**Lesson 9**

**2, 3 August 2021**

**Genesis 6:9 – 8:19**

**Jen Wilkin, *God of Creation* video #8, “The Flood”**

**Context Is Important** – We have to look at the account of Noah and the ark, not as children in a nursery, but as adults looking at it in the context of what all has come before. We should never read *any* story in Scripture independently of what has come before it and what is going to follow it. Children’s Bibles and Bible story books do not generally give the account of Noah in all its detail, because it is a difficult concept for small children to absorb. But we are *not* children; we are adults who are serious about the Lord.

**Other Accounts of a Flood** – Some of us may have encountered the “Epic of Gilgamesh” in high school or college. It is an ancient Babylonian text that predates the writing of Genesis, and it describes a flood in terms very similar to those Moses used. This can be “faith sucking”, but it shouldn’t be. After all, if a worldwide flood actually happened, we should *expect* that it would be recorded by many ancient cultures, not just one (i.e. Moses’ account). And that is what we find: there are literally *hundreds* of recorded tales about a flood that happened. Literary scholars have studied and compared these accounts and have come up with the following statistics:

* 88% of the stories mention a “favored family”.
* 70% had an account of survival via a boat.
* 95% say that the sole cause of the catastrophe that occurred is a flood.
* 66% say that the disaster was due to the wickedness of humankind.
* 67% say that animals were preserved, along with human life.
* 57% indicate that survivors ended up on a mountain.
* Other accounts mention things such as a bird being sent out, a rainbow, and that eight people were saved.

So was Moses just telling a story that he grew up with? No, he is giving a true account of a flood that actually happened, and all these other stories are echoes that indicate that at one time there *was* a flood of catastrophic proportions. Orthodox (orthodox = “conforming to the Christian faith as formulated in the early creeds and confessions”) Bible scholars have debated whether the flood was worldwide or not. No matter what position we may hold on the *extent* of the flood, if we want to be true to Scripture, we *must* acknowledge that the flood wiped out everyone but Noah and his family. The whole point of the biblical account of the flood is that God is cleansing the earth of its wicked inhabitants.

**What about “Original Sin”?** – Orthodox Christians hold to the doctrine of “original sin”, which means that we are all born with a bent toward sinning because of Adam’s sin. This doctrine troubles some people because they think that they would have done a better job than Adam did, and they resent that he is our representative. But in reality, he truly represents us. Any one of us would have fallen prey to Satan’s wiles, just as he did. Because each and every person is born with a bent toward sinning, we can see that the flood is just a temporary solution.

**Genesis 6:9** – Noah is described as a “*righteous* man, *blameless* among the people of his time, and he *walked with God”*. He was the great-grandson of Enoch, who also “walked with God”, and the grandson of Methuselah, whose lifetime was the countdown to the flood. Noah comes from a godly line of men, but he lived in a time when wickedness was pervasive. The New Testament refers to him as a “preacher of righteousness”, so he wasn’t just *living* right, he was also *proclaiming God’s truth* to those around him, i.e. he was telling the people around him how their lives were an affront to a holy God. His whole life, as someone who lived a righteous life among a wicked and depraved people, would have been a study in frustration and rejection and sorrow.

**Corruption** – The word “corrupt” is used three times in these two verses to describe how evil man had become. Notice how blame is established: the people have corrupted the earth, and violence is because of the people. So God says that He is now going to *destroy* (the Hebrew word for “destroy” is from a root word meaning “corrupt”) both the earth and its people. They have destroyed their beautiful environment, so God is going to destroy them.

**Partnering with God** – In this account we see echoes of the creation rhythm, “And God said…and it was so.” But now the rhythm includes man as a partner in bringing about what God commands. In Genesis 6:13, we read, “And God said…” followed by His telling Noah to build an ark in verse 14. Then in 6:22 we read, “Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.” This partnership is a picture of our sanctification. God acted *alone* to accomplish our *salvation*. We don’t do anything. But in the process of *sanctification*, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we work through grace driven effort to grow in holiness. God gave the command to create, but Noah carried out the creative act.

**Details, Details, Details** – God did not just say, “I want you to build a big boat and fill it with animals.” He gave very specific details about the dimensions, the materials, and the design of the boat, as well as how many of each kind of animal to bring. God has an exact plan, and He wants Noah to know what it is and how to carry it out.

**Covenant** – In Genesis 6:18 we see the first mention of the *word* “covenant” in Scripture. But it is not the first time we have seen the *concept* of God making a promise to man. He did so after the first sin, when He promised to send a Deliverer. God here implies that He will spare Noah’s family from the flood.

**The Project** – Consider the task that God gives Noah. Noah has never seen rain, as far as we can tell from the account so far, much less enough water to flood the earth. He lives in the middle of a desert, far from any body of water large enough to accommodate the boat he is supposed to build. So the task seems ludicrous. Not only that, it is laborious. It will require much effort, with little or no help from outsiders, for his family to build the ark. And the job is protracted. It took about 100 years to complete the ark. Besides all that, it would have been very expensive for Noah to acquire the amount of wood and other materials needed to build the ark, and even more expensive to outfit it with vast amounts of food for themselves and all the animals they would be caring for. But Noah did it! And he did it with no hesitation or questioning.

**Pattern: God Commands, and It Was Done.** – Chapter seven continues the pattern seen at the end of chapter six. God gives a series of commands, and Scripture records that “Noah did just as the Lord commanded,” e.g. 7:5, 9, 16. And there are a series of specific time periods recorded: e.g. seven days of waiting (7:4) and rain falling for 40 days and 40 nights (7:12).

**“And the Lord shut him in.”** – Notice that God didn’t tell Noah, “Now shut the door and latch it.” God Himself fastens the door securely. There are three things we can deduce from this.

1. The perfect security that is found in being in the ark – The safety of Noah’s family relied wholly on Him. Revelation 3:7 tells us, “What He opens no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open.” In the New Testament, being in the ark is a picture of our *baptism* (1 Peter 3:20-22). Noah’s family entered the ark, went through the waters of death, and were raised to life when they came out. Similarly, baptism symbolizes the fact that we enter into a relationship with Christ, go through the waters of death, and are raised to newness of life. The sealing of the door to the ark pictures for us being sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). We are utterly secure.
2. God’s grace – Remember that Methuselah’s long life was evidence of God’s long-suffering. It was prophesied that the great judgment would not come until he died—and his life was the longest ever recorded in history. In the same way, when all the work to prepare the ark was completed, and there was absolutely nothing left to do except close the door and seal Noah’s family in, God still waited seven days to send the flood. The door to salvation remained open for as long as possible for any who would come.
3. But there is an end to grace. Jesus spoke of this in His parables. He would show that there is time for repentance, but there comes a point when there is no more time. Perhaps the most compelling parallel to the door to the ark being sealed is Jesus’ statement in John 10:9. “I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved.” It is the Lord who shuts in Noah’s family, and there has never been a safer family in a time of danger than they were. So we believers, who have been sealed with the Holy Spirit, can know that we will persevere. We already enjoy the firstfruits of what it means to be resurrected with Christ, and one day we will be fully in possession of them, receiving even our physical bodies in resurrected form. We are safe in Him.

**“God remembered Noah”** – For 150 days the waters rose higher and higher on the earth. This is the third specific time interval mentioned in the account. Genesis chapter eight begins with the statement, “But God remembered Noah and all the (animals) with him in the ark.” This doesn’t imply that God had forgotten about them and then suddenly thought of them again. Rather, it means that God thought of His promise to Noah, and it was time to bring it to pass. “And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters receded.” The Hebrew word for wind is *ruach*, the same word used in Genesis 1:2 about the Holy Spirit, who hovered over the waters of the embryonic earth. The earth, in the waters of the great flood, has been returned to its primordial state. This is a *de-creation narrative*. But now God begins to separate dry land from the waters once again as the water recedes (Genesis 8:5).

**Six Periods of Time in the Flood Narrative** – Genesis 8:6 records that 40 days after the ark came to rest on Mount Ararat Noah sent forth a raven and a dove. So we have had seven days of waiting, 40 days and nights of rain, 150 days of water prevailing on the earth, and then another 40 day period of waiting. Noah then waits seven more days before he sends out the dove again, and this time it returns with an olive leaf in its mouth. He waited another seven days to send the dove out again, but this time it did not return. So we have six specific number of days recorded in all (7, 40, 150, 40, 7, and 7). These increments of time correspond to the number of days of creation in Genesis 1.

Then the Bible tells us that the ground was completely dried up, so God told Noah to come off the ark, along with his entire family and all the animals and birds. Notice that Noah doesn’t just walk off the ark when he sees that the ground is dry. He stays on the ark until God commands him to come out. This is reminiscent of the story of Lazarus in the New Testament, who lay in a grave behind a sealed door. But when Jesus called, “Lazarus, come forth!” the dead man, Lazarus, was restored to life. God is the one who resurrects the spiritually dead to life.

Notice, too, that Moses can find his personal story in this story, because he also was placed in an ark as an infant and floated upon the waters of death, the Nile River. And he too was taken up from those waters to live. The children of Israel could find their personal story in the story of the flood, and indeed the people of God from all time can find their personal story in this story.

**Psalm 29: “The Voice of the Lord”** – Our God sits enthroned above the flood. He brings us safely through. And He meets us on the other side with the olive branch of peace and a call to life.

**TAKE AWAYS:** *The following comments come from Bible Study Fellowship’s Lesson 5 on Genesis. Their definition of the doctrine of God’s judgment is worthy of further study on your own. You can verify the validity of these statements by looking up the verses given in parentheses.*

**The Doctrine of God’s Judgment of Believers and Unbelievers**

God’s Word, human history, and personal experience reveal that humans cannot stop sinning. We cannot solve the problem of evil on our own. Sin’s damage spreads until God steps in to judge and to stop the evil. God promises judgment for both unbelievers and believers. The Bible speaks of many kinds of judgment. The chief kinds of judgment are:

* **evaluative judgment** upon *believers* to reward their service (Romans 8:1; Romans14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:8)
* **punitive judgment** upon *unbelievers* for their sins (Acts 17:31; Romans 1:18, 28; Romans 2:1-13; Hebrews 9:27)

**The Bible describes punitive judgment as dreadful and warns sinners to flee to Jesus Christ.** Punitive judgments will be endured in a conscious condition forever. (See Luke 16:19-31; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20:15.) Although God desires none perish, *He allows all people to* *ultimately have what their hearts truly desire*. Those who reject Him in this life spend eternity apart form His presence. God makes a way to save all who repent and believe.

**The truth that I will face God as Judge determines how I live.** If I do not believe God is my judge, I can live any way that pleases me. I am accountable only to myself, able to determine what is right for me. But when I know that one day I will stand before my Creator, who knows everything about me, who I am and what I have done, this life matters more. I do not take good things for granted. I measure my thoughts, words and deeds against His standards, not mine. I quickly realize my own efforts can never meet His standards; therefore, I humbly seek the rescue He provides in Christ. I anticipate everlasting life and great reward. I am eager to invite others to this bright and beautiful future.  ***I do not fear my Judge. I love Him.*** BSF Genesis Lesson 5, page 4

* God delivered judgment in His time, in His way, and in keeping with His character. *ibid*, page 5
* **The Bible teaches that either Jesus will bear your sin for you, or you will bear it for yourself.** Two absolute truths stand together: God will judge sin, and God extends saving grace, a way of rescue through His Son. *ibid*, page 5