

**Main idea: God chooses to work in response to covenantal signs, in order to show to us how amazing is His grace in Christ and to confirm in us how sure is His grace in Christ.**

Introduction: Covenants and Gen 6:17-18

1. God wants us to know the salvation of His amazing grace (connection of act, Word, and sign)
  - a. WORD necessary because of our ignorance
  - b. SIGN necessary because of our weakness of faith (sign) and weakness of commitment (seal) ... Gen 9:11 and 2Pet 3:5-9
2. God wants us to understand the salvation of His amazing grace (what the sign shows)
  - a. God-initiated (He puts His sign). He decides what the sign it will be, who should do it, and where it will go.
  - b. God-defined (Holding back His wrath from us; aiming His wrath at Himself... this is a promise not just of justification but of the new creation, cf. Hos 2:18; 1Cor 11:26)
  - c. God-sustained (Out of our reach; out of our sight)
  - d. God-guaranteed (He is the One who assigns to the sign its significance)
3. God wants us to be sure of the salvation of His amazing grace (who respond to the sign and how)
  - a. The primary beholder of the sign is God
    - i. (but we behold it too); everywhere Noah's children go, there is flood evidence and bow evidence
  - b. The primary responder to the sign is God (cf. esp. Eph 5:2, 2Co 2:15)
    - i. (but we respond to it too)

Conclusion: how are you responding to God's appointed signs?

- Established by Christ
  - Baptism
  - The Supper
- Empowered by Christ
  - Baptism
  - The Supper
- Effective in Christ
  - Baptism
  - The Supper

The instrumentality and necessity of faith (Gal 3:7-9, 29)—even if we do not respond to the signs, God still will. The rainbow is a help to faith. Without faith, a rainbow is just evidence that in the providence of God, different wavelengths of light bend different amounts as they refract through water. But with faith in God's words about God's covenant of grace, a rainbow is a display that God is keeping His commitment to do everlasting good to all sinners who belong to Jesus Christ--the one who was pierced for us.