

## **GENESIS 7:1-8:16**

### **THE WATERS PREVAILED**

How many of you have ever heard the story of Noah and the Flood? I have never ever taught a lesson on this subject though I have referenced it on many occasions such as when I taught Second Peter. I found out some interesting things as I was preparing. I can guarantee you that I will mention at least one thing about the Flood that you've never heard before.

To set the stage: for a hundred years Noah – a man described as “righteous, blameless in his generation who walked with God” – he constructs an ark. It is a massive undertaking to assemble from gopher wood what amounts to a giant rectangular box structure 450 ft long x 75 ft wide x 45 ft high. Noah is not only a carpenter but 2 Peter 2:5 refers to him as a “herald” (or preacher) of righteousness. Having been told by God about God’s plan to destroy the earth with water, Noah warns whoever will listen to him of a coming judgment. After nearly a century of working on the ark it is finally finished. Food and provisions are gathered and stored on the ark. Once again God gives instructions to Noah...

READ Genesis 7:1-3

Noah had been told in Chapter 6 to take two of every kind of animal, male and female and to load them on the ark. Here God adds that he is to take seven pairs, male and female, of each type of what are referred to as “clean” animals. These animals will be designated later by God for sacrifice. The question was raised last week about the use of the terms “clean” and “not clean” here in Genesis Chapter 7. This designation will not be given by God to His covenant people for another 1000 years when the Levitical dietary laws are given to Moses at Mount Sinai. So how is it that this term “clean” is being used here, in Noah’s day? Well, that’s a good question. You need to understand that the earliest readers of the book of Genesis – the Jewish people – would have been familiar with the concept of clean and unclean animals. This audience did not need any explanation. But God obviously would have had to tell Noah specifically which animals Noah

needed to take extras of. It makes perfect sense. If the whole idea of bringing the animals onto the ark is to preserve the various species and you intend to sacrifice some of them later, you need to take additional numbers of those animals in order to prevent them from becoming extinct. God continues...

READ Genesis 7:4

God tells Noah that in just seven days He is going to make it rain. Now, if I had been Noah and heard God say this I would have asked the obvious question: "God, what's rain?" Up until this time it had never rained before. How do we know this? Let's go back to earlier in Genesis. "And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so" (Genesis 1:7). "For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land... and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground" (Genesis 2:5-6).

In his commentary on these passages John MacArthur's summarizes what's happening this way: "'Under the expanse' refers to subterranean reservoirs. In Genesis 7 these are called the 'fountains of the great deep.' 'Above the expanse' could possibly have been a canopy of water vapor that acted to make the earth much like a [greenhouse]. This gave the planet a uniform temperature, prevented mass air movements, caused a mist to fall, and filtered out ultraviolet rays from the sun, thus extending life. This 'mist going up from the land' indicates that water came up from beneath the ground like springs. It spread over the whole earth in an uninterrupted cycle of water.'" So, there you have MacArthur's explanation and to me it makes a lot of sense.

Prior to the Flood the hydrological pattern of the earth was much different from what we see in our world today. But Noah doesn't ask God for clarification. Or at least it's not recorded in scripture. Noah simply obeys God.

READ Genesis 7:5-9

Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives enter the ark with all of the animals. And just as God had said...

READ Genesis 7:10

When telling the story of Noah's ark before I said that "only after they were all on the ark did the raindrops begin to fall." But Noah's family actually enters the ark seven days BEFORE the Flood comes. V 12-16, which we will look at here in a minute, tell us WHAT Noah's family did during those seven days leading up to the Flood. They loaded and secured all the animals!

READ Genesis 7:11

This is no fairy tale beginning with "once upon a time." No, it's clear from this text that the Flood is a real historical event that begins on a certain day in time and, as we will see, it ends on a certain day and time. We don't know for sure the calendar system Moses is using, but it's obvious as he writes this account that he has a certain day in mind. Noah is 600 years old which means that the Flood of Genesis Chapter 7 occurs in 2450 B.C.

On a certain day in time "the fountains of the great deep burst forth." These are the waters "under the expanse" that we noted earlier in Genesis Chapter 1. Subterranean reservoirs, great chasms of water deep in the earth burst forth upward and break through the earth's surface. Picture a series of volcanic-like eruptions all over the planet. Heated water from deep down inside the earth's core under great pressure shoots up and blows the surface of the earth open. The ground shakes and huge land masses shift creating continents. Incredible seismic forces like those we see in volcanic eruptions push the mountains upward and create huge chasms where the reservoirs of water once were. This causes large portions of the land to sink. These great depressions form large bodies of water that we know as lakes and oceans.

Psalm 104 provides us with a commentary on what happened during the Flood – what I just described. It says, "He [the LORD God] set the

earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At Your rebuke they fled; at the sound of Your thunder, they took to flight. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that You appointed for them. You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth" (Psalm 104:5-9). This one cataclysmic event we know as the Flood effectively changes the whole topography and hydrology of the earth.

The last part of v 11 says that "the windows of the heavens were opened." These are the waters "above the expanse" from Genesis Chapter 1. The fountains bursting forth send heated water along with dust and particles of the earth far into the sky. Their upward movement of material and gases creates turbulent forces that break loose the water canopy surrounding the earth. This canopy falls down onto the earth in what amounts to a torrential downpour. So, there is a lot going on here.

READ Genesis 7:12-16

These verses tell us what Noah and his family do during those seven days leading up to the Flood. God directs Noah and his family to enter the ark. The animals enter the ark with them and as they do Noah and company load them up. As you can imagine this takes some time. After that God shuts and seals the door of the ark. Immediately preceding judgment, we see God's grace here on full display! A remnant of humanity and the animal will be saved, secured in the ark by God Himself.

Let's go back to the Flood...

READ Genesis 7:17-20

"The waters increased", "The waters prevailed and increased greatly," "The waters prevailed mightily, "The waters prevailed above the mountains." As the floodwaters continue to rise the ark floats safely in the turbulent waves. We are told that during the initial 40-day Flood event that the waters rose to more than 20 feet above the mountains!

READ Genesis 7:21-23

Millions of people living on the earth at this time died in the Flood. Only eight people survived – Noah and his family. Billions of air-breathing land creatures, birds, insects and reptiles perished in the Flood. Only the animals in Noah’s ark survived.

Make no mistake about it. This is a worldwide flood. It is NOT just a localized event as some have suggested. If only an isolated region was flooded then there would have been no reason to go to all that trouble of building a massive ark and loading up all those animals. Instead, God would have just directed Noah and his family to move, to relocate to a safer area somewhere else. Every indication in the Bible here in Genesis and elsewhere suggests that this was a total destruction of the earth and of all living land creatures. Later on, in Genesis 8:21 God declares, “I will never ever again strike down every living creature as I have done.” So clearly this is a global event.

READ Genesis 7:24

For an additional 110 days (after the 40 days and 40 nights of rain) the waters prevail over the earth, but they slowly begin to subside.

READ Genesis 8:1-4

God shuts off the water. The two sources of flooding we mentioned in Genesis 7:11, the “fountains of the deep” and the “windows of heaven” are closed. For the next several months the ark continues to float high above the earth guided by the providential hand of God. But on a certain day in time the ark comes to rest on a mountain range in SE Turkey. It was known in Moses’s day as the mountains of Ararat. It is still called that today. Can you imagine how Noah and his family felt after all that time in the ark just floating around? “But God remembered Noah.” Those are such reassuring words. He has not forgotten those who are on the ark!

READ Genesis 8:5

So, it is another 2 ½ months before the tops of any other mountains can be seen. The water is receding ever so slowly. Is it safe to exit the ark? Not quite yet.

READ Genesis 8:6-12

This all transpires for about three months. When the dove does not return Noah knows that it has found a dry place to land.

READ Genesis 8:13

Five and half months after coming to rest on Ararat, Noah removes the covering of the ark. He sees that the ground surface in the vicinity of the ark is dry. Can they exit now? No, not yet.

READ Genesis 8:14

After two more months in the ark God gives Noah those words, he and his family have long waited to hear...

READ Genesis 8:15-16

The total time in the ark ends up being a year and 10 days – 375 days!! They exit the ark only when God says, "Go."

So, what's the point of all this? There's a movement today called Universalism. It suggests that "God is a loving God and would never destroy the earth with fire" (as 2 Peter 3:7 says). "Certainly, God is not going to send the vast majority of people to hell. God wouldn't do that!" The Genesis Flood account that we have looked at this morning sees things quite differently.

God is a holy God who hates sin in all of its forms. In response to the sinfulness of humanity God DID destroy the earth with water. Millions of people perished. However, by God's grace He spared a remnant of the righteous, namely, Noah and his family, eight people total. So, there IS a divine precedent for the judgment that the Bible teaches is still to come. It is still future for us. There will be judgment upon the individual who rejects God and His provision of salvation thru Jesus. And there will be judgment

upon this physical earth that has been thoroughly corrupted by sin. There will be!

I close with this hopeful passage from 2 Peter which uses the Flood we just read about as a lesson for all of us... "For they [scoffers] deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:5-9). That's God's desire. But in the end each person will decide for themselves whether to believe what God says or not, just as they did back in Noah's day.

So, as I said last time: Get saved while there is time. Get on board the ark that is Jesus Christ! God's judgment IS coming!