

THE NOAHIC COVENANTS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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1. Introduction

THE NARRATIVE OF the book of Genesis shows readers that the idea of covenant—especially divine covenants—plays a prominent role in the biblical narrative. This applies to covenants established with Noah both before and after the flood, for God exercises a covenantal judgment upon the earth in the Noahic flood even as he presents a post-diluvian covenant promise coming after that judgment.

Many biblical commentators and theologians, however, neglect to note the difference between the prediluvian and postdiluvian Noahic covenants. For example, O. Palmer Robertson suggests that there is no distinction to be made in the Noahic covenant between a prediluvian and postdiluvian aspect. In defending this view, he argues that the Noahic covenant should be considered as “the covenant of preservation”:

The pre-diluvian and post-diluvian covenantal commitments of God to Noah fit the frequent pattern of covenantal administration in Scripture. It is not necessary to posit two covenants with Noah, one preceding the flood and one following the flood. Preliminary dealings precede formal inauguration procedures. God’s commitment to “preserve” Noah and his family prior to the flood relates integrally to the “preservation” principle, which forms the heart of God’s covenantal commitment after the flood.¹

In contrast to that understanding of God’s dealings with Noah, we will examine the Noahic covenant (Gen 6:5–9:17) to show that it possesses distinct prediluvian and postdiluvian content—that is, that God makes distinct covenants (plural) with Noah. Viewed from the perspective of redemptive history and the kingdom of God, we will argue on the one hand that the prediluvian Noahic covenant (Gen 6:5–8:19) should be interpreted from the perspective of the divine

1. O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1980), 110.

covenant of grace (Gen. 3:15); on the other hand, we will propose that the postdiluvian Noahic covenant (Gen 8:20–9:17) may best be viewed from the perspective of the renewal or recovery of the covenant of common grace, first inaugurated after the fall into sin, wherein God imposed curses upon Adam and Eve but did not immediately impose the sentence of death upon them; instead, God graciously preserves their lives and allows them to be fruitful and multiply under the blessed promise of the seed of the woman (see Genesis 3:15–19).²

In the exploration of the prediluvian Noahic covenant, we maintain that it is a “royal grant” covenant in the milieu of the ancient Near East treaties. As such, a royal grant covenant stands in harmony with the divine covenant of grace, which is an inherently redemptive covenant.

Among Bible interpreters and theologians, historically there has been no consensus whether the Noahic flood was universal or local in scope. Given this debate, we will seek to demonstrate that the Noahic flood was universal in character, for the redemptive historical understanding of God’s judgment during the days of Noah brings us to the conclusion that the flood was not merely local but covered the whole earth. Indeed, this universal flood, being a divine judgment upon the human race, functions emblematically as precursor to the final redemptive judgment that will also be universal in character.

In addition to the above, in viewing the postdiluvian Noahic covenant as the renewal of the covenant of common grace, first established after the fall into sin, we will explore the biblical-theological significance of the distinction between clean and unclean animals.

2. For a comprehensive and critical interpretation of the Noahic covenant from divergent perspectives, see Irvin J. Busenitz, “Introduction to the Biblical Covenants; the Noahic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 10/2 (1999): 173–189; John J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 79–80; William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1984), 11–46; Jonathan Edwards, *A History of Redemption: Containing the Outlines of a Body of Divinity* (Lexington, KY: Hard Press, 2011), 46–54; Meredith G. Kline, *God, Heaven, and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006), 78–92; idem, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2000), 212–262; Hans K. LaRondelle, *Our Creator Redeemer: An Introduction to Biblical Covenant Theology* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005), 18–22; Nicholas P. Lunn, “Patterns in the Old Testament Metanarrative: Human Attempts to Fulfill Divine Promises,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 72/2 (2010): 237–249; John Murray, *The Covenant of Grace: Theological & Biblical Studies* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1988), 12–16; Michael Horton, *Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006), 111–128; Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 109–25; Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), 45–55; Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 284–304; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, in *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 148–208; Michael D. Williams, *Far as the Curse Is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 83–99.

Through the formation of the Noahic theocratic kingdom prior to the judgment of the flood, God had made a distinction between clean and unclean animals. After the flood, we find that God restored the covenant of common grace and thereupon abrogated the distinction between clean and unclean animals. In this way he allowed for the consumption of animal meats without any distinction.

Finally, we will examine the divine institution of capital punishment under the authority of state, which should be conceived as an institution of God's common grace. In this connection we will argue that capital punishment is warranted or sanctioned throughout the duration of world history, unto the Parousia.

2. The Prediluvian Noahic Covenant

According to the biblical narrative, in seeing that the world was corrupt, God decided to execute judgment upon the earth he had created. In anticipation of this judgment, God commanded Noah to build an Ark. The aim was to protect a covenant remnant, Noah's line, so that in entering into the Ark this family might escape the wrath to come, so that when the catastrophic judgment of God came upon the earth, the wicked and corrupted world would perish while the covenant community inside the Ark would be delivered from this sentence of damnation.

2.1. Covenant of Royal Grant and Universal Judgment

The biblical narrative informs us that during the days of Noah, human hearts had turned wholly wicked; human ill-behavior followed in step. Human beings lived as citizens of the kingdom of Satan. God therefore revealed that it was his intention to wipe the slate clean, that he would wipe human beings "from the face of the earth," including animals and the birds of the heavens (Gen 6:5-7). In the midst of this corruption and impending judgment, God bestowed his special grace on Noah: "...Noah found *grace* in the eyes of the Lord" (וַיִּחַד נֹחַ בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה) (Gen 6:8).³ While it is important to remember that the mother-promise of Genesis 3:15 (regarding the "woman's offspring") was the inauguration of the principle of saving grace, i.e., it was the first statement of the covenant of grace; nevertheless, Genesis 6:8 may properly be considered the first explicit divine revelation making known that sinners will be saved by God's grace alone. Moreover, this text reveals the principle of saving grace as sovereignly initiated by God and applied to sinners.

3. Here, I adopt the translation of the KJV. The Septuagint translates Genesis 6:8 as follows: *Νωε δὲ εὗρεν χάριον ἐναντίου κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ*. Thus it translates וַיִּחַד as *χάριον* which carries the meaning of *saving grace* so clearly.

Before the flood, God made a covenant with Noah, stipulating that Noah and his family, as the covenant community, shall enter the Ark and shall bring into the Ark every sort of living creature, male and female.

For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breadth of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. *But I will establish my covenant with you* [וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּךָ], and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them." Noah did this, he did all that God commanded him (Gen 6:17-22).

As Noah began to build the Ark according to God's design prescriptions, we learn from the biblical text that it took about 120 years to complete the project. In the process of building the Ark, people continued in their wicked lifestyle—life lived under the reign of the kingdom of Satan; they mocked Noah's apparent stupidity in undertaking this boat-building enterprise. Noah, however, did not forsake the task; facing this ridicule he stood fast as the representative of the kingdom of God as it manifest itself post-fall. He persisted in this building program until the Ark was completed according to God's grand design. We might say that Noah's completion of the Ark symbolized a victory over his mockers, an initial victory over the kingdom of Satan. In that way and in that sense, Noah was already a victorious warrior, contesting the power of darkness on behalf of the kingdom of God. He labored as a soldier of the Great King. In the end, God as the Great King granted to Noah and his covenant family a special privilege to enter the Ark, itself representative of God's heavenly kingdom, a safe haven in the midst of the divine judgment of the flood. In this sense, the prediluvian Noahic covenant may be viewed and understood as a covenant of royal grant. Kline offers this summary:

As in all other administrations in the Covenant of Grace series, the blessings of the covenant with Noah were a gift of grace to ill-deserving sinners, fallen in the first Adam. Yet there was a principle of works in this covenant in connection with the messianic aspect of the typology of the ark-salvation event. The covenant was a covenant of grant, bestowing kingdom

benefits as a reward for faithful service rendered to the Lord of the covenant. Noah was a type of Christ, the faithful Servant of the Lord, and as such he was the grantee of the ark covenant.⁴

Indeed, Noah's faithful obedience may be viewed typologically in that it foreshadows Christ's perfect and meritorious obedience as the mediator of the new covenant. God blessed Noah's obedience by granting the kingdom of God to Noah and his covenant family in the Ark. Although Noah obeyed God in building the Ark, his obedience was not strictly speaking *meritorious* inasmuch as his obedience was at best imperfect; it certainly was not sinless. In that sense, it falls far short of Christ's perfect obedience evidenced in his life and death, fulfilling his office as the mediator of the new covenant. Against this sort of assessment, Kline views Noah's obedience as meritorious in some sense, such that God rewarded his obedience by bestowing the typological kingdom in the Ark.

The Genesis 6:18 covenant with Noah might be identified more precisely as a covenant of grant. That is the kind of covenant that ancient rulers gave to meritorious individuals for faithful service to the crown. Such grants had the character of a royal charter or prebend. They might guarantee to the grantee his special status, or bestow on him title over cities or lands with their revenues, or grant to territory under his authority exemptions from customary obligations.⁵

I would suggest, however, contrary to Kline, that the idea of a meritorious obedience should be limited to the obedience of the first Adam and the last Adam, though even the first Adam could "merit" in the way of obedience only because of the covenant arrangement God had established in the Garden of Eden. Strict merit could not apply,

4. Kline, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 78. I will use the term 'the covenant of royal grant' instead of 'the covenant of grant' because the covenant of royal grant more effectively summarizes the idea of *royal grant* to the faithful vassal after the vassal completed his mission on behalf of *the Great King*.

5. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 234. It is true that Kline limits Noah's obedience such that the typological kingdom in the Ark is granted as the reward to the faithful servant, avoiding legalism. However, it is better not to use the word *merit* inasmuch as Noah's obedience, at best, was a faithful servant's obedience under God's saving grace. Waltke's comment is helpful here: "Our refusal to trust in the Triune God's grace through the gospel of Jesus Christ and not to trust in ourselves mires us in the muck of our depravity. Our depravity keeps us from learning truth. The virtue of faith is God's gift to those whom he chooses as covenant partners (Eph. 2:8). 'It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose' (Phil. 2:13). In other words, Noah's righteousness is not a work to gain merit with God but the outcome of his faith in God, as seen in his building and provisioning the ark" (Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 290).

for the creature cannot strictly merit before the Lord. In any case, the first Adam failed to obey God and plunged the human race into ruin as its representative head.

Meanwhile, speaking prophetic words, God revealed to Noah that the judgment of the flood would be universal in scope, not merely local.⁶ Although God did not directly tell Noah that the flood would be universal in scope, his prophetic message suggests that this would be the case, for he declared that the waters of the flood would cover “the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven” (v. 17).⁷

God’s prophetic word to Noah, in respect to the universal flood, was realized during Noah’s lifetime. According to God’s stipulated design, Noah finished the Ark and thereupon entered into it with his family, along with all the birds and animals as God had specified. Then we read that the flood commenced and continued for forty days “on the earth” in fulfillment of God’s prophetic word. In fact, the flood waters rose “so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains un-

6. In the ancient Near East, the Epic of Gilgamesh, as the Old Babylonian account of the flood myth, represents and depicts a close parallel account to the Noahic flood narrative. Cf. Bill T. Arnold & Bryan E. Beyer, eds., *Readings from the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 66-70; James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958), 39-72. For a brief comparative analysis between the Noahic Flood narrative and the Mesopotamian flood myths, see Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 291.

7. In his interpretation of Genesis 7:17, Calvin demonstrates that the Noahic flood was universal in character, covering the whole world: “Moses copiously insists upon this fact, in order to show that the whole world was immersed in the waters... But seeing it is plainly declared, that whatever was flourishing on the earth was destroyed, we hence infer, that it was an indisputable and signal judgment of God; especially since Noah alone remained secure, because he had embraced, by faith, the word in which salvation was contained. He then recalls to memory what we before have said; namely, how desperate had been the impiety, and how enormous the crimes of men, by which God was induced to destroy the whole world... These two things, directly opposed to each other, he connects together; that the whole human race was destroyed, but that Noah and his family safely escaped. Hence we learn how profitable it was for Noah, disregarding the world, to obey God alone: which Moses states, not so much for the sake of praising the man, as for that of inviting us to imitate his example... In this sense, Peter teaches that Noah’s deliverance from the universal deluge was a figure of baptism, (1 Pet. iii. 21); as if he had said, the method of salvation, which we receive through baptism, agrees with the deliverance of Noah” (Calvin, *The Book of Genesis*, 7:17). For a sampling of commentators who view the Noahic Flood as universal or global in scope, see John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker reprint, 1979), 258-73; John Owen, *Biblical Theology: the Nature, Origin, Development, and Study of Theological Truth* (Pittsburgh, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1994), 202-204; Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 284-300; John C. Whitcomb Jr. & Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979). Among writers who promote the view that the Noahic Flood was local in scope, see Roland K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 98-104; Bernard L. Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978); Davis A. Young, *The Biblical Flood: A Case Study of the Church’s Response to Extrabiblical Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995).

der the whole heaven were covered.” Likewise, the flood waters covered the earth, blotting out every living flesh “from the earth.”

In this connection, it is noteworthy that there is no mention made or name given to some particular region or area as specifying a local flood, which strongly suggests that the flood was conceived as universal in character. In fact, we see that general terms are used, such as “on the earth,” “above the earth,” “from the earth,” and “under the whole heaven” to reveal that the scope of the flood covered the earth on a global scale:

The flood continued forty days *on the earth* [עַל-הָאָרֶץ]. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high *above the earth* [מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ]. The waters prevailed and increased greatly *on the earth* [הָאָרֶץ עַל-], and the ark floated on the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed so mightily *on the earth* [עַל-הָאָרֶץ] that all the high mountains *under the whole heaven* [תַּחַת כָּל-הַשָּׁמַיִם] were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. And all flesh died that moved *on the earth* [עַל-הָאָרֶץ], birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm *on the earth* [עַל-הָאָרֶץ], and all mankind. Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out *from the earth* [מִן-הָאָרֶץ]. Only Noah was left, and those who were in the Ark. And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days (Gen 7:17-24).

Throughout redemptive history, God specified the parameters of his judgment, such that it was confined to a specified location. A representative example of this is God’s judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah, where he clearly indicates the specific scope and target of his judgment (Gen 18:22–19:19). It is clear from the vivid description of the divine judgment upon these cities that God’s punishment was confined to these locations. “The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground” (Gen 19:23-25).

Peter, pointing to the Noahic flood and to God’s judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah, specifies on the one hand the limited area of Sodom and Gomorrah while on the other he refers to the universality of the Noahic flood, at least indirectly, inasmuch as he does not identify any specific locale. Thus, Peter uses general words such as “the

ancient world” (ἀρχαίου κόσμου), and “a flood upon the world of the ungodly” (κατακλυσμὸν κόσμου ἄσεβῶν) which allude to the flood as universal, covering the earth:

If God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; if he did not spare *the ancient world* [ἀρχαίου κόσμου], but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought *a flood upon the world of the ungodly* [κατακλυσμὸν κόσμου ἄσεβῶν]; if by turning *the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah* [πόλεις Σοδόμων καὶ Γῶμόρρας] to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly (2 Pet 2:4-6).

Furthermore, Peter explains that the present world, described as “the present heavens and earth,” will go through a recreating process by means of a fiery judgment. “Ungodly men” will receive the final verdict and suffer their penalty. In this they are like the ungodly during the days of Noah, who being strangers to the Noahic covenant, were barred entrance into the Ark and perished in the flood.

Meanwhile, Peter explains, as the ancient world was “formed out of water and by water” during the process of God’s original creation, this world as “the world of that time” (ὁ τότε κόσμος) was destroyed by the Noahic flood. This anticipates the universal fiery judgment upon “the present heavens and the earth” (οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ) which constitutes the last and great day of of God’s judgment:

But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and *the earth was formed out of water and by water*. By these waters also *the world of that time* [ὁ τότε κόσμος] was deluged and destroyed. By the same word *the present heavens and earth* [οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ] are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men (2 Pet 3:5-7).

Peter carefully chooses the phrase “the world of that time,” which seems to indicate that the original world was globally and universally destroyed by the flood. In Peter’s mind, the Noahic flood destroyed the original world and brought forth the present world. However, when the final judgment arrives, not only will the present world face God’s judgment, but the present heavens and earth. That is why Peter uses the words “the present heavens and earth” to denote clearly that the present world will face God’s fiery judgment when “the day of judgment” comes.

2.2. The Flood and Redemptive Judgment

From the narrative in Genesis we learn that God revealed to Noah and his family that “every living thing of all flesh” both “male and female” would be saved upon entering into the Ark. In that sense, the Ark was the Ark of salvation. However, all who did not enter into the Ark faced the destructive deluge. This twofold outcome is paradigmatic to God’s ways with sinful human beings, for it demonstrates the twofold pattern of the final judgment to come, which brings the radical separation of the elect from the reprobate, of heavenly blessings from hellish curses.⁸

Noah, as the mediator of the prediluvian Noahic covenant, obeyed God’s command in the process of building the Ark. In this sense, as we already discussed, Noah’s obedience may be considered as typological of the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ in his life and death as the mediator of the new covenant (Gen 6:22–7:5). God used Noah’s obedience as a means to save the Noahic covenant community and every living thing when the flood came. Similarly, God will save only the elect because of Christ’s perfect and meritorious obedience on the cross when the final judgment arrives.

Meanwhile, the Ark was the Ark of salvation. The Noahic covenant community, which entered the Ark, was saved when God sent the flood upon the ancient world, encompassing the people outside of that covenant community. In that sense, the Ark was a type of the eschatological heavenly kingdom of God where the saved covenant community dwells eternally in heaven. Meanwhile, the reprobate will be given over to perdition.

The apostle Peter testifies that Christ proclaimed the gospel message through Noah to the people who refused to heed Noah’s prophetic message; and they are given over to perdition. Through the mouth of Noah, “the Spirit of Christ” went and proclaimed the message of repentance “to the spirits” (τοῖς πνεύμασιν) who are now in hell, which Peter describes as “in the prison” (ἐν φυλακῇ). This is a clear testimony that the Noahic covenant community was saved by the principle of grace and faith in the same manner of believers under the new covenant:

8. Warren Gage is correct to note that the Noahic flood represents the classical paradigm of recurring judgment in redemptive history, culminating in the final judgment: “This chapter proposes first to demonstrate that the flood of Noah establishes the fundamental paradigm of biblical judgment recurring in the destructions of Sodom, Egypt, Canaan, Jerusalem (both the first and second temples), and the present cosmos. This pattern of judgment is reducible to three elements: the ‘days of Noah,’ the ‘flood’ of judgment, and the deliverance of the remnant from wrath” (Warren Austin Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* [Winona Lake, IN: Carpenter Books, 1984], 63).

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which *he went and proclaimed to the spirits in the prison* [τοις ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεῖς ἐκήρυξεν], because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him (1 Pet 3:18-22).

Likewise, Peter understood and interpreted the history of the Old Testament in light of redemptive history, its announced inauguration coming in Genesis 3:15. Whereas Peter himself once lived by the principles of a legalistic Jewish worldview prior to being called by Jesus, subsequently, as a disciple of Jesus, he abandoned Jewish legalism and was transformed, we might say, into a redemptive historical theologian as witness to the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus and giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Remarkably, Peter interpreted the Noahic flood from a redemptive historical perspective. That is, Noah, as the mediator of the prediluvian Noahic covenant, obeyed God's command to build the Ark exactly as God prescribed. In addition to building the Ark, Noah was faithful to his prophetic mission as "a preacher of righteousness" (δικαιοσύνης κήρυκα), proclaiming the good news of the gospel prior to the incarnation of the Son of God (2 Pet 2:5).

God executed his judgment when Adam and Eve rebelled against him, culminating in their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, for sinful human beings were not to be permitted to stay in the original holy land, though God extended his mercy to them, clothing them with the righteousness of Christ. This was typologically and symbolically manifested by God's clothing them with animal skins (Gen 3:21-24).

In the proclamation of the primitive gospel in Genesis 3:15, God prophetically proclaimed the battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. The deluge was the first visible example of holy war against the kingdom of Satan. God won the first universal holy war against the kingdom of Satan by means of the flood. In that sense, God set the stage for the subsequent contest. The redemptive historical paradigm he established functions in an exemplary manner, setting forth the ongoing pattern of redemptive judgment. In fact, redemptive judgment will come to an end with the final judgment through the intrusion of heavenly fire. Jonathan Edwards beautifully captures and demonstrates that the flood presents the redemptive

historical paradigm for the ongoing redemptive judgment, which will culminate in the final judgment:

And therefore, God's destroying those enemies of the church by the flood, belongs to this affair of redemption: for it was one thing that was done in fulfillment of the covenant of grace, as it was revealed to Adam: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head." This destruction was only a destruction of the seed of the serpent in the midst of their most violent rage against the seed of woman, and so delivering the seed of woman from them, when in utmost peril by them.... We read, that just before the world shall be destroyed by fire, the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, shall gather together against the church as the sand of the sea, and shall go up on the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and then fire shall come down from God out of heaven, and devour them, Rev. xx. 8, 9. And it seems as though there was that which was very parallel to it, just before the world was destroyed by water. And therefore their destruction was a work of God that did as much belong to the work of redemption, as the destruction of the Egyptians belonged to the redemption of the children of Israel out of Egypt, or as the destruction of Sennacherib's mighty army, that had compassed about Jerusalem to destroy it, belonged to God's redemption of that city from them.⁹

Similarly, the Noahic flood, when we examine it from the perspective of redemptive history, must be seen as a distinctive divine judgment. In a word, it is a redemptive judgment—that is, it is a typological manifestation of the final judgment to come. The final judgment will be revealed when at Christ's Parousia, which will be the ultimate eschatological judgment wherein the elect and reprobate are clearly and visibly manifested and distinguished from one another—and so too the everlasting bliss of heaven or bane of hell. God demonstrated his redemptive judgment through the historical episode of the flood judgment, bringing forth the separation between the Noahic covenant community and the rest of humanity (Gen 7:21-23).¹⁰

9. Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, 47-48.

10. There are a growing number of evangelicals today who deny the existence of hell. The denial of hell and the eternal punishment of the reprobate is, I think, the result of failing to read the Bible from a redemptive-historical perspective wherein the existence of hell is clearly revealed as divine punishment to unredeemed and rebellious sinners. Among those who deny the existence of hell, see David L. Edwards & John Stott, *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), 313-320; Philip E. Hughes, *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), chap. 37; Clark Pinnoch, "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent," *Criswell Theological Review* 4/2 (1990): 243-259; John Wen-

To be sure, in doing this God did not use human-wrought weapons. Although all people enjoy the benefits of God's common grace, inaugurated in Genesis 3:16-19, the manner in which he produced a redemptive outcome by means of the flood was not grounded in common grace. Instead, God used the flood itself to execute his redemptive judgment at this time, which was a kind of eschatological age of the prediluvian world. Interestingly, when Jesus returns in judgment, God will not execute that final judgment against the present world by means of flood waters; rather, he will execute this judgment with fire from heaven, which is the sign of the manifestation of heavenly glory (2 Pet 3:6-13).

2.3. "Ark" as the Kingdom of God

After Noah, his covenant family and all the appointed living flesh, according to God's command, entered the Ark, God shut the door of the Ark. These actions indicate that the kingdom of God, now resident in the Ark, has found its inauguration while those remaining outside of the Ark face the divine judgment of the flood: "They went into the Ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in" (Gen 7:15-16).

The kingdom of God in the Ark serves to foreshadow God's everlasting kingdom in heaven, as earlier discussed. It is not difficult to imagine that the visible glory of the Lord was present in the Ark, the Lord having safely shut Noah and the other passengers, with the animals, inside. The visible presence of the glory of God indicates that the Ark is a type of the kingdom of God to come—the kingdom of heaven. At the consummation, the glory of God will be the light of this kingdom so that there will be no need of the light of the sun or of a lamp, as we learn from the apostle John in the beautiful vision of the glory of God in the New Jerusalem, a picture of the heavenly consummation:

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates

ham, *Facing Hell: An Autobiography 1913-1995* (Paternoster Press, 1998); N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (HarperOne, 2008), 175-182. For the defense of the classical doctrine of hell, responding to contemporary annihilationism and the denial of the existence of hell from diverse perspectives, see Christopher W. Morgan & Robert A. Peterson, eds., *Hell under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment* (Zondervan, 2004); Robert A. Peterson, *Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment* (P&R Publishing, 1995).

will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life (Rev 21:22-27).

Indeed, God’s shutting Noah into the Ark was the turning point of redemption in the prediluvian world. It was the turning point of the separation of heaven and hell, in a typological manner, in that prediluvian world. In the Ark, the glory of God was fully present and began to shine inside of the Ark. In this way, the Noahic covenant community experienced a foretaste of the heavenly kingdom of God in the presence of this visible glory. Meanwhile, by means of the flood God cursed the prediluvian world residing outside of the Ark upon shutting Noah and his family into this refuge. Indeed, God cursed all the people and every other living thing outside of the Ark. In doing so, we see a prefiguration of the final judgment to come, wherein God will separate the elect from the reprobate.

The separation between the Noahic covenant community inside the Ark and the non-covenant community outside of the Ark foreshadows the existence of what will later in redemptive history, especially in the New Testament, be called heaven and hell. In his famous Olivet discourse, Jesus explained that the visible realization of the kingdom of God will coincide with his second coming, that is, that this visible manifestation of God’s kingdom will be fulfilled with “the coming of the Son of Man” (ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου). It is noteworthy that Jesus expounded this in view of the Noahic flood and God’s judgment upon the earth, which at that time must be conceived as the eschatological age in the pre-flood world:

But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be *the coming of the Son of Man*. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be *the coming of the Son of Man* [ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου]. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming (Matt 24:36-42).

In the original world, the world prior the Noahic Flood, the judgment of the Flood brought about the manifestation of and separation between the Noahic covenant community and those standing outside of it. For the Noahic covenant community, this judgment foreshad-

owed in the form of the Ark the heavenly kingdom of God; whereas, for those who were outside of the Noahic covenant community, it was the day of hellish judgment. So, the day of Noah's entrance into the Ark was the divine Judgment Day in the world prior to the Flood, visibly separating the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Jesus picks up on this judgment theme in his Olivet discourse, where he clearly explains that no one knows the day of "the coming of the Son of Man" (ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), except the heavenly Father, for it will be the day of the final judgment, separating the redeemed elect and non-redeemed reprobate. Indeed, it will be the day of separation, so that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan are each fully manifested and realized.

3. The Postdiluvian Noahic Covenant

Following the Noahic Flood, God blessed this remnant of humanity, the Noahic covenant community, to live in this cleansed world with the aim that the human race might go forth and the history of the world might continue unto Christ's return, the Parousia. It is in that light that we should understand the Noahic covenant of common grace as a covenant bringing about the recovery and renewal of this grace. Indeed, this covenant conceived as granting a certain degree of "common grace" was first inaugurated in Genesis 3:16-19. God, however, temporarily set this aside when he executed the judgment of the flood, which universally was imposed upon the whole earth (Gen 8:20-9:17).¹¹

3.1. The Restoration of the Covenant of Common Grace

In the order of the history of redemption, after the Fall God revealed the primitive gospel—that is, the good news of the gospel through the woman's offspring (Gen 3:15). Next he revealed the covenant of common grace as the backbone of redemptive history, which unfolds for the salvation of his elect through the process of world history (Gen 3:16-19). The divine judgment manifested in the Noahic flood was not to be the one and only (or final) judgment of God. Rather, the Noahic flood functioned typologically as a precursor to the last and final judgment to come. Thus, in the gospel promise enunciated in the Garden after the Fall we see first introduced a covenant of

11. For representative writers who read the postdiluvian Noahic covenant as a covenant of common grace, see Michael Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 111-119; Kline, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon*, 81; idem, *Kingdom Prologue*, 244-262; David VanDrunen, *A Biblical Case for Natural Law*, in *Studies in Christian Social Ethics and Economic*, No. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Acton Institute), 26-35; Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 284-304. Horton and VanDrunen basically follow and adopt Kline's biblical-theological exposition of the Noahic covenant of common grace.

common grace in the sense that God reestablished a stable world environment and natural order, shared by both the elect and reprobate, wherein all human beings, though fallen, live under God's providential care and protection without discrimination. Likewise, following God's judgment of the Noahic flood, he reaffirmed and renewed a covenant of common grace so that he might continue his project of redemption for the salvation of his elect and the expansion of his spiritual kingdom unto all nations—a project that reaches its fullness in the last days (Gen 9:1, 7).

Consequently, we read that after the waters had receded, Noah and his family disembarked, leaving the Ark, and all the animals left the Ark as well. Scripture informs us that Noah then built an altar and worshipped the Lord with burnt offerings. The biblical text tells us that the Lord accepted the burnt offerings as a "pleasing aroma" [רִיחַ הַנְּיִיחִים]. Moreover, Yahweh promised never again to "curse the ground" on a global scale. In addition, God promised that he would never again "strike down every living creature" as he had done with the flood. Yahweh further promised that he would bless this sin-cleansed world with his providential care and protection:

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and burnt offerings on the altar. And when the LORD smelled *the pleasing aroma* [רִיחַ הַנְּיִיחִים], the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Never will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease" (Gen 8:20-22).

As Noah and that covenant community, upon leaving the Ark, restored their worship of God with burnt offerings, their pilgrimage was renewed in the post-flood world—the world that God had recreated, so to speak, by means of the judgment of the flood. The burnt offerings at the altar functioned to foreshadow the final sacrifice to come, which would be definitively fulfilled with the coming of the Messiah and his sacrifice at the cross. Thus, this divine grant to Noah and his line, *viz.*, the gift of a new, post-flood-world-order, along with its blessings, served to fore-signify the final blessings of a new heaven and a new earth which would be established after the great and last Day of Judgment—and according to the Messiah's sacrificial work and ministry to redeem his elect.

As we demonstrated earlier, the prediluvian Noahic covenant was part of the covenant of grace, and directly related to personal salvation and redemption. It offered, through a typological picture, a vision of the Kingdom of God in heaven. God thus made the covenant with Noah—Noah functioning as the head of the covenant family. The

postdiluvian Noahic covenant, however, was quite distinct from the prediluvian covenant, for God established it not only with Noah as representative of others but with Noah's descendants and with all living things upon the earth—indeed, with the earth itself. These distinctive characteristics indicate that the postdiluvian Noahic covenant was not directly related to personal salvation and redemption, nor directly related to the bestowment of the heavenly Kingdom of God—all of which are included in what is essential to the covenant of grace. Rather, these distinctive characteristics are indicative of the covenant of common grace, which provides the way for and opens the possibility of human history to proceed upon the earth:

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth" (Gen 9:8-13).

Interestingly, God presented the rainbow as the visible sign of the postdiluvian Noahic covenant. Later, God instituted circumcision as the sign of the covenant of grace when he formalized that covenant with Abraham. The sacramental practice of circumcision continued among the people of Israel throughout Old Testament history, with more elaborate stipulations surrounding it being given under the Sinaitic covenant. Jesus, the mediator and fulfillment of the covenant of grace, instituted baptism as a sign of the new covenant in him, which replaced the sign of circumcision. The distinct characteristics of circumcision and baptism, as the signs of the covenant, reside in the fact that each was administered to the bodies of members belonging to the covenant community. By contrast, the sign of the postdiluvian Noahic covenant was not administered to the bodies of members belonging to the covenant community inasmuch as this covenant did not directly symbolize or declare salvation and redemption. Rather, the sign of the rainbow followed upon the judgment of the Noahic flood in order to symbolize and declare that God would spare the world his universal wrath in the way of flood. And with this temporal reprieve, human history can proceed under God's providential care and common grace, opening the way also for the history of salvation. In this way, the postdiluvian covenant is a covenant of common grace.

In addition, for the peoples of the ancient Near East, the rainbow represented a battle bow. In fact, the bow was a representative symbol of war in the ancient Near East. When a battle bow pointed to a target vertically, the images of battle and wrath were involved. However, when the battle was over, warriors unstrung and laid down this weapon. The rainbow, then, placed in the sky as a sign of the post-flood covenant, was like an unstrung battle bow, laid down, for God's holy war against the sinful world of those days was completed. The rainbow was an abiding and magnificent visible symbol that God had laid down the battle bow he had used to curse and condemn the ancient world by means of the flood.¹²

The rainbow, as the sign of the covenant of common grace, means that God will not wage holy war on a global scale until (given the testimony of the New Testament) the Parousia. Throughout subsequent redemptive history, following the judgment of the flood, God used holy war to curse the world. But it was not on a global but only a local scale that he did so, as we see in the judgments of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Exodus, the conquest of Canaan, etc. In that sense, the rainbow, as the sign of the postdiluvian Noahic covenant, was an abiding sign of the peace treaty between God and the present world, signifying that God would not curse the world on a global scale until the Parousia. The postdiluvian Noahic covenant is a unilateral covenant of common grace in which God promised to provide a relatively

12. For differing interpretations of the symbolical meaning of rainbow in the Noahic covenant, see Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 123-125; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, in *The Old Testament Library* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), 133-134; Williams, *Far As the Curse Is Found*, 96-98. Kline offers a comprehensive summary of the biblical-theological meaning of the rainbow as the sign of the covenant of common grace in relation to the battle bow in the ancient Near East: "This arching color-spectrum in the heavens is designated by the word for the archer's bow. The war-bow is mentioned in God's arsenal of wrath, particularly when he is viewed as advancing in the judgment-storm, dispatching his arrows of lightning (cf. e.g., Deut 32:42; Pss 7:12[13]; 18:14[15]; 64:7[8]; 77:17[18]; 144:6; Hab 3:11; Zech 9:14). However, the sign of the rainbow is not raised vertically and drawn taut in the face of the foe but is suspended in the relaxed horizontal position. There are Near Eastern representations of kings, first seen engaged in battle, then returning in peace, with the state-god of the storm depicted above in stance identical to the king's in each case. In the battle scene king and god hold bows fitted with arrows and full drawn, while in the peace scene their bows hang at their side, loosened. Accordingly, the designation of the rainbow as a battle-bow may best be interpreted as suggesting the picture of the divine warrior with his weapons laid aside, turning from the path of judgment against rebellious mankind, prepared now to govern them with forbearance for a season" (Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 247-248). With respect to the rainbow in relation to "the bow of war" in the literary context of Genesis 9:8-17, Von Rad's analysis is helpful, though he stands in the tradition of the historical-critical school: "The Hebrew word that we translate 'rainbow' usually means in the Old Testament 'the bow of war.' The beauty of the ancient conception thus becomes apparent: God shows the world that he has put aside his bow. Man knows of the blessing of this new gracious relationship in the stability of the orders of nature, i.e., first of all in the sphere of the impersonal elements only" (von Rad, *Genesis*, 134).

stable living environment on the earth, executing his common grace to both the elect and reprobate alike.

God's remarkable provision in the postdiluvian Noahic covenant demonstrates that the present world will not end with the catastrophic disasters of earthquake, hurricanes, famine, or the effects of global warming, pollution, and nuclear wars. The covenant of common grace guarantees that God, as the sovereign Lord of world history and of all things, will take care of the present world unto the final day of judgment. Indeed, in light of the covenant of common grace, unto the final judgment, Waltke offers the following comprehensive summary of God's providential care of the present world:

His unconditional covenant takes into account the universal and inevitable reality of human sinfulness. This earth will not be torn down until it is ultimately consumed by fire, whereupon it will be replaced by a new cosmos (2 Peter 3:10-13). God's providential preservation of all life throughout the span of human life until the final eschaton is known as God's "common grace"—the Creator's indiscriminate goodwill by which "he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matt. 5:45).

Many people waste time and emotional energy worrying about the earth's destruction from various disasters, such as a recurrent big bang, and an asteroid disturbing the earth's orbit, or a life-annihilating thermonuclear war. They should not. The earth will be here until Jesus comes again.¹³

Meanwhile, the covenant of grace is bilateral inasmuch as it requires the obedience of believers while God sovereignly executes his saving grace to the elect. However, the covenant of common grace is unilateral, for God promises his provision to provide a stable environment for both the elect and reprobate until the final judgment comes, which is in no way contingent upon a faithful or obedient human stipulation. As such, when God renewed the covenant of common grace after the Noahic flood, he promised *unilaterally* that he would never again use the flood to judge the world (Gen 9:11-15).

3.2. The Distinction between Clean and Unclean Animals

Because God created man in his own image, he also issued to him the original cultural mandate—that is, God declared that man shall have "dominion over" the creatures of the earth as a vicegerent. In possessing and exercising this dominion, man as image-bearer of God was to give all glory and honor to his Lord and Great King (Gen 1:26-30).

13. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 291-92.

After recreating the world (renewing it) by means of the Noahic flood, God blessed Noah and his sons and issued a new cultural mandate, namely that they were to have dominion over the newly created world (Gen 9:1-7). It is striking that God ordered the new cultural mandate according to the principle of the covenant of common grace, something absent in the original cultural mandate as given in Genesis 1:26-30. Consequently, a proper interpretation of the new cultural mandate within the context of the Noahic covenant of common grace, along with the implications of that mandate, is vitally important not only for a proper perspective on the subsequent redemptive history, but also for a biblical worldview in the present world.

Meanwhile, Yahweh had established a distinction between clean and unclean animals under the prediluvian Noahic covenant before Noah and his covenant family, along with the animals and birds, entered the Ark (Gen. 7:2). God instituted the distinction between clean and unclean animals, something he had not done earlier, in that animal sacrifice on the altar possessed a redemptive typological meaning and significance.¹⁴

Most importantly, God made this distinction in the process of forming the theocratic kingdom by means of the Ark. Interestingly, Yahweh commanded Noah to take “seven pairs of all clean animals” (הַטְּהוֹרֹת שְׁבַע שְׁבַע כָּל הַבְּהֵמָה) both male and female while he commanded Noah to take pairs of unclean animals into the Ark (Gen. 7:2). In addition, he ordered Noah to take “seven pairs of the birds of the heavens” (שְׁבַע עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם שְׁבַע) both male and female:

Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. *Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals* [הַטְּהוֹרֹת תִּקַּח-לְךָ שְׁבַע שְׁבַע מִכָּל הַבְּהֵמָה], the male and his mate, and *a pair of the animals that are not clean* [שְׁנַיִם וּמִן-הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא טְהוֹרֹת הוּא], the male and his mate, and *seven pairs of the birds of the heavens* [שְׁבַע שְׁבַע מִעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם] also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth” (Gen 7:1-3).

Indeed, Yahweh planned and envisioned that world history and life on the earth would continue after the Noahic flood. The kingdom of God, resident in the Ark, being a theocratic kingdom, was a typological kingdom. As such, it would fade away following the flood. Thereupon, animal sacrifice on the altar would be renewed, yet this sacrifice required the use of clean animals alone, not unclean ani-

14. For a discussion of the distinction between clean and unclean animals, and its biblical theological significance in redemptive history, see Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 254-56.

mals. This is the reason why Yahweh ordered Noah to take “seven pairs of all clean animals” along with “seven pairs of the birds of the heavens.” But only “a pair of the animals” was sufficient as a means of reproduction among the unclean animals inasmuch as unclean animals were not permitted to be sacrificed on the altar when blood sacrifice was resumed following the flood.

In fact, when the flood was over, Noah and his covenant family along with the animals and birds, came out from the Ark in order to offer burnt offerings on the altar, sacrificing “some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird.” Here we find the biblical-theological rationale for the divine command to Noah to take seven pairs of clean animals and birds rather than one pair only (Gen 8:20-22).

In the postdiluvian Noahic covenant, God permitted the consumption of animals, without making a distinction between clean and unclean animals. This is the sign that the theocratic kingdom as residing in the Ark was concluded, and the new world order begins in the resumption of the covenant as a covenant inclusive of common grace. It is interesting to note that in the beginning, with Adam and Eve, God ordained the consumption of vegetables and fruits. However, it seems apparent that in the beginning God was simply silent about whether human beings should consume animal meats. Most certainly, in the Garden of Eden God had given plants and fruits as food for Adam and Eve while green plants were given as food for every animal and birds:

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so (Gen 1: 28-30).

Verse 28 is the *textus classicus* for the divine cultural mandate. God is the Great King, and man, as the vicegerent, is to act on God’s behalf and for his glory in caring for the creation. The language of eating is absent in verse 28. Instead, God here uses the language of ruling, telling Adam that he is to “have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing” on the earth. The idea of dominion “over every living thing” on the earth embraces ruling as God’s vicegerent, but also entails the right to eat or consume them.

While God only formally permitted, for the first time and explicitly, the eating of “every living thing” in the postdiluvian Noahic covenant,¹⁵ this does not mean that God prohibited eating animal flesh before the postdiluvian Noahic covenant. And although God allowed the consuming of animal flesh, without making any distinction between clean and unclean animals, he specifically stipulated that the blood was not to be consumed. This stipulation aims to keep a proper regard for sacrifices, for the blood from animal sacrifices on the altar was a precursor of the final sacrifice to come in the form of the new covenant in Christ’s blood. In that light, the prohibition of eating the blood of animals was related to the ceremonial law, which was centered on animal sacrifice, typifying the blood of Jesus, as the blood of the New Covenant, who fulfilled the ceremonial law in the Old Testament.

In the Genesis narrative, we read that after Noah offered an animal for sacrifice on the altar, God blessed him and his family. God reissued the cultural mandate to be fruitful to multiply, and to subdue the earth. This cultural mandate was not intended that humans exploit but exercise stewardship over the creation, acting as God’s servants and vicegerents. The cultural mandate, issued in the postdiluvian Noahic covenant, parallels the original cultural mandate that God gave in Genesis 1:28. Moreover, God pronounced the fear and dread of “every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens,” every creeping animal, and “all the fish of the sea.” God, canceling a distinction between clean and unclean animals, permitted eating “every moving thing” (כָּל־רֹמֵשׁ), which includes animal, birds, and fish:

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them. “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon

15. Kline’s analysis is helpful here. Kline argues that God, from the beginning of his creation, permitted man to consume animals, although there is no explicit mention of this in the original account of creation: “Moreover, there is a special literary purpose in the reference to the permission for the use of plants for food in Genesis 1:29, namely to prepare for the exceptional stipulation in Genesis 2:16, 17 prohibiting the use of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. These considerations show how unwarranted is the assumption that the silence of this passage concerning man’s use of animal flesh as food must be intended as a prohibition of such.... If Genesis 9:3 were interpreted as simply permitting the eating of meat as well as vegetables, it would, in any case, not be the first such authorization even in the postlapsarian period, judging from Genesis 4:4 (cf. 3:21). However, what Genesis 9:3 actually authorized was the eating of all kinds of meats, thus removing the prohibition against the eating of unclean animals that had been instituted for Noah’s family within the special symbolic situation in the ark-kingdom. Instead of posing a problem for our thesis, Genesis 9:3 is another argument for it. For by its illusion to an earlier situation where the eating of meat had been temporarily restricted to the flesh of clean animals, this passage discloses the fact that the eating of meat had been permitted all along and was not a privilege first granted after the Deluge” (Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 55).

every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. *Every moving thing* [כָּל־רֹמֵשׁ] that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything” (Gen 9:1-3).¹⁶

In his exposition of Genesis 9:3, Calvin notes that God permitted the consumption of animals from the beginning, that is, from the original creation. Calvin argues that the institution of animal sacrifices to God and the divine permission “to kill wild beasts” in order to make “garments and tents” prior to the deluge show the biblical evidence in support of this view.

The Lord proceeds further, and grants animals for food to men, that they may eat their flesh. And because Moses now first relates that this right was given to men, nearly all commentators infer, that it was not lawful for man to eat flesh before the deluge, but that the natural fruits of the earth were his only food. But the argument is not sufficiently firm. For I hold to this principle; that God here does not bestow on men more than he had previously given, but only restores what had been taken away, that they might again enter on the possession of those good things from which they had been excluded. For since they had before offered sacrifices to God, and were also permitted to kill wild beasts, from the hides and skins of which, they might make for themselves garments and tents, I do not see what obligation should prevent them from the eating of flesh.¹⁷

Interpreting Genesis 9:3, Wenham remains uncertain whether God permitted the consumption of unclean animals as well:

“That is alive” precludes the consumption of animals that have died of natural causes (cf. Lev 11:40; Deut 14:21). Whether this permission to eat meat meant that Noah could eat unclean as well as clean creatures is uncertain. The silence of the text on this issue is usually taken to mean that he was not restricted just to clean creatures. However, the fre-

16. From the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, the consumption of animals was allowed by God. Some scholars argue, however, that this began only after the flood, based upon the description of Genesis 9:3. As a representative of this view, Waltke describes it as follows: “Their rule is further assisted by God’s placing the fear of humans in all other living creatures (9:2) and his holding the whole animal kingdom accountable for the death of any of those who are the image of God. Moreover, the custodians of the earth may now eat animals, but not wantonly—they must not eat their lifeblood” (Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 296-297).

17. Calvin, *The Book of Genesis*, 9:3.

quent mention of the difference between clean and unclean animals elsewhere in the story makes it problematic to assert that total freedom is being given here (7:2, 8; 8:20).¹⁸

Here Wenham bypasses and undermines the importance of making the distinction between clean and unclean animals in Genesis 7:2, 8 and 8:20. It is important to remember that those distinctions were part of the formation of the Noahic theocratic kingdom, which God did away with after the flood. So when God permitted the consumption of animal flesh, he did not observe the distinction between clean and unclean animals made earlier when the Noahic covenant community entered the Ark, the distinction here being part of the formation (a prefiguration) of that theocratic kingdom. Following the flood, the Noahic covenant community, along with the animals, emerged from the Ark. In doing so, the kingdom of God as a theocratic kingdom faded away; and, likewise, the distinction between clean and unclean animals ceased. And so we see that God, when he permitted the consumption of animals, did not make a distinction between clean and unclean. He simply said, “every moving thing that lives shall be food for you.” The distinction between clean and unclean animals, then, seems to be closely related with the formation of the theocratic kingdom which was foreshadowed in the Noahic Ark. This subsequently came to full reality in the covenant community of Israel in the promised land.

Many years after the flood, God made the Sinaitic covenant with Israel, which inaugurated the theocratic kingdom of Israel. And Israel, being the embodiment of the theocratic kingdom, eventually entered into the promised land after forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Once more, now following the prescriptions of the Sinaitic covenant, God distinguished between clean and unclean animals, alluding to the time of the Ark under the Noahic economy prior to the formation of the theocratic kingdom. However, under the Sinaitic covenant God now described clean and unclean animals in greater detail; and he specifically named unclean animals, forbidding the consuming of animals under the unclean designation (see Lev. 11:1-47; Deut. 14:3-21). At the end of the analysis of the distinction between clean and unclean animals, such dietary rules are summarized as follows: “This is the law about beast and bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms on the ground, to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean [וְהָרַחֵק בֵּין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטָּהוֹר] and the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten” (Lev 11:46-47).

The theocratic kingdom becomes obsolete with the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, the new covenant is inaugurated. Indeed, Pentecost is a di-

18. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 192-93.

vine sign that the gospel or the Good News should be preached to all nations, reaching out beyond the boundaries of the promised land. The church of the new covenant was formed and expanded through the evangelical endeavors of the disciples of Jesus and believers from Jerusalem to other regions. The Sinaitic covenant, thus, was dissolved with the inauguration of the new covenant—the decisive termination of the Sinaitic covenant being realized in AD 70 with the destruction of the temple and the fall of Jerusalem through God’s covenant lawsuit against the unfaithful covenant community of Israel. The inauguration of the new covenant and the termination of the Sinaitic covenant included the obsolescence of the distinction between clean and unclean animals, as well as between clean and unclean people. This explains why God showed two different visions in relation to the abrogation of the distinction between clean and unclean people, as well as the distinction between clean and unclean animals—one to Cornelius and another to Peter (Acts 10:1-48).

As we already explained, God prohibited the consumption of unclean animals to the covenant community of Israel under the Sinaitic covenant. Peter followed the traditional observation of this food law, not consuming unclean animals as defined and commanded in Leviticus 11:1-47. So, initially, Peter did not understand why God commanded him through a vision to consume unclean animals. God responded to Peter that the distinction between clean and unclean animals has ceased and is now invalid. The implication is that the distinction between clean and unclean animals, along with the distinction between clean and unclean people, Jews and Gentiles, is likewise terminated with the new covenant.

The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; Kill and eat.” But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; *for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.*” And the voice came to him again a second time, “*What God has made clean, do not call common.*” This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven (Acts 10:9-16).¹⁹

19. The followers of Judaism and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church still maintain the distinction between clean and unclean animals, regulated as dietary laws under the Sinaitic covenant. In a word, they hold to this position because they fail to read the dietary laws in light of the progress of redemptive history.

Similarly, although God originally made a distinction between clean and unclean animals in the formation of the theocratic kingdom, i.e., in the Ark, after the flood the theocratic kingdom in the Ark ceased, along with the distinction between clean and unclean animals. For with the postdiluvian Noahic covenant, God renewed the covenant of common grace and also permitted the consumption of animals, fish, and birds—without any distinction between clean and unclean. However, with the formation of the theocratic kingdom of Israel under Moses, God resumed the distinction between clean and unclean animals, permitting his people only to consume clean animals. Subsequently, with the inauguration of the new covenant and the termination of the theocratic kingdom, God permanently obviated both the distinction between clean and unclean animals and the distinction between clean and unclean people, Jews and Gentiles.

3.3. The Prohibition of Eating Animal Blood

After Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, the human race began its pilgrimage into the original, now fallen world. In doing so, the Lord directed the covenant community to worship him at the altar. We find the first explicit example of altar worship with Cain and Abel. Interestingly, Yahweh rejected Cain's offering of "the fruit of the ground" while he accepted Abel's offering of "the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions" (Gen 4:1-7). The altar worship here in evidence suggests that Yahweh had encouraged or sanctioned it, so that the sacrifice of animals commences at this early stage of the human race. Perhaps it was during this period that the Lord also informed his covenant family not to consume animal blood, which seems to carry the meaning of atonement and redemption.

In Genesis 9:4, God prohibits eating animal blood. This prohibition appears to be related to the earthly altar. It is interesting to note that though God abrogated the distinction between clean and unclean animals in the postdiluvian Noahic covenant, nonetheless, he stipulates that animal blood not be consumed. The reason for this, at least as it comes to clarity in redemptive history, appears to be that animal blood, sacrificed on the earthly altar, prefigures and signifies the blood of the new covenant in Christ's blood.²⁰

Later on, Yahweh will once more command the covenant community, this time Israel, not to consume animal blood, encapsulating that command within the ceremonial law of the Sinaitic covenant (Lev 17:10-16). Indeed, God declares that those who violate the regulation of the ceremonial law regarding the consumption of animal blood would be cut off. In a word, the violator would face capital punishment. Moreover, the prohibition to consume animal blood applied

20. For a comprehensive discussion of the relation between the prohibition of eating animal blood and the earthly altar, see Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 254-60.

not only to the covenant community of Israel, under the Sinaitic covenant it also applied to “strangers who sojourn among them”:

If any one of the house of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them eats any blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood. Any one also of the people of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who takes in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. For the life of every creature is its blood: its blood is its life. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off (Lev 17: 10-14).

The prohibition of eating animal blood was temporary, not permanent. It was applicable as long as the earthly altar worship continued. With the new covenant, the mediator of that covenant offered himself as the definitive sacrifice unto the complete remission of sin. And with that definitive sacrifice, animal sacrifice on an earthly altar became obsolete, for the shadow vanishes with the arrival of the reality. In addition, the prohibition of eating animal blood was likewise obviated within the new covenant community.

In the history of the early church, the question of eating blood was addressed at the Jerusalem Council (about AD 48 or 49). This is recorded for us in Acts 15. Some of the Pharisaic Christians insisted that the Gentile Christians submit themselves to the entirety of the Mosaic laws, including circumcision, if they were to be reckoned righteous and enjoy salvation (Acts 15:1-5). In the midst of the discussion, Peter argued that God has removed the barrier between the Jews and the Gentiles in Jesus Christ. He insisted that salvation does not lie in obedience to the Mosaic law, including the law of circumcision; rather, salvation is purely a matter of God’s grace in Jesus Christ. “But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus just as they will” (Acts 15:11).

Subsequently at this Council, James proposed that a letter be drafted, to be sent to the church at Antioch. This letter, among other things, addressed the question regarding abstaining from animal blood:

Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them *to ab-*

stain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from blood. For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues (Acts 15:19-21).

James' proposal was accepted. The apostles and the elders chose Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas along with Paul and Barnabas to send the Jerusalem Council's letter to the Gentile believers in the Antioch Church. The Jerusalem Council's letter also included the commandment to abstain from animal blood.

We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that *you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality.* If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell (Acts 15:27-29).

It is important to remember that the Jerusalem Council's decision regarding abstinence from animal blood is not unrelated to the earthly altar that still existed at the temple in Jerusalem. Although it immediately became obsolete with the rending of the veil of the temple at Jesus' death (see Matt. 27:51), the temple and the sacrifices continued until AD 70 when the city and temple were destroyed by the Romans. With the destruction of the temple, the rule of abstinence from eating animal blood within the covenant community was permanently lifted as well.

4. The Institution of Capital Punishment

Next we consider how God instituted capital punishment within the historical context of the recovery of the covenant of common grace. God prohibited the killing of man, for man was created in "the image of God," which shows us that man is distinct from animals precisely in this way. The institution of capital punishment in connection with the recovery of the covenant of common grace is apt since capital punishment served to safeguard society from lawbreakers and violent persons. The aim, in part, was to secure a stable environment in which human life could flourish and proceed to its God-ordained goal:

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is its blood. And for your life-blood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckon-

ing for the life of man. ‘Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image’ (Gen 9:3-6).²¹

With Christ’s arrival and his redemptive work of fulfillment, we discover that we enter into a new epoch in God’s saving plan, for now the salvific work embarks upon the path that includes all nations, which are to be the Lord’s heritage. This is the new conquest. In his Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:1-7:29), Jesus proclaims the message of the church’s eschatological mission under the new covenant, for it was a proclamation of the inauguration of the new era of God’s mission to the world. The world of this Joshua (Jesus) stands in marked contrast to the Old Testament Joshua of the first conquest.

When the Israelites entered the promised land under Joshua, God commanded them to destroy their enemies entirely, inclusive of women and children and livestock. He commanded them to wage holy war in the form of *cherem* (חֵרֶם) warfare, which signified things devoted to the Lord totally for destruction. But, with the coming of Jesus, God’s people now engage in a different sort of warfare—no longer wielding a sword of steel but now wielding the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. That Word is the gospel of Jesus Christ; and that gospel spreads out from the land of promise to all lands and nations. Thus we see a grand reversal taking place, for now believers are to go to the nations, enduring persecution, and make disciples from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. The idea of total destruction, that is *חֵרֶם*, gives way to love for the lost. This explains why Jesus presses the command to love one’s neighbor to include even enemies: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” It is a perfectly suitable message to believers in the context of church’s eschatological mission and ministry under the new covenant in the last days.

You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matt 5:43-45).

In Jesus’ mind, when he delivered the Sermon on the Mount, he already envisioned the eschatological mission of the church, which would be proceed after his death and resurrection, and after Pente-

21. In light of Genesis 9:3-6 and arguing in support of the institution and execution of capital punishment in the case of an active manslayer, as exercised by the state, until Parousia, see Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 250-253; Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 115-25; and Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 303-304.

cost. That mission would be progressively fulfilled and most certainly fulfilled through the work of the Holy Spirit. The covenant community of the church, under the new covenant, would be his instrument. But Jesus' message regarding the eschatological mission of the church does not mean the abrogation or a discarding of the state's right to exercise capital punishment, as warranted by the postdiluvian Noahic covenant. Jesus' message may not be understood as entailing a kind of political ideal of pacifism. In other words, Jesus was not advocating pacifism and was not himself a pacifist. The mission of the church, as a realm of the spiritual kingdom, is to practice unconditional love as Jesus taught us to love even our enemies; and this is part of the ministry of gospel in the labor of missionary outreach.

However, the state, as a realm of the political kingdom, is not an institution of God's special grace; rather, it is an instrument of common grace. Thus, the primary task of the state is to execute divine justice and to protect the citizens under its care, providing for the wellbeing of society and securing the freedom to worship God. Because the Roman Empire was in many ways a cruel regime in the first century to non-citizens, which meant many Jews and Christians, most first-century Jews were awaiting the coming of the Messianic earthly kingdom, for the Messiah was understood as one who would throw off the Roman tyranny and establish a kingdom of justice. In that light we find the proponents of Pharisaic Judaism and the Herodians asking Jesus the question whether they should pay "taxes to Caesar or not." Jesus' reply was that they should "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." The ensuing dialogue among Jesus, the Pharisees, and the Herodians is important because it reveals that Jesus' ideal was not the establishment of the earthly Messianic kingdom in the form as conceived by so many first-century Jews.

Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "*Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*" When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away (Matt 22:15-22).²²

22. Cf. Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26.

The dialogue here reveals, at least indirectly, that Jesus made an important distinction between church and state, which was already anticipated, though obscurely, in the postdiluvian Noahic covenant with its reestablishment of doctrine of common grace.

With the recovery of the covenant of common grace, God allowed the government to be armed with the sword for the punishment of evildoers, even sanctioning capital punishment in order to protect its citizens and to secure the wellbeing of the state. As Jesus properly distinguished church and state, the apostles adopted this distinction after his pattern. In this milieu, Paul explains the role of state, being an expression of common grace and ordained by God, to include the exercise of justice, even wielding the sword to punish evildoers. In Romans 13 the apostle clearly distinguishes between church and state:

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. *For he is the servant of God, and an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.* Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience (Rom 13:1-5).²³

In that sense, capital punishment, instituted in the postdiluvian Noahic covenant as an arm of the state, is sanctioned by God. According to the apostle Paul, capital punishment continues within the political realm of the state as its legitimate responsibility, even while the new covenant in Christ's blood has been inaugurated. Capital punishment, then, should not be abolished or ignored for the remaining duration of human history this side of Christ's return. It remains a legitimate instrument placed in the hands of the state.

5. Conclusion

In examining the Noahic covenant we have argued for Noahic covenants, differentiating a prediluvian Noahic covenant and a postdilu-

23. Peter agrees with Paul, maintaining that believers must obey the civil authorities, who themselves are under the Lordship of Jesus Christ: "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good" (1 Pet 2:13-14).

vian Noahic covenant. In doing so, we have endeavored on the one hand to view the prediluvian Noahic covenant in light of the covenant of grace, which is a covenant thoroughly redemptive in nature; on the other hand, we have sought to demonstrate that the postdiluvian Noahic covenant is a renewal or recovery of the covenant of common grace, which was inaugurated in Genesis 3:16-19, though temporarily abrogated during the time of the flood. In this way, we have argued that the postdiluvian Noahic covenant provides the groundwork for and the possibility of a continuing history of the world, and this world history thus proceeds onward until the day of the final judgment.

We have identified the prediluvian Noahic covenant as a covenant of royal grant inasmuch as God bestowed and granted the kingdom of God in the form of the Ark—Noah having fulfilled the task of building it. In this way Noah acted as God's warrior in a corrupt world. The kingdom of God, in the form of the Ark, may in this sense be regarded as a precursor to the eternal kingdom of God in heaven.

While we have identified the postdiluvian Noahic covenant as bringing about the renewal of common grace, we have also acknowledged that there is a redemptive-historical significance to God making a distinction between clean and unclean animals in placing Noah and his family in the Ark, which functioned as a prefiguration of the theocratic kingdom to come later, i.e., under the Mosaic economy. From this perspective, we see that God's command to eat "every living thing," a command issued in the historical context of the postdiluvian Noahic covenant, is not the first time God allowed the consumption of animal flesh. On the contrary, God's command regarding the consumption of animal flesh, without distinction between clean and unclean, exhibits what shall apply following the period of the Mosaic economy and the dietary regulations that were part of that economy. The permission to eat "every living thing" coincides with the renewed covenant of common grace as part of the postdiluvian Noahic covenant. Moreover, as part of the postdiluvian period God ordained capital punishment for murderers—which is for the preservation of order and the wellbeing of society. This too is reflective of the renewal of a common grace of God at work in this present, corrupted world.