

“Noah Walked with God”

Genesis 8:1-11:9

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Let's review a few facts we learned last week as we examined the high cost of sin in Noah's generation:

- Noah entered the ark when he was 600 years, 2 months, and 10 days old.
- Seven days later the rain began to fall.
- The rain fell for 40 days and 40 nights.
- The fountains of the great deep also burst forth with water.
- Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out.
- The Flood covered the earth for 150 days.
- Only Noah was left and those people and animals that were with him in the ark.

Last week, we examined the result of sin as the earth was flooded and all life was wiped out save for one family and the animals that the Lord invited into the ark. We left this vessel floating in the waters that flooded the earth.

This week, we will see how God remembers His own as He renews and repopulates a changed earth and its inhabitants. We will see how God establishes His covenant with promises to mankind and the earth's creatures that will last through out all the generations to come. We will see how evil creeps back into the world through Noah's family and His descendants.

God Remembers His Own

From Genesis 8:1, we learn, “God remembered Noah, as well as all the wildlife and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water began to subside.”

If you add it all up, Noah spent one year and 17 days in the ark. We know that he was a man of faith who took God at His Word (Hebrews 11:7). That's why he built the ark in the first place. But he was human, too. It could not have been easy to be confined inside the ark with his family and all those animals with no view whatsoever. Did Noah wonder if God had forgotten him? I could not blame him if he had his doubts.

Did you take notice of the word “remember” in Genesis 8:1 by chance?” Theologians agree that the word “remember” in Genesis 8:1 doesn't mean to call something to mind that may have been forgotten. God cannot forget anything because He knows the end from the beginning. Rather, it means “to pay attention to, fulfill a promise.”

Noah, his family, and the animals had been together in the ark for over a year, which is a lot of “togetherness.” We have no record that God spoke to them after He had shut them into the ark. I have to believe that someone in the family, if not all of them, experienced doubts and fear that maybe God would not remember them anymore.

We know that God not only remembered Noah and his family, but He also remembered the animals that were with them. God spared these creatures so they could live on the renewed earth and reproduce after their own kind. We will take a closer look shortly at God's plans for the animals.

In God's provision, He sent a wind that blew across the whole earth and caused the waters to recede. This, of course, speaks to God's authority over the forces of nature. By His power, the torrential rain and the eruption of water from beneath the earth's surface ceased; and during the next five months, God caused the water to recede and the land to dry up. The winds that God sent over the earth helped to evaporate the water and also move it to the place God had provided.

Water Recedes and the Ark Comes to Rest

On the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the ark rested on a peak in the mountains of Ararat, located in modern Turkey. I am amazed at how many accounts both written and spoken exist from explorers who have searched for the ark. Amazingly, it has been "seen" in present day Turkey, Armenia, close to Russia, and in Iran. Explorers have found petrified wood that they were "sure" belonged to the ark in various places, but the carbon dating proved each discovery to be a case of mistaken identification.

The truth is, we don't know which peak was the ark's resting place. One might believe that leaving the ark at such a high altitude and in mountainous terrain may have meant a difficult departure for the people and the animals. However, I have no doubt but that our omnipotent God placed it exactly where He wanted it. If God's purpose was to put the ark in a place where it might be preserved for thousands of years, He chose an excellent place for it. Explorers searching for the remains of the ark cannot find much biblical data to help them in their search.

Besides the question as to where the ark touched land, people also wonder if the Flood was worldwide or did it cover a smaller, localized area. According to Genesis 8:5, "The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month, the tops of the mountains became visible." Pastor David Guzik states, "This is an indication that the Flood was worldwide" (Enduring Word).

Revelation of God's Plan

I don't know about you, but I struggled to understand why I needed to know that the ark rested on land on the seventeenth day of the seventh month. I will admit that the importance of that day escaped me. But the longer I study God's Word, the more I can see His plan unfold and how the dates and events connect and align with one another throughout history.

The seventh month will become very special to the Jews. In later years, the seventh month would become the first month in the Hebrew religious calendar when the Jews were delivered from their Egyptian bondage (Exodus 12:1-5). The Jews would celebrate three major events at this time of year--the new year with the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:23-44).

Don't miss this. It was on the fourteenth day of the first month, Passover, when Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God was nailed to a cross. The ark rested on the seventeenth day--that's three days after Passover. We know three days after Jesus was crucified, He rose again. Therefore, the ark rested on the mountain the very day Christ would rise from the dead years later.

When I consider this history, I know no mere man could have made these events come to pass. My confidence level in God's strategic planning soars as does my trust and faith in Him. And by the way, September 30th starts the week-long observance of the Feast of Tabernacles/Feast of Booths according to the modern Jewish calendar. Both Jews and Christians alike commemorate this week by pitching tents and living in them during the celebration. The children love this and the adults—well, not so much. These holy days commemorate the time when the people built temporary shelters as they wandered in the desert and celebrated God's presence. Oh, and by the way, you still have some time to dust off your tents!

The Hebrew text says that "the ark came to rest," reminding us that Noah's name means "rest" and that his father Lamech had hoped that his name would bring rest to a weary world. Though the ark had rested safely, Noah waited for the Lord to tell him what to do. He waited 40 days and then sent out a raven which continued to fly back and forth. Since it was an "unclean" bird that eats the flesh of dead animals according to Levitical Law, it may have felt right at home if there were floating carcasses.

The Lord Rewards Faithfulness

Noah waited a week and then sent out a dove, which was considered to be a "clean," non-scavenging bird and not a bird of prey according to Levitical Law. It found no place to land; so, it returned to the ark. A week later, Noah sent the dove out again, and when it returned with a fresh olive leaf, Noah knew that the plants were growing and fresh life had appeared on the earth. I think it is no accident that a dove bearing an olive branch is a familiar symbol of peace around the world. A week later, when Noah sent the dove out the third time, it didn't return. He knew then that the water had dried up.

Noah had built a "window or hatch" in the upper deck of the ark which he opened in order to survey the world around him. This was on the day the passengers had been in the ark one entire year. Noah saw that the ground was dry, and I find this extraordinary—he did not make a move out of the ark until the Lord told him to leave. Twenty-six days later, that order came and Noah obeyed it. He came out of the ark with his wife, sons and their wives and all of the animals that had been on board.

Then Noah, this man of faith, built an altar to the Lord and "took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar." Yes, these were costly sacrifices. But costly sacrifice is pleasing to God.

The Lord was satisfied with the sacrifices. He was pleased with His people and their worship. Many Biblical scholars agree that the sacrifice speaks of Jesus Christ offering Himself up for us. Like the ark that saved Noah and his family, Jesus Christ went through the storm of God's judgment for us.

God Resets His Creation

With this new beginning on earth, Noah is referred to as the "second Adam." God had brought the ark through the Flood and now the Lord even gave Noah's family and the animals the same command that He had given at the beginning: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth." He repeated that mandate that He had originally given Adam because Noah was essentially beginning all over again.

Genesis Chapter 9 opens with God's blessing to Noah and his sons. The world was significantly different from the world he knew before. Following the Flood, man would no longer be only a vegetarian. We see in Genesis 9:2-4, God specifically gave mankind permission to eat animals--

permission Adam was not given as far as we know. Some historians believe that this may be because the earth was less productive agriculturally as a result of the Flood.

It would seem that for their protection, God gave animals a fear of mankind. I wish I had known that when I was chasing chipmunks in Sequoia just a few years ago. I think I was 10. It is also good for me to understand that I should not take it personally when the rabbits in my backyard shun my advances to be their friend.

Recognition of the Sanctity of Blood

On a very serious note, blood and the handling of blood is significant to our Heavenly Father. The importance of the idea of blood in the Bible is shown by how often the word is used. It is used 424 times in 357 separate verses. The respect for blood is observed because it represents the life of the being, whether animal or human. When blood is poured out, life is poured out.

In verses 4-7, God gave instructions to not eat flesh that has its lifeblood still in it. Warren W. Wiersbe stated, "...God again revealed His concern for animal life. The life is in the blood and that life comes from God and should be respected. Furthermore, the blood of animals would be important in most of the Mosaic sacrifices, so the blood must be treated with reverence."

From instructing Noah about the shedding of animal blood, the Lord proceeded to discuss an even more important topic: the shedding of human blood. God declared that He would demand an accounting from every animal and every human who takes the life of a person. When murder is committed, the death penalty is in order. In verses 5-6, God says, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His own image."

God's Reassurance

Genesis 9:8-17 is the section that theologians call the Noahic Covenant. Noah stepped out of the ark onto an earth devoid of human life. God made a covenant with Noah and all his descendants "and all generations to come" (verse 12). God gave him a reassuring promise which had three parts:

- 1) God would never again destroy the earth with a flood.
- 2) The seasons would come and go for as long as the earth remained. The Flood had interrupted the normal cycle of nature. God affirmed that the rhythm of days and weeks and seasons would continue as long as the earth endured.
- 3) A rainbow would be the sign of God's promises. God said, "I have set my rainbow in the clouds and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth--a covenant for all generations to come" (verse 12).

Relationships and the Rest of the Story

Verse 18 introduces the sons of Noah by name: **Shem, Ham and Japheth**. We know that from these three sons of Noah, the whole earth was populated. Jon Courson describes the rest of Noah's story as one that moves from "rainbows to shadows." After being a carpenter, a preacher who warned the people of judgment, and being a sailor for 377 days in God's floating zoo, Noah changed occupations. He became a farmer and in so doing he sampled some of the fruit of his vines and became drunk. It was in this condition that he laid naked and uncovered in his tent. We are not privy to all of the details related to this occasion, but we know that it evolved into a family tragedy.

In verse 22, Noah's son, Ham, saw his father naked and told his brothers. The ancient Hebrew language says that Ham "told with delight" what he saw in his father's tent. Ham talked about his father's nakedness with a mocking attitude and a severe lack of respect for his father. He determined to mock his father and undermine his authority as a man of God.

This event stands as another example to us of how a person's sin can affect his family. When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done, Noah exclaimed, "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." He also said, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Shem! May God extend Japheth's territory and may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be the slave of Japheth" (Genesis 9:25-27).

It seems strange to me that if Ham sinned against Noah, that Canaan (Ham's son) was cursed. Perhaps the strongest punishment against Ham was for Noah to prophetically reveal the destiny of his son Canaan. Some experts believe that we can trust God is not punishing the son (Canaan) for the sin of the father (Ham). This goes against the heart and justice of God (Ezekiel 18:2-3). However, through Noah's prophecy, God told Ham what would happen to his son and grandson based on what he saw in their character.

In contrast, Shem and Japheth would not look at their father's nakedness. They took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked.

How people respond to the sin and embarrassment of others is an indication of their character. In this situation, Ham could have chosen to cover his father's body, and say nothing about the incident to anyone. When people sin and we know about it, our task is to help restore them in a spirit of meekness. Galatians 6:1-2 tells us, "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ." Before we condemn others, we had better examine ourselves, for all of us are candidates for conduct unbecoming to a Christian.

We are told in the Bible that Noah lived after the flood for 350 years. In total, he lived 950 years and died. He was a remarkable man who served God in his own generation. Yet his last years do not seem to match the glory of his first years.

Nevertheless, Noah was a man of faith whose name is recorded in Hebrews 11:7 with those of other heroes of faith. He had the faith to walk with God when the people of the world were ignoring and disobeying God. He had the faith to work for God and to witness for God when opposition to truth was the popular thing.

This is a strong lesson to us to be faithful and to finish well. Let us be men and women of faith. God rewards faith!

Repopulation and Genealogies

Family lists and genealogies are a prominent part of the Bible. These genealogies were obviously important to Israel, and the Jews kept meticulous records.

One reason family history was important to Israel is that it proved one's identity as a Jew, a partaker of the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and part of the people chosen by God. If a person was not a Jew, he or she could not truly be a Jewish citizen and participate in all of the aspects of Jewish life and culture.

In addition, the genealogies of the Jews were important in tracing the line of the Messiah. The Old Testament made it clear that the Messiah would be the Son of David; therefore, records of family history were vital. Matthew and Luke both include genealogies of Jesus in their Gospels to show Jesus' connection to David. Matthew's Gospel, written for Jews, traces Jesus' genealogy to Abraham. Luke's Gospel, written for Gentiles, traces Jesus' genealogy all the way back to Adam.

I am convinced that the lists of genealogies help substantiate the Bible's historical accuracy and confirm the existence of the Bible characters.

Genesis Chapter 10 is known as "The Table of Nations" and is unique in the annals of ancient history. The purpose of this chapter is given at the beginning (verse 1) and the end (verse 32) to explain how the earth was repopulated after the Flood by the descendants of the three sons of Noah.

These peoples had their own clans and languages, territories and nations. The listing is not exhaustive--there are descendants of Noah that are not mentioned. We don't find Edom, Moab, and Ammon mentioned; and yet, these were important nations in Biblical history. Even though it is incomplete, William E. Albright shared that "The Table of Nations remains an astonishing, accurate document."

I know that you have combed through the descendants of Noah's three sons in your reading this week. I will merely highlight the name of each of Noah's sons and provide a cursory list of where the clans migrated.

Japheth was the father of the Indo-European peoples, those stretching from India to the shores of Western Europe.

The descendants of **Ham** populated Africa and the Far East. One notorious descendant of Ham and a name that you will recognize is Nimrod. He was a hunter of men and an offense before the face of God. His name means "let us rebel." Nimrod goes on to found Babylon, but he also is the founding father of the Assyrian Empire. It was the Assyrians who carried away the 10 northern tribes of Israel into captivity in 722 B.C. and the Babylonians who destroyed Jerusalem 136 years after that.

In the printed lessons, you will find The First Family Tree diagram made up of the "Unrighteous Branch" that hails from Cain and ultimately ends with the Flood. "The Righteous Branch" delineates Seth's family line which survives the Flood. Noah's son **Shem** is the ancestor of Abraham who is the founder of the Hebrew nation. This, of course, is the lineage of David and ultimately of Jesus Christ.

We know that from these clans of Noah's sons and according to their lines of descent, these nations spread out over the earth after the Flood. Noah's three sons left a mixed legacy to the world, but the Lord of the nations was still in charge, and history is still His story.

Rebellious Pride

Finally, we come to Genesis 11:1 which tells us "...the whole world had one language and a common speech." The descendants from the ark journeyed from the east and settled on a plain in the land of Shinar which is located in present-day Iraq. Shinar was a term which was also used for Babylon.

These descendants came together to build a great city and tower, in rebellion against God's command to spread out over the earth (Genesis 9:1) due to their prideful desire to build a tower with a top that reached to the heavens.

In verse 5, the Lord made a personal visit to see the city and the tower the people were building. The tower was actually a ziggurat used for the pagan practice of astrological observation. The Lord noted that because the people were one and they all had one language, nothing would be impossible for them to accomplish. He said "Come, let Us go down there and confuse their language, so they will not understand one another's speech." I believe that the word "**Us**" is used in reference to the Trinity and that God the father, God the Spirit, and God the Son were actively working together in unity and in one accord.

The Lord confused the language of all the people and scattered them all over the earth. The distrust that God showed for the organized rebellion shows man has not gotten any better since the Flood. Time, progress, government, and organization have made man better off, but not better.

Now God will begin to make man better, and He will start with a man who will do His will, even if he does not do His will perfectly. We will learn more about Abraham and His family next week.

Remaining Thoughts

The pages of the Bible are so rich in history and lessons. I appreciated learning more about Noah and the centuries that he walked with God. With God's guidance, I will concentrate on improving my walk with Him the remainder of my days in this life.

Here are some closing thoughts that I want to share with you:

1. **Great is God's love for each of us!** "I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever. For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths, from the realm of the dead" (Psalm 86:12-13).
2. **Great is God's grace!** "Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore He will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!"
3. **Great is God's desire that I should persevere in accomplishing His plans for me!** "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).
4. **Great is His faithfulness!** "Not one word has failed of all the good promises He gave..." (1 Kings 8:56).