

Covenant, Noahic

Noahic Covenant (Gen 9:1-17)

The Noahic Covenant restates God's authority over man and his duties as found in the Adamic Covenant (Gen. 9:1), and then it adds further provisions. This is a conditional covenant that was made between God and all mankind.

For those who accept the Scripture as the true Word of God, the Noahic Covenant proves very useful in helping our interpretation of the other covenants. The Noahic Covenant is not an isolated covenant with some special hermeneutic employed to understand it, when compared to other covenants—especially the unilateral ones—that God would make. Nothing within the text nor in the literal fulfillment, to this very day, of God's subsequent judgment on the earth would give any indication that God intended some allegorical method of interpretation in both what He accomplished in Gen 6-9 nor for what He promised for the future.

The Noahic Covenant contains seven provisions:

1. Man was to repopulate the earth (v1,7)
 - a. With the exception of eight people, the entire human race was destroyed by the Flood. After the Flood, only eight people remained to re-populate the entire earth. Just as with the Edenic Covenant, man was again commissioned to repopulate the earth, but the command to subdue the earth is not repeated.
 - b. With man's fall, he lost his authority and Satan usurped it. Thus Satan is *the prince of this world* (John 12:31) and the god of this world (2 Cor 4:4). Satan has authority over all the kingdoms of this world and can offer them to whomsoever he will (Luke 4:6). He made that offer to the Seed of the woman, Jesus, who turned it down. He will offer it some day to the seed of Satan, the Antichrist, who will accept it (Rev 13:1-3).
2. Fear of man was put into animals and man was to dominate them (v2)
 - a. While man had lost authority over the earth, he was still to dominate and have authority over the animal kingdom. For this reason, the fear of man was placed in animals. This fear was a means of self preservation due to the next provision.
3. Man's diet was to consist of both *every moving thing* and *the green herb* (v3)
 - a. Previously, his diet had been vegetarian, but now all animals were included. No limitations whatsoever are given in the passage, thus all animals were fit for food.
4. Man was forbidden to eat blood (v4)

- a. All creature life, both man and animal, is blood sustained. Blood is the symbol of life, and the shedding of blood is the symbol of death. Because blood is the symbol of life, God commanded that it not be eaten or drunk.
- 5. Capital punishment instituted (v5-6)
 - a. When Cain killed Abel, Cain was not executed because capital punishment had not yet been instituted. The provision for capital punishment came with the Noahic Covenant and all murderers were to be executed.
 - b. With this covenant, God established civil government, along with capital punishment, as the key feature. The Lord installed civil government and sanctioned capital punishment as a way of restraining evil in the interim, because "the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen 8:21). Capital punishment is clearly endorsed in the NT (Rom 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 3:12-14).
- 6. Humanity would never again be destroyed by a world wide flood (v8-11)
 - a. While there would be local floods that would destroy portions of humanity, never again would there be a world wide flood. In the future, there will be a passing away and destruction of earth's present system, but it will not be by means of a universal flood. This shows that the Noahic Flood was universal, not local.
- 7. The token of the covenant was the rainbow (v12-17)
 - a. Not every covenant came with a sign or token, but this one did. This was the first time in human history that the rainbow ever appeared. Rain did not exist before the world wide flood and the earth was watered by a mist that came daily upon the vegetation. Rainbows come in conjunction with rain. So for the first time in human experience the rainbow appeared.

The Noahic Covenant became the basis for the Dispensation of Human Government. Although this dispensation has been superseded, the unconditional Noahic Covenant is still very much in effect. It provides the jurisdiction that makes all mankind responsible to God for their actions in concert with the Edenic Covenant. The sign of the covenant, the rainbow, is a universal sign that has appeared since the Flood and continues to this day, which reinforces God's claim that all mankind since the Flood are under its force.

The judgments of the Tribulation against the Gentiles will come because of violations of the Noahic Covenant. According to Is 24:5-6, the judgment comes because humanity has violated *the everlasting covenant*, a name given to the Noahic Covenant in Gen 9:16. For that reason, the prophet used the Noahic Flood motif, *the windows on high* and *foundations of the earth* in Is 24:18. But next time, God will destroy the masses of humanity by fire.

The Noahic Covenant is mentioned specifically in Is 54:9-10.