

STUDIES IN GENESIS

Session 8 – Genesis 7:1-24

It is interesting to notice that 3 chapters are dedicated to this final consequence of sin, being the judgement of God. Thankfully through the details of these chapters, we also see God's heart and character as a Saviour in the amazing salvation that Noah and his family experienced. It is therefore one of the clearest OT pictures of the salvation that is available for everyone today in the Lord Jesus, 1Timothy 2:3-6.

This judgement event therefore points us to the unique message of Christianity seen in the amazing grace of the Lord Jesus, 2Corinthians 8:9. Though he is the judge of all men, in amazing love and humility he willingly endured the poverty of being judged for us at the cross! We have therefore been brought into the riches of his grace, one result of which is our total preservation from the coming judgement, John 5:22-24.

Following from the end of chapter 6, the ark is now complete and ready for its huge task to preserve life. God therefore instructs Noah to enter into it with his family. We continue to see the reality that God is in control of everything and so step by step is putting his plan into action. Having observed everyone else through this time of preparation, God sadly confirms that only Noah is righteous, v1.

That raises the question as to how he sees each one of us today in our "pre-judgement" world. Do we stand out from the crowd as being righteous due to faith in him, Romans 5:1? We are reminded of the confirmation of the Lord Jesus following his upbringing in Nazareth, "this is my beloved son, in him I am well pleased", Matthew 3:17.

In v2 and 3 God instructs Noah to preserve every type of life by taking it into the ark:

1) Seven pairs of clean animals being those suitable for sacrifice. Some of these will be used for this purpose after the flood, Genesis 8:20.

2) One pair of all the other types of animals.

3) Seven pairs of every type of bird. Some of these will also be sacrificed after the flood.

God stated clearly that a pair must be composed of 1 male and 1 female, confirming his purpose of a heterosexual relationship even in the animal kingdom. It is sad to note that humans as the crown of his creation have rebelled against this through their involvement in homosexuality!

This same desire of God to preserve every type of life is repeated in v8,9 and also in v14,15. As the creator of all life forms, God ensured that the ark was sufficient for them all. Equally for us today the work of the cross is sufficient for all of humanity, Romans 3:22-24. Because we are all sinners, we can all be justified freely by his grace and redeeming power. The Lord Jesus therefore sent his followers to make disciples of all nations, Matthew 28:18. We praise God that one day in heaven surrounding his throne there will be people from every tribe, tongue and nation, Revelation 5:9.

After this God gives the final time marker of 7 days before the commencement of the flood and so the destruction of everything, v4. We are amazed at the incredible patience and longsuffering of God both at this time, 1Peter 3:20, and throughout all the biblical ages, including those still to come. For example throughout Jeremiah and Ezekiel, God constantly warned the children of Israel of the coming judgement. He longed for them to repent and turn to him, but sadly they did not. Equally in the age that we live in, God is still warning and waiting patiently because he does not want anyone to perish, Acts 17:30,31; 2Peter 3:9.

It is interesting to notice that the time period of 40 days is used 3 times in this chapter, v4,12&17. The first two references specifically mention 40 days and 40 nights, to confirm this was a constant deluge of water from above.

From various scriptural examples we observe that 40 is often the number of trial or testing. For example, the life of Moses divides into 3 sets of 40 years where he was tested in different environments, the first being as a prince in Egypt, the second as a Shepherd in the desert, and the last as the leader for the Israelites. Then also the Lord Jesus was tempted by Satan for 40 days in the desert. So here in terms of the flood it was a time of testing for Noah and his family shut in the ark. Will they trust completely in God's provision for them as they experience the storms and destruction taking place all around them?

Just as in the last verse of the previous chapter, so here in v5 we are reminded of Noah's total obedience to do everything that God had commanded him. The Lord Jesus confirmed to his disciples, that this is the sign of true love for God, John 14:15. We wonder what Noah must have been thinking of, being aware of the total destruction that is about to come on the earth because of the people's rebellion and now also their refusal to listen to God's warning.

Throughout this chapter and chapter 8 there are continual time markers.

- 1) Noah was 600 years old, v6.
- 2) The flood began on the 17th day of the second month, v11.
- 3) The flood waters covered the earth for 150 days, v24.
- 4) On the 17th day of the 7th month the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, ch8:4.
- 5) On the 1st day of the 10th month the mountains became visible, ch8:5.
- 6) On the 1st day of the 1st month (of the next year) the flood waters had disappeared, ch8:13.
- 7) On the 27th day of the 2nd month the land was dry, ch8:14.

This is further confirmation that this was an actual event, not fiction. It also confirms that Noah and the animals were inside the ark for 1 year and 10 days or a total of 370 days. That was a long time and a huge test of their faith.

Noah knew exactly what he was doing when he entered the ark, as it was God's amazing provision for them to escape from the flood. We pray for similar individual responses in our day to the message of the gospel. By faith Noah had built the ark and so now by faith he enters into it, Hebrews 11:7. We are reminded that when an individual walks with God, he is constantly living by faith, 2Corinthians 5:7.

It is precious to see that all of Noah's family entered into the ark with him, v7, not just the 3 sons but also their wives. We assume that these ladies had chosen to believe the warning that God had given, and so sadly were the only results that Noah saw from his preaching. In one sense it is also an important marital reminder of the need for both partners to be one in Christ, 2Corinthians 6:14.

It would seem from the language used both here in v8,9 and also in v15,16 that all of these creatures came willingly because God had sent them. Noah did not need to go searching for any of them. Just as God brought the animals to the ark, he continues to bring people to Christ in our day in the power of the Holy Spirit, John 6:44; 16:8-11. The Lord Jesus confirmed that all that the father had given him will come to him, John 6:37.

Finally after all of the huge and varied preparations, the flood came, v10-12. Water erupted from under the ground, and also rained in perpetual torrents from above for 40 days and 40 nights, bringing total destruction. Such a global flood like that had never or will ever be experienced again. Solemnly it does point us to a future judgement when everything will be destroyed by fire, 2Peter 3:10.

God is always true to what he has said, even though people still mock his word today, 2Peter 3:3-7. Sadly they "prefer to remain ignorant" or "deliberately forget" the historical evidence and clear biblical truth. Future judgement is a reality confirmed by many warnings such as Acts 17:30,31, 2Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 9:27,28; 10:31; 1Peter 4:5.

The Lord Jesus in his teaching referred to the example of Noah and the flood as a warning regarding his return, Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26,27. He highlighted the fact that people continued their normal lifestyle of parties and weddings right up until when Noah entered the ark. They sadly had no realization of what was about to happen, so God's sudden destruction swept them all away. Equally in the future people will claim that all is safe and secure, but then disaster will suddenly fall, 1Thessalonians 5:3.

Once everyone was safely inside the ark, we are told in v16 that in his care and concern the LORD shut the door. The day of opportunity was now over. As we saw in the previous session, this door speaks clearly of the Lord Jesus, John 10:9. He is still calling everyone to come to him and so enter through the narrow door, Matthew 7:13,14. At the end of this age of grace, this door of salvation will be closed, Luke 13:24-27; 2Corinthians 6:1,2. Perhaps just as in the days of Noah, people will come to knock and plead to enter, but oh so sad, they will be too late.

The flood waters lifted the ark high above the earth, and caused it to float on the surface, v17-20. We think of:

- 1) Our Saviour the Lord Jesus who in one sense like the ark was lifted up upon a cross for everyone to see, John 12:32,33. Everyone would have seen the ark beginning to float on the water, realising in horror they were too late.
- 2) In total contrast to the ark, all the waves and billows of God's judgement rolled over the Lord Jesus during the hours of darkness, Psalm 69:1-3. These verses speak of him sinking in deep waters.
- 3) Just as everyone in the ark was safe and preserved from the judgement taking place all around them, so we are eternally safe in the Lord Jesus, John 10:28,29; Romans 8:1.

The last few verses confirm the total impossibility for anything to survive. A) The flood waters were more than 22 feet above the highest peaks of the mountains, v20. B) The waters covered the earth for 150 days, v24. Therefore every living thing died except for those in the ark, v21-23. Sin has to be judged by a holy and righteous God, and its wages is death, being separation from God forever. The NT records that it is a thing of great fear to fall into the hands of the living God, Hebrews 10:31.

Two additional observations

- 1) Even though many people today mock this scriptural account, Christian scientists tell us that there is a lot of natural evidence to confirm that the flood did take place. It was not a local event as some have claimed, because millions of fossils have been found across the world, some even on mountains! Fossils are formed through rapid burial, so they are proof of catastrophic events across the world which would have been the case during the flood.
- 2) It is interesting to observe from these chapters that Enoch was taken out of the world before the judgement came, just as the church will be, 1Thessalonians 1:10. But Noah and his family were preserved through the judgement, just as the true Israelites will be during the coming tribulation, Zechariah 13:8,9; Matthew 24:22; Revelation 14:1.

Key things we should learn and remember

- 1) God must deal with sin, so future judgement is a reality.
- 2) God is a Saviour, and so he has provided an amazing salvation that is available for all who will trust him.
- 3) We should not grow weary in warning the unsaved, praying for them and pointing them to Christ.