

God of Creation | Genesis Ch. 1-11

Session Eight: Genesis 8:15-9:29 | The Flood

Stories of a Flood

- The Epic of Gilgamesh
 - Babylonian text that predates the writing of Genesis
 - It describes a flood in very similar terms to Moses' recording
 - Its existence has historically rocked the faith for some Christians, but it shouldn't!
 - If something like this actually happened, then we should assume that it wasn't just recorded by one culture or by one person
- There are literally hundreds of recorded tales about a flood that happened
 - 88% had a favored family as part of the story
 - 70% had the element of survival due to a boat
 - 95% said the sole cause of the catastrophe that is noted is a flood
 - 66% say that the disaster was due to the wickedness of humankind
 - 67% indicate that animals were preserved along with human life
 - 57% indicate that survivors end up on a mountain
 - Other elements: a bird that is sent out, a rainbow, and 8 persons saved
- Q) Is Moses just telling a story that he grew up with?
 - A) No- Moses is telling the true story.
 - All of the other stories are just echoes that indicate that at one time there was a flood of catastrophic proportions.
- There is a lot of debate about whether the flood was global or local
 - It isn't actually necessary within orthodox belief to acknowledge a global flood
 - You can acknowledge that the flood happened in a regional way, but the only way it stays within orthodox belief is to say that if it was regional, it wiped out all humankind except the 8 people who were preserved on the ark.
 - Why? Because the whole point of the story is that God is cleansing the earth of all of its wicked inhabitants

Original Sin

- the doctrine of original sin says that we are all born with a bent toward sinning
- Because Adam messed up in Genesis 3, we have to walk around from our earliest days wanting to commit sin
 - You might ask, "It seems like if I'd been there I would have done a better job than Adam. Why does he get to be my representative?"
 - If the God of the universe allowed for that situation to be orchestrated, don't you think that when He chose a representative for you He chose someone who was absolutely equal to the task?
- One of the most difficult pieces of coming to terms with the flood narrative is that it's only a temporary solution, because as long as there are 8 human beings who survive it, guess what they carry inside of them: the same problem.

Shem, Ham, Japheth (6:10)

- The text is mentioning their name to raise your awareness
- Usually when that happens it means that you should watch out for their names to appear again

Noah

- Noah was a righteous man
- The great grandson of Enoch who walked with God
- He had godly ancestors before that in Methuselah and in Lamech
- Noah follows in that line
- He is dwelling in a time when wickedness was pervasive, so how popular do you think he would have been?
- The New Testament refers to him as a “preacher of righteousness”
 - He wasn’t just living right, he was telling other people how they were an affront to a holy God
- He was tasked with a difficult task, and it wasn’t just building the ark
- His whole life was someone who lives a righteous life among a wicked and depraved people
 - it would have been a study in frustration, rejection, and sorrow

3 “corruption”s in two verses (6:11-12)

- Blame is established here
 - Corruption is because the people corrupted the earth
 - Violence is because of the people
- Word play: “I am surely going to destroy”- the root is from the word “corrupt”

Listening and memory tools: repetition

- Vs. 13 “and God said”
- Vs. 22 “Noah did everything just as God commanded him”

Noah as Mediator

- Now rather than God being the one who accomplishes the work, Noah is brought in as a partner to the process
- This is a good picture of our sanctification.
 - Q) Who is it that acts to bring about our salvation?
 - A) Just God. We don’t do anything.
 - But in the processes of sanctification, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we work through grace-driven effort to grow in holiness
- God now gives the command to create
 - It is Noah who carries out the creative act- Noah did everything just as God commanded him
 - God gives Noah detail and specificity- God has an exact plan and wants to help Noah carry it out
- Covenant
 - 6:17 is the first mention of this word in the Bible
 - It means God is making a promise with humans
 - But it is not the first time we have seen the concept
 - We saw a covenant applied back in the garden after we saw the first sin- when he promises the seed will come from the woman
- God says to bring two of every kind of animal, male and female
 - This too was an echo of the creation narrative- it is to symbolize the completeness of the pair
- How would Noah have received this command to build a boat?

- Where does Noah live? He lives in the desert.
 - It is ludacris- he is landlocked, and he's never seen rain
 - It is laborious- if he is a preacher of righteousness and he's not a popular guy, how many people show up to help
 - It is protracted- how many years did it take for the ark to be constructed? About 100
 - It is expensive- it would have required great sacrifice in financial terms to pull this off

And so it begins

- He spends 7 days waiting for rain,
 - and then flood waters came on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights
- Q) Who shuts the door?
 - A) God!
 - Their safety will rely wholly on him.

We see:

1. The perfect security that is found in being in the ark (Revelation 3:7b (NIV) What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.)
 - This corresponds with our baptism (1 Peter 3:20-22)
 - This corresponds to us being sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30)
 - There is nothing that can affect the security of the believer held safe
- 2) God's grace
 - God is slow and He waits and waits to judge
 - When all the preparations have taken place, when there is nothing left to do, then the door is closed.
 - So the doors of salvation remain open as long as possible to anyone that might come- until the very last minute.
 - All of those that are outside the ark jeering at Noah still have the opportunity to change their minds
 - There is an end to grace.
 - Jesus speaks a lot about this in his parables- that there is time for repentance, and then there is no more time.
 - There is a word of warning here certainly
 - Probably the greatest parallel that we can find in looking at this ark and relating it to our baptism, and of God shutting them in, is John 10:9 where Jesus says "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved."

The flood ends

- "But God remembered Noah" (8:1)
 - Not in the sense that he had forgotten it, but that it was time to bring it to pass
- "And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided."
 - The word for wind is the same as "Spirit" from Genesis 1:2 "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."
- This is a de-creation narrative.
 - The world is the way that it was in Genesis 1:1. We are going to see the same exact things happen.
 - Dry land separates from water
 - The seas are returning to their proper boundaries and the earth is being revealed.
 - Increments of time
 - 150 days of floating around, waiting for everything to subside.

- 40 days where the waters are receding.
- 7 days of the waters to recede when the dove returns.
 - The symbol for peace is the dove with the olive branch.
- We have seen now a total of 6 different increments of time that are laid out for us in the flood narrative.
 - Genesis 1, we had 6 intervals of time for the creation of the world.
 - Now the 7th day that would have corresponded with the sabbath...
 - A repeated cultural mandate to fulfil once again (8:17)
 - God called him out of the ark
 - Similar to Jesus calling Lazarus to come forth
 - It is God who resurrects the spiritually dead to life

The Israelites' perception of the flood

- This particular incident forms the psyche of the Israelites in the way few other stories do
- We see the flood mentioned in SO many other different places
 - Psalm 29
- Imagine the trauma that a story like this conveys to a people examining their origins.
 - In one sense, Moses' original audience has just been pulled out of the darkness of Egypt to a place where they can become the people of God
 - they can relate to this story, because they too have passed through the waters of death in a sense and have been resurrected to life as the people of God
 - It's a story that would have been very personal to Moses as his own story as an infant
 - he is placed in a basket of tumen and pitch and passed through the waters of the Nile which were certain death for the children of Israel at that time
- The flood marks the psyche of not just Israel but of ALL who believe