

# GENESIS

## Chapter 9

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. 2 The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon 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. 3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. 5 And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. 6 “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. 7 And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it.” 8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 9 “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, 10 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. 11 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.” 12 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: 13 I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” 17 God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

9:1–7† At this new beginning, God renewed his original benediction (1:28) and his provision for man’s food (cf. v. 3; 1:29–30). But because God now appointed meat as a part of man’s food (v. 3), further divine provisions and stipulations are added (vv. 4–6). Yet God’s benediction dominates and encloses the whole (see v. 7). (CSB)

### Major Covenants in the Old Testament

COVENANTS	REFERENCE	TYPE	PARTICIPANT	DESCRIPTION
Noahic	Ge 9:8–17	Royal Grant	Made with “righteous” (6:9) Noah (and his descendants and every living thing on earth—all life that is subject to man’s jurisdiction)	An unconditional divine promise never to destroy all earthly life with some natural catastrophe; the covenant “sign” being the rainbow in the storm cloud
Abrahamic A	Ge 15:9–21	Royal (land) Grant	Made with “righteous” (his	An unconditional divine promise

<b>Abrahamic B</b>	Ge 17	Suzerain-vassal	faith was “credited to him as righteousness,” v. 6) Abram (and his descendants, v. 16) Made with Abraham as patriarchal head of his household	to fulfill the grant of the land; a self-maledictory oath symbolically enacted it (v. 17) A conditional divine pledge to be Abraham’s God and the God of his descendants (cf. “As for me,” v. 4; “As for you,” v. 9); the condition: total consecration to the Lord as symbolized by circumcision
<b>Sinaitic</b>	Ex 19–24	Suzerain-vassal	Made with Israel as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and as the people the Lord has redeemed from bondage to an earthly power	A conditional divine pledge to be Israel’s God (as her Protector and the Guarantor of her blessed destiny); the condition: Israel’s total consecration to the Lord as his people (his kingdom) who live by his rule and serve his purposes in history
<b>Phinehas</b>	Nu 25:10–31	Royal Grant	Made with the zealous priest Phinehas	An unconditional divine promise to maintain the family of Phinehas in a “lasting priesthood” (implicitly a pledge to Israel to provide her forever with a faithful priesthood)
<b>Davidic</b>	2Sa 7:5–16	Royal Grant	Made with faithful King David after his devotion to God as Israel’s king and the	An unconditional divine promise to establish and maintain the Davidic dynasty on

			Lord's anointed vassal had come to special expression (v. 2)	the throne of Israel (implicitly a pledge to Israel) to provide her forever with a godly king like David and through that dynasty to do for her what he had done through David—bring her into rest in the promised land (1Ki 4:20–21; 5:3–4)
<b>New</b>	Jer 31:31–34	Royal Grant	Promised to rebellious Israel as she is about to be expelled from the promised land in actualization of the most severe covenant curse (Lev 26:27–39; Dt 28:36–37, 45–68)	An unconditional divine promise to unfaithful Israel to forgive her sins and establish his relationship with her on a new basis by writing his law “on their hearts”—a covenant of pure grace

**Major Types of Royal Covenants/Treaties in the Ancient Near East**

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<b>Royal Grant (unconditional)</b> A king's grant (of land or some other benefit) to a loyal servant for faithful or exceptional service. The grant was normally perpetual and unconditional, but the servant's heirs benefited from it only as they continued their father's loyalty and service. (Cf. 1Sa 8:14; 22:7; 27:6; Est 8:1.)	<b>Parity</b> A covenant between equals, bringing them to mutual friendship or at least to mutual respect for each other's spheres and interests. Participants called each other “brothers.” (Cf. Ge 21:27; 26:31; 31:44–54; 1Ki 5:12; 15:19; 20:32–34; Am 1:9.)	<b>Suzerain-vassal (conditional)</b> A covenant regulating the relationship between a great king and one of his subject kings. The great king claimed absolute right of sovereignty, demanded total loyalty and service (the vassal must “love” his suzerain) and pledged protection of the subject's realm and dynasty, conditional on the vassal's faithfulness and loyalty to him. The vassal pledged absolute loyalty to his suzerain—whatever service his suzerain demanded—and exclusive reliance on the suzerain's protection. Participants called each other “lord” and “servant” or “father” and “son.” (Cf. Jos 9:6, 8; Eze 17:13–18; Hos
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12:1.)

Commitments made in these covenants were accompanied by self-maledictory oaths (made orally, ceremonially, or both). The gods were called upon to witness the covenants and implement the curses of the oaths if the covenants were violated.

**9:1** *be fruitful...multiply...fill* – What God blesses, He also enables. (TLSB)

**9:2** *fear and dread of you* – One stipulation of the blessing in Eden is missing here. Adam and Eve had once been given the divine mandate to subdue the earth, to rule over every living creature (1:28). God knew that to give imperfect creatures complete control of the created world would lead to all sorts of abuse. This lack of dominion over God’s creation did, however, put the human family in jeopardy. The animals were no longer subject to man, and they vastly outnumbered him. To make sure they would not exterminate the human race, God announced: “The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth.” (PBC)

*into your hand they are delivered* – God reaffirmed that mankind would rule over all creation, including the animals. (CSB)

The relationship of humans and animals would be different from that experienced by Adam at creation (2:18) and by Noah in the ark. People will have dominion to hunt or tame animals. (TLSB)

**9:3-4** Humans will eat animals. The Lord enacts dietary rules, which Moses later repeated and amplified (Lev. 11:1-3). The decreasing fruitfulness of the earth (3:17-19) perhaps made it necessary for the animals to serve this purpose. In extremely cold or arid regions, humans could not survive without animals for food. (TLSB)

**9:3** *Everything that lives shall be food for you* – Meat would now supplement mankind’s diet. (CSB)

While meat would now supplement human’s diet, only freshly killed animals were to be consumed. Although meat likely was eaten before the flood, now it may be eaten with divine sanction. Chemnitz: “The Fifth Commandment is not talking about beasts or birds or fish... Beasts were to be eaten...But he who beats a pack of animals to death sin against the Seventh Commandment. God has willed that, in the very act of killing, all cruelty is to be avoided” (LTh 2:408-409). (TLSB)

**9:4** *you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood.* † Lev 17:14 stresses the intimate relationship between blood and life by twice declaring that “the life of every creature is its blood.” Life is the precious and mysterious gift of God, and man is not to seek to preserve it or increase the life-force within him by eating “life” that is “in the blood” (Lev 17:11; 19:26; Dt. 12:23; 1Sa 14:34; Ac 15:20, 29; 21:25)—as many pagan peoples throughout history have thought they could do. (CSB)

Blood was regarded as the seat and soul of life. God’s people were not to emulate the pagan practice of eating blood. (TLSB)

**9:5** *for your lifeblood ... I will require a reckoning from every beast* – God himself is the great defender of human life (see 4:9–12), which is precious to him because man was created in his image (v. 6) and because man is the earthly representative and focal point of God’s kingdom. In

the theocracy (kingdom of God) established at Sinai, a domestic animal that had taken human life was to be stoned to death (Ex 21:28–32). (CSB)

Killing animals for food would be permissible, but not the killing of humans – by man or beast. God will demand an account. The passage is a clear proclamation that human life is different from animal life. (TLSB)

**9:6** *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed.* † Those guilty of premeditated murder were to be executed (see Ex 21:12–14; Nu 35:16–32; see also Ro 13:3–4; 1Pe 2:13–14). (CSB)

God uses human agents to punish evildoer, the beginning of court justice and capital punishment. (TLSB)

*God made man in his own image* – In killing a human being, a murderer demonstrates his contempt for God as well as for his fellowman. (CSB)

Murder strikes at humanity’s dignity and God’s majesty. (TLSB)

**9:7** More than a repetition of v. 1, this accompanies v. 6 as a basic ordinance that will be binding upon humankind as long as the earth stands. Cf Ps. 127-128. (TLSB)

**9:8** *and to his sons* – God included a word of assurance to future generations. (TLSB)

**9:9** *I establish my covenant.* † God sovereignly promised in this covenant to Noah, the new father of the human race, to Noah’s descendants and to all other living things never again to destroy man and the earth until his purposes for his creation are fully realized (“as long as the earth endures,” 8:22). For similar commitments by God see his covenants with Abram (15:18–20), Phinehas (Nu 25:10–13) and David (2Sa 7). See chart on “Major Covenants in the OT”. (CSB)

God’s covenants are unilateral; He obligates Himself to observe the terms of His own contract (here a reassurance of flood’s survivors after their fearsome experience). (TLSB)

God gave them that assurance in the most solemn and binding form of divine promise – by means of a covenant. Think of it! God actually obligated Himself to observe the terms of a solemn contract. (PBC)

But hadn’t God said that to Noah when he first came out of the ark? (8:21) Why should He repeat His promise? Luther points out that Noah and the members of this family must have loved in great trembling. The sense of the awesomeness of the year-long experience that had just gone through hadn’t left them. All around them was evidence of fearful destruction. God saw that these frail creatures of dust needed all the assurance He could give them. (PBC)

**9:10** *every living creature* – Animals also benefited from God’s covenant. (TLSB)

**9:11** *Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood.* A summary of the provisions of the Lord’s covenant with Noah—an eternal covenant, as seen in such words and phrases as “never again” (vv. 11,15), “for all generations to come” (v. 12) and “everlasting” (v. 16). (CSB)

Regions may be devastated; people and animals may be swept away by floods. But never again will a flood be universal. (TLSB)

**9:12** *sign* – A covenant sign was a visible seal and reminder of covenant commitments. Circumcision would become the sign of the covenant with Abraham (see 17:11), and the Sabbath would be the sign of the covenant with Israel at Sinai (see Ex 31:16–17). (CSB)

**9:13** *bow in the cloud* – Rain and the rainbow doubtless existed long before the time of Noah’s flood, but after the flood the rainbow took on new meaning as the sign of the Noahic covenant. (CSB)

When the marvelous rainbow appears, believers will recall with joy its God-given significance. Rainbows may not have existed until this time (AE 2:148).

In addition to assuring them with words that He would never send another flood, God gave them a visible sign as a seal of the truthfulness of His promise. (PBC)

**9:14** *bring clouds* – Perhaps a new occurrence as a result of atmospheric changes from the flood. (TLSB)

**9:15** *remember my covenant* – God will be faithful to the covenant He has made. (TLSB)

Hebrew is *zakar*. It means “to recall” or “keep in mind.” God could not forget His covenant with His people. When He “remembers” them, He actively works to keep His promise to protect and save them. (TLSB p. 843)

**9:16** *bow in the clouds* – Natural laws that produce rainbows were already in existence, but now they would work their giant wonders in the sky with particular significance. (TLSB)

*everlasting covenant* – While this covenant will last only until the end of time, it is also associated with God’s covenant relationship with His chosen people. (TLSB)

**9:17** *this is sign* – Sight of a magnificent rainbow may even have accompanied this summary statement. (TLSB)

**8:20–9:17** After the fearsome yearlong experience on the ark, God reassures Noah and his family that He will never again send a universal flood. As time would soon tell and continues to tell, no amount of amazing rescues and rainbow sightings can keep humankind, including God’s own people, from falling into sin. But God is faithful to His covenants, even when people are not. The message of every rainbow tells us He is faithful to His promise to provide a Savior. • O God, for Jesus’ sake, grant that every sighting of a rainbow may bring to mind Your promises of grace and mercy. Amen. (TLSB)

*Noah's Descendants*

**18** The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) **19** These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed. **20** Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. **21** He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. **22** And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. **23** Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. **24** When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, **25** he said, “Cursed be Canaan; a

**servant of servants shall he be to his brothers.” 26 He also said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. 27 May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.” 28 After the flood Noah lived 350 years. 29 All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.**

**9:18** *Ham...Canaan* – Because God’s chosen people would in due time possess Canaan, the origin of its early inhabitants is noted. This anticipates the story in vv. 21-22, where Ham acted as the father of Canaanites, known for their immorality. (TLSB)

**9:19** *dispersed* † Thus anticipating the table of nations (ch. 10) and the dispersion of the builders of the tower of Babel. (CSB)

**9:20** *man of the soil* – Noah, like his father Lamech (see 5:29), was a farmer. (CSB)

Noah returned to farming (5:29) for his livelihood. (TLSB)

**9:21** *When he drank wine and he became drunk* – The first reference to wine connects it with drunkenness. (CSB)

Scripture’s first reference to wine associates it with drunkenness and immodest behavior. (TLSB)

*lay uncovered in his tent.* † Excessive use of wine led to immodest behavior and to incest (see 19:30–35). (CSB)

Noah threw aside the garment that had covered him. (TLSB)

**9:22** *father of Canaan* – Mentioned here because Ham, in acting as he did, showed himself to be the true father of Canaan. (CSB)

*saw the nakedness of his father* – Expression and incident are confusing, perhaps due to modesty in the description. Hebrew expression could imply more than Ham seeing his father uncovered. At the very least, the incident had grave consequences for the family and Ham’s descendants. (TLSB)

*told his two brothers* – He broadcast, rather than covered, his father’s immodesty. (CSB)

**9:23** *faces were turned ... they did not see* – They wanted to avoid further disgrace to their father. (CSB)

Shem and Japheth took extra measures to avoid further disgrace to their father. (TLSB)

**9:24** *from his wine.* From the drunkenness caused by the wine. (CSB)

*knew* – Perhaps Noah remembered the event or wondered about the garment that covered him. (TLSB)

**9:25** *Cursed be Canaan!* † Ham’s son, Canaan, and his descendants were to be punished because they were going to be even worse than Ham (Lev 18:2–3, 6–30; Ex 20:5). (CSB)

Third pronouncement of a curse in Scripture (3:14-19; 4:11), a prediction of the future subjugation of the Canaanites. (TLSB)

Noah foresaw that the coarse sensuality, the tendency toward immorality which his son Ham had displayed would be developed more fully in Canaan one of Ham's four sons. Canaan was the ancestor of that branch of Ham's family which occupied the Promise Land before the Israelites conquered and occupied it. Wherever we meet Canaanite culture, we note that its outstanding characteristic was its moral depravity. Canaanite religion for example, was a combination of idolatry and adultery. Temple prostitution – heterosexual and homosexual – was a Canaanite way of honoring the gods. Noah predicted that for this reason a curse would fall upon the Canaanites; they would be slaves to their brothers. History records that in subsequent centuries the Canaanites were enslaved, in turn by their fellow Hamites, as well as by the Shemites and the Japhethites. (PBC)

Even though the Canaanites later became slaves of the Hebrews, this slavery became a blessing for them, for through it they came in contact with the true God (see Joshua 6:25; 9:27). It should, therefore, be emphasized that Noah spoke in generalities. His prophecy does not predict the unalterable fate of every Canaanite or every Israelite. (PBC)

*servant of servants* – Joshua's subjection of the Gibeonites (Jos 9:27) is one of the fulfillments (see also Jos 16:10; Jdg 1:28, 30, 33, 35; 1Ki 9:20–21). Noah's prophecy cannot be used to justify the enslavement of blacks, since those cursed here were Canaanites, who were Caucasian. (CSB)

Hebrew superlative indicates lowest of slaves. "Canaan" comes from the verb for stooping or submitting. As the son of Ham, Noah's youngest sons (v. 24), Canaan would be last in authority and inheritance, not only because of birth order, but especially because of alienation from the family due to his father's immorality. (TLSB)

**9:26** *Blessed be the LORD.* The Lord (instead of Shem) is blessed (praised) because he is the source of Shem's blessing. He is also the "God of Shem" (and his descendants, the Semites—which included the Israelites) in a special sense. (CSB)

The Lord is blessed as the source of Shem's blessings. He is also the God of Shem in a special sense, because Shem's descendants included the Israelites. (TLSB)

**9:27** *Japheth* – He would have numerous descendants. Genesis 10 informs us that Japheth was the of the Indo-Europeans, who later occupied vast stretches of land in Asia and Europe and points north and west. The choicest blessings Noah foretold for the Japhethites, however, were not earthly, physical ones, but the spiritual blessings they would enjoy. They would "live in the tents of Shem," sharing the blessed inheritance given to Shem – the truth of God as we have it in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Noah prophesied that Gentiles would share in all the blessing Christ came to bring. (PBC)

*tents of Shem.* Share in the blessings bestowed on Shem. (CSB)

**9:28-29** Continues genealogy of 5:32, which had been postponed for the flood story. (TLSB)

**9:28** *350 years* – Noah lived a third of his life after the great flood. (TLSB)



**9:29** *and he died* – As the tenth and last member of the genealogy of Seth (5:3–32), Noah had an obituary that ends like those of his worthy ancestors. (CSB)

The 10th and last member of Seth’s genealogy (5:3–32), Noah’s obituary ends like that of his worthy ancestors. (TLSB)

**9:18–29** Noah’s sinful drunkenness results in more sinful behavior and tragic consequences for one of his sons. God’s faithful people, past and present, are never free from temptations that often lead them to sin, at times with adverse consequences for generations. The biblical heroes were sinful men and women who lived by faith in the forgiveness of sins. God has been faithful to His promises and has provided forgiveness of sins and everlasting life through the salvation gained by His Son. • Thank You, O Lord, for the warning that accompanies the encouragement that You have given us through Your servant Noah. Amen. (TLSB)