



Lesson 5 / March 12, 2017

NOAH AND THE FLOOD

Genesis 6-9

Key Verse

“The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.”

Genesis 6:5-6

Discussion Questions

1. How does sin evolve in the time between Adam and Noah?
2. What does the flood story tell us about the condition of our human hearts?
3. What makes Noah different than the rest of his generation? Why do you suppose he “walks with God”?
4. How does God express his wrath against sin?
5. Where do you see God’s mercy at work in the midst of the flood?
6. How does God use a “remnant” to preserve life during the flood?
7. What are the elements of God’s covenant with Noah? (See Gen 6:18; 8:20-9:17)
8. How does the flood make possible the saving work of Christ?
9. Where do you stand today? Are you part of the wicked or part of the righteous remnant?

Question 9: What is God’s wrath?

Short Answer: *God’s wrath is his hatred of sin.*

Full Answer: *God’s wrath is his hatred of sin whereby he judges and condemns the wicked while also graciously preserving the righteous as a remnant.*

Question 10: What covenant does God make with Noah?

Short Answer: *God covenants with Noah that he will never again destroy the world with a flood.*

Full Answer: *God covenants with Noah and all creation that he will never again destroy the world with a flood, and God blesses Noah with life and provides the rainbow as a sign of the covenant.*

Summary

Just when you thought it couldn't possibly get any worse, it inevitably does. Adam and Eve have sinned and been banished from the Garden of Eden, yet it turns out their sin is only the beginning of a downward spiral of sin. Their firstborn son, Cain, murders his brother, Abel, and is cursed by God to wander as a fugitive (Gen 4:1-16). Seven generations later, Lamech boasts to his multiple wives (note the polygamy!) that his own violence is even greater than Cain's (Gen 4:23-24). By the time we reach the days of Noah in Genesis 6:1, the last morsels of morals fade away as those who ought to be godly (i.e. the "sons of God") partake in wicked immorality with ungodly women (i.e. the "daughters of man"). Humanity slides ever deeper into sin until the entirety of humanity has become wicked beyond what God can bear. When God sees the extent of human corruption, he is grieved to the heart and he decides to "blot out" life from the earth with a worldwide flood.

God's judgment introduces us now to the full measure of God's wrath, whereby God hates the sin that hurts those he loves. He cannot turn a blind eye to the wickedness that has corrupted his good creation, so God acts as judge, jury, and executioner. He floods the entire world and brings death to all living creatures, including mankind. This is an extreme act of judgment, unparalleled in the rest of history. This flood is not an accident, nor is it a myth. God really did flood the world according to his own purpose. He set the time frame (120 years), he brought forth the floodwaters, and he shut the door of the ark to seal his judgment and to ensure none of the wicked could enter and be spared. God's wrath is real – just ask those who drowned!

But thanks be to God that his wrath is exceeded by his mercy, and in his mercy, God limits his wrath. God patiently grants 120 years of notice leading up to the flood. During this time, Noah preaches even as he builds the ark (see 2 Peter 2:5) and God stands prepared to forgive and to spare all who would repent of their wickedness. Yet none repent, so God's favor continues to be only toward Noah, for Noah alone is righteous and blameless, and – like Enoch in Genesis 5:22-24 – Noah walks with God (Gen 6:9). Noah is everything the rest of mankind is not. God speaks to Noah and Noah listens, believes, and obeys God's word. Several times

we are told that Noah did everything God commanded him to do (e.g. Gen 6:22; 7:5, 9, 16), including building the ark according to God's precise specifications, entering and exiting the ark at God's command, and offering a pleasing sacrifice to God.

Thus God, in his mercy, preserves Noah even as he blots out the rest of mankind. In Scripture, whenever God judges, he also preserves those who are faithful, protecting them from his wrath so that they remain as a "remnant" while the wicked are blotted out. From this remnant, God then establishes a people who will be faithful to him. Noah and five members of his immediate family are God's first remnant in history. God preserves Noah in the sanctuary of the ark and God blesses Noah and establishes his covenant with Noah.

The covenant God makes with Noah in Genesis 8:20-9:17 echoes the instructions God gave to Adam in Genesis 1:28 to fill the earth with life. God promises to Noah that he will never again destroy life on earth with a flood; instead, Noah is to (re)fill the earth with life. In this covenant with Noah, God also provides additional food for life by allowing humans to consume meat. Fire up the barbeque, Noah! And God protects human life by outright condemning the violence of murder. Finally, God gives the rainbow as a sign of the covenant. With every rainfall, God himself will look upon his rainbow and remember his covenant, and we look upon his rainbow and we remember that God is faithful to his covenant.

In the end, the story of the flood solemnly reminds us that sin grieves the very heart of God and provokes his wrath. May we turn away from wickedness and become like Noah, walking with God in faith, lest we should receive his wrath. The flood also reminds us of the mercy of God whereby God preserves those who are faithful to him. And by preserving faithful Noah, God also preserves the line of Noah, from which one day God would bring forth Jesus Christ, who delivers even the wicked who trust in him from God's coming wrath (1 Thess 1:10)! May each of us by faith become part of the remnant of Christ, preserved from God's wrath and established as his eternal people.