

Noah (Part 2)

“Symphony #2: It's a zoo out there”

For those who are with us for the first time today, we have been studying the book of Genesis. Each week we take a section or sections of the book and see if it has anything to say to us, as 21st century people.

Our story begins with some themes that have already been being played. With every good symphony, the composer introduces scales or segments of text and melody that will find their way into the score later. Sure enough, that's how the Creator Composer of our Eternal Symphony has done it today. The theme of waters over the earth, and of the animals being brought near to the man, in those days to be named, and in these to be spared find their way into our ears. There is also a theme introduced earlier that is playing here but will come to fullness later in the Torah and that's the clean vs. unclean animals. I'm regularly amazed how few non-Jews understand why Jewish people don't eat certain meats, lobsters, etc. The supporting data, or shall I stick to our musical motif, the later movement is featured in Leviticus and repeated in Deuteronomy. Look at the other themes: there is only one way into the ark, which saves humanity. Or another: God makes covenant with people, even with a person, one at a time.

So today here are 3 movements:

- I. *God's invitation* to Noah to come into the ark
- II. *Noah's obedience*
- III. *The coming of the threatened deluge*

Let's read our text. Genesis 7 [for those online, see the text at the end of the sermon, as well as other endnotes not preached]

Evidences for a global flood

Some argue that there is no evidence of a global flood, and there are many believers who say such. Let me offer just a couple that I think help us although you won't lose your sanctification or your chance to eat lunch with us today if you disagree!

1) **Other non-biblical writings:**

Just a few examples, although there are many others

ATRAHASIS EPIC

Akkadian—early 2nd millennium BC

A cosmological epic depicts creation and early human history, including the flood

GILGAMESH EPIC

Akkadian—early 2nd millennium BC

Gilgamesh, ruler of Uruk, experiences numerous adventures, including a meeting with Utnapishtim, the only survivor of a great deluge

KING LISTS

Sumerian—late 3rd millennium BC

The reigns of Sumerian kings before the flood are described as lasting for thousands of years, reminding us of the longevity of the pre-flood patriarchs

You have to know that Sumeria and Akkadia are parts of ancient Babylon, and are some of the most ancient of texts available to us historically. These ancient documents evidence for us that others were saying similar things to the biblical record. This of course makes sense if Ham, Shem and Japheth traveled to different parts of the new globe and brought their tribal stories along with them.

2) **Biological evidence of flood: The bones are a-talking**

This from some the Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties. "Perhaps the most striking evidences of the violence of the Deluge throughout the earth are to be found in the amazing profusion of Pleistocene or Recent animals whose bones have been discovered in a violently separated state in several ossiferous fissures that have been excavated in various locations in Europe and North America. Rehwinkel (*The Flood*) indicates that these fissures occur even in hills of considerable height, and they

extend to a depth of anywhere from 140 feet to 300 feet. Since no skeleton is complete, it is safe to conclude that none of these animals (mammoth, bears, wolves, oxen, hyenas, rhinoceros, aurochs, deer, and many smaller mammals) fell into these fissures alive, nor were they rolled there by streams."

3) Geology: The plates are a-moving

Anyone familiar with plate tectonics, the science related to underground geological strata, knows that scientists agree that the continents are shifting apart from one another. And you don't have to be a scientist to see that Africa used to fit neatly into South America. The earth I believe used to be one giant landmass, with the center being the Garden of Eden. Man failed, was removed from there, and filled the earth with pagan-ness and refused to walk with God. "Raq rah kol hayom" we read last week, "Only evil all the day (continually)". What a summary judgment on the human race. God was constrained to judge us, and brought the flood. As a result of the global flood, the continents were formed, separated, and are still floating away from one another. Only a global flood can explain this.

God called and Noah Obeyed

Now that was entirely background. Whew. Let's get on with our exegetical study today. First, the call or invitation to Noah. It is for himself and his family and a few creatures.

In the midst of the pagan cultures that Noah in ~~which~~ found himself, the living God, Yahweh called to Noah. The name of God often changes in the Torah. Elohim was first, and is often identified with the creation and in other cultures may be the God of Nature. But Yahweh is the covenantal name of God with Israel and is His nickname of mercy. It's Yahweh who calls Noah. Mercy is extended. What grace and kindness! How great is our God!

But wait: Is there room enough? I believe there was plenty, not only for Noah and family and the families of animals, but also for many others, to whom Noah preached, to be included.

The ark and fitting all the animals

The ark was fairly box-like in shape (as would be probable in view of its special purpose); it would have had a capacity of 3.6 million cubic feet. This is the capacity of about two thousand cattle cars, each of which can carry 18 to 20 cattle, 60 to 80 hogs, or 80 to 100 sheep. There are only 290 main species of land animals larger in size than sheep. There are 757 more species ranging in size from sheep to rats, and there are 1,358 species smaller than rats. Two individuals of each of these species would fit very comfortably into two thousand cattle cars, with plenty of room for fodder.

Noah's invitation from God was further declared by Noah from God. As a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5), Noah warned his contemporaries of coming judgment and testified to the vitality of his own faith (Hebrews 11:7). I believe that the way we understand God is the way we will treat others, especially those who don't know Him. If you see God as gracious and extending mercy to you, then you will extend that to others. Remember what Y'shua said in the parable of the Unforgiving Servant? The way you treat others often reflects what you think about God's treating of you. Noah received grace "matza chen" and wanted to pass it on to others. Hence he preached.

Yesterday Kyle and I went to Bondi Junction to hand out tracts and share Y'shua with many. One man, Mick, an unbelieving Gentile approached me with venom. He was tired of all the Gospel peddlers. He was bothered by the ownership each one claimed over their god and the declaration each one had of eternal hell for the others. But he wouldn't listen to a word I had to say. He had his mind made up and continued to toss out question after question. But he wasn't listening for any answer. Do you reckon I answered him? This was so hard, but I leaned against a pole and listened to him ramble and rant for about 3 minutes. It seemed like

eternity. God is gracious and I wanted to be to Mick. Maybe he will think about this today, but yesterday his ears were closed.

However Haidi and Inger were different. These Jewish women actually listened to what I had to say, and although they didn't give me their details for further follow-up, their giving ear to my comments made me aware that they were hungry in measure for God.

Finally, though Ben and Zoe and Sam were all keen to learn and gave me their details. They would have listened to Noah as he preached. They might have been open enough to attend classes and maybe they would have entered the ark. They are certainly willing to meet up and we might just see them here soon.

One thing is clear, if God invites you, you ought to be inviting others to join Him! Listen to this reference to God's grace and announcement of it: Dr. Lightfoot very probably conjectures that Methuselah was alive in the first month of this year. And it appears, says he, how clearly the Spirit of prophecy foretold of things to come, when it directed his father Enoch almost a thousand years before to name him Methuselah. This name is translated "they die by a dart;" or, "he dies, and then is the dart;" or, "he dies, and then it is sent." And thus Adam and Methuselah had measured the whole time between the creation and the flood, and lived above two hundred and forty years together.

So the 7 days is an extension of Grace, that Noah found and wants to extend to the human family. Sounds familiar eh?

John Wesley wrote in his commentary on this text, " It shall be seven days yet before I do it, After the 120 years were expired, God grants them a reprieve of seven days longer, both to show how slow he is to anger, and to give them some farther space for repentance. But all

in vain; these seven days were trifled away after all the rest, they continued secure until the day that the flood came. " This is similar to the saying in the Fathers according to Rabbi Nathan and from Rashi as well. Some even allude to the 7days being Shiva for Methuselah.

Remember the message of Y'shua in the book of Matthew? He said, "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be... Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. Matthew 24:37-44

There will be a day that God closes the door. The ark will not always be available. If you are not yet a believer, for what are you waiting? Today may be your day of entering into the community of faith and being with the ones who found grace. Noah heard the invitation; he obeyed and built the ark.

The floods came

But then the floods came. The music changes. The timpani beat out a new cadence. The cymbals crash. The floods of the violins first pluck the strings to indicate drops of rain, and then it comes, one by one, each instrument adds its sounds to the cacophony. Each one plays more furiously and more pronouncedly. The composer is making the statement.

There is judgment. There is war with evil. There is the sound of chaos. The earth, which was 'very good', is now being erased. It will be washed clean and renewed.

Some of you who are computer technicians will understand that God was rebooting, or reinitializing the hard drive and erasing the former contents. The rains came for 40 days and 40 nights. Have you ever been to Niagara Falls? Or Fitzroy Falls? Or seen the effects of the Big Wet around Sydney? Torrential rains over a few days make for full creeks and riverbeds. Waters rise very quickly and houses can be lifted off their moorings

Verse 4. Forty days — This period became afterwards sacred, and was considered a proper space for humiliation. Moses fasted forty days, Deuteronomy 9:9, 11; so did Elijah, 1 Kings 19:8; so did our Lord, Matthew 4:2. Forty days' respite were given to the Ninevites that they might repent, Jon 3:4; and thrice forty (one hundred and twenty) years were given to the Old World for the same gracious purpose, Genesis 6:3. The forty days of Lent, in commemoration of our Lord's fasting, have a reference to the same thing; as each of these seems to be deduced from this primitive judgment.

7:20 *covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet.* The ark was 45 feet high (6:15), so the water was deep enough to keep it from running aground. My friend David Ritchie, pastor of Mowbray Anglican Church, and I were down in Minnamurra the other day for two different reasons and happened on each other. We stood a few feet from and looking at the Minnamurra River. I asked David if his new 24-foot boat could travel from Lane Cove to Minnamurra. But he told me that it needed place for the deep hull, perhaps 2 meters deep, or it would catch a sandbar and run aground. Aha, this all made sense. That the waters of the deep had to break up and the levels of the flood waters from above had to descend enough, so that the ark itself would rise above it all.

Then think about this one. The very thing that caused destruction to the earth and to its inhabitants brought salvation to Noah and his family. The judgment was the flood; the salvation was the flood. What caused the heathen to die took Noah and his family to their new home and to their New World. The very agent of the water for the one brought death and to the other brought life. What will you do with the plan and purposes of God? What will you do with His grace and His judgments?

When you hear the cry of the preacher to repent... will you repent? Will you rise above the judgments of the world and hear the mercies of God?

Summary:

Some final thoughts:

- 1) God makes covenants with persons, that is He wants to be in relationship with you, personally**
- 2) There is only one way into the ark.**
- 3) You cannot negotiate with raging waters, you have to submit to them and/or ride them to their end**
- 4) Family continues to be important to the biblical record. If you are not in one, let's see what we can do to help you find one.**

Brothers and sisters, we have eternal life due to the Saviour, due to His love and forgiveness. No amount of good works will give us enough information to help us overcome evil. No amount of information will help us overcome our own evil inclination. Only the messiah can repair our relationship with God and give us pleasure with Him.

If you have never experienced this eternal and new life about which we are speaking, if you are yet outside the relationship with God, then pray with me. If you haven't yet been restored into communion with Him, then why not pray this prayer and ask God to forgive you of your sins, whatever they might be, and come home to pleasure with God?

Lord forgive me in the name of the Messiah, the Serpent Bruiser, Y'shua himself. Forgive me for all my sins, and make me clean again. Give me eternal life in the name of Y'shua and make me born again. I trust you.

Let me find grace.

Actual Text

Gen. 7:1 ¶ Then the LORD said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household; for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.

Gen. 7:2 "You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female;

Gen. 7:3 also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth.

Gen. 7:4 "For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made."

Gen. 7:5 And Noah did according to all that the LORD had commanded him.

Gen. 7:6 ¶ Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth.

Gen. 7:7 Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood.

Gen. 7:8 Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground,

Gen. 7:9 there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.

Gen. 7:10 And it came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth.

Gen. 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened.

Gen. 7:12 And the rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

Gen. 7:13 ¶ On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark,

Gen. 7:14 they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds.

Gen. 7:15 So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life.

Gen. 7:16 And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed it behind him.