenant of mosaic date.

Although, as we've said, this is really rooted in the nature of God. So, it's not a dating issue, per se. It's an expression of God's nature.

He identifies who he is. He's God. That tells us the title.

There are stipulations. He tells them to be fruitful and multiply, as we've seen. He commands them not to eat the flesh with its life.

It's the blood. He repeats the command to be fruitful and multiply. And I think the reason he repeats it, which forms an inclusio in that little section.

Inclusio means, it's just a Latin word for an inclusion. It wraps it up in one little package. I think the reason he repeats it is that he's just wiped everybody out.

So, he's reassuring them. I really mean this. You can go on and be fruitful and multiply.

I'm going to allow the human race to continue. He blesses them. Well, we're told that at the beginning.

The fear of man put on all creatures. I think that's a blessing. He gives them all plants and animals for food.

That is certainly a blessing, too. He promises no second flood. That's also a blessing.

Here, incidentally, whereas before the fall, the man and the woman were allowed to eat any fruit in the garden, now it's plants and animals for food. So, who knows what's going on there? Perhaps they started out as vegetarians, and then God allowed them to eat meat, but this is a blessing. There is one curse element.

This is very significant because here you have man's blood demanded from man and beast. Anyone who sheds the blood of Adam, a human being, by Adam shall his blood be shed because God made man in the image of God. So, here you have a death sentence penalty for killing a human being.

Remember that Cain killed his brother, and he wasn't put to death for it. So, with each successive divine-human covenant, you get a little bit more of God's nature and requirements revealed. Here, now you realize that God considers the image of God to be so important that now he's serving you notice that if anyone kills a human being, this should be what happens.

If one were inclined to make an argument for the death penalty in a state, anywhere, any state, any country, under common grace, because this is a common grace covenant that applies to the whole world, this is where you would start to make your argument. I'm not arguing for that, and I'm just saying this would be where you would start. The same penalty is repeated under the Mosaic covenant, which could be a supporting line of evidence, but here's where it would start.

So, the death penalty for that and the oath, I establish my covenant with you and your seed and the rainbow and the explanation of its meaning. Well, the abundance of blessings, as we've indicated, indicates a second-millennium date because this was

the treaty form that was used then and had blessings in it in the days of Moses. It's termed an everlasting covenant, and the bow is given as a covenant sign.

Now, one thing about the term everlasting, and we'll talk about it in a moment, but it doesn't necessarily mean everlasting, and so that's something to understand. Every biblical divine-human covenant is identified as a covenant, so everyone that is called a covenant, and the only one that is left out is the Adamic covenant; it's just not called a covenant. It doesn't mean it's not a covenant. It's just not called a covenant.

Every one of them is called everlasting, but I would argue that not every one of them lasts forever. The Abrahamic covenant no longer functions as a covenant. Circumcision, the sign of admission to it, has been abrogated, so if you cannot have the sign of the covenant, you cannot enter membership in the covenant.

It doesn't function as a covenant anymore, and when Paul argues against circumcision in Galatians, that's what he's arguing against. It's significant. Incidentally, it's a bit of a digression, but I'll take it. It's significant that he says anyone who allows himself to be circumcised has to obey the whole law.

Now, if circumcision were the sign of the law, he wouldn't have to say that. He'd just say, you're circumcised. You have to obey the law. But circumcision is not the sign of the Mosaic covenant.

Sabbath in Exodus 31 is the sign of the Mosaic covenant. But the Mosaic covenant required circumcision, and the reason it required it was to indicate that if you were party to the Mosaic covenant, you were also part of the Abrahamic covenant. So, the two went on together until the new covenant was signed.

That's why Paul says if you get circumcised, you have to obey the whole law. If you're going to obey that part of it, you've got to obey all of it. You can't just obey, and you can't pick and choose.

But anyway, membership in that covenant is not possible. It doesn't function anymore as a covenant. The Mosaic covenant doesn't function anymore in Colossians 2. He says he canceled it, which is this legal bill that stood against us.

He nailed it to the cross. We'll talk about how it stood against us later. The Davidic covenant, of course, again, as we've said, Christ is now the King of Kings.

There's not going to be another king over Israel, and the true Israel is the Israel of God, the church. So, what about the Adamic and Noahic covenants? The Noahic covenant is called a berit olam, an everlasting covenant. Well, it has a provision for the shedding of human blood, for instance.

When the Lord returns, we have a new heaven and earth. There's not going to be any more sin. We're going to be like him because we see him.

There won't be any more murder. There won't be any more punishment for murder. And so, we have the Noahic covenant, the renewal of the Adamic, together they govern the present earth.

When we get a new earth, those covenants will no longer apply. We won't need them anymore. And so, although it's called a berit olam, it's not everlasting.

And so, the root of this is that I'm getting about half a page ahead of the game here, but I'll say it. The Hebrew term olam comes from a root that means to be hidden. And so, with respect to time, the meaning is that it's so far in the past or it's so far in the future that it's hidden from view.

It doesn't mean it's everlasting. It means it's a long time in the past or a long time in the future. Isaiah 63:11, Isaiah, the Lord talks about the days of olam, the days of Moses.

Well, the days of Moses were not infinitely remote from Isaiah, but they were far enough in the past to be out of sight. They were hidden from view. He couldn't see Moses.

Moses was gone. So, that's the sense of the word. So, I would say to you that the only covenant that is really an everlasting covenant that you read about in Hebrews 13, the blood of the everlasting covenant, is the new covenant because that's the one that goes on forever.

But anyway, that's where we are with that. But this is called an everlasting covenant. And we have the sign of the rainbow.

And when the Lord sees it, he's going to remember what he's done and not bring a similar judgment. Here, too, like the idea that God was sorry that he made humanity on the earth, remembering has a special sense. It's not that God forgets and he needs this reminder, like his attention is on the Andromeda galaxy, and then he happens to notice this rainbow and it doesn't matter how bad things he says, oh yeah, I remember I promised I wouldn't wipe them out, so I won't.

It's a way of saying he will put his attention to something. The cloud that's involved, too it has been argued that the clouds of the flood have to do with theophany. So, the Lord was present in the flood. He was overseeing it.

Psalms 29:10 says that the Lord sits enthroned above the mabul, the flood, which is a term that has only been used before for the Noahic flood. So, the picture is

suggestive that the Lord was theophanically, he was present in the flood, he was present in the storm clouds, bringing the flood. When it was over, you have the rainbow.

And the rainbow, one study has suggested that the analogy to that may be seen in Assyria, where you have carvings that show that after a battle, the Assyrian emperor, Victorious, hung up his bow. And above him in the heavens, the chief god, Assyria, hung up his bow. So, it's a way of saying the battle's over, and we're hanging up the war implementation.

The rainbow symbolism in the Genesis 9 account is that the Lord has finished waging war against humanity, so he hangs up his bow, and that's the rainbow. I would say if there is such symbolism, it's the other way around, that the original end of the was the rainbow, and you get the later imagery among fallen human beings. But one point then, though, out of that is that when God brings judgment, he is waging war.

And in this case, he's waging war against most of humanity, and it takes the form of a flood. Well, we've had the term everlasting covenant. We've talked about the term everlasting. And in Isaiah 24:5, we read that the everlasting covenant has been broken.

The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants. They have transgressed the laws, violated statutes, and broken the everlasting covenant. This is significant.

This has been called sometimes the Isaiah apocalypse, and I think rightly so. It's an eschatological poem. It's a judgment on the whole earth.

And it's the only covenant that is termed an everlasting covenant, which governs the whole earth, is the one we read about in Genesis 9, 16. That's the everlasting covenant the Lord makes through Noah with him and with the earth. So, they have broken the Noahic covenant.

Interestingly, they have transgressed the laws and violated the statutes. Well, what were all those? We don't know. It seems to suggest that God imparted through Noah more statutes and requirements than are recorded.

Just as in Genesis 26:5, he says to Isaac, I'm reaffirming this covenant with you because Abraham obeyed all my laws and statutes and requirements and decrees. We don't know what those were. So, another hint of laconic reporting: we know that these things came through Noah.

We don't know what they were. But humanity is accountable for them. And eventually, humanity's breaking of these becomes so bad that the Lord brings judgment.

We also have the statement that the city of chaos is broken down. The Hebrew term here is *tohu*, the city or the village of *tohu*, chaos, is broken down. We think of chaos as a bad term.

In Genesis 1:2, it appears the earth was formless, *tohu*, and void, *vavohu*. I would suggest that this tells us something about the nature of sin, though. Because in Genesis 1, when we're told that things were *tohu vavohu*, formless and void, that's not a bad thing.

That's the Lord telling us that, okay, there was a process. At a certain stage it, the material that God had called into existence was relatively formless and wasn't useful for very much. Eventually, he formed it into a cosmos.

So, if we use the term chaos neutrally, we can say he brought the cosmos out of chaos. Cosmos being order, adornment, beauty. Okay, well, that's good.

What's happened by the time of this eschatological vision is that you have this city of formlessness, of chaos. And that's not a good thing. And I do think that this is a kind of symbolic statement.

The city is, I think, very much like what Augustine later wrote about in the *De civitate Dei*, The City of God and the City of Man. The city of man is that human enterprise that has grown throughout history and is increasingly dead set against God. And so it is, in a sense, a tale of two cities, a conflict between two cities.

And the city of man pits itself against God. And being a city of man against God, it is lawless. It's the nature of sin that it is lawlessness.

It rejects God's law. It's *anomia*. So, it is chaotic.

And as Jesus says, the enemy comes to kill and steal and destroy. He brings chaos. He brings disorganization.

He reduces cosmos to chaos. And so it's kind of like if you have a pile of bricks and you're going to build a house. Well, the pile of bricks is *tohu*.

You know, that's just kind of formless. But you're going to build a house and you're going to bring cosmos out of that. That's good.

If you have a house built of bricks and it gets bombed then you've got a pile of bricks. Well, that may be a pile of bricks, too, but it's not good. That's chaos.

That's a result of destruction. And that's what sin does. And so that shows the nature of sin.

It's true in the individual. I think we know it. If we sin, we feel the disruption, or we ought to.

If we have the spirit, we have anything of the image of God about us, and the spirit helping us, we realize there's something wrong, and we don't have peace until we're reconciled with the Lord. But that's what it does. It disrupts.

It disrupts whatever order, cosmos, soundness, and sanity the Lord is building in us. And globally, that's true, too. The more the sin increases, the more chaotic it becomes.

And so, the situation envisioned here eschatologically is that things get worse and worse. We also mentioned in Revelation 11 and 18 that the people are destroying the earth. And so there's going to be this fiery judgment at the end of it, which Isaiah just gives us in some detail.

The eschatological nature of it, the global nature of it, not only the global nature, which has already been indicated, but the cosmic nature of it is indicated. He will punish the hosts of heaven in heaven and the kings of the earth on the earth. After that is all done, the Lord will come to earth and rule from Jerusalem.

Then we read the moon will be confounded. The sun of shame, Yahweh of hosts, will reign. And before his elders, Hebrew word is kavod.

It means glory. It could be taken adverbially as gloriously, but I think it's better if we take it as glory. The point is that once the Lord has brought this judgment and completely done away with sin, then he can be before his elders part for the whole, before his people.

His glory can be there with nothing in between. We'll be without sin as he is. We'll be able to take it, which, as we've said before, is not the case after the fall and won't be until we have the new heavens and new earth.

So, this is the Isaiah apocalypse, which gives us the whole picture, if you will, in one chapter. Well, we've talked about the death penalty and want to explore that a little bit because one might say that's a point of application here. And this certainly is one topic among many that have some biblical. Shall we say the Bible has something to say about it? It has been a matter of debate for some time in our own society.

Should we have a death penalty? Well, as we've said, the death penalty here seems to be rooted in the imago Dei. And so, we learn how seriously the Lord takes that. It's



worth noting that according to James, human beings, anybody, people under common grace, have been made in God's likeness.

And so, at a minimum, I would say this is telling us that human beings have the divine form, the likeness that we read about in Genesis 1:26. And so, it's important not to curse them. It's important not to kill them, a murder, that is. And so, as we've said, the argument would go, well, the Noahic covenant still applies, the death penalty should as well, one could argue.

I think that makes sense. Not everyone would agree. And obviously, you know, at this point, one would have to say, okay, there are contingent issues here.

You read about cases where somebody's been in prison for 20 years, convicted of a crime, and DNA evidence, it turns out, proves that person is innocent. So, that person's life is wrecked. And well, so they get to go free, but big whoop, right? Well, what if that person was executed? So that can happen.

Since the death penalty is applicable under the Noahic covenant, one might say, well, that's a society with the death penalty for various reasons. What about that? I think we have to give God the benefit of the doubt here and say that, well, if the society at least had judges who were discerning by God's grace and able to see who really was guilty, probably there would not be such miscarriages of justice, or they wouldn't be very common anyway. But it is what it is.

And God does have this penalty under the Mosaic covenant for the same reason, if you kill a man, you have to be put to death. There are other grounds for the death penalty, though, in the Mosaic covenant. Some of them have to do with God.

Some of them have to do with people. So, for instance, approach to a holy place by people who are not warranted to do so or designated to do so. Back in Exodus 19, whoever touches the mountain shall be surely put to death.

The tabernacle, anyone except certain designated people who enter it, shall be put to death. Blasphemy, you're put to death. Following gods in any form, other gods, you're put to death.

A prophet or a dreamer who says to follow other gods, you're put to death. And we'll talk more about that a little later. A medium or a spiritist is to be put to death.

Incidentally, Leviticus 20:27 is a very interesting verse because the Hebrew actually says, a man or a woman in whom there is an *ov*. And the Hebrew term *ov* comes from a root apparently that means to return. And the way the word is used in the Old Testament makes it quite clear that people then had a concept very much like what we have today, apparently, of a ghost.

People die, and then there's a ghost that wanders around. Actually, I don't think the Bible supports that at all. It seems to have been a concept that was around.

You remember when they saw Jesus walking across the sea in the storm, they thought it was a ghost. That doesn't mean there are ghosts that wander the earth, but that was a popular idea. But I think Leviticus 20:27 actually gives us a glimpse at what's involved.

Because a medium is someone in whom there is an ov, in whom there is an ov, and I would submit to you that a human being can have three kinds of spirits in him or her. His own spirit. We all have our own spirits.

Paul says, may the Lord preserve you body, soul, and spirit until he returns. If we come to faith in Christ, we can have the Holy Spirit. We know from the New Testament, Jesus's ministry, and Paul's ministry that a person can have an evil spirit in him or her.

Nowhere in the Bible are we presented with a picture that a human being has in himself or herself the spirit of a dead person. So I think the biblical picture that is hinted at in this statement in Leviticus is that a medium if the person really is spiritually involved somehow, is involved with evil spirits. And the Lord doesn't want people getting revelation from that kind of source.

And so today, if you go to a medium, which I would not recommend before I knew the Lord, I went to one. And I think, in my case, she was just reading my poem. And I think she was just a good character reader.

And she knew what I was hoping to hear, and she told me. But you go to a medium, say, and you go to a seance. And the medium is hearing from your dead Uncle Joe.

And it's hearing things that only Uncle Joe knew, and you knew. You think, well, wow, this is a real deal. She's really hearing from Uncle Joe.

Well, not necessarily. Because Uncle Joe may have had a demon or two, or there may have been demons around him.

They know everything that went on. And they can pretend to be Uncle Joe and actually tell this medium stuff. And, you know, it's, they are deceivers, too, like their master Satan.

So that's stuff you don't want to get involved with. But it can be spiritually real. This is not fully explained in Leviticus 20.

But the Lord just gives them a warning. This is not the way you go. If you want revelation, you'll get it from me, not from such a source.

But people who go to that are there to be put to death. Breaking the Sabbath is the death penalty because it is the sign of the Sabbath in Exodus 31. If you break the Sabbath, you're basically saying, I throw away the covenant.

I don't want any part of it. Well, those are all sins against God. Dishonoring father and mother can bring the death penalty.

Cursing them. Sleeping with one's father's wife. Other sexual sins.

With an animal, or adultery, or homosexuality. Homosexuality is a sensitive issue in our culture. And I know that in biological genetic terms, it can be complex.

It's not simple. But this is the judgment in the Old Testament. And Paul reaffirms the issue in the New, of course, in Romans 1, where he says, you know, this is unnatural, and it's not what God wants.

It's not godly. It's not right. Kidnapping.

And so we have two categories of sin deserving the death penalty under the Mosaic covenant. Sins against God, to summarize what we have looked at. And sins against people.

That can include manslaughter, which we didn't mention, but I tagged on here. So if a bull gores someone and is a habitual gorer, and the owner has not penned it up, the bull must be stoned, and the owner must also be put to death. I think we understand the spirit of that, incidentally.

You know, if it happens once, well, that's one thing. But if this is known to be a habitual thing, and the guy just hasn't taken care of it, he's really culpable, too. He is, in effect, one who has facilitated the killing of the human being.

Well, what remains from all this? Here, we are saying that Jesus has canceled that legal bill, the old covenant. Hebrew is saying it's replaced by a better covenant. What remains? Well, the death penalty for sins against God, it seems pretty clear, is annulled by Jesus.

He says in Mark 3 all the sins and blasphemies that anyone commits can be forgiven, against the Father, against the Son. There's only one that cannot be forgiven, and we mentioned the sin against the Spirit. I think, again, because somehow that is most profoundly antithetical to God in his inmost nature.

If one rejects the Spirit, one totally rejects God. In that case, their rejection takes the form of mischaracterizing the work of the Spirit as the work of the devil. Death penalty for social sins could remain for a state that would pattern itself after the form of the Old Testament kingdom.

And this is not to say theonomy here. This is not to say that somehow we adopt the laws of Israel in place of our Constitution. But it is to say that if the laws of a nation embody the spirit of the laws that we see in the Old Testament, which the Mosaic law is sort of God's constitution for his nation, that's not a bad thing.

And there's some support for that, I think, in a statement in Jeremiah that does address God's judgment of nations under common grace. And that's Jeremiah 18. The Lord has Jeremiah go down and look at the potter, and the potter's at work, and he's not happy with what's happening with the clay, so he recharacterizes it.

He judges it and does something different with it. And so, the interpretation is, well, if at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down, and destroyed, in that nation I warn, repent of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. If at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had to do for it.

In other words, he will judge it. And so, the judgment here seems to be based on common grace standards. God is saying through Jeremiah that because it's any nation or kingdom, a nation or kingdom, it's not just Israel.

He says that I will bring judgment if I consider it's warranted. If the sin of a nation is egregious enough. And so, this makes it very clear that just under common grace, nations are accountable to God, just as people are.

And God knows the justice of that. We can't see or understand it completely. And he's very patient with people, too.

But I mean, you look at what the Soviet Union was, predicated on a world philosophy of history that there was no God. It's dialectical materialism. Well, there's no more Soviet Union.

Now you have a Putin who wants to, you know, he wants to try to reconstruct that somehow or reachieve it. But I'm just saying God just does visit judgment on things. And, of course, we know that with the fall of the Soviet Union, there was an opportunity for the kingdom of God to work.

Missionaries went in, and people went in. And so, he does not wink at these things. He brings his judgments when he decides to.

And incidentally, this is in the Old Testament, but it's put in terms of any nation or kingdom. And there's nothing in the New Testament that abrogates this. And that's important to understand.

We understand from the New Testament that God is love. We see the face of his love in Jesus Christ. And we know that the form of the kingdom is the church.

And the goal is to reach people for the Lord and bring them into that kingdom. And so, just as in the Old Testament, the form of the kingdom was a nation-state. And therefore, if you want to read about what God does to nation-states, you're going to find more of that in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, the form of the kingdom is the church. And so, you don't read much about that. Read a little bit. You know, Romans 13, you fear God, and you honor the emperor, who, incidentally, at that time was Nero.

He was pretty bad, but you still honor him because he has his authority from God. I'm just saying that if you want to understand how God deals with nations, you probably look more to the Old Testament. And nothing in the New changes that.

There's nothing in the New that tells us God no longer does this. He no longer judges nations. So that's something to be thoughtful about.

On the other hand, you can't always be sure that what you're seeing is a judgment, right? People said on 9-11, well, that was a judgment. Actually, I think it was. I think there are reasons for that.

I won't go into that now. But people thought that Katrina was a judgment. I kind of doubt that.

But who knows? It's hard to call. So, you want to be a little modest about these things. But just recognize that nations, too, are accountable to God.

And since, as Paul says, these things in the Old Testament were written for our instruction, it's good to read them thoughtfully and be aware of these ideas, at least. Okay, so what about the justice of the death penalty under the Mosaic Covenant? Well, the Mosaic Covenant, in its renewal in Deuteronomy 24, makes it clear that people get put to death when that's appropriate for their own sins. And Ezekiel echoes this.

And so that's important to understand. What is the effect of murder? So, let's talk about murder here, which is one thing that brings about the death penalty. What's the effect of murder on the land? Well, it pollutes the land.

Bloodshed pollutes the land, as we read. And so, you don't defile it. Later, of course, in Psalm 100, we read that they did defile it.

They shed innocent blood—the blood of their sons and daughters whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan. The land was desecrated or polluted by their blood.

Recalls, I would think, what the Lord says to Cain, your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. Therefore, the ground itself is somehow polluted. It's not going to do what it ought to do.

It's not going to yield its crops for you. And again, the Imago Dei is the root issue. It's worth noting that we're not going to explore very much, but what else pollutes the land biblically? We know from Jeremiah that idolatry pollutes it, in the Lord's view.

Sexual sins pollute it. And hence, eventually, these things increase to such an extent that we can read in Isaiah 24 that the earth is polluted by its inhabitants. One might consider that if murder, idolatry, and sexual sin pollute the land, well, just how polluted is our land? And I'm not talking about carbon emissions or any of that.

And so, I think we can, as I've often said to students, I think our country survives on the Sodom and Gomorrah principle. There are enough righteous people. And I think there are a lot of righteous people, but there's a lot of pollution going on, too.

And of a more existentially threatening kind than material pollution, although that's serious, too. Well, the flood and Noah, this really, Adam raised this matter too, in terms of a first Adam and a second Adam in Christology. But typology and Christology are raised very vividly by the flood, too, because the New Testament takes these issues into account.

Jesus says, as it was in the days of Noah, it will be at the coming of the Son of Man, for as in the days of the flood, they were doing all these things, and they didn't know anything was coming. They didn't expect it. And then the flood came and took them all away.

That's the way it'll be at the coming of the Son of Man. They may even know that such a thing has been talked about, but they won't know when it's coming. Just so we're clear on a typology and Christology.

Here we have the Old Testament flood as a type and the New Testament coming of the Son in the eschatological final judgment as the antitype. And that's the terminology. The Old Testament gives you a type, and the New Testament gives you

an antitype, that is to say, the thing that corresponds to it and shows a fuller and different fulfillment of it.

When that is applied to people, you get Christology. So, Adam, as a covenant mediator, as a prophet who heard from God, from whom comes humanity, he's the type of Christ. And the antitype, of course, is Christ himself, who mediates a covenant. From him comes a new humanity, and so on.

The way scholars use this terminology, type and antitype, in terms of Christology, it has to do with office. So, if an Old Testament person is a king, a priest, a prophet, or a covenant mediator, he is a type of Christ because Christ has those offices. So even Ahab, who's a very bad king, is a type of Christ, you could say, technically.

So, just that's to explain the terms so we're clear about them. So, but as a flood, as a type, and the final judgment as the antitype, Peter mentions the same thing, talking about how by God's word all of these things were formed, and then by the waters that world was destroyed. By the same word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept till the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

So, the flood is a type of eschatological fiery judgment. And I suspect, incidentally, it's an interesting statement: by the same word, they were created by this word, and by the same word, they're reserved for judgment. In Hebrew, the Greek word is *logos*, so it could mean the pre-incarnate son.

They were created through him, by him, and they're going to be judged by him. They're reserved for judgment by him. It could also imply the Lord's word of covenantal commitment to Adam, a commitment to restore all things implicitly. But that's just a side note.

The flood is also taken up in the New Testament as a type of baptism, and 1 Peter makes this clear. Christ died for sins once and for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God, and he talks about those who disobeyed, or rather that only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also. So, what is the flood? It's death to sin in this sense.

It wiped out the sinful human beings, well, everybody's sinful, but it wiped out the really bad ones, and the eschatological judgment will wipe that out completely. The baptism symbolically signifies your death to sin. Romans 6 takes this up, first few verses, where you go under, you die to sin, you die as Christ died, you rise to a new life with him.

This is not baptismal regeneration, incidentally. It's because you already have the Holy Spirit. That's why you do this. But you go under, which symbolizes you're dying, you're rising, and you have a new life in Christ.

And that life enjoys freedom and power in the Spirit; that's why Paul says in the same passage sin doesn't have to be your master because you're no longer under law; you're under grace. If one wants to make the case for baptism by complete immersion, I think this is where you'd look for it; it's certainly a key place. You go under, you symbolically die, and you rise to a new life.

It's a symbolic statement because you already have a new life by having the Spirit. Well, that's a typology of the Noachic Covenant as it's taken up in the New Testament. And then there's Christology.

And as we've said, Noah, by virtue of being a prophet, and here again, he's not called a prophet, he's called a preacher of righteousness, he's not called a prophet. But since he mediates a covenant, since he hears from God and conveys God's instructions, he clearly is a prophet. And we've said that it has to do with office and not with character, so even Ahab could be a type of Christ.

In Noah's case, he does have qualities that we see later with regard to Jesus, too. Noah finds favor in the eyes of the Lord, and that's true of Jesus, too. He's in favor with God and men.

Noah was a righteous man, Jesus Christ the righteous. As we've said, righteousness involves conformity to God's being and doing to the extent that one might be able to do so under whatever covenant one's under. So, Noah wasn't as righteous as Jesus was, but he could be called righteous, which means he's good, he's merciful, he's loving, he's kind, he's obedient, and all that.

And then there's a statement in Genesis 7, the Lord says, go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found that you singular are righteous in this generation, which is significant because it's not telling us that Noah's family are righteous. And indeed, we know from the subsequent events that they are not all righteous. But because the one man is, the others get saved.

And that's very anticipatory in its way of Christ because he is the righteous one, and by his obedience, we too are saved. So, some very significant connections there. And indeed, Noah's family are saved from that global judgment, and we are saved from a cosmic judgment because of the righteousness of Christ.

If we look at the Noachic covenant in terms of what I've called the major paradigm, God works by his spirit; his words are spirit, he speaks to Noah, and he tells him what to do. We won't go into it, but in Genesis 8:1, we read about the wind that brings the



waters; that's the same word that means spirit. The spirit probably is involved in producing the storm.

The flood. He works through a prophet figure, Noah. He's waging war against and defeating his foes, which is humanity in this case.

He establishes a covenant with a people, a small people, Noah and his family, that establishes them as his. But we don't yet have a temple presence because that really becomes a special grace phenomenon again. And there aren't enough people around for it, as would appear.

So, as we've noted then, Noah is not called a prophet, but he is a prophet. And that seems pretty clearly indicated. So, this principle might, or what the principle we see involved here could encourage us to reflect back again on Genesis 1, 1 through 2, 3, which is not called a covenant, but it has those elements.

God's flood, as we said, is an act of war. His acts of judgment are his war. He's going to war against somebody, judging them.

And it's his first act of war against a people, in this case, global humanity, and so on. Not all of that covenant community, then, as we've said, they're not all righteous. They don't all turn out to be faithful.

We read in Genesis 9 that Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers. I suspect that in the narrative, the flavor of the telling is more like what he told about his father. I said, oh, look what I saw.

Our father got drunk. Look what he did. And so that's it.

There is a curse that follows this. It's important to note that the curse is on Canaan. It's not on Ham.

And so, historically, Mormons and others have thought that the blackness of black people in Africa and their primitive state and all the rest of it are indications of a curse because it goes back to Ham because they are the Hamitic peoples, biblically, the Africans. Well, it's worth noting here that the curse is actually on Canaan, Ham's son. The curse is that he'll be a servant of others, which doesn't mean that they're going to be slaves, leading to the Civil War.

It means they're going to be Canaanites, and they're going to be, those of them that survive will be servants to the Israelites, which certainly, to some extent, turned out to be true. So, the covering of the nakedness here, we know that Shem and Japheth cover their father's nakedness. I think that's a very Christological act.

God covers the nakedness of Adam and Eve, or Adam and his wife, in Genesis 3, because the covering that they fashion for themselves is not adequate. It's long been thought that if he covered them with animal skins, animals had to die for that. And that kind of prefigures the death of Christ so that we're covered with Christ.

And I think that idea has some merit. Galatians 3 tells us all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. And Isaiah 61 declares I delight greatly in the Lord.

My soul rejoices in my God. He has clothed me with garments of salvation, arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, and so on. And so, this idea of clothing, which can involve inheritance, can involve restoring to office; these are all good things, and the Lord does them for us.

He does them for the man and the woman. I think that when he clothes them in Genesis 3, it prefigures the idea of sacrifice, blood sacrifice, and the need to clothe them, which happens to us with Christ. Clothing in the ancient Near East could signify inheritance.

Dr. Hugenberger has worked on this idea. It can also include an office. Very noteworthy, the Assyrians would talk about clothing someone, investing someone in an office with a robe and a ring.

And I think the Lord, to some extent, when he clothes them, he's saying to them, I am reinstating you as king and queen over the earth. You're going to die someday, but you're going to rule. You're still going to have all that.

The parable of the prodigal son. Remember, the son returns. And the father, what does he do? He gives him a robe and a ring.

He's not giving him his inheritance because he says to the older son, everything I have is yours. But he is saying to the younger son, you've squandered your inheritance, but I'm reinstating you in the family. You have your position in the family again.

I think that's the symbolism. So, all these things are involved, I think, with God's clothing, the man and the woman. And it's all very good.

Okay. Well, the blessing. We've seen the curse that's on the son of Ham.

Then we have this blessing. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, which is the Semites. May God extend the territories of Japheth, which is the pagans out there, shall we say.

And may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave. So, Gerhardus Vos pointed out the elements of this blessing a long time ago in his biblical theology. Well, Shem, the Semites, eventually, that gets fulfilled in Israel.

Japheth, the pagans, eventually get fulfilled in us. We are the sons of Japheth if you will. We're the peoples out there, the goyim, the people outside of God's people, the Israelites, that is, outside of them.

We get to live in the tents of the Semites. We get to live under the same God, the God of Israel. And Canaan is the Canaanites, and their slavery and servitude are fulfilled in the Old Testament form of the kingdom.

Okay, if we look, then just for a recap of the matter of the Noahic covenant and how it relates to the Adamic. We argue that we do have a creation covenant or an Adamic covenant. It does get renewed in the Noahic covenant.

Many of the same terms were reiterated, with a little tweaking because of changed circumstances. This is exactly the way covenant renewals worked in the ancient Near East. It's the way Deuteronomy works vis-a-vis the Sinai covenant.

Together, these form one legal package, and so they form the common grace context or a platform on which the special grace program can unfold. So, in other words, in the Adamic and Noahic covenants, which we have now up to this point, we have the provision, the assurance of a planet, an ongoing world in which God will continue to cause his sun to shine and his rain to fall on the good, the bad, the righteous, and the unrighteous. And in that context, his kingdom advance continues the program of now in the new covenant, bringing the gospel to all the nations.

That all gets foreshadowed most clearly with the Abrahamic covenant, and that's the covenant to which we will turn next.

This is Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus in his teaching on Biblical Theology. This is session 4, The Noahic Covenant.