

GENESIS 9:8-13 A COVENANT OF HOPE – THE PROMISE OF LIFE

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.

God makes an eternal covenant with his remnant that promises that through his sovereign love he will never destroy all life by a flood. In Genesis 8:22, God says to Noah:

“As long as the earth endures, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

As a sign he puts down his bow, an instrument of war, in the full view of the world. It is a covenant of grace because the remnant has done nothing to deserve it; they haven’t even requested the covenant. Yet, God in his mercy has provided the hope for the world that precludes the fatalism of the pagans. We are not caught in an endless cycle of good fortune and calamity, but God has us on a trajectory to glory.

Another feature of the promise, and our hope, is that the covenant is communicated directly by God to his creaturely remnant through the material of his creation. God interacts with his creation by entering into creation. Therefore, creation and life itself have become sacred because they have been touched by the Holy God. We realize this most fully in the Incarnation, where God the Son becomes human, dies a human death and then after the resurrection takes that humanity into the dwelling place of God through the bodily ascension. As a consequence, our hope in the promises of God is a terrestrial hope which will be manifested in a physical resurrection to a new and physical “Jerusalem,” the dwelling place of God.

Thank you, Lord, for giving me a reason to hope and the witness of your love for your creation. As I live my life, keep my eyes on your promises, my heart on you and my feet upon the path you have placed before me. Amen.