

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 6/18/2000 Brad Brandt

Genesis 8 "Lessons about God from The Flood"*

Proposition: The account of The Flood in Genesis 8 teaches us three lessons about God.

I. God preserves His people (1-14).

A. God remembered Noah (1-5).

1. He sent a wind (1).

2. He removed the water (2-5).

B. Noah waited on God (6-14).

1. Waiting on God is not inactivity.

2. Waiting on God involves active devotion.

II. God has a plan for His people (15-19).

A. God gave instructions to Noah (15-17).

1. Come out.

2. Bring out.

B. Noah obeyed (18-19).

III. God accepts His people on the basis of sacrifice, not merit (20-22).

A. Noah built an altar to the Lord (20).

B. The Lord was pleased with Noah (21-22).

1. He promised never to curse the ground again.

2. He promised never to destroy all life again.

3. He promised to preserve His world.

Implications: Make it personal...

1. Am I waiting on God?

2. Am I obeying God in all areas?

3. Am I worshiping God as He deserves?

"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 (Gen 7:11-12)."

Do you believe there really was a world-wide Flood in Noah's day? Do you believe that there was an ark that a man named Noah built and then lived on for a year? Do you believe that God preserved two of every kind of animal (and seven of the clean animals) on that ark? Do you believe that every land creature--man and animal alike--perished in the Deluge that God sent, except for those upon the ark? Do you believe all that?

I do. And why? I believe it because it's recorded in the Book written by the One who performed that great event. I believe it because I believe the Word of God.

Realize this. Genesis 8 is more than a story about a boat. Fundamentally, it's a story that teaches us about God. And rather than *telling* us, it *shows* us what God is like.

What do we learn about God from the account of the Flood? This morning we come to the third message devoted to the biblical record of Noah. We've already learned (from chapter 6) that Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and a man who walked with God (6:9). God told Noah to build an ark according to specifications, which he did.

Then in chapter 7, God told Noah to get on the ark--which he also did. And then the waters came. The world perished--the *whole* world. "Every living thing that moved on the earth perished--birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind (7:21)."

By the end of chapter 7, every living land-creature has perished, except for Noah, his family, and the remnant of living creatures. And they're floating along on the ark.

What happened to them? We find the answer in chapter 8. What's more, we learn three important lessons about God in Genesis 8, and here's the first.

I. Lesson #1: God preserves His people (1-14).

Aren't you glad to know that? Romans 8 asks the questions, "If God is for us, who can be against us (31)?" "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect (33, KJV)?" "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ (35)?"

Beloved, if you are a child of God you are secure in the hands of One who will not let you go. It's true. God preserves His people, even in the midst of the storms of life. And in Genesis 8, we have a beautiful illustration of this truth. The first words of chapter 8 are significant.

A. God remembered Noah (1-5). That doesn't mean that prior to this God had *forgotten* Noah. Rather it declares that God took care of him during the Flood. It stands in stark contrast to the final verse of chapter 7, "The waters flooded the earth...BUT God remembered Noah."

Sir Thomas Browne once said, "That there was a Deluge once seems not to me to be so great a miracle as that there is not always one." Without question, the judgment of God was severe. The planet was now in shambles with the evidence of massive destruction all around. God is just.

But He's also merciful. While the world perished, God was preserving His people.

You see, God made a covenant promise to Noah back in 6:18, and what God promises He performs. God is faithful to His people. He keeps them. True, He may take them through storms, but they are ever safe in His hands.

In Noah's case, what did God do to insure the preservation of His people? In "remembering," He took action and performed two specific acts.

1. *He sent a wind (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."

In the Bible to "remember" someone means to express concern for him and to demonstrate mercy, grace, and love towards him. God remembered barren Rachel, and He gave her a son named Joseph (Gen 30:22). At Calvary a criminal asked Jesus to "remember" him, and Jesus promised him paradise (Luke 23:42-43).

Here God remembered Noah. By the way the text indicates He also remembered *the animals* on the ark.

Don't miss God's concern for His creatures, including the animals. God cares for all of His creatures. The Bible doesn't teach pantheism. We are not "one with nature," and are not to worship nature. Man alone is created in the image of God and has been given dominion in God's world.

Yet still, God cares for all that He has made. In fact, as His image-bearers He commands us to do the same. We're not to abuse this world, but care for it.

In His providential care, God sent a world-wide wind to begin the process of drying out the planet. As a result, here's what happened. Secondly...

2. *He removed the water (2-5).* "Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. 3 The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, 4 and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. 5 The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible."

Remember the twofold source of the water for the Flood? According to 7:11, the Flood was not the result of *rain* as we know it. The "springs of the great deep" burst forth, and the "floodgates of heaven" were opened. Thus, water burst through the earth surface in volcano-like fashion, and crashed down from the water canopy that encircled the earth.

But notice what God does in chapter 8. He "closed" the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens. God cut off the source of the flooding. Consequently, the water began to recede.

At this point someone raises the question, "Wait! Where did the water go?" A good question. In *The Answers Book*, creation scientists suggest that the Flood altered the earth's topography. Prior to the Flood much of the water that is presently in the oceans was stored away in the atmospheric canopy and the subterranean cavern. The pre-Flood world did not have the contrast of the high mountain ranges and deep ocean floors we know today. Those were caused by the incredible force unleashed during the Flood itself.

The book explains, "New continental landmasses bearing new mountain chains of folded rock strata were uplifted from below the globe-encircling waters that had eroded and leveled the pre-flood topography, while large, deep ocean basins were formed to receive and accommodate the flood waters that then drained off the emerging continents.

"That is why the oceans are so deep, and why there are folded mountain ranges. Indeed, if the entire earth's surface were leveled by smoothing out the topography of not only land surface but also the rock surface on the ocean floor, the waters of the ocean would cover the earth's surface to a depth of 1.7 miles (2.7 kilometers). We need to remember that about 70 percent of the earth's surface is still covered by water. Quite clearly then, the waters of Noah's flood are in today's ocean basins."

At the end of 150 days, Noah's ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (4). That's in the region of modern-day Turkey. That's also about 17,000 feet above sea level.

God indeed remembered Noah. The Flood that destroyed the world did not harm Noah and the ark's inhabitants. Interestingly, verse 4 says the ark came to "rest" on the mountains. For five months the ark labored to accomplish its work of saving its inhabitants, but now it *rests*. This is the second mention of "rest" in the Bible, the first being when God "rested" after His work of creation (2:2). Here, the ark had fulfilled the task God gave it, and now it, too, rests.

So God remembered Noah. Here's what Noah did...

B. Noah waited on God (6-14). The text explains, "After forty days Noah opened the window he had

made in the ark 7 and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. 8 Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. 9 But the dove could find no place to set its feet because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. 10 He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. 11 When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. 12 He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

13 By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. 14 By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry."

Have you ever noticed how much *waiting* is involved in living for God? I'm impressed by Noah and his faith. God told him to build an ark--and he did. God told him to get on the ark--and he did.

Did you realize that from the time God commanded Noah to get on the ark (7:1) until the day God commanded Noah to get off the ark (8:15), there is no record of *any* message from God to Noah. Only silence.

You say, "But verse 1 says that God *remembered* Noah." That's right, He did. But did He tell Noah that? Is there any record that God sent a personal message saying, "Noah, I'm *remembering* you right now!?" Not in the text.

Listen. If you're going to succeed as a Christian, you must learn to do what Noah did. *Wait on God.*

What does it mean to "wait on God?" A couple of thoughts...

1. *Waiting on God is not inactivity.* Altogether Noah was on the ark for slightly over a year, probably 371 days altogether. And Noah wasn't "inactive" during that time.

Even here we see him at work. Notice the verbs the text uses to depict Noah's activity. In verse 6 he "opened" the window. Why? God promised him there would be life after the ark--and though Noah's waiting on God, he's checking to see if it's time yet.

Then he "sent out" a raven (7). And then he "sent out" a dove (8). Then he "reached out" his hand and "took" the dove, and "brought" it back to himself (9).

Then what? Noah "waited" (10). How long? A week. Then he "sent out" the dove again (10), and this time the dove returned with an olive leaf (11).

Then what did Noah do? He "waited" (12). For how long? Seven more days until he "sent out" the dove again.

This time the dove didn't return, so Noah "removed" the covering from the ark and "saw" that the earth's surface was dry (13).

No, waiting on God isn't synonymous with inactivity. Rather, as Noah exemplifies...

2. *Waiting on God involves active devotion.* It's not inactivity. It's to keep fulfilling the mission God gives you until further notice.

Chew on that thought. God gave Noah a mission, right? Build an ark, warn the world of the impending

judgment, and then take the animals with you on the ark. And Noah did what God told him to do. He got on the ark, and then he stayed on the ark until God told him to get off. That was his mission.

Do we have a mission? Before Jesus returned to heaven, what did He say? He told His followers, "Go make disciples." Has our mission changed? No, it hasn't.

But here's where we get in trouble. Sometimes it doesn't *seem* like anything is happening. And we get frustrated. And we think about jumping ship. But waiting on God requires *active devotion*.

Someone has well said, "Never doubt in the darkness what God has shown you in the light." A lot of people have the notion, "It was easier to live for God in Bible times. Back then God spoke directly to people."

To which I would respond, "Wrong." Noah waited in silence for over a year. But he

lived by faith, just as we must. He took God at His Word, just as we must. He took to heart this truth about God. *God preserves His people*.

If you know Christ as your Savior, you are eternally secure in Him. You say, "But will I always *feel* secure?" I'll answer that question with another question. *Did Noah?* Do you think Noah felt secure while he was on the ark and the world was being destroyed all around him?

Listen. Our security has nothing to do with how we *feel*. It has everything to do with *whose we are*. If you belong to God, you are secure. He will preserve you.

You ask, "How can I know if I belong to God?" Again, the answer is simple. Those in the ark lived, those outside the ark perished, right? God saved those who entered the ark--and only those--and God destroyed those who stayed outside the ark.

You say, "But there's no ark to enter today, is there?" Oh, yes there is!

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee; Let the water and the blood, from Thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power."

"Not the labors of my hands can fulfill Thy law's demands; Could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow, all for sin could not atone; Thou must save and Thou alone."

Here's the ark of safety: "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling; Naked, come to Thee for dress, helpless, look to Thee for grace; Foul, I to the fountain fly, wash me, Savior, or I die."

There are only two options, beloved. The ark is Christ. If you are *in Christ*, you belong to God and are eternally secure. If you are *not* in Christ, you will perish forever.

Now lesson # 2...

II. Lesson #2: God has a plan for His people (15-19).

In Noah's case here's how the plan unfolded...

A. God gave instructions to Noah (15-17). "Then God said to Noah, 16 'Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. 17 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.'"

God broke the silence of Noah's waiting. He did so with two instructions.

1. *Come out.* That's verse 16. And the second...

2. *Bring out.* Bring out the animals, *all* of them. And why bring out the animals? So they can "multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it."

Sound familiar? God is repeating the creation-mandate. Remember God's words to Adam (1:28), "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth."

Think about it. In a very real sense, Noah is like a second Adam. As he leaves the ark he enters a virgin world washed clean by judgment. The period after the Flood was a new beginning for the human race. And as Ronald Youngblood points out the events of Genesis 8 parallel those in Genesis 1 in a remarkable, literary way:

In 8:1 God sent a *wind* over the earth. In 1:2 the word for *wind* is the same Hebrew word for *Spirit*.

In 8:2 God closed the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens. In 1:7, God "separated the water under the expanse from the water above it."

In 8:5 the waters receded and the tops of the mountains became visible. In 1:9 God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered...and let dry ground appear."

In chapter 8 Noah sent out the raven and the dove. In 1:20 God said, "Let the birds fly above the earth."

God is not haphazard. He operates by a plan. In this new beginning He gave instructions to Noah. What did Noah do?

B. Noah obeyed (18-19). "So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. 19 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."

The text indicates that Noah did exactly what God told him to do. God said to come out and to bring out, and Noah did. Noah understood the principle that God has a plan for His people, and he submitted his life to that plan.

This is so basic, but it's where we get into trouble. *Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

Obedience isn't optional. We were created to obey God. We were redeemed so we can obey God. When we obey God, we experience His favor. But when we disobey God, we can expect His discipline (Heb 12:5-7).

Guaranteed. There's no question about it. It's for certain. God has a plan for His people. A final lesson...

III. Lesson #3: God accepts His people on the basis of sacrifice, not merit (20-22).

What happened next is beautiful. Listen to verse 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."

What was Noah's instinctive response after getting off the ark? It was the same as that of every redeemed person. It was to thank God for sparing his life. It was to *worship God*. And how did he do it?

A. Noah built an altar to the Lord (20). An altar to whom? Not simply to "God" (Elohim), but to the "LORD" (Yahweh). The text uses God's special name, the name the OT uses over and over again to depict

the personal, covenantal nature of God. He is the *LORD*. He's the one who enters into a personal relationship with people.

But what's the basis of that relationship? Is it works? No, it's *sacrifice*.

Noah took some animals. Not just any type of animal--they had to be *clean*. We come to God on *His terms*, not ours. Then Noah sacrificed those animals on the altar as *burnt offerings*.

I should mention that the text uses a word here that comes from the Hebrew word which means "to ascend." Aalders explains (179), "The significance lay in the fact that the offering went up in fire and smoke. The symbolism is readily understandable. It suggests that what is offered ascends up to God."

Some might say, "What a waste! Why keep animals alive on the ark only to kill them once they're off? That doesn't make sense. Why would Noah do that?"

Here's why. Noah understood that God accepts sinners on the basis of sacrifice, not their merit. That was true for the Israelites. Listen to Leviticus 1:3-4, "If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. he must present it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting so that it will be acceptable to the LORD. He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him."

It's called substitutionary atonement. One creature dies so another can live.

Why did Jesus die on the Cross? Some would say, "His death was a tragedy, a waste of a good man's life, a case of a good plan gone haywire." Wrong. A thousand times wrong! "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God (1 Pet 3:18)."

Dear friend, if you are depending on your personal goodness as your ticket to heaven, you're in for a tragic surprise. No sinner can approach a holy God. You must either be perfect (Matt 5:48), or you must place your faith in Someone who is.

That "Someone" is Jesus! Jesus came to die as our substitute. He came to rescue sinners. And God accepts us, not because we are worthy, but on the basis of Christ's sacrifice.

How do I know? Watch how God responded to Noah's faith.

B. The Lord was pleased with Noah (21-22). "The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma. Stop there. What did God think of Noah's sacrifice? The KJV says it was "a sweet savor" to Him. That's a way of saying, it pleased Him.

God is pleased when we worship Him, when we come to Him not in the pretense of our righteousness, but in dependence upon His grace.

Verse 21 continues, "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. 22 As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.'"

God demonstrated His pleasure with Noah's sacrifice by proclaiming a threefold promise.

1. *He promised never to curse the ground again.* Again, not because man deserves His mercy for from conception "every inclination of his heart is evil." But in His grace, God promised never to curse the ground again. Secondly...

2. *He promised never to destroy all life again.* Not by a Flood, that is. "As I have done," He states. We know that the day is coming when He will destroy the world by fire (2 Pet 3:10), but never again by a world-wide flood. And thirdly...

3. *He promised to preserve His world.* "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

So Genesis 8 is more than a story about a boat, isn't it? It's a story about God. What's true of God? God preserves His people. God has a plan for His people. And God accepts His people on the basis of sacrifice, not merit. Now let's make it personal...

Implications: Make it personal...

Ask yourself three personal questions.

1. *Am I waiting on God?* Yes, God preserves His people, but our responsibility is to *wait on Him*.

Noah waited through the worst storm the world has ever seen. Are you in a storm right now? Are you waiting on God? Perhaps you've run ahead of Him. Or resisted Him. Will you resolve today to exhibit active devotion to Him?

2. *Am I obeying God in all areas?* You see, He has a plan for His people. What does He require of us? Obedience. Are you obeying Him? In all areas?

The third question has to do with the third lesson. God accepts us on the basis of sacrifice, not our merit. Since He does, ask yourself...

3. *Am I worshiping God as He deserves?* How can we do less than worship the One who invited us to come aboard the ark of Christ and spared us the destruction we deserve? When Noah got off the ark, he worshiped. Are you worshiping the Lord with your life?