An Everlasting Covenant
Gen 9:8-17
SS Lesson for 09/22/2013

Devotional Scripture: Isa 54:9-14

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson examines how God established an **Everlasting Covenant** with Noah and all people, who would be his descendants. The **study's aim** is to build confidence in God and His Word especially in God's faithfulness. The **study's application** is to live each day in faith that God is in control and will keep His promises.

**Key Verse:** Gen 9:11

*11 Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.*

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

That this covenant (verses 9, 11-13, 15-17) is cosmic and universal (every living creature, vv. 10 [twice], 12; all living creatures, vv. 15-16; all life, vv. 11, 15, 17) is seen from the rainbow God gave as a sign (vv. 12-13, 17). When it arches over the horizon after a rainfall it is an all-embracing sign of God’s faithfulness to His work of grace. Signs remind participants in a covenant to keep the stipulations. In the rainbow God, who is omniscient, perpetually reminds Himself (repeated in vv. 15-16) never to flood the whole world again (vv. 11, 15). Since no rain had fallen before the Flood (2:5), no rainbow was needed. Now when clouds clear, light refraction shows this marvelous display. The rainbow arcs like a battle bow hung against the clouds. (The Heb. word for rainbow, qešet, is also the word for a battle bow.) Elsewhere in the Old Testament God referred to judgment storms by using terms for bows and arrows. The bow is now “put away,” hung in place by the clouds, suggesting that the “battle,” the storm, is over. Thus the rainbow speaks of peace. In the ancient Near East, covenant treaties were made after wars as a step toward embarking on peace. Similarly God, after judging sin, made a covenant of peace. Israel certainly would be strengthened to see in the skies again and again God’s pledge that He keeps His promise of grace. But certainly it also reminded the faithful in Israel that God’s judgment was completed for that age. Judgment will come once again in the end times (Zech. 14:1-3; Rev. 19:15) before there can be complete millennial peace and rest (Rev. 20:6). So Genesis 9:8-17 anticipates that in the end Israel will beat her swords into plowshares (Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3). In the meantime life goes on in a new order; the divine will of forbearance, “common grace,” is at work until that end.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

The key verse text is a beautiful promise God made to Noah after the catastrophic Flood that He used to wipe out all of mankind except for Noah and his family. Noah was a man who consistently obeyed God. The Bible describes Noah before the Flood as “a just man and perfect in his generations” (Gen. 6:9). In obedience to God's command, Noah built an ark, which God used to protect him and his family from the Flood. When the waters had receded and everyone was able to leave the ark, Noah offered a sacrifice to God. God was very pleased with this humble sacrifice: "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour" (Gen. 8:21). In response, God made a promise to never again destroy mankind with a flood. God further established this promise by setting a rainbow in the sky (9:13). The rainbow serves as a reminder that God's promise to Noah is solid and trustworthy. Notice how important consistent obedience is in the eyes of God. While we may not witness miraculous intervention like that Noah experienced, we can expect God to be faithful to help us and bless us in the midst of life's trials as we turn to Him in obedience. The word "covenant" in this verse indicates a lasting and binding promise. God is a faithful God, and He will never turn back on this promise—or on any of His other ones. Notice what the Bible says about the promise of our salvation in Christ: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). How wonderful that we have a God who cannot lie! While other people may betray us or hurt us, we have a God who will never retract His blessed promises. Consider all the promises in Scripture. God promises never to leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). He promises to be with us wherever we go (Matt. 28:20). He also promises to provide everything we need (6:33). In our walk with Christ, it is
vitaly important that we recognize and appreciate God for these promises and the blessings they provide. Certainly, God did not give us promises to squander them on self-indulgence but rather so that we might come to know and appreciate Him better. Our attitude should be like that of the psalmist in Psalm 103:2: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Psalm 103 is a beautiful celebration of all that God has accomplished, and such a celebration of what God has done in the past should compel us to have faith in Him for what He is going to accomplish in the future. Like the psalmist and like Noah, we should live lives of sacrifice and praise. When we observe all that God has promised us and blessed us with, we must tear down our selfishness and pride. Nothing we have was given to us by our own merits. God’s promises are amazing blessings that we do not deserve. Perhaps the greatest promise that God has made concerns salvation. Indeed, "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). We are so unworthy of this gift of salvation! Let us never cease to praise Him for the most blessed gift and promise He could ever give—salvation in Christ (cf. II Cor. 9:15).

Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The concept of the outline of the lesson was adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary and from the points revealed by the study of the Scriptural text.

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Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Noah received a direct communication from the Lord about a day of judgment—a judgment that was to be carried out by means of a flood. Noah was also told how to prepare for that day, eventually being given an exact timetable as to when God’s judgment would be carried out (Genesis 7:4). What made Noah worthy of this honor was the fact that he "was a righteous man, ... and he walked faithfully with God" (6:9). Noah obeyed God’s commands fully (6:22; 7:5). While we do not know the time of the coming, final Judgment Day (and we should be extremely suspicious of anyone who claims to know), we do know what God’s expectations of us are. They are essentially what he has required from his people since day one and what he required from Noah—obedience. Last week’s lesson text focused on the aftermath of God’s judgment by means of the great flood. God brought the flood on the world because of the level of corruption and depravity that those made in his image had reached (Genesis 6:5). The exception to this spiritual quagmire was Noah, who "found favor in the eyes of the Lord" (v. 8). God commanded Noah to build an ark, which provided deliverance from the flood for him, his sons, their wives (1 Peter 3:20), and those creatures that Noah was told to take aboard. The subsequent rains lasted 40 days and nights (Genesis 7:12). Over a year passed from the time the rains began until the earth dried out after the waters receded (comparing 7:11 with 8:13, 14). The Lord then brought forth from the ark Noah, his family, and the living creatures that had been given refuge there. Noah built an altar to the Lord and offered sacrifices (8:20). The Lord responded with a promise that he would never again destroy all living creatures as he had done by means of the flood (vv. 21, 22). The Lord’s next words, part of today’s printed text, were directed specifically to Noah and his sons.
From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Behind the text of our lesson is the universal Flood recorded in Genesis (chaps. 6—8). That this Flood was universal in scope (that is, it covered the entire earth) is attested to by the fossils and fossil fuels found on all continents as well as on the ocean floors. It is also shown in the field of geology in the sedimentary layers of rock found all over the earth. Much of this evidence has been wrongly interpreted to support evolution. It may have never rained before the Flood. There is a theory that before the Flood there was a water-vapor and possibly ice canopy surrounding the earth above, so that real greenhouse conditions were established. This could account for the vast amount of plant material that was compressed and converted into coal. There is not enough vegetation on earth at the present time to create coal in similar quantities. To create the Flood, the "fountains of the great deep [were] broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Gen. 7:11). As we may all be aware, water covers about three-quarters of the earth now, and there are vast canyons in the deepest parts of the ocean. There are also vast quantities of water trapped as ice in the polar ice caps. With a relatively small rearrangement of the deeper sea levels and the polar ice caps, there would be more than enough water on the earth to cover all the highest mountains. A flood of this extent is entirely possible from what we already know. Also, remember that we are referring to a miracle by Almighty God creating the Flood. So we need not have any doubt about the account found in Scripture.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

**The Covenant Bond (Gen 9:8-11)**

8 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying:
9 "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you,
10 and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all
10 that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth.
11 Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never
again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

**Bond with humans (8-9)**

*Bond with humans motivated by compassion (Isa 54:8-10)*

8 In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the Lord your Redeemer. 9 "To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. 10 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

*Bond with humans through Jesus becoming human (Rom 1:2-4)*

2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Bond with humans so that Satan's slavery could be destroyed (Heb 2:14-18)*

14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. 17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a
merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

_Bond with humans because God is sovereign_ (2 Sam 7:18-19)

"Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? 19 And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign Lord?

**Bond with animals (10)**

_Bond with animals because God is good to all He created (Ps 145:9)_

9 The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

_Bond with animals because He knows they need food (Matt 6:26)_

26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

_Bond with animals because God can provide better than man (Matt 6:28-29)_

28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

_Bond with animals because they look to God to satisfy them (Ps 104:25-29)_

25 There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number — living things both large and small. 26 There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there. 27 These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. 28 When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. 29 When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.

_Bond components (11)_

**Forty days of flood (Gen 7:17-21)**

17 For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. 18 The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. 19 They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. 20 The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet. 21 Every living thing that moved on the earth perished — birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind.

**God's promise (Gen 8:21-22)**

21 The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. 22 "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

**God's patience (2 Peter 3:5-9)**

5 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. 6 By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. 7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a
thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as
some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to
repentance.

**God’s power (Ps 104:6-9)**

6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. 7 But at your
rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; 8 they flowed over the mountains,
they went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. 9 You set a boundary they cannot
cross; never again will they cover the earth.

**Seven Lessons Learned from the Flood (from Explore the Book by J Sidlow Baxter)**

Noah and those who were saved with him in the Ark are remarkably typical of Christian
believers, and of the
Church as a whole, in **seven outstanding ways**. (See Gen 6-9)

1. **Chosen.**

They were made party to a covenant (6:18). This covenant, in which they were chosen to salvation, was
made 120 years before the Flood came, as it would seem from chapter 6:3 with 6:8. Even so, Christian
believers are a chosen people." God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation" (2 Thess 2:13)." He
hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4).

2. **Called.**

The Ark was entered in response to a Divine call." The Lord said unto Noah: Come thou and all thy house
into the Ark" (Gen 7:1). Similarly, the true people of Christ, besides being eternally chosen in Him, are
brought into their vital union with Christ by a Divine call. Thus we read in Rom 13:30," Moreover, whom
He (God) did predestinate, them He also called." And in 1 Cor 1:9, we read," God is faithful, by whom ye
were called into the fellowship of His Son."

3. **Believers.**

Noah built the Ark, and entered it with his family, because he believed God (7:4 with 7:7). See also Heb
11 - "By faith Noah . . . prepared an Ark." So the people of Christ are distinctively believers. See Heb
10:39 - "We are of them who believe to the saving of the soul"; (and many other passages). Note: Noah's
faith made him obedient (Gen 6:22; 7:5). So is it with the Christian (1 Peter 1:22; Rom 16:26; etc.).
Noah's faith also brought him imputed righteousness (Heb 11:7 with Gen 7:1). So is it with the faith of the
Christian believer (Rom 5:1; 10:4).

4. **Separated.**

The Ark which effected salvation also involved separation. Noah was already separated from his wicked
generation, in the spirit and tenor of his life. His entering the Ark was the outward culmination of it.
Christians also are a separated people." They are not of the world" (John 17:16); "A people for God's own
possession" (1 Peter 2:9, Rv.); and accordingly we are exhorted to make our separation a practical and
obvious thing, - "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor 6:17).

5. **Sealed.**

Besides being told that "they went in" to the Ark, we are told that "the Lord shut him in" (Gen 7:16). Thus
were the occupants of the Ark inviolably sealed by God Himself unto the day of salvation after the Flood.
So are Christian believers sealed." After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise"
(Eph 1:13)." Ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph 4:30)." He which established us with you in
Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who also hath sealed us" (2 Cor 1:29.).
6. Risen.

The higher the Flood prevailed the more the Ark rose above it. When the guilty world was beneath the Flood of judgment and death, those in the Ark were risen above it and were alive! (Gen 7:17-19). Thus in a remarkable figure the Ark meant life out of death. This has its counterpart in the experience of the Christian. "The Ark was . . . the like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21). "Risen with Christ" (Col 3:1).

7. Rewarded.

They not only survived the Flood, they became the possessors of a new world (Gen 8:15-19). So is it to be with the redeemed in Christ." We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13). See also Rev 21:1-4. Note the outstanding facts about Noah's occupation of the new world:(1) Fragrant fellowship (8:20); (2) The "curse" stayed (8:21); (3) A perpetual covenant (9:12, etc.). Even so is it in the "new heaven and new earth" for which Christian believers look (Rev 7:15-17; 22:3-5, with 4:3).

The Covenant Sign (Gen 9:12-17)

12 And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:
13 I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.
14 It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud;
15 and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.
16 The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."
17 And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Sign of the rainbow (12-13)

Sign of the rainbow is God's faithful witness in the sky (Ps 89:35-37)

35 Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness — and I will not lie to David — 36 that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; 37 it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky."

Sign of the rainbow is a sign that God will do what He promised (Isa 38:7)

7 "This is the Lord's sign to you that the Lord will do what he has promised:

Sign of the rainbow should be a constant remembrance of God and His power (1 Cor 11:23-26)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Sign significance (14-15)

Significant because when we are sinful, God will remember His covenant (Lev 26:42-45)

42 I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. 43 For the land will be deserted by them and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them. They will pay for their sins because they rejected my laws and abhorred my
44 Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the Lord their God. 45 But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the Lord.”

**Significant because God is faithful in keeping His covenant of love (Deut 7:9)**

9 Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

**Significant because God is attentive to our prayers for the sake of His covenant (Ps 106:43-45)**

43 Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion and they wasted away in their sin. 44 But he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; 45 for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented.

**Significant because of God's unfailing love (Isa 54:8-10)**

8 In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the Lord your Redeemer. 9 "To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. 10 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

**Sign between God and all living creatures (16-17)**

**Sign of God's promises to all living creatures (Gen 8:20-21)**

20 Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. 21 The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

**Sign of God's covenant promises to all descendants (Gen 17:19)**

19 Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

**Sign of God's kindness and compassion to all creatures (Isa 54:8-10)**

8 In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the Lord your Redeemer. 9 "To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. 10 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

**Sign for all the other creation of God eagerly awaiting redemption (Rom 8:19-22)**

19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.
Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The months of April and November in 2011 were themselves the wettest Aprils and Novembers on record in Cincinnati. This weather pattern caused some parts of the U.S. to suffer greatly from floods and tornadoes. Skeptics may look at a promise of God such as that found in today's text and mockingly ask, "What covenant? Look, I don't care if the flood was worldwide or not; if God is in charge of the world, can't he keep a flood or a tornado from devastating whole towns and communities and disrupting the lives of millions of people? What good can possibly come by his letting such disasters occur?" Living in a fallen world—a world still under the curse of sin—can present followers of the Lord Jesus Christ with some very challenging questions. We know that ultimately God will bring about "a new heaven and a new earth" (2 Peter 3:13). But at times we may wonder why he doesn't step in and fix some of what's wrong with the earth we live in now. An important part of our witness occurs in the midst of the tragedies that are an inescapable part of life in a fallen world. We are able in such circumstances to show the difference our faith in Christ makes. This is not because we are exempt from tragedies or because life automatically gets better by turning to Jesus. Rather, it is because Christian faith gives us a unique perspective on the tragedies of this present world. The cross of Christ becomes our sign by which we view life (especially the difficult side) in a fallen world. Just as God used the tragedy of the cross to accomplish his purpose of providing salvation from sin, so he can use the disasters of this life for a higher, eternal purpose (Romans 8:28). We must remember that we have not had a clear message from God regarding any flood that has occurred since the days of Noah. Noah's flood is the only one specifically tied with the judgment of God. Current floods (and other disasters) can be situations in which Christians demonstrate in tangible ways the love of Christ to cynics. When we do, we allow these circumstances to testify to God's grace rather than his judgment.

Concluding Thought From Bob Deffinbaugh

From the series: Genesis: From Paradise to Patriarchs

God’s covenant with Noah and his descendants displays many of the characteristics of subsequent covenants which God had made with man. For this reason, we shall highlight some of the covenant’s more obvious features.

1. The Noahic Covenant was initiated and dictated by God. The sovereignty of God is clearly seen in this covenant. While some ancient covenants were the result of negotiation, this one was not. God initiated the covenant as an outward expression of His purpose revealed in Genesis 3:20-22. God dictated the terms of the covenant to Noah, and there was no discussion.

2. The Noahic Covenant was made with Noah and all successive generations: “And God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again will I make a flood to destroy all flesh.”’ (Genesis 9:12). This covenant will remain in force until the time when our Lord returns to the earth to cleanse it by fire (II Peter 3:10).

3. This is a universal covenant. While some covenants involve a small number, this particular covenant includes “all flesh.” That is, all living creatures, including man and animals:

4. The Noahic Covenant is an unconditional covenant. Some covenants were contingent upon both parties carrying out certain stipulations. Such was the case of the Mosaic covenant. If Israel kept the law of God, they would experience the blessings and prosperity of God. If not, they would be expelled from the land (Deuteronomy 28). The blessings of the Noahic covenant were not conditional. God would give regularity of seasons and would not destroy the earth by a flood simply because He said so. While certain commands were given to mankind in verses 1-7, these are not viewed as conditions to the covenant. They are technically not included as a part of the covenant.

5. This covenant was God’s promise never again to destroy the earth by a flood: “and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh” (Genesis 9:15). God will destroy the earth by fire
(II Peter 3:10), but only after salvation has been purchased by the Messiah and the elect are removed, even as Noah was protected from the wrath of God.

(6) The sign of the Noahic Covenant is the rainbow: Every covenant has its accompanying sign. The sign of the Abrahamic Covenant is circumcision (Genesis 17:15-27); that of the Mosaic Covenant is the observance of the Sabbath day (Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-17). The “sign” of the rainbow is appropriate. It consists of the reflection of the rays of the sun in the particles of moisture in the clouds. The water which destroyed the earth causes the rainbow. Also, the rainbow appears at the end of a storm. So this sign assures man that the storm of God’s wrath (in a flood) is over. Most interesting is the fact that the rainbow is not designed so much for man’s benefit (in this text, at least) but for God’s. God said that the rainbow would cause Him to remember His covenant with man. What a comfort to know that God’s faithfulness is our guarantee.

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Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. God graciously speaks to man and always for his benefit (Gen. 9:8; Heb. 1:1-3)
2. God’s concern and grace extend to all of His creation (Gen. 9:9-10)
3. God’s promises are gracious, clear, and trustworthy (Gen. 9:11; Num. 23:19)
4. Like the rainbow, signs of God’s grace and goodness are observable by all who would see them (Gen. 9:12-13)
5. God can never forget His promises (vss. 14-15)
6. We worship the One who made the promise, not the token of the promise (vss. 16-17)