Genesis – The Cleansing Flood Part 2 10/09/22

“The old world was forever dead to them from that moment on. Their life was henceforth a new life and they were to live in a new world. The Ark of safety endured the batterings of the Flood for them, as the Flood destroyed the world of the ungodly which would otherwise soon have destroyed them. So Christ, in dying for our sins, triumphed over sin “that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Galatians 1:4).” Morris 160

Noah rested quietly on his back, hands folded behind his head, and gazed up at the timbered ceiling above.

He wondered what the sky above looked like? He longed for the day when God would allow him to once again look up to the heavens.

The constant swaying and rocking of the ark had ceased weeks ago.

Noah remembered how violently it had shaken at times, tilting to a terrifying angle then righting itself.

And the noise, Oh the noise!

It often sounded outside as though the entire world was exploding.

The vessel rocked and pitched, creaking and groaning, seemingly on the verge of shattering into a million splinters.

Smiling at his own doubting fear, Noah remembered how through it all, the animals slept on, wrapped in the presence of Almighty God.

God’s Spirit had always been here with them, Noah knew.

Noah felt the Spirit all around, comforting him and his family.

The air was thick with the love of the Father, and the smell of thousands of animals.

Noah allowed himself the wisp of a smile at his little joke.

Noah thought back to the day more than a hundred years ago when God had first spoken to him. He told Noah of the evil on the earth, and of His wrath to come.

This did not surprise Noah, since he plainly witnessed the utter depravity all around him.

What was surprising was that God spoke again, telling Noah to build this ark.

This enormous vessel.

God had given him the dimensions and told him how to build it.

The design was clear in his mind.

He could see it.

Noah remembered setting to work immediately.

God had blessed him with tremendous wealth, and it was a good thing, too, since the materials for building this ark were expensive.

Noah thought of God’s provision in giving him strong young sons to help, along with his father Lamech and his grandfather Methuselah.

The thought of his fathers, so recently gone to paradise, filled Noah’s heart with pain and longing.

He needed them now, as never before, yet he knew God willed to take them, and that he would now have to be strong for his wife, sons, and daughters-in-law.

In this, Noah could feel the Spirit assisting him and giving him strength.

As they built, people would come, mocking them, spitting at them, and sometimes even striking them or hitting them with whips.

Noah worked on the ark and preached to any and all who would listen, warning them of the judgment and destruction to come, but the people only laughed and called him crazy.

All the while, Noah’s heart for the people ached within him.

Why would no one listen?

Why did they mock and jeer at the word of the Almighty Lord?

There were so many times Noah wanted to stop.

Had he really heard from the Lord?

Did God really tell him to do this?

Why was no one listening?

Often at these times his father and grandfather would talk to him, offering comfort and encouragement.

While there times of great doubt and discouragement, there also many times when he could feel the presence and protection of the Holy Spirit, and he knew without doubt that God was with Him.

Indeed, Noah remembered, it was clear that God had protected Noah, his wife, and later his young sons from the chaotic evil that ran rampant in those years before the waters came. When his sons took wives, Noah prayed fervently that they would also be protected, and that they would love the Lord their God, just as Noah and his sons did.

God was faithful and answered Noah’s prayers for his family.

Lying on his cot, Noah thought back to the days not long before the deluge.

Animals began arriving in pairs, walking onto the ark.

They knew.

Noah marveled at their docile complicity.

He and his sons organized them, praying for wisdom as they penned and settled them in.

Then came the day when God gave a final warning.

Seven days, He said.

In seven days, judgment would begin.

Noah had stood in front of the ark on a box he had made, shouting passionately to the people of the terrible reckoning to come.

There was room aboard, if they would only believe and come in!

By this time Noah had spent a life’s accumulation of wealth to build the ark.

He had nothing left but a promise of salvation.

At the end of seven days, God invited Noah and his family to come into the ark with Him.

Noah was touched by the fact that God called them in.

He didn’t know what was coming, but He knew he wanted to be in God’s presence when it came. From his place overlooking the gathering of increasingly aggressive and angry people, Noah made one last appeal.

Would anyone turn from their evil ways, have faith in God and enter into the ark?

He wept as he turned and entered.

Stones thudded against his back as he climbed the ramp.

Behind him, the door closed, causing the crowd to gasp in astonishment.

Before their eyes there appeared a thick coat of black pitch all around the edges of the door, and a deafeningly loud round of thunder boomed as lightning struck all around them.

It had begun.

Noah thought of the world he looked upon in those last few moments before he entered the ark. All was lush and green.

The vegetation was thick and dense.

The air was filled with an ever-present light mist and a pale blue sky spread out above.

The temperature varied little and all seemed tranquil and still.

And now...

It was hard for Noah to imagine what had been happening outside the ark.

At first from lamplit glow and cool stillness inside the great vessel, they heard cursing and the thudding of rocks against the door and side of the ark, but a few hours after the Lord had shut and sealed the door, the cursing and anger of the people turned to panicky fear as the earth rocked and bucked, the water rising first to their ankles and then higher.

Now people pounded on the outside of the ark, crying out and calling for mercy.

Eventually, the calls for help turned to terrified screams.

Noah would never forget the sounds of people realizing the terrifying consequences of their rebellion, and he took no pleasure in it.

He had been cursed, spit on, and even struck on occasion.

At the least, people laughed, shaking their heads, and calling him a lunatic.

Often in this past year in the ark, he had wept in his bed, thinking of how the screams eventually ceased as the ark lifted from its moorings and began to move on the water.

Noah shuddered, thinking about what must have happened underneath the ark as the days passed and the animals slept in their enclosures.

The ark in all its immensity pitched and rolled like a tiny toy on the water.

The sound of water rushing around him and spilling from the heavens was deafening!

How could Noah have known the extent of the complete and utter destruction below him, not to mention the unthinkable, crushing cascade of water from above?

Immense cracks in the earth broke open, unleashing geysers of water upward.

Meteors rocketed from above crashing into the earth, smashing, and pulverizing the land.

Tectonic plates shifted violently, thrusting shelves of rock upward to the sky and separating the earth into enormous continents.

These continents moved underneath miles of water, shifting cataclysmically, changing the very face of the planet under the crushing weight of water.

As these unthinkably huge masses of land moved under the tumultuous seas, they caused waves miles and miles high to race across the surface of the water.

Volcanos erupted under the surface, unleashing molten rock out and up.

Mountains and canyons formed in hours as the earth turned inside out and the deluge continued. On the surface of the waters, a tiny speck, a minute wooden structure raced, rose, and fell with the waves.

Inside, eight humans and some 16,000 of God’s creatures rode out the storm as the entire planet was destroyed and forever altered.

The old world and all in it now lay buried under the water.

Everything, all flesh, was dead.

As thoughts of death, destruction, and of his family’s deliverance filled Noah’s head, he realized that he had sent the dove out a week previous, and the dove had not returned.

 “This is day 371,” Noah reflected. “53 weeks exactly. What shall I do now, Lord?” he wondered aloud.

Suddenly the overwhelming presence of God filled Noah’s room.

He sat up and swung his legs out, settling his feet on the rough floor underneath, casting his gaze submissively down at the boards he had hewn with his own hands many years before. The voice of the Lord, warm and rich, filled the room.

“Noah, go out of the ark.

You, your wife, your sons, and your daughters-in-law.

Bring out all the animals, birds, cattle, all those that creep on the ground, that they may breed, multiply and be fruitful.”

Noah and his sons chopped through the thick tie-down ropes with their axes and removed the covering from the ark.

The sun shone brightly on a world none of them could fathom.

They all gasped in utter astonishment.

Nothing was the same.

Noah wept, thinking of all those who had perished, and at the overwhelming sight before him. Everything was new.

Okay.

How many of us have ever conceived of the flood in this way?

I don’t believe for a second that I even came anywhere near capturing it here, but I’m pretty sure it’s closer than what most of us (including me) thought as we read the account in Genesis. I’ll issue one more challenge.

If you believe that God indeed created all things, could He not do this?

What if you took this concept, that of a cataclysmic, earth destroying and altering year-long series of events and applied it to the fossil record and the incomplete geologic column we see here on earth today?

This as opposed to the concept of a billions-of-years long uninterrupted and uniform continuity of natural processes with no cause and no planning.

Some of you have held a fossilized shark tooth in your hand that was found ten miles from here as you listened to me read this account.

This begs the question, how did a shark tooth get there?

As challenging as the acceptance of a true Genesis flood account may be, I have another challenge for you that is of even greater immediacy, if not importance.

Please open your Bibles to Romans chapter 6.

As you find your places, I’ll remind you that we have considered the events in Genesis 6-8:19 as a type, or in other words a picture of salvation.

First came sin and separation from God, then nearly complete and total judgment, which destroyed everything and killed everyone, except for the few who had faith in God, the few who believed and trusted Him.

God obliterated everything they had known before, and they stepped off the ark into a new world where nothing was the same.

SLIDE 2 – Out with the Old, in with the new

Let’s read from Romans 6, verses 1-11.

**“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection, 6knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him,* that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God. 11Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Do you see the connection between the world-wide cataclysmic flood and our own personal salvation?

Now, I’ll pause here and make a couple of observations.

How have we managed to misunderstand salvation so thoroughly?

I think it has a lot to do with how it is presented.

*Say a quick prayer and you’re good, Right? Do you believe in Jesus? Good. That’s all there is to it. That wasn’t too painful, now, was it?*

The problem with this type of conversion experience is that nothing has changed for you, other than you got your free pass into heaven.

For many of us, this “sinner’s prayer” was just a means of hedging our bets.

How do I know this?

Because I see no change in so many people, and I’ve seen too little change in me.

Here's the thing.

What did God do in response to the pervasive, rampant sin and evil in the world He had previously declared GOOD, by which He meant perfect?

He utterly destroyed it, with the exception of a precious few with whom He found favor because of their faith in Him.

If you have recognized and reckoned with your own sin and have found favor with God because of your resulting faith and trust in Jesus to remove that sin,

He has obliterated everything about you before you made that decision in response to His love.

It is dead.

You are dead.

Don’t believe me?

Let’s look again at the passage from Romans.

We were buried with Christ, and we live with Him!

Verse 4 tells us,

“...**we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”**

There may be several things that happen when the Christian considers this verse.

We either don’t grasp the truth, the reality of this statement, and so we fail to live it,

or we willfully ignore it and continue on living the life that God destroyed for us,

or we ignore it and try to live righteously under our own power.

This is one we see all the time.

People try to change themselves, instead of understanding what God has done within them.

I think the most common response to this reality, though, is that we love the old, dead person that we are without Christ.

We don’t want to let that person go.

Speaking just for myself, I really like not having to guard my thoughts.

I like not being intentional about my walk with Christ.

There are things in life I do that separate me from God, and much of the time, those are exactly the things I would prefer to do.

You see, many of us profess belief in Jesus, which should lead to a new life with new desires and a new focus, but we hang on to everything we possibly can from our fleshly life.

Many of these things are deadly, even for the Christian.

So here is where the rubber meets the road in terms of our Christianity.

Ask yourself, do my priorities match those of my Father in heaven?

Am I concerned with the things He is concerned with?

Have I put ALL of my faith and trust in Him, or am I withholding some of it from Him?

God wants you and me to abandon all that was before.

He wants us to walk in newness of life.

He has reconciled us to Him.

We who were far off have been brought near, so why do we continually break free and run away, back to the traps and chains that once held us down?

It’s like trying to jump out the window of the ark into the swirling, roiling hundred-foot waves!

Why do we do this?

I mentioned last week that our salvation is not for us, it is for God.

He loves us and wants fellowship, a relationship with us.

I may have been a little too absolute with that statement.

Of course our salvation is for us also.

God wants for us to be free from the entanglement and eventual death that sin causes.

He eternally existed in love and fellowship within the Trinitarian Godhead, and He created us to join in that fellowship, and now he has moved heaven and earth to bring us back to Him because He loves us SO much!

SLIDE 3

Ephesians 4:22-24 tells us that If we have learned anything from Christ, to

**“put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”**

We have been given a choice.

We can either put off the old man and put on the new, or we can remain in our old, dead flesh. Either way, it is an exercise of our free will.

Think of it this way:

As a Christian you have been adopted, and you have a new name, a new home, and new parents. A new life lies in front of you.

You can choose to love your adopted parents back because they have chosen you, or you can reject the kindness they have shown you and refuse to be in relationship with them, insisting on using your old name, repeatedly running away to the filthy dump you once lived in, and the abusive toxic parents you were born to.

All of this, despite the fact that God destroyed all that, and you are free from it.

From now on when you read or think of the flood account in Genesis, please see it as something real that we can learn from and be shaped by.

It is a strikingly helpful picture of what God has done for each of us.

You are or were a sinner in need of saving.

God made ONE way for you to be saved and invited you to enter in with Him.

You live with Him in the shelter He has made, and now He wants you to go out and warn others of the danger they are in and how they can be saved too.

 I will make one final appeal to you.

Please recognize how completely God has obliterated the old you and the old life you once lived in the flesh.

Please recognize how your desire to return to the old, rotten flesh holds you back.

SLIDE 4 – Who do you love?

1 John 2:15-17 warns us,

**“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”**

Yes, you read that right. It’s going to happen again. The world is passing away. God will again judge all of His creation.

Why did people fail to heed the warnings of judgment given them for over a hundred years through Noah?

Because they saw nothing wrong with themselves or the world they lived in.

Are we the same way?

As for you, it is not enough that you have trusted God to the point where you were willing to get on the ark. God says in Genesis 8:16,

“Go out of the ark.”

Now, step off the ark into the new world and step into new life God has given you.

SLIDE 5

A Single Point of Application:

1. Let go of your past.

(Romans 6:4, Ephesians 4:22-24, 1 John 2:15-17)