

The Flood

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[Start with pictures of flooding this week in upper Midwest - Go to pictures of flooding last June in this area] None of this compares to what is recorded in Genesis 6-9. Today we consider the Biblical account of the Flood.

So how many of every kind of animal did Moses take on the ark with him? Someone always falls for that. Moses didn't go on the ark. Noah did, along with his wife, his three sons, and their wives. And a bunch of animals.

Some consider the Biblical account of the Flood to be a myth or a fairy tale. Others relegate it to **a children's story**. But there is much more to it than a message for kids. It is God's Word. There is obviously more in these 4 chapters than we can cover in one sermon, but I want to help you see that this is, above all, a story of God's mercy and care and concern for His creation.

Genesis 6:5-9 ⁵ *The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.* ⁶ *The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.* ⁷ *So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them."* ⁸ *But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.* ⁹ *This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.*

The previous chapters list the descendants of Cain and the descendants of Seth. Perhaps the "sons of God" in the first part chapter 6 refers to the children of Seth who feared the Lord – we don't know for sure. But whether they were descended from Seth or Cain, all men were sinful. The wickedness of man had grown to the point that ***every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time***. It was so bad that God decided to wipe the slate clean, as it were and start all over.

Well, almost. God would not destroy everyone. Remember, He had made a promise to Adam and Eve that He would send one to "crush the head" of the serpent. That child was yet to come. All those who believed God's promise were saved the same way people today are saved: by faith. They were looking forward in faith, we are looking back in faith. But here, at the time of the Flood, that one had not yet come. So God would preserve a remnant through whom the promised Savior would come. A man named **Noah** found favor in God's sight. He is called a "righteous man." He was no more without sin than anyone else. This description of him simply means that

he believed God's promises. He was in a faith relationship with God. God chooses Noah as an act of mercy. Through him, not only would mankind continue, but the Promised Messiah, the one who would save all people, would come.

In this account, just as in the Fall and the story of Cain and Abel, we see punishment for sin but also a display and promise of God's mercy. In the flood we see both Law and Gospel.

Genesis 6:11-22 ¹¹ *Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence.* ¹² *God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.* ¹³ *So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth."* ¹⁴ *So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.* ¹⁵ *This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high.* ¹⁶ *Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks.* ¹⁷ *I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.* ¹⁸ *But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.* ¹⁹ *You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you.* ²⁰ *Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive.* ²¹ *You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."* ²² *Noah did everything just as God commanded him.*

God was going to destroy mankind, but He would spare Noah and his family and the animals in a floating box: **450 feet long**, 75 feet wide and 45 feet tall. This was a fairly large structure. It would be about 3 times the width of this sanctuary, half again as tall, and 9 times as long. It would be a tremendous act of faith to build it.

God's punishment of sin is that everything outside the ark would perish. But God's mercy would preserve Noah and family. And God was involved in the process: ***Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive.*** It was not as though Noah had to round everything up. The animals would come to him. While the text tells us ***Noah did everything just as God commanded him,*** it was not Noah's obedience that saved Noah. It was God's doing.

Chapter 7 gives us the details of the Flood itself

Genesis 7:2 *Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate,*

Some are shocked to see that it says “Seven” or “seven pairs” of clean animals. This is not a contradiction, but part of the Hebrew way of sharing a story. This chapter gives added details to what was previously said, just as Chapter 2 of Genesis goes into more detail about a specific part of the Creation recorded in chapter 1. One explanation for the larger number is that the clean animals would be used as sacrifices to the Lord after the Flood.

Genesis 7:11-12 In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

It rained for 40 days and nights. Not only that, it says the Springs of the great deep burst forth. Water from above and water from below.

Genesis 7:17-24 For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet. Every living thing that moved on the earth perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

Some who challenge this account want to say the flood was a local event. But this says otherwise. If the water was more than 20 feet over the mountains, how could that be contained to one area of the earth? And it says that every living thing perished. Not just in one area, but “every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out.” And it says the flood conditions continued for 150 days. Many understand this to mean that volcanic and seismic activity continued for quite some time after the rain stopped.

Genesis 8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.

I know that there have been many times when I’ve forgotten things. One I’ve done several times is when I am filling our pool, I’ll forget I turned the water on and much later remember, “Oh, no! I forgot to shut off the water.” That is not what is meant when it says “God remembered Noah.”

He did not get busy and forget about Noah. Rather, this means God was faithful to Noah. God remembers. It would be more that a year after the flood began they were able to exit the ark.

Genesis 8:14-22 *By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry. Then God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it." So Noah came out, together with his sons and ● his wife and his sons' wives. All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on the earth—came out of the ark, one kind after another. Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground ● because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."*

In Gratitude, Noah offered a sacrifice from the clean animals. It was pleasing to the Lord. And then God made a promise: *Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil.* Note that man is still evil, but God promises not to destroy the earth again in this way. The promise is continued in the next chapter.

Genesis 9:11-13 *I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.*

God's promise was given, along with a sign of that promise – **THE RAINBOW** –(refer to stained glass windows.) Every time we see a rainbow, it reminds us of the promise God made, reminds us of His mercy as He deals with sinners. Noah did not earn God's favor – not by his life before the flood or even in building the ark. It was faith that granted him favorable status in God's sight. God's mercy and faithfulness saved Noah, just as His mercy and faithfulness in *Christ saves us.* We were not deserving of salvation, either. But God was faithful to the promise he had made to Adam and Eve and sent the promised one. Jesus did everything required of us, did it in our place, and then offered His life in our place as well on the cross.

The mercy of God is seen in sparing Noah, his family and the animals. Even greater mercy was displayed in sending His Son to be the Savior of all mankind. All anyone has to do is believe that Jesus is who He said He is.

As I said earlier, there are plenty of folks who challenge this account, saying it could not possibly be true. Scripture says it happened. Not only that, Jesus Himself said it happened.

Matthew 24:37-39 ³⁷ *As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.* ³⁸ *For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;* ³⁹ *and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.*

The writer of Hebrews believed it--

Hebrews 11:7 ⁷ *By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.*

The Apostle Peter believed it--

1 Peter 3:20-21 ²⁰ *who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,* ²¹ *and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*

The Flood is a story of God's mercy and care and protection and deliverance. The message of Christ is the ultimate display of God's mercy and care and protection and deliverance, available to all people through faith.