

Slide 9 The Bible makes it clear that the flood which we studied last week was massive world-wide destruction. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out. It was God's judgment on mankind like never before or since.

- Genesis 7: Every living that moved on earth perished....
- Genesis 7:24: the waters flooded the earth for 150 days

The fossil record verifies that there was a massive extinction event; dinosaurs instantly died; mammoths whose skeletons only exist today in museums, saber-tooth tigers....gone. Trilobites and others died out without explanation almost overnight. The great flood transported and deposited material in massive layers all over the world; there is evidence of sea life on mountaintops, intact fossils of dinosaurs throughout the world found in locations where they would not have survived the climate where they were found.

Slide 10 The geologic record shows that massive mudslides pushed rocks all over the face of the earth to locations where no other such rocks existed. Springs of the deep broke through the face of the earth, shooting explosive gas along with powerful projections of water from the center of the earth. This water and gas flew into space and broke up the canopy which had kept the Earth warm and had filtered out the damaging rays of the sun for a thousand years. The broken canopy took 40 days and 40 nights to empty itself in the form of pouring rain.

Slide 11: The continents moved apart as the softened plates beneath the surface of the earth separated animal groups and plant life onto different landforms as the waters from the deep moved them apart. **Slide 12** Today, scientists call this the theory of Continental Drift and say that it occurred over millions of years. However, other scientists can prove that it occurred instead in a few months as the waters covered the earth during the flood.

Slide 13 Rather than taking thousands or millions of years, as many science books state as fact, the mountains and great canyons were formed quickly as the weight of water pushed layers on top of layers on top of layers on top of layers and mountains pushed up with volcanic movement. The smooth layers of sedimentary rock that are visible in the Grand Canyon, Bryce and others in the western U.S. would have been weathered and eroded between the layers if they had taken years to form; instead, as the waters retreated, those layers were quickly and smoothly laid down, and even before they hardened, were covered by another layer, in a series of great stratifications. **Slide 14** The mesa in Arizona and Utah are evidence of a quick retreat of water, which left the soft rocky surfaces flattened and smooth.

Slide 15 God revealed this clearly to David so that he could record it as poetry in Psalm 104: *Read Psalm 104: 6-9*

*You covered the earth with the deep as with a garment,
The waters stood above the mountains,
But at Your rebuke, the waters fled,*

*at the sound of your thunder, they took to flight,
They flowed over the mountains;
They went into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them.
You sent a boundary that they cannot cross;
Never again will they cover the earth.*

This is what occurred in the latter part of the flood as the water subsided, the mountains began to push up, and the ocean basins began to sink. God had been pretty busy reshaping the earth with mountains and valleys, making sure that His animal creation was preserved in the fossil record. In almost every mountain range on earth, marine fossils are found at the top of the mountain because that's where they floated as the waters retreated. The whole shape of the earth and the face of the earth was changed dramatically as the waters flooded the earth for 150 days. **Slide 16**

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark..... (Genesis 8:1)

It had been five months since any communication is recorded between God and Noah. It must have been very lonely, especially since Noah was out of touch with what had been happening in the outside world.

It was time for the next step: God began to remove the water. He caused a "wind to pass over the earth," and this wind began to blow the water away. The sun evaporated it, and the great sea basins were created. **Slide 17** And the ark landed in the mountains of Ararat. It's a region of the Caucus Mountains in

western Asia. The mountains were pushed up under water, but it was still two and a half months before even the tops of the mountains were visible. Then, the water began to flow down the hills and the mountains into the valleys, into rivers, and into the deep caverns that became the beds of the seas.

And we read in verses 6-8 that Noah sent out a raven to scout the world. He probably chose a raven because it is a scavenger, able to eat anything that was floating in the water without having to land. Noah could assume when it did not return that it had a plentiful food supply. The raven showed Noah there was death outside. But that wasn't true of the dove. Doves are birds of the valley, and they need to find a settled place in a valley or on a low cliff, just above the ground. When the dove first went out, it came back to Noah and look at this detail in verse 9:

He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. (gesture)

It's a picture of what God often does for me and perhaps has done for you. How many times in your life, when you have been seeking something out there in the world, material security or a significant person to make things right in your world, and you "can't get no satisfaction", does God reach out His hand and lovingly draw you back to Himself?

Slide 18 Well, the second time that Noah sent out the dove, it returned to show Noah there was life.....a freshly plucked olive leaf. That meant the valleys were drying out and that the land was fruitful once again. There was hope for Noah and

his family. **Slide 19** The dove with an olive branch in its beak is a familiar symbol; you often see it on Christmas cards as a reminder that there is hope when things are difficult. Just as the dove brought hope for a new life, so too does Christ bring hope for a new life for each one of us.

So now, that the world was being regenerated, Noah must have been anxious to begin again, but still he waited.....seven days, and finally..... more than a year after the flood began, he got up enough courage to open the cover on the ark, and then he still waited even after being confined to the ark for over a year until he heard from the Lord..... and it had been a long time. The last time he heard the Lord speak was when the Lord said, "Get in." He didn't hear anything for over a year, and then God said, "Come out", with no explanation in between. And yet, Noah did not question God, nor did he doubt God's faithfulness or even wonder why they were the only ones in the whole world whose lives were spared.

When Noah finally stepped out, without even being coached, he built an altar and taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, offered them as sacrifices. It was worship in the truest sense of the word. He had no assurance that the animals would be replaced and yet he willingly gave them up. He was the high priest for humanity, giving an act of total devotion, heartfelt thanksgiving, repentance and dedication to the Lord for the sin of the world. God was pleased! Not only with the soothing aroma, but with the heart of Noah. Carol reminded us last week that worship without sacrifice is rather useless.

Think of your own worship. If everyone in the body of Christ worshipped like you worship, would God be pleased with that worship? When you worship, are you bringing something sacrificial to the table? Is your heart totally dedicated? Are you giving Him your all? Is your worship casually offered for only a few minutes of music time on Sunday morning, or have you worshipped throughout the week? If God looked at your heart, would it send a pleasing fragrance.....or the stench of hypocrisy?

Look what God did when He saw Noah's dedication:

He announced an incredible promise in verse 21: never again will He curse the ground because of men's evil inclinations and never again will He destroy all living creatures, as He had just done. He did not promise to remove judgment, or accountability for mankind, or begin an era of tolerance. There will still be sin, judgment, death, and there will still be hell. What there won't be is the destruction of the whole human race at once.

Someday, heaven and earth will pass away. Someday the judgment will come. In fact, that day has already been fixed. Acts 17 says the Lord has fixed the day in which he will judge the world, just as the day of the flood was fixed. Noah was told it was coming in 120 years, so too, the day of the return of Christ and ultimately the destruction of the heavens and earth that we know of is fixed, and the world has been given plenty of time to repent, get on the ark of safety offered by Jesus Christ, and tell others to do the same.

The world's entire cycle of life had been upturned, and now God re-established the seasons, and re-set the sun to rise and set. A cycle of blessing, seedtime and harvest, cold, heat, summer, winter, day, and night.....so life began in the new world. **Slide 20** Now there were dramatic seasonal and temperature variations. Large amounts of land in the mountains and deserts were inhabitable and useless for growing crops. Water now covered 75% of the Earth's surface and as a result, the Earth was soon plunged into an Ice Age which forced people and animals to migrate to warmer climates for survival. Winds, storms, rains, snow made the environment less congenial to man and animals than it had been before. And yet God told Noah and his wife and their sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives to be fruitful, increase in number and populate the earth. God is in charge of population control and does not need man's help; as the author of all life, He knows how to manage the number of lives which the Earth can sustain.

Slide 21 Then God established a different relationship with the animal kingdom; whereas before man and animals lived in peaceful co-existence, now, a predator-prey relationship was established as God now added animals to man's food supply. Perhaps this was because the ecological changes which occurred after the flood made the earth less productive agriculturally. Now, God gave man permission to eat meat with one stipulation that it was not to be eaten raw, a precaution for disease prevention which easily spreads through parasites in uncooked meat or diseases contained in blood. This would also prevent wanton destruction of animals for waste as God demanded an accounting from every animal. Man was now re-affirmed as the steward over all lower forms of life, to

use them in such a way to reflect the usefulness, the order, the beauty and the purpose of its creator.

God then established accountability for man for the life of other men.

We read in chapter 9:6

"Whoever sheds man's blood by man, his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man".

The life of every person is inherently precious and cannot be taken without giving account to God. This is a new command; when Cain killed Abel, God did not demand his life, nor from Lamech who bragged about his murderous exploits.

But now, God gave everyone protection from other men by essentially saying if somebody kills somebody, they are pay with their own life. It lays down the principle of capital punishment as law to protect the weaker from the stronger.

In its original languages the Bible makes a distinction between *killing* and *murder*.

Not all killing is murder, because there are cases where there is just cause for killing (self-defense, capital punishment with due process of law, killing in a just war). There are other instances where killing is accidental. In such cases, the demand of a life for a life would not be required.

Genesis 9:8-17 God then established this covenant with Noah and all his descendants, and every living creature on the Earth, that He will never again drown the world in a universal flood. This was an important promise for Noah to hear because now, rain would be a common and necessary occurrence. In the new post-flood world, the water cycle, precipitation, evaporation, condensation,

and would constantly recycle the rainwater on the earth. Water is a necessity and there would be local storms, hurricanes, and floods, **slide 22** but here is a sign that the rain is temporary: "I set My bow in the cloud and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth." The rainbow represents the victory of God's grace over judgment.

Scientifically, a rainbow is an arc of concentric colored bands that develops when sunlight interacts with raindrops. Sunlight is refracted as it enters a raindrop which causes the different wave lengths of visible light. Every time we see a rainbow, we remember the faithfulness of God and every one of His promises.

One thing didn't drown in the flood, and that was sin. Sin was riding in the ark; in the nature of Noah, his wife, Shem, Ham and Japheth and their three wives. And through them, sin survived the flood. It was a new earth, but it was the same old human nature, and when Noah and his family left the ark, sin stepped into the new world with them. **Slide 23**

As we read the story, Noah drank too much of the wine that he produced from his own vineyard. As he lay in a drunken stupor inside his tent, his son Ham exposed their father's nakedness to his brothers. This was a serious breach of the family ethic and made a mockery of Noah's leadership. Noah's dignity as a man God and his sense of decency were compromised with his family. Shem and Japheth had an appropriate sense of shame and attempted to rectify the damage. For this, they and their descendants were blessed, even as their brother Ham and his descendants were cursed.

Noah was a preacher of righteousness, the New Testament says. He preached for 120 years while he was building the ark, he must have had a lot to say as he preached to all those who watched as he built the Ark, but we have no record of those words. Instead we only have recorded in Scripture the first and only thing Noah ever says in Genesis 9:25: "Cursed be Canaan, the lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." Before he added a blessing for Shem and Japheth and prophesied that Canaan, the son of Ham, would be their slaves. This prophecy for the enslavement of the sons of Ham in no way condones slavery as it was practiced in the ancient world, the enlightened world and even today. Although enslavement was some sometimes an act of judgment, as in the case of Israel's captivity in Babylon, most of the time, it resulted from man's lack of recognition that all men are created equal in the eyes of God.

Noah's oracle as patriarch of his family is common among several of those whom we will meet this year in Genesis. He predicts the future of his sons, without actually knowing how his words will be played out in history. Canaan, the son of Ham would later become the father of the near-eastern peoples, most of whom were conquered by Joshua when Israel took the Promised Land. They would continually oppose the Shemites whose family line we will see more of in next week's lesson. As a conquered people, the sons of Ham would be in servitude to the descendants of their cousins. They would struggle with the consequences of their own degradation and poor choices to come in the future. We will be watching how their struggles and their enslavement play out throughout our study of Genesis.

In chapter 10, we see how Noah's sons re-populated the world after Noah's death. **Slide 24**

The sons of Japheth were the Indo-European peoples, whose settlements stretched from India to the shores of Western Europe. They would include the Greeks, and the peoples living north to the Black Sea. These groups are not often seen in Bible history, but they are named in some prophecies. They also include Magog, who settled in the far north of Europe and became the Russian peoples. Magog figures in end-time prophecy in the book of Revelation. From Japheth also came the Germanic peoples and others of Western Europe including the French, Spanish, and Celtic settlers. The people of India also came from this branch of Japheth's family.

The descendants of Ham are the peoples who populated Africa and the Far East. They moved into the southern area of Mesopotamia including Egypt and part of the Arabian Peninsula. Canaan refers to the peoples who originally settled the land we today think of as Israel and its surrounding regions. Many people believe the Oriental peoples descended from the Sinites in Ham's line.

Slide 25 Inserted in verse 8 is a reference to Nimrod, the mighty warrior who established the earliest conquering peoples in Babylon and Assyria. The original saying, "A mighty hunter before the Lord" was not a compliment. The idea is that Nimrod was an *offense* before the face of God. Jewish legends say that Nimrod proclaimed, 'Depart from the judgment of the Lord, and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod!'

Eventually, men no longer trusted in God, but rather in their own cleverness and abilities, an attitude to which Nimrod tried to convert the whole world.

Finally, the sons of Shem include the ancestors to the Persian peoples, the Assyrians, the Lydians who lived for a time in Asia Minor, the Arameans, who are also known as the Syrians, and the ancestors of Abram and the Hebrews. The note on Eber's son Peleg, says that during his time, the Earth was divided, which puts into a time frame, the Tower of Babel incident which will conclude our lesson in Chapter 11.

Slide 26 Despite God's specific command to Noah's descendants to spread out over the earth, the descendants of Noah determined, to build a tower which would reach to the heavens. According to Josephus, the ancient historian, Nimrod provided the leadership for this program. Perhaps the people sought to save themselves from another flood. More likely, they wanted the fame and economic prosperity associated with constructing a famous landmark. Nimrod, selected the location on the plains of Shinar where Babylon is today (**pointer on Babel**) His actions were in direct defiance of God's command to Noah' family to spread out and fill the earth.

Slide 27 The center of each ancient Mesopotamian city was a ziggurat which served as a city hall, a storage facility for surplus crops and as a temple for worship of gods. The people of Shinar boasted that their city was a heavenly city, which would strengthen their reputation and maintain their independence from the Almighty. It is more likely they built the tower as an observation point to observe the skies since it was built "unto the heavens." **Slide 28**

Most astrological and occult practices have a history back to Babel.

The fact that God came down to verify their plans shows how concerned God was that His people once again had resorted to wickedness. God immediately thwarted their plans by confusing their languages to stop the coordination of the construction efforts. The babble which they now heard coming from the others' mouths caused them to give up their efforts at unity, and re-locate to other lands in order to stay near those with whom they could communicate. God actually *gave* them their desire. They wanted to make a name for themselves; **slide 29** their now unfinished tower and their city became known as Babylon as a result of their confused languages. It too has prophetic implications in end-time prophecy.

It would have been difficult for a family to leave the area of Babel and go out on their own. They would have had to find a location which had water and other natural resources, and then would have had to live in crude dwellings until once again they developed the land enough to support their families. They would have had to trust God to provide for them. Had they done so willingly, I'm sure that God would have done that for them and history would have been very different. The whole account of what happened at Babel with its organized rebellion against God and the direct distrust of God's promises showed that man had not really learned the lesson of the flood. The forced separation of men from Babel was God's mercy as well as His judgment. God, in dividing man both linguistically and geographically, limited the power of his sin nature for man's own good.

According to Jewish tradition, Eber the great-grandson of Shem was one who refused to help build the tower, so his language was not confused with the others. It is his language that was retained to become the language of the Hebrews. Eber was the father of Peleg during whose lifetime this dividing and scattering of the descendants of Noah most likely took place. **Slide 30**

We leave the descendents of Noah scattered over the face of the earth. They have little faith in God to protect them, and so without Him, they were left to develop their own their own cultures and traditions, and their own gods which man made in his own image and which became an abomination.

Within a few generations after the flood, the world had returned to the same level of wickedness that resulted in the judgment of the Flood. God had promised never to destroy the world with another flood, so His next judgment was to scatter the people to the farthest ends of the earth.

Would they learn their lesson? No.....so what would God do next?

The stage was now set for the next step in God's plan for mankind.

Grace.....sin....judgment.....grace.....sin.....judgment; a cycle which we see over and over again in the history of the world, in the history of God's people, in the story of our own lives. The only one who broke the cycle was Jesus Christ who stepped into history and paid the price for that sin. We will not experience the terrible judgment which we so completely deserve because of Him. Pardon for sin and a peace that endures, strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all ours and ten-thousand beside. **Slide 31** Sing.....Great is Thy faithfulness chorus.