

JUDGMENT

Genesis 6:13-22; 7:20-24

It has been said that if we do not learn from past history that we will be doomed to repeat it. One of the reasons that we study the Biblical accounts is so that we may learn the lessons of the wisdom of doing things God's way and the foolishness of going on without God to do things our own way. We will learn those lessons either by observing the actions of others or we will learn them the hard way, by experience. We saw that Adam and Eve paid a very high price for doing things their own way which affected them and every generation after that. We read that Cain paid a high price for his rebellious nature. These accounts were so significant they were passed down from generation to generation so people could learn from them. However, very few people learned.

We read in the early part of Genesis 6 that the sons of God married the daughters of man. When this happened, there was a corruption of the morals and ethics of those who were following God. At the time this passage was written, people believed that "spiritual beings" had taken on human form and produced offsprings with human females. The results of this union were giants (Nephilim) that were "men of renown" and these giants were responsible for the intense iniquity of the people of the earth. Around AD 400, Augustine taught that the reference to the "sons of God" was with regard to the descendants of Seth and the daughters of men were the descendants of Cain. We are told (Genesis 4:26) that after the birth of Seth's son Enos that it was during this time that people begin to call upon the name of the Lord. When Seth's descendants failed to keep themselves separated from the corrupt influence of those who did not know God (daughters of Cain), then there was general deterioration of morality. The lesson of not keeping corrupting influence out of a society has been around a long time. (This situation of the corrupting influence of ungodly wives was repeated during the time of Solomon's reign as king of Israel.)

Corruption and violence are the by-products of living apart from God. Those who were capable of moral insight had chosen to do what was wrong. How bad was the corruption in the world at that time? It is summed up in verse five of this chapter: Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. They had rejected God and had made no room for Him even in their thought life. It seems that they really did not leave God any choice.

Not only did they **do** evil, but all they **thought** about had an evil intent. Notice that it does not say every thought was evil, but that the **intent** of the thought was evil.

We read in the Revelation that God created all things for His pleasure. However, God's creation was causing Him grief rather than giving Him pleasure. So often we fail to realize that our sin hurts God and is an affront to him. How much does it hurt Him? We have only to look at the cross to see the extent and depth of the pain.

Judgment Announced – 6:13-17

¹³ And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶ Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷ For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. Genesis 6:13–17 (ESV)

As we have discovered from the Scripture, the actual substance of the earth was not

destroyed but the destruction was of “all flesh that breathed.” The Hebrew word “eth” rendered as “with” in most translation is also translated as “from” in other passages. It was not the fault of the physical world that mankind had become corrupt because of sin.

We find here that God was willing to undo what had happened and to start over. Parts of the creation had become so corrupt that reformation was not an option and these parts needed to be taken away so that the right things could take their place. We may find that such drastic action is needed in our lives. If we are not careful, we can build up such a lifestyle and pattern of living that drastic actions are needed to set things right. We need to eliminate the bad influences and retain the good ones. This protocol of “make an end of all flesh” points toward God’s ultimate solution for mankind as stated by Jesus to Nicodemus, “You must be born again.”

God told Noah about His plans for the world. He has also communicated to us what He is doing so that we can have some understanding of events that have taken place in the history of the world and what we are seeing in the present. It was important that Noah know what was going to happen since He would involve Noah in the survival plan for humanity.

Most cultures that trace their origins back to ancient times have traditions of a flood that destroyed the world and a man and his family that survived that destruction. As we might expect, the stories are different in the names of the main characters and in the description of the “vessels” used to preserve the animals and people who survived the flood. A more significant difference is in the reasons cited for why the “gods” or God decided to cause the flood to happen. Since the dispersion of the people of the earth (as related in the account of the Tower of Babel) occurred several generations after the flood, we would expect that the flood account would be passed on from generation to generation and that there would be variations that would result from the various people groups being separated from each other.

Some pagan cultures have stories that suggest that their god was displeased with the noise that the humans were making and that resulted in “god” initiating the action to bring on the flood. Others suggest that the flood was for population control because there were too many people on the earth. These reasons seem to us to pale in comparison to the reason that we find in the Genesis account that was tied to the corruption of man’s morality and rebellion against God.

The comparison of pagan reasoning versus the Biblical accounts is significant. The pagan stories relate the flood to the capriciousness of the gods while the Genesis account put the responsibility on the behavior and character of man. The pagan approach seems to absolve man of accountability and any responsibility while the word of God clearly teaches that each of us has personal responsibility and we will be held accountable. Do such differences influence what we see happening in the world in which we live?

Many cultures have practiced “denial of responsibility” for centuries. No accountability and no responsibility are assigned. In our own nation, the lack of a sense of responsibility and accountability has resulted in an over reliance on government programs and that people are subject to (or victims of) the capricious actions of the government. In a sense, the government has become the pagan god of our culture.

Rescue Promised – 6:18-22

¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. ²¹ Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.” ²² Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him. Genesis 6:18–22 (ESV)

God gave Noah specific plans for the means of his survival. Noah did not argue with God and want to try to design his own boat. The one God provided was what was needed. God has provided means for our survival or salvation by Jesus Christ. It is amazing that so many people want to find some other way – they want to get into another boat.

In some ways the ark is like the church. We are somewhat like Noah in that we are to participate in putting together the church, gathering in materials (new Christians) and applying pitch to the structure. The pitch was to keep out the destructive and drowning influence of the water. As we saw in the account of creation, water and the chaos (associated with the sea) were related to evil and disorder. We need to learn the lesson of keeping the influence of the world out of the church. We realize that the tar or pitch kept the water out of the ark because water and tar are incompatible. If the water represents the destructive forces of chaotic evil that is in the world, then we need to liberally apply something that is incompatible with values of the world. We find that protection in the Word of God rather than in the anti-God philosophies of the world.

We see clearly that God is in control of everything. It is He Whom we must satisfy. Just as God initiated salvation for Noah and his family through the ark, He initiated salvation for us through the Cross, through Jesus Christ so that all who are in Christ Jesus are safe just as all those who were in the ark were safe. Notice also that the godly influence and salvation given to Noah benefitted the world around him in that the animal kingdom was able to participate in the safety of the ark.

Much of what is written in various commentaries about the specifics of the design of the Ark are arguments regarding whether it was big enough for the animals, how they might be fed, did they go into a state of hibernation, were dinosaurs in the Ark and a multitude of other questions related to the plausibility and workability of the sketchy details given. It is more important for us today to learn the significance of what we read and see if we can relate these things to the Kingdom of God or to the church.

We could start with trying to determine the significance of “gopher” wood and that would likely lead to nothing other than it was probably a commonly available wood and that may be all we need to know. God would have us use what we have available. Throughout the scriptures we see instances of God choosing ordinary people and working with and through them to accomplish extraordinary things.

The dimensions of the ark were to make it sea worthy or to enable it to navigate in the environment (flood water) that would arise. It is important for us in the church to realize that we are in the world (even though we are not of the world) and we need to be able to navigate and do what God has called us to do in spite of the hostile surroundings.

A window was needed for light and air circulation which could apply to the church which needs to walk in the light of the word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to refresh us at all times. We might speculate about the three deck levels on the ark to be related to the work the church has to do which ranges from lowly tasks (lower deck) to things sublime (upper deck) and a lot of activities in between.

The covenant mentioned in verse 18 is the first time the word covenant appears in the Bible. This was not the first time the idea of a covenant is found. If a covenant is simply a promise of God to people with whom He is dealing in a special way, then we could say that God had initiated a covenant with Adam with conditions that if Adam obeyed God with regard to the tree of knowledge that Adam would continue to enjoy the life he had that came from God's grace. We know that Adam disobeyed and was denied the benefits of the conditional promises.

There have been numerous covenants (Abraham, Moses, David, New Covenant)

mentioned in the scriptures following the one established with Noah. These appear to have some commonality. We find that God was the initiator in that He first called for a step of obedience or taking action. In Noah's case, he was told to build an ark. In Abraham's case, God told him to leave where he lived and go to where God would lead him. Moses was called to go confront Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of bondage. David was called to be king. Jesus called the disciples to follow Him.

Because they obeyed, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and those whom Christ called were recipients of great promises found in the major covenants of the Bible. These covenants were essentially promises of what God committed Himself to do. We will see the specifics of the covenant with Noah in Genesis 8 and 9.

Judgment Executed – 7:20-24

²⁰ The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. ²¹ And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. ²² Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³ He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. ²⁴ And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days. Genesis 7:20–24 (ESV)

The destruction of the world by the Flood brought the earth back to point that it could be described in the same terms as we saw in Genesis 1:2 that told us “The earth was formless and void.” It returned the earth to the situation of watery chaos that existed before God started speaking in 1:3. Life (that was not in the Ark) was destroyed. Water covered everything, even the mountain tops, so that the planet looked as it did when God first created it.

If we look ahead to the beginning of the next chapter we find “Then, when God remembered Noah, he sent a wind over the earth.” This should remind us of the hovering spirit/wind of God in 1:2. We could argue that the world was born anew. Dry land and waters were separated, and Noah, the new head of the human race, emerged from the ark and, like Adam, was told to ‘*Be fruitful and increase in number*’ as was recorded in Genesis 1:28.

In a sense, this flood event could be termed the de-creation of the earth. Genesis regards the flood as the great dividing point in world history. If we consider the entire Biblical account, the great dividing point in world history is the cross.

If the ancient earth was “de-created” or destroyed in the Flood, what was “de-created” or made of “no effect” at the cross event? From Hebrews 8:13 (in writing about the New Covenant) we see “By using the words, ‘a new Covenant,’ He has made the first one obsolete; but whatever is decaying and showing signs of old age is not far from disappearing altogether.” It took about forty years from the cross to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple before the last vestiges of the Old Covenant “disappeared.” In the account of the Flood, it rained forty days before the “old world” had “disappeared.”

We also see a tie in to the First Covenant in Revelation Chapter 20 regarding the statement that “the first heaven and first earth are passed away.” According to some scholars, the new heaven and new earth would be the New Covenant that Christ introduced and confirmed by the shedding of His blood on the Cross.

In Noah's case, humanity essentially had a fresh start. The same can be said for those who have experienced the new birth in Christ Jesus.