

The Rainbow Promise
[Genesis 8:20-9:1-17](#)

Introduction-What is a Covenant

Beriyth (ber-eeth') is the Hebrew word and carries the idea of binding. A covenant is a solemn agreement which binds two parties together.

The Greek word **diatheke** (dee-ath-ay'-kay-testament) basically describes a **biblical covenant as a one-sided relationship in that one member is dominant and determines the terms of the agreement. A will or testament is a one-sided relationship, yet more than one person is involved.**

God determines the conditions, and man has the responsibility to accept God's decision.

Gen 8:20-22 **God's Covenant with His Creation** Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

21 And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

22 "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease." NKJV T

"God blessed Noah" ([Genesis 9:1](#)) **God's Word (which is what the promises are) is given to bless mankind.**

A. The Reproduction in the Covenant ([Genesis 9:1, 2, 7](#))

"breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth" ([Genesis 8:17](#))

1. The Copiousness in the Reproduction

"Multiply" ([Genesis 9:1](#)). T means "to become many; to be abundant... to become numerous" (Baker and Carpenter)

There is no room for abortion here that in our country kills a million babies a year.

2. The Character of the Reproduction

"be fruitful" means "to flourish... The word speaks of **quality** in this matter of reproduction, **not just quantity.**

"Replenish the earth" ([Genesis 9:1](#)). The word "**replenish**" means **to fill, to complete.** This is the same word used in [Genesis 1:28](#) Since there were only two in the beginning the earth needed filling. To jump to the conclusion of a pre-Adamic race plays right into the hands of unbelief which prefers to get along with evolutionists rather than expositors.

4. The Conservation of the Reproduction

"And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered" ([Genesis 9:2](#))

Affright in animals. – Fear means terror

Authority over animals. "Into your hand are they delivered" ([Genesis 9:2](#)). This statement means "to be delivered into absolute control to be dealt with as the other [man in this case] may determine"

God ordained by this decree that **man is to rule over beasts, that man is thus better than beasts.** Jesus confirmed that fact when He said regarding the fowls of the air, "Are ye not much better than they?" ([Matthew 6:26](#)).

B. The Refreshments in the Covenant [Genesis 9:3, 4](#)

1. The Flesh in the Refreshments

"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things" ([Genesis 9:3](#)).

1 Tim 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, **believed on in the world**, received up into glory. 1 Tim 4:1-5 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Going against the decrees God has given Concerning marriage between a man and woman, and eating meat are more than sin. It is the doctrine of demons.

2. The Forbidden in the Refreshments

"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you... but flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat" ([Genesis 9:3, 4](#)).

The bacteria in the animal. Not road kill.

The blood in the animal. "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat" ([Genesis 9:4](#))

Holiness was involved in this restriction. This restriction shows respect for the blood. Later Israel was told in the Mosaic law that "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" ([Leviticus 17:11](#)). The blood "is the life of all flesh... the life of all flesh is the blood" ([Leviticus 17:14](#)). This respect for the blood finds its ultimate message in the blood of Jesus Christ. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us... without the shedding of blood is no remission" ([Hebrews 9:12, 22](#)). "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" ([1 John 1:7](#)); "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" ([Romans 3:24, 25](#)); "Being now justified by his blood" ([Romans 5:9](#)).

C. The Retribution in the Covenant [Genesis 9:8-17](#).

"And surely your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every beast will I require it... at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man" ([Genesis 9:5](#)). **That puts opposition to capital punishment in the category of rebellion against God.**

The Bible says that death is separation from 'God. Even unsaved people are in the image of God. Genesis 1:27 **God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.**

In other words do not kill an unsaved person because he is still in the image of God. So the image of God is **effaced** in fallen man, but not **erased**.

2. The Responsibility for Capital Punishment

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood [murder], by man shall his blood be shed" ([Genesis 9:6](#)). human governments—duly designated individuals—are to do the executing.

3. The Reason for Capital Punishment

"For in the image of God made he man" ([Genesis 9:6](#)). It simply says that capital punishment is justified because murder dishonors God and capital punishment retrieves that honor.

The greatness of any sin is that it dishonors God. When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God" ([Genesis 39:9](#)). When David was confessing to God his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and his subsequent ordering of Uriah, her husband, to death, he said, "Against thee [God], thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" ([Psalm 51:4](#)). The "only" does not mean he did not sin against his fellow man, but that he sinned chiefly against God in doing all this evil.

D. The Rainbow in the Covenant

1. The Promise in the Rainbow

The style of the promise. "I, behold, I establish my covenant with you" ([Genesis 9:9](#)). The word "covenant" appears some seven times in this decree about the rainbow ([Genesis 9:9](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [15](#), [16](#), and [17](#)). **The "covenant" is initiated by God ("I, behold, I") and is non-conditional.**

The "covenant" is not only with man but also "with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth" ([Genesis 9:10](#)).

The safety in the promise. "Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there anymore be a flood to destroy the earth... The waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh" ([Genesis 9:11, 15](#)).

LIVES IN THE SAFETY. "Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood."

"I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth" ([Isaiah 54:9](#)).

LIMITS IN THE SAFETY. "Neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth" ([Genesis 9:11](#)). The limits in the safety promised by the rainbow are twofold.

(1) **The rainbow does not promise safety from all floods.** It only promised safety from worldwide floods

(2) **the rainbow does not promise safety from other forms of judgment.** While God will not destroy the world with a flood again, He will indeed destroy the world with fire. "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word [Word of God] are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men... the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" ([II Peter 3:6, 7, 10](#)). The rainbow assures of safety from a worldwide flood but not from a worldwide fire.

THE SIGN IN THE PROMISE. "This is the token of the covenant." The rainbow is called a "token" ([Genesis 9:12, 13, 17](#)). It is the sign or symbol of the promise. **The fact that the rainbow is seen worldwide and that local floods have still occurred teaches us that Noah's flood was obviously worldwide in scope.**

THE STEADFASTNESS IN THE PROMISE. "I will remember my covenant... I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant" ([Genesis 9:15, 16](#)). **"I will remember" is "An anthropomorphism introduced to remind man that God is ever faithful to his covenant"** (Whitelaw).

God calls it a covenant SEVEN TIMES Man is not faithful, but God is absolutely faithful.

2. The Place of the Rainbow

"I do set my bow in the cloud... the bow shall be seen in the cloud... the bow shall be in the cloud" ([Genesis 9:13, 14, 16](#)).

Three times God says the rainbow will be in the cloud.

3. The Period of the Rainbow

"This is a token... for perpetual generations... the everlasting covenant" ([Genesis 9:12, 16](#)).

The Bible warns repeatedly about the consequences of sin, but you will not hear educators or government officials saying much, if anything, about the Bible warning of sin.

But to keep your perspective on what is important and what is not important, **keep your eye on Jesus.** It is the consequences of sin, not of the melting of the ice caps about which men need to be concerned.

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