

Genesis 7 "The Flood: When God Took Action"***

Proposition: In Genesis 7, God took action by sending the Flood. In doing so, He revealed for us two of His attributes.

I. We see God's grace (1-10).

A. God gave Noah instructions (1-3).

1. Enter the ark (1).

2. Take animals with you (2-3).

B. God gave Noah an explanation (4).

1. I will send the Flood in seven days.

2. I will destroy every living creature.

C. God gave Noah protection (5-10).

1. Noah did what he was told to do.

2. God did what He said He would do.

II. We see God's judgment (11-24).

A. God sent the Flood (11-12).

1. Water came from beneath the earth.

2. Water came from above the earth.

B. God preserved a remnant (13-16).

1. This included one family.

2. This included every kind of living creature.

C. God destroyed those not in the ark (17-24).

1. If you were in the ark, you lived.

2. If you were not in the ark, you perished.

Implications: We learn four practical lessons...

1. God means what He says.

2. It's always best to obey God.

3. God's judgment is certain and severe.

4. God's grace is sufficient for us.

Roger had been burdened for his neighbor, Pete, for some time. Pete was a nice guy, for sure, but every Sunday when Roger headed for church he noticed Pete's car remained in the garage.

One day he took a break from his yard work, walked next door, and began a conversation with his neighbor. He asked Pete, "Have you given much thought to the person of Jesus Christ and what He did for us?"

Pete refused to make eye contact, and in fact, looked around as if searching for an escape route from danger. The air was tense. Finally, Pete shifted his weight, cleared his throat, and responded, "Roger, I'm not interested in religion. I'm a good person, so don't take me wrong. If this 'God-stuff' makes life more pleasurable for you, fine, but I'm satisfied with my life just the way it is. So let's talk about the weather, okay?"

End of conversation. Ever been there?

Pete and people like Pete are convinced they are just fine the way they are. But are they fine? Pete said he was "satisfied with his life just the way it is." But is it possible to be satisfied with your life and be in grave danger? Indeed it is.

How do I know? There was a time long ago when the world was full of people like Pete, and I mean, *full*. In fact, of the world's entire population there was only *one man* (and his family) who was not living for the gusto in the here and now. That man, and the world of that day learned a lesson of eternal importance--and for the world, the lesson was learned too late. Here's the lesson...

There is a God who will take action.

Our text today is Genesis 7. The man I've just mentioned, of course, is Noah. According to the Bible, Noah was "a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God (6:9)."

According to the genealogy in Genesis 5, Noah was the tenth generation from Adam. It's remarkable, yet true according to the Scriptures. In just ten generations, the world went from paradise to being full of wickedness. In stark contrast to Noah, the rest of the earth "was corrupt in God's sight and full of violence (6:11)."

And so God took action. How? In Genesis 7, God took action by sending the Flood.

I know you know the story. But do you know the real significance of the Flood? What does the Flood teach us about God? Pete needs to know, doesn't he? And Pete's neighbor needs to know, too.

When God sent the world-wide deluge, as recorded in Genesis 7, He revealed for us two of His attributes. Here's the first.

I. We see God's grace (1-10).

What is grace? Grace is what Noah found in the eyes of God (6:8). Grace is when God gives us what we don't deserve. 2 Corinthians 8:9 explains, "But you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you, through His poverty might become rich."

So grace gives. That's exactly what we see in the first part of Genesis 7. God gave Noah three things in verses 1-10.

A. God gave Noah instructions (1-3). "The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. 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, 3 and also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth."

What were the instructions? Notice two...

1. *Enter the ark (1)*. Who was to enter it? God told Noah that he and his family were to enter the ark, the one they built according to God's command in chapter 6.

Answer this. Why did God spare Noah and destroy the rest of the world? God gives the answer in verse 1, "Because I have found you righteous in this generation."

Do you see grace here? Why was Noah permitted to come to the ark? You say, "Well, he built it." Yes, but why did he build it? Because God told him to. God warned him that destruction was coming. God established a covenant relationship with Noah according to 6:18. It's true that Noah built the ark, and he did so because his life had been transformed by grace.

You see, in His grace, God gave Noah a relationship with Himself. Noah was saved *by grace* just as we are. He became right with God the same way we do, *by faith*, as Hebrews 11:7 states, "By his faith he [Noah] condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes *by faith*."

But God's grace does not eliminate human responsibility--indeed, it makes it possible. God commanded Noah, "Enter the ark." Don't miss this. Noah built the ark, that's great. But the ark would do him no good if he failed to what? Get on it.

I don't know how long Noah had been building the ark--the text doesn't say. A statement God made in 6:3 may indicate he'd been at it for up to 120 years! That's a long time to obey God, isn't it? But past obedience would do him no good now. On this day Noah needed to obey God. He needed to get on the ark.

Beloved, I'm concerned about something. I meet people all the time who say, "Well, I *used to* go to church regularly." Or, "I *used to* teach a Sunday School class." Know this. God does not reward *fast starters*, only *faithful finishers*.

God instructed Noah to enter the ark. Then He gave him a second instruction...

2. *Take animals with you (2-3)*. How many animals? Verse 2--*seven* of every kind of clean animal.

The skeptic cries, "See! A contradiction in the Bible! In 6:19 Noah was told to bring *two* animals. Here it says *seven*. That's a contradiction!"

Wrong. There's no conflict here. The second passage merely includes a detail not mentioned in the first. Noah was to take seven of what type of animal? The *clean* animals. Seven clean animals, two unclean animals. That's not referring to hygiene. A clean animal was one that was acceptable to God for sacrifice.

Moses, writing in the fifteenth century B.C., knew all about clean animals--much of the Pentateuch deals with matters of ceremonial "cleanness." But this text indicates that the distinction between *clean* and *unclean* animals preceded the Mosaic Law.

What did Noah do right after he came out of the ark? According to Genesis 8:20, "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."

So in His grace, God gave Noah instructions. Secondly...

B. God gave Noah an explanation (4). "Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth ["destroy" in the KJV] every living creature I have made."

There's the explanation. Why did Noah need to enter the ark and bring some animals along? Because of two impending actions by God. The first, God said...

1. *I will send the Flood in seven days*. Seven days. That would give Noah and his family adequate time to make final preparations for their trip. And two...

2. *I will destroy every living creature.* May I remind you that God has the right to do as He pleases with His world. He made it for His glory.

Please note that these are the last recorded words of God to Noah until after the Flood itself. God does not speak again--at least as recorded in the text--until 8:15, more than a year later. God's final message to Noah before the Flood was, "Enter the ark." His first speech after the Flood began, "Come out of the ark." During the year between those two messages, God was silent--and Noah waited patiently.

Isn't that how it is for us, too? The Christian life involves obedience and waiting. We obey God's Word and then wait for further light which comes when needed.

A third evidence of grace...

C. God gave Noah protection (5-10). "And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him. 6 Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. 7 And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. 8 Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, 9 male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. 10 And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth."

I'm impressed by two things here.

1. *Noah did what he was told to do.* ALL that he was told to do (5). He entered the ark (7). He took the animals along (8-9). Noah did exactly what he was told to do. Similarly...

2. *God did what He said He would do.* After seven days, He sent the Flood--just like He said He would. What's more, He protected Noah--again, just like He said He would.

And notice that the animals *came to Noah* (9)--just like God promised they would back in 6:20. God keeps His Word.

I want to call to your attention an important statement in verse 7. Why did Noah and his family enter the ark? The answer? *To escape the waters of the flood.*

Answer this. Was it raining when they got on the ark? No. The sun was shining, wasn't it? Do you think Noah felt like getting on the ark? Do you think he felt like leaving behind his house, his possessions, his earthly treasures, and walking down the road to the ark? Do you think he felt like going through the door when his neighbors were there mocking him and calling him a religious lunatic?

I'm not sure he felt like getting on the ark. I'm quite confident it was a beautiful day, and his rational senses screamed out, "Why get on that ark? What if the Flood doesn't come? You'll be a fool."

But he got on and here's why. He took God at His Word. Are you?

Some of you need to get right with God, but you've resisted. And the reason is you've been waiting for a *feeling*.

"If God would just send me a *feeling*, then I'd know for sure I could come to the Cross and He'd save me." My friend, you don't need a feeling. You need to take God at His Word and obey Him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved (Acts 16:31)." That's what He said. And that's what He'll do. Why? Because He is a God of *grace*.

But...He's not just a God of grace. In the second portion of Genesis 7 we come face to face with a second attribute of God.

II. We see God's judgment (11-24).

You'll notice three divine activities in this section. First...

A. God sent the Flood (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. 12 And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights."

It's amazing to ponder the power of water out of control. In *The World That Perished*, John Whitcomb, Jr. offers this commentary, "Nothing can quite compare to the terror and sense of helplessness that people experience when in the presence of huge masses of water on the rampage. Our nation will never forget what happened to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in 1889, when 20,000,000 tons of water from Conemaugh Lake swept into the city and killed 2,200 people. The Ohio and Mississippi River floods of 1937 killed 400, left 1,000,000 homeless, and destroyed \$500,000,000 worth of property. In South America, in May of 1970, an avalanche of water, rocks, and mud, rushing nearly 100 miles an hour down the slopes of the Andes, totally buried the Peruvian cities of Yungay and Ranrahirca with 14,000 inhabitants."

As staggering as those events were, they do not begin to compare with *The Flood* of Genesis 7. In fact, what happened in Genesis 7 was a totally unique event never to be repeated again on the earth. "No other phenomenon has ever been equivalent or similar to it," as Aalders puts it.

A common objection says, "There's not enough water in the world to cause a world-wide flood. Where did the water come from and where did it go?" Actually, there is plenty of water as both science and the Bible verify.

First a word from a scientific perspective. In a chapter entitled, "An Engineer Looks at Noah's Ark," taken from the book *The Ark on Ararat* by Tim LaHaye and John Morris, the authors explain (pp. 252-3), "It has been calculated in recent years, due to vastly increased knowledge concerning the earth's surface, that if all the globe were smoothed out into a perfect sphere (no mountains, no ocean basins), that the waters would cover the land to a depth of one and one-half miles. As it is, water covers approximately two-thirds of the surface of the earth, and the average elevation of the land is approximately at 7,800 feet below sea level. Make no mistake, there is plenty of water."

What science supports the Bible clearly indicates. Verse 11 plainly states that the Flood waters came from, not one, but two sources.

1. *Water came from beneath the earth.* The text indicates that "the springs [or "fountains," KJV] of the great deep burst forth." Remember, the created world was very different from the Post-Flood world we know. In the first world, it didn't rain according to Genesis 2:5. According to Genesis 2:6, "Streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground."

Apparently, there were vast, subterranean caverns of water beneath the earth's crust. But on this day, in volcano-like fashion, these "springs of the deep" burst forth. It was devastating. In addition...

2. *Water came from above the earth.* As verse 11 records, "The floodgates of the heavens were opened."

This was no pitter-patter rainfall. This was turbulent. Remember the water canopy mentioned in Genesis 1:7? Apparently, there was a vast layer of water that enveloped the first world in the atmosphere above. But on this day that canopy came crashing down.

Some envision the scene as follows. At first a rain drop, then another, then a few more. Then a steady rain. Then a downpour. And then people start running for their houses, and then their roof tops, and then for high

ground.

I don't think so. I don't think there was time for any running. This was devastation like we've never seen. The waters below burst through the earth's surface, and the waters above fell in great force. And it lasted for *forty days and forty nights*.

Which raises a question. What kind of effect did the Flood have on the world? Genesis 7 records a second divine activity that makes it clear that not everyone perished. First, God sent the Flood. Second...

B. God preserved a remnant (13-16). "On that very day [What day? *The day God had specified seven days earlier*] Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark [Notice Noah's obedience]. 14 They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. 15 Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. 16 The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in."

On this day of judgment, not everyone perished. God preserved a remnant.

1. *This included one family.* And...

2. *This included every kind of living creature.* Wild animals were represented. So were pairs of livestock, ground creatures, and birds.

And notice what God did at the end of verse 16, "Then the LORD shut him in." God shut the door to insure the safety of the remnant from the judgment.

God preserved a remnant. And why? Because His plan of redemption depended on it. In Genesis 3:15 He promised to send a Deliverer to the world to rescue mankind.

Know this. Those God *calls* He *keeps*. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Romans 8:35 asks. And the answer--"I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers...will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God sent the Flood. Then God preserved a remnant. But thirdly...

C. God destroyed those not in the ark (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. 18 The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. 19 They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. 20 The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet. 21 Every living thing that moved on the earth perished -- birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. 22 Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. 23 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.

24 The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days."

What about that ark? Could Noah really survive the storm in it? Henry Morris, a Christian scientist who has written several books in the area of hydraulics and water resources, comments, "Both hydrodynamic calculations and laboratory wave-tank model testing have demonstrated that the ark was so dimensioned as to be exceedingly stable in the violent waters of the Flood. It was, once loaded, practically impossible to capsize, and would align itself in such a direction as to ride the waves most comfortably."

Yes, Noah and his family survived, but no one else did. No one. It boiled down to two options...

1. *If you were in the ark, you lived.*

2. *If you were not in the ark, you perished.* There was no middle ground. Notice the emphasis on *every* in this section. "*Every* living thing perished (21)." "*Everything* on dry land...died (22)." "*Every* living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out (23)." A world of 250 million people or more (some estimate as many as one billion people) perished.

Did anyone survive? Verse 23 concludes, "Only Noah was left and those with him on the ark."

Dear friend, we're in the same situation today. The fact is, we face the same two options the people of Noah's world faced. God's judgment is coming--for sure. But there's a place of deliverance. Where? At the Cross. Why must we come to the Cross? Because the Cross of Jesus is the ark of deliverance. If you want to escape the judgment of God, you must come to the Cross. If you are in Christ, you will live. If you are not in Christ, you will perish forever.

There is a God who will take action. If there's anything that Genesis 7 makes clear, it's that. Before we leave the story allow me to suggest some implications.

Implications: We learn four practical lessons...

1. *God means what He says.* Professor, author, and speaker, R.C. Sproul, tells the story about an Old Testament Survey class he once taught. There were 250 students in the class. In the syllabus he stated the requirements in clear, unmistakable terms: three papers due on September 30, October 30, and November 30. If the paper is not turned in on time, there will be an automatic "F."

When the first paper was due, ten people were not ready. They pleaded for mercy, "Please Professor Sproul, have mercy!" And he did. He gave them an extension.

The next due date twenty-five students were not ready. Another plea, another extension.

When the third paper was due, fifty people were not ready. But they weren't too worried. They knew the prof was merciful.

You can guess what happened. "John, do you have your paper?" Sproul asked a student.

"Sorry, Prof, not yet. But I'll get it to you soon," he replied.

To which the professor replied, "No, I'm sorry. You know the requirements. No paper, an automatic F. That goes for everyone.

One student bellowed out, "You can't do that! That's not *fair!*"

To which Sproul replied, "Okay, if you want what's *fair*, you get an 'F' for this paper, and an 'F' for the others you turned in late as well."

Beloved, we tend to think that because God is patient and longsuffering, He doesn't care, and that our sin is not that big of a deal to Him. Wrong. A holy God must deal with sin, and He will. Furthermore, He does not owe us mercy. If you are presuming upon His patience, beware. God means what He says.

"It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment (Heb 9:27)." He means what He says.

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him (John 3:36)." He means what He says.

"Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom 10:13)." He means what He says.

The wicked "are like chaff that the wind blows away...For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish (Ps 1:4, 6)." God means what He says.

Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing (John 15:5)." He means what He says.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive what is due him (2 Cor 5:10)." He means what He says.

2. *It's always best to obey God.* It pays to obey. Obedience is always right.

Some of you are in a storm right now. God knows. And He has a plan. He could remove the storm, but on the other hand, He may want to take you *through* the storm. Are you willing to cooperate?

If Noah could speak to us today he'd surely say this—"It's always best to obey God."

3. *God's judgment is certain and severe.* Think of the impact the Flood had on Noah. While he was on the ark, the entire world perished around him. The guy he had bought lumber from...perished. The Feed Store owner he bought animal supplies from...perished. His next door neighbors...perished.

2 Peter 2:15 says that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness." While he was building the ark, he warned people of the imminent judgment. Do you realize what God told the prophet Ezekiel? Check out Ezekiel 2:3-3 and 3:16-21 some time. In essence God told Ezekiel, "If you know that someone is heading for judgment and fail to warn them, then *you* are accountable for their fate."

Dear friend, the day of judgment is coming. No, it will not be a world-wide flood the next time. Rather, according to 2 Peter 3, God is going to destroy the universe by *fire*. Is there an ark of deliverance from that judgment? Yes, His name is Jesus Christ. At the Cross, Christ died in the place of sinners who deserve destruction. And then He rose again so that those who believe in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

4. *God's grace is sufficient for us.* In His grace, He provided the ark to deliver Noah and his family. And in His grace, God provided the Cross for us.

Yes, God's grace is sufficient for you. Thank Him today.