

NOON BIBLE STUDY: GENESIS 8

THE FLOOD OF THE EARTH HAS COME. THE WATERS HAVE RISEN OVER EVERY MOUNTAIN TOP AND FILLED IN EVERY VALLEY. NOAH AND HIS FAMILY ARE ALONE IN THE ARK WITH THEIR ANIMAL COMPANIONS. THE RAINS CONTINUED FOR 40 DAYS AND NIGHTS AND THE WATER REMAINED ON THE EARTH FOR 150 DAYS.

GENESIS 8:1-5 - THE WATERS RECEDE

WATER COVERS THE EARTH AND THE "WIND (HEBREW: *RUACH*)" FROM GOD PASSES OVER THE EARTH. WHAT WE READ IN GENESIS 8:1 SHOULD BRING US BACK TO 1:1-2:

GENESIS 1:1-2 - IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH. 2 THE EARTH WAS FORMLESS AND VOID, AND DARKNESS WAS OVER THE SURFACE OF THE DEEP, AND THE SPIRIT (*RUACH*) OF GOD WAS MOVING OVER THE SURFACE OF THE WATERS.

THROUGH THE FLOOD, GOD IS NOT ONLY DESTROYING THE EVIL AND CLEANSING THE EARTH, HE IS ESSENTIALLY RE-CREATING IT. AND HE WILL BEGIN THIS WORK AGAIN NOT THROUGH ADAM BUT THROUGH NOAH, A MAN WHO HAS PROVEN FAITHFUL TO GOD, DESPITE ADVERSITY, AND IS "REMEMBERED" BY GOD.

AFTER THE 150 DAYS, THE FLOOD WATERS BEGIN TO RECEDE. GENESIS 7:11 TOLD US THAT THE FLOOD BEGAN ON 17TH DAY OF THE 2ND MONTH. NOW WE READ IN GENESIS 8:4 THAT THE ARK RESTS ON THE MOUNTAINS OF ARARAT ON THE 17TH DAY OF THE 7TH MONTH. VERSE 5 THEN TELLS US THAT THE WATER DECREASED STEADILY UNTIL THE 10TH MONTH AND ON THE 1ST DAY OF THE MONTH THE TOPS OF THE MOUNTAINS BECAME VISIBLE.

LET'S THINK ABOUT THE MAGNITUDE OF THESE DATES. COMPARATIVELY THE FLOOD WOULD HAVE BEGUN ON FEBRUARY 17TH AND RAINED WELL INTO THE END OF MARCH. 150 DAYS IS CLOSE TO 5 MONTHS, BRINGING US TO JULY/AUGUST. THE TEXT TELLS US THAT THE TOPS OF THE MOUNTAINS BECAME "VISIBLE" ON OCTOBER 1ST. NOAH AND HIS FAMILY ARE ON THE ARK FROM FEBRUARY TO OCTOBER! AND THIS IS BEFORE THEY EVEN BEGIN TO CONSIDER IF THERE IS DRY LAND FOR THEM TO LIVE ON. (REMEMBER GOD CLOSED THE DOOR).

GENESIS 8:6-12 - DRY LAND?

AFTER 40 MORE DAYS (NOVEMBER?) NOAH OPENS A WINDOW ON THE ARK. HE SENDS OUT TWO BIRDS, FIRST A RAVEN, FOLLOWED BY A DOVE TO SEE IF THERE IS DRY LAND. THE ASSUMPTION IS THESE BIRDS CAN FLY AROUND AND WILL RETURN TO THE ARK IF THERE IS NO SOURCE OF FOOD OR A NON-WATER BASED PLACE TO REST THEIR WINGS. THE DOVE RETURNS AND NOAH CONCLUDES THAT THERE IS NO DRY LAND YET. HE REPEATS THIS ONE WEEK LATER.

THE SECOND TIME THE DOVE RETURNS WITH A "FRESHLY PICKED OLIVE LEAF" AND "NOAH KNEW THAT THE WATER WAS ABATED FROM THE EARTH". THE NOAH FAMILY MUST HAVE BEEN OVERJOYED. HE WAITS ANOTHER WEEK AND THE DOVE DOES NOT RETURN.

GENESIS 8:13-19 - NOAH LEAVES THE ARK

AFTER OVER A YEAR ON THE ARK, NOAH AND HIS FAMILY LEAVE THEIR TEMPORARY REFUGE HOME.

WHILE THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IMAGES OF THE COMING OF THE FLOOD AND THE MARCHING OF THE ANIMALS DO NOT ACCURATELY ILLUSTRATE THE WRATH OF THE FLOOD, I FEEL LIKE THE CHILDLIKE IMAGES OF NOAH AND HIS FAMILY AND ALL OF THE ANIMALS *LEAVING* THE ARK DO ACCURATELY ILLUSTRATE THIS MOMENT. SMILING FACES, GREEN EARTH, SUNSHINE. I GET THE SENSE THAT THIS WAS A HAPPY DAY.

SURE THERE WERE ECHOS OF THE HORRORS OF THE FLOODS DEVASTATION, BUT THOSE THOUGHTS AND IMAGES LIKELY WERE VISUALIZED WHILE THE FAMILY WAITED FOR THE WATERS TO SUBSIDE WHILE THEY WERE STILL ON THE ARK. NOW THEIR FEET ARE STANDING ON THE EARTH AGAIN. THIS IS VERY GOOD.

GOD GIVES A RENEWED COMMISSION TO HUMANITY, ECHOING BACK TO GOD'S CHARGE TO ADAM & EVE. THE LORD CALLS NOAH NOW TO "BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY ON THE EARTH" (CP. GENESIS 1:28). THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT DETAIL IN OUR STORY. IT SHOWS US THAT EVEN THOUGH HUMANITY DID NOT REMAIN FAITHFUL TO GOD, GOD DID NOT ABANDON HIS ORIGINAL INTENTION FOR THE CREATION: AN EARTH FILLED WITH CREATURES, LED BY HUMANS, IN RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.

JUST BECAUSE HUMANS ABANDONED THEIR PURPOSE DOES NOT MEAN GOD ABANDONS HIS. IN FACT, THIS CREATION STORY AND THE RENEWAL OF BOTH THE CREATION AND HUMANITY'S PURPOSE ON THE CREATION IS A GOOD WINDOW IN THE HEART OF GOD AND HIS ETERNAL PURPOSES. THOUGH HUMANS CONTINUE TO REBEL AND SIN, GOD'S WILL IS SURE TO BE DONE ON THE EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

THE BIBLE'S MAIN THEME, WHAT JESUS CALLED "THE KINGDOM OF GOD" BRINGS THE WORLD BACK TO WHAT GOD PLANNED IN THE BEGINNING - HUMANS ON THE EARTH, IN PARADISE, LIVING FOREVER IN HARMONY WITH EACH OTHER, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY WITH GOD. IF THIS IS WHAT GOD HAS ALWAYS WANTED FROM THE BEGINNING, WHY WOULD HE ABANDON OR REVISE THIS PLAN BECAUSE OF US? INSTEAD, GOD WORKS IN SPITE OF US (AND OUR SIN) TO ENSURE HIS DREAM COMES TRUE.

WE SEE THAT AGAIN HERE WITH NOAH AND HIS FAMILY AFTER THE FLOOD. AND WHY BEGIN AGAIN WITH NOAH? WE SEE INTO THE HEART AND CHARACTER OF WHY GOD CHOSE NOAH IN THE NEXT VERSES.

GENESIS 8:20-22 - NOAH WORSHIPS

THE FIRST ACTION NOAH TAKES AFTER LEAVING THE ARK IS TO BUILD AN ALTAR TO THE LORD (FIRST USAGE OF THAT PHRASE IN SCRIPTURE) TO OFFER UP A SACRIFICE. THIS WAS A VERY SIGNIFICANT OFFERING FOR THIS MOST SIGNIFICANT MOMENT - EVERY CLEAN ANIMAL AND EVERY CLEAN BIRD - WAS OFFERED UP (THUS BRINGING SOME CLARIFYING EVIDENCE TO WHY SEVEN OF THE "CLEAN" ANIMALS WERE BROUGHT).

IN RESPONSE TO NOAH'S SACRIFICE, THE TEXT TELLS US THAT "THE LORD SMELLED THE SOOTHING AROMA" LIKELY A FIGURE OF SPEECH MEANING THAT NOAH'S SACRIFICIAL AND WORSHIPFUL ACTIONS WERE PLEASING TO GOD. AND SO THE LORD MAKES A PROMISE TO HIMSELF TO "NEVER AGAIN CURSE THE GROUND ON ACCOUNT OF MAN" AND "WILL NEVER AGAIN DESTROY EVERY LIVING THING, AS I HAVE DONE." THOUGH GOD ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE "DEFAULT SETTING" OF HUMANS IS "EVIL", GOD DECLARES THAT

HE WILL NOT DESTROY ALL THINGS AGAIN. (HE REITERATES THIS IN THE CLOSING LINE OF THE CHAPTER). THINGS ARE GOING TO BE DIFFERENT NOW, AS WE WILL LEARN, BUT GOD COMMITS TO HIS PART OF THE PLAN. THESE PROMISES WILL SERVE AS THE BASIS OF THE COVENANT GOD WILL MAKE WITH NOAH (MORE ON THIS IN CHAPTER 9).

THE PHRASE "SOOTHING" (ESV "PLEASING") AROMA IS A SIGNIFICANT HEBREW PHRASE.

"THE HEBREW TERM FOR "PLEASING," *NIKHOAKH*, CONVEYS THE IDEA OF REST AND TRANQUILITY. IT IS RELATED TO THE NAME "NOAH" (HB. *NOAKH*) AND IS PROBABLY USED HERE IN ORDER TO REMIND THE READER OF LAMECH'S REMARKS IN GEN. 5:29 (ABOUT THE BIRTH AND NAMING OF HIS SON, NOAH). IT ALSO HAS THE SENSE OF "SOOTHING." THE BURNT OFFERING SOOTHES GOD'S ANGER AT HUMAN SIN, SO ALTHOUGH HUMAN NATURE HAS NOT BEEN CHANGED BY THE FLOOD, GOD'S ATTITUDE HAS CHANGED." (ESV STUDY BIBLE, GENESIS 8:20-22)

WE DO NOT READ THAT THIS SACRIFICE WAS EVER COMMANDED BY GOD. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES WERE MADE TO WORSHIP, GIVE THANKS, AND MAKE ATONEMENT. ALL THREE OF THOSE THINGS ARE PROBABLY HAPPENING HERE IN NOAH'S HEART AND MIND. HE IS WORSHIPPING THE LORD WHO HAS JUST BROUGHT A FLOOD AND SPARED HIS LIFE. HE IS GIVING THANKS FOR THAT SAVING AND OFFERING THE ANIMAL SACRIFICES IN A SORT OF "IN THE PLACE OF" ACTION FOR HIS OWN LIFE. EVERYONE ELSE DIED, NOAH LIVED AND HIS SACRIFICES INDICATE HE GETS WHAT A BIG DEAL THAT IS. THIS ACTION DID NOT HAVE TO BE COMMANDED - IT WAS THE OUTWARD EXPRESSION OF NOAH'S GRATEFUL HEART, AND THE **FIRST** THING HE DID!

THIS IS THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP GOD WANTS WITH US. HE COMMANDS WORSHIP AND COMMANDS ACTIONS WHICH ARE RIGHTEOUS - BUT HE LONGS FOR EXPRESSIONS OF SACRIFICE AND WORSHIP NOT MOVED BY COMPULSION BUT MOVED AUTOMATICALLY BY GRATITUDE AND AWE.

THIS IS WHAT MATURITY LOOKS LIKE. WHEN SOMEONE DOESN'T HAVE TO ASK YOU TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT BUT THAT YOU DO WHAT IS RIGHT BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT AND YOU WANT TO DO IT. WE ALL HAVE A SEASON OF IMMATURITY IN OUR FAITH AND RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THIS SEASON IS MARKED BY THE NEED TO BE TOLD AND TAUGHT THAT IT IS GOOD AND RIGHT FOR US TO DO THIS OR THAT (EX: READ BIBLE, FELLOWSHIP WITH BELIEVERS, PRAY, BE GENEROUS ETC). BUT AS WE MATURE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD OUR LIVES SHOULD BE MUCH MORE MARKED BY A GENUINE AND NATURAL INCLINATION TO DO AND THINK AND SPEAK WHAT IS RIGHT AND GOOD.

THE CLOSER OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD GETS, THE MORE THIS WILL BE TRUE OF OUR LIVES. THE MORE WE SEE HIS GOODNESS AND GLORY, THE MORE WE WILL BE INCLINED TO WORSHIP AND GIVE THANKS. THE MORE WE REALIZE WHAT WE HAVE BEEN SAVED FROM BY THE GRACE OF GOD, THE MORE GRATEFUL WE WILL BE AND INCLINED TO LIVE IN LIGHT OF THE CROSS. THE MORE WE HAVE HAD TRANSFORMED HEARTS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE MORE WE WILL BE LIKE CHRIST.

NOAH KNEW GOD BECAUSE HE WALKED WITH GOD (GENESIS 6:9). AND AS A RESULT OF THIS INTIMACY WITH GOD, NOAH RESPONDED TO ALL THAT HAD TRANSPIRED OVER THE LAST YEAR AND YEARS WITH SACRIFICE, THANKSGIVING AND WORSHIP. THIS IS THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP I DESIRE WITH THE LORD. I DON'T WANT TO JUST "POP IN ON GOD" ONCE A WEEK OR CALL UPON HIM ONLY WHEN IN NEED OF A LIFE PRESERVER, I WANT TO WALK WITH GOD. I DON'T WANT TO BEGRUDGINGLY DO THE RIGHT THING BUT HAVE A WILLING SPIRIT TO OBEY! I DON'T WANT TO SACRIFICE BECAUSE I HAVE TO BUT BECAUSE I OWE THE LORD EVERYTHING. I DON'T WANT TO WORSHIP FOR WHAT I GET OUT OF IT BUT INSTEAD OFFER UP TO GOD THAT WHICH WILL BLESS HIM!

I PRAY WE CAN LOOK AT OUR OWN DAYS AND YEARS AND SEE MATURITY ON THE RISE AND IMMATURITY ON THE DECLINE. GOD HAS COMMITTED TO HIS CREATION AND WHILE "SEEDTIME AND HARVEST, AND COLD AND HEAT, AND SUMMER AND WINTER, AND DAY AND NIGHT" CONTINUE ON, MAY WE WALK EVER SO CLOSELY TO THE ONE WHO HAS MADE THIS PROMISE.