

NOON BIBLE STUDY: GENESIS 7

GENESIS 6 GAVE US THE TERRIFYING NEWS THAT BECAUSE OF THE GREAT AND CONTINUAL EVIL OF HUMANITY UPON THE EARTH, GOD HAD DECIDED TO FLOOD THE EARTH TO CLEANSE AND CLEAR THE CREATION FROM THE EVIL. IN THE MIDST OF THIS NEWS, GOD SHOWS GRACE AND FAVOR TO NOAH AND HIS FAMILY, CALLING THEM TO BUILD AN ARK TO SAVE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE ANIMAL KINGDOM AND ALSO THEIR OWN LIVES. THIS ARK WILL BE A MASSIVE UNDERTAKING BUT NOAH RESPONDS IN FAITH AND OBEDIENCE.

GENESIS 7:1-5 - FINAL CHARGES BEFORE THE FLOOD

WE READ IN GENESIS 6:20 THAT GOD WAS GOING TO INITIATE SOMETHING IN THE ANIMALS TO BRING THEM TO NOAH. INITIALLY THE TEXT TELLS US THAT NOAH IS TO BRING TWO OF EVERY KIND (6:19) AND NOW WE READ FURTHER INSTRUCTION TO BRING SEVEN "CLEAN ANIMALS". THE TEXT GIVES US THE FIRST INDICATION OF WHY IN VERSE 3 - "TO KEEP OFFSPRING ALIVE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH." HERE IS SOME MORE INSIGHT:

(NOAH) IS INSTRUCTED TO TAKE ON BOARD SEVEN PAIRS OF ALL CLEAN ANIMALS AND A PAIR OF THE ANIMALS THAT ARE NOT CLEAN. (WE CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT) THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CLEAN AND UNCLEAR CREATURES, IN LEVITICUS 11:1-47 AND DEUTERONOMY 14:4-20. SINCE AFTER THE FLOOD SOME CLEAN ANIMALS WILL BE OFFERED AS SACRIFICES (SEE GEN. 8:20) AND SOME WILL BE EATEN AS FOOD (SEE 9:3), TO ENSURE THEIR SURVIVAL IT WAS NECESSARY TO HAVE MORE THAN ONE PAIR OF EACH KIND IN THE ARK." (ESV STUDY BIBLE, GENESIS 7:1-5)

CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW NOAH MUST HAVE FELT HEARING THE NEWS THAT "IN SEVEN DAYS I WILL BRING THE FLOOD?!" WE DO NOT HAVE AN EXACT TIMELINE OF HOW LONG IT TOOK NOAH TO BUILD THE ARK (BETWEEN GENESIS 6-7), BUT SOME GOOD SCHOLARS HAVE SUGGESTED ANYWHERE BETWEEN 55-75 YEARS BASED ON GENEALOGIES AND OTHER ESTIMATES.

LET'S ASSUME IT TOOK 60 YEARS. THAT'S A LONG TIME. THAT'S YOUR FULL TIME JOB. AND YOU ARE WORKING HARD, SEEING LIMITED PROGRESS DAILY BUT SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS YEARLY. AND FINALLY THE MASSIVE, 500+ FOOT VESSEL IS COMPLETE AND GOD SAYS - "NOAH, IN SEVEN DAYS, THIS ARK WILL RISE ON THE WATERS THAT WILL FLOOD THIS EARTH... THIS WILL BE YOUR HOME FOR THE NEXT 40 DAYS AS THE EARTH IS CLEANSSED FROM ITS EVIL."

WHAT DO YOU THINK NOAH FELT?!

GENESIS 7:6-12 - THE FLOOD BEGINS

NOAH'S FAMILY AND ALL OF THE ANIMALS NOW ENTER THE ARK AND THE FLOOD BEGINS. THE TEXT TELLS US THAT NOT ONLY WAS THEIR INTENSE RAIN BUT THAT THE "FOUNTAINS OF THE GREAT DEEP WERE OPENED". WATER FROM ABOVE AND WATER FROM BELOW FOR 40 DAYS NON-STOP.

TO MAKE THIS MOMENT EVEN MORE DRAMATIC, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME IT RAINED. CONSIDER WHAT WE READ PREVIOUSLY:

GENESIS 2:5-6 - NOW NO SHRUB OF THE FIELD WAS YET IN THE EARTH, AND NO PLANT OF THE FIELD HAD YET SPROUTED, FOR THE LORD GOD HAD NOT SENT RAIN UPON THE EARTH, AND THERE WAS NO MAN TO CULTIVATE THE GROUND. 6 BUT A MIST USED TO RISE FROM THE EARTH AND WATER THE WHOLE SURFACE OF THE GROUND.

GENESIS 7 IS THE FIRST RECORDED TIME OF "RAIN" UPON THE EARTH, AND IT'S IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE FLOOD. WOW.

V. 11 - IT'S ALSO WORTH NOTING THAT THE TEXT INCLUDES A NUMBER OF VERY DETAILED CHRONOLOGICAL FEATURES. "THE 600TH YEAR OF NOAH'S LIFE", "SEVEN DAY", "40 DAYS AND NIGHTS" AND THE MOST DETAILED FOUND IN VERSE 11: "IN THE SECOND MONTH, ON THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH". THESE PHRASES HIGHLIGHT THAT THIS WAS A REAL AND HISTORICAL EVENT.

GENESIS 7:13-16 - NOAH'S FAMILY ENTERS THE ARK

8 PEOPLE ENTER THE ARK WHILE THOUSANDS, IF NOT MILLIONS OR BILLIONS DO NOT. THE ANIMALS ARE THEIR ONLY OTHER COMPANIONS. AND GOD SHUTS THE DOOR. WHEN GOD SHUTS THE DOOR, NO ONE IS GETTING IN, NO ONE IS GETTING OUT.

GENESIS 7:17-24 - THE WORLD IS FLOODED

AS THE RAIN WATERS RISE, THE ARK IS LIFTED FROM IT'S SUPPORT AND NOW IS A FLOATING ZOO. AS I READ THE TEXT AGAIN THIS TIME I ENVISIONED NOAH AND HIS FAMILY FILLED WITH UNCERTAINTY AND EVEN FEAR YET PALPABLY MINDFUL OF THE GRACE OF GOD UPON THEIR LIVES. WHAT WERE THEY THINKING? WHAT WERE THEY DOING?

DID THEY HEAR THE VOICES OF THEIR PREVIOUSLY MOCKING NEIGHBORS AS THEY SHRIEKED FOR HELP AND ENTRANCE ONTO THE ARK? WAS THE RAIN TOO LOUD TO HEAR ANYTHING ELSE? DID THE FAMILY SIT IN THEIR LIVING QUARTERS HOLDING EACH OTHER OR WERE THEY ALREADY WORKING THE ROUNDS OF FEEDING THE ANIMALS ON THE BOAT?

THE FLOOD WATERS COVERED THE MOUNTAINS. IT RAINS FOR 40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHT AND THE WATERS REMAINED ON THE EARTH FOR 150 DAYS. EVERY LIVING THING, EVERY LIVING THING THAT IS NOT ON THIS ARK DIES BY DELUGE AND DROWNING. CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE?

THIS IS A DIFFICULT STORY TO READ IN IT'S TRUE, NON-CUTE SUNDAY SCHOOL STORY BECAUSE THERE ARE LITTLE PAIRS OF ANIMALS MARCHING ON OLD MAN NOAH'S HAPPY BOAT. THIS IS DIFFICULT, AND SAD AND SOBERING. OUR CREATOR, YAHWEH IS A POWERFUL GOD AND HE IS THE JUST GOD. AND SIN AND PRIDE AND REBELLION HAS CONSEQUENCES. AND MAKE NOT MISTAKE, THE FLOOD IS NOT GOD'S FAULT, IT'S HUMANITY'S FAULT.

TO THINK ABOUT THE SADNESS OF THIS EVENT SHOULD GET US TO BE GRATEFUL THAT GOD LETS US CONTINUE ON HIS PLANET AT ALL. ONE SIN SEPARATES US FROM THE HOLY ONE. CONTINUANCE IN SIN DRIVES US FAR AWAY. HE IS HOLY WE ARE NOT. AND YET HE PURSUES US, LONGS FOR US TO BE RECONCILED WITH HIM. HE GIVES US GRACE AND MERCY EVERY DAY. AND HE HELPS US LIVE HOLY, WHEN WE ASK HIM FOR THAT HELP. HE IS NOT LOOKING FOR PERFECTION FROM HIS FALLEN CREATION, HE IS LONGING FOR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM.

AND SO WE LOOK AT NOAH AND HIS FAMILY, ALONE ON THE ARK AND REMEMBER HOW MUCH GOD LOVES US, THOSE WHO HE HAS BESTOWED HIS GRACE UPON. AND THE WAY GOD SHOWS THIS GRACE IS PECULIAR. LET'S REMEMBER, NOAH AND HIS FAMILY ARE RESCUED AND SNATCHED AWAY FROM JUDGEMENT, NOT BY WHAT THEY HAVE DONE, BUT BY WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR THEM.

J.A. MOTYER WRITES: "THERE IS NO SECURITY FOR NOAH ANYWHERE BUT IN THE ARK. QUITE OUTSIDE HIS EXPERIENCE, AND HIS EXPECTATION, NOAH AND HIS FAMILY ARE TO BE ENTOMBED IN A PLACE OF DARKNESS IN ORDER TO BE SAVED. THE THREE-STORY BOAT, 450 FEET LONG, 75 FEET WIDE, AND 45 FEET HIGH WAS EFFECTIVELY A PRISON. AND NOAH TAKES ON HIMSELF THE PAIN AND THE DARKNESS OF THE TOMB IN ORDER TO PASS SAFELY THROUGH THE TIME OF DIVINE JUDGMENT. BY HIS WILLING OBEDIENCE TO GOD, HE BECOMES THE SAVIOR OF THOSE OF HIS FAMILY WHO TRUSTED IN HIM AND HIS GOD. NO WONDER THE ARK HAS FEATURED IN CHRISTIAN THINKING AS A SYMBOL OF SALVATION IN CHRIST, AND AS A PICTURE OF GOD'S CHURCH." ("THE BIBLE SPEAKS TODAY: THE MESSAGE OF GENESIS 1-11", PGS. 140-141)

GOD PROVIDES A PLACE OF SAFETY FROM THE JUDGEMENT THAT IS COMING TO THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM AND RESPOND TO HIS WORD. HE KEEPS THEM SAFE AND WILL BRING THEM TO RENEWAL AFTER THE JUDGMENT. IN THE MEANTIME, WE LIKE NOAH MUST CLING TO THE PROMISE OF GOD. WE MUST BE JEALOUS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND STAY FAITHFUL AND BUSY WITH WHAT GOD HAS CALLED US TO DO. AND WAIT IN THAT SAFETY, AMONGST THE MESS AND SMELL OF THE OLD WORLD'S CREATURES TO BEGIN LIFE AGAIN ON THE OTHER SIDE WHEN GOD OPENS UP THE DOOR AGAIN.