
Lesson 19 — A BRAVE NEW WORLD



“And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.”

[Genesis 8:4]

After enduring the catastrophic chaos and violent forces of the global flood for 150 days (5 months), Noah’s ark finally rested somewhere on the mountain ranges of Ararat, which is on the eastern border of modern-day Turkey. It would take another 7 full months for the waters to subside and the earth to thoroughly dry out so that Noah, his family, and the animals could safely leave the ark. All in all, they spent just over one year on the ark. The year was approximately 2350 B.C., or some 1,650 years from the beginning of creation.

When Noah finally stepped off the ark, he would recognize little from the world that existed before the flood. The old world perished. Noah was walking into an entirely new world. The catastrophic effects of the flood cannot be overemphasized. Everything changed.

Earth’s original land mass was changed due to sudden breaks in the fault lines and the rapid movements of tectonic plates. Subsequent continental collisions would have totally rearranged and reformed the topography of the earth’s surface creating high mountain peaks. Subduction in the earth’s mantle would have formed massive ocean trenches and created much deeper seas. The violent tectonic activity would have disrupted and possibly reversed the magnetic field of the earth. The earth’s atmosphere likely would have been affected, and new weather patterns would have emerged. The climate dramatically would have changed, eventually sending the planet into an ice age. It is likely that Noah and his descendants would have experienced the very first winter on earth.

“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” [Genesis 8:22]

Furthermore, plant and animal life would significantly have been different. It would take several generations to see variations within kinds emerge and expand on the earth. Human lifespans would begin to significantly drop, and humanity would have to start all over from scratch. All the knowledge, ingenuity, invention, and innovation necessary to reestablish human civilization was preserved on the ark. But before Noah could get back to work, he had a higher priority. Noah’s first act after the flood would be to worship!

The Heart of Worship

Like his forefathers before him, Noah was well aware of his need for atonement to be forgiven and restored to God. Noah built an altar to the LORD and offered sacrifices in faith as his very first act of worship upon leaving the ark. It is easy to read past this and miss the significance of Noah's obedience.

In the aftermath of the flood, nothing but death was left in the wake of God's judgment. Only Noah and his household survived. Noah understood both the severity and the kindness of God. Noah was a first-hand witness to the righteous indignation of a Holy God, and at the same time he was a direct recipient of the lovingkindness of a merciful God. He and his family deserved to die with the rest of mankind but were saved by God's amazing grace. The blood sacrifices served as a tangible reminder to Noah and his family that without the shedding of innocent blood, there is no forgiveness of sin.

As Noah stepped off the ark, he desired one thing and one thing alone. He desired God's favor and presence and therefore approached the LORD the only acceptable way.

- ❖ Read Genesis 3:21, 7:1-2. Who initially established the pattern of atonement? How was Noah made aware of the necessity of atonement? What other episode from the early chapters of Genesis emphasized the necessity of atonement?

- ❖ Read Genesis 8:14-19. What was God's command and immediate commission for Noah and his family? How is this connected to Genesis 1:26-28 and Matthew 28:18-20?

- ❖ Read Genesis 8:20-22. How did the LORD respond to Noah's act of worship? Read 2 Corinthians 2:14-17. How does Paul describe followers of Christ? What is most pleasing to God according to this passage?

Releasing the Dove

Once Noah could safely open the window to the ark, he first released a raven and then a dove to determine if the waters had subsided from the earth. After returning several times, the dove finally left and never returned. Again, it is easy to miss the deeper meaning. The language in this passage is rich with prophetic symbolism, and nothing in God's word is a coincidence. Everything must be interpreted through the rest of Scripture.

- ❖ Read Genesis 8:6-12. What stands out to you in this passage? Read Matthew 3:13-17. What is happening in this scene? How is the Holy Spirit described and how does this connect to Genesis 8?

- ❖ Read Genesis 1:1-2. Discover as many connections between the original creation and the recreation after the flood.

The New Normal

As mentioned earlier, Noah and his family walked into a brave new world after the flood. It would take years for the earth to be replenished with life and for the environment to be reset to its natural rhythms. Historical models and archaeological discoveries suggest that the aftereffects of the flood most likely sent the earth into a cooling phase that would eventually produce the ice age.

The massive glacial formations and ice caps are evidence today that a large portion of the earth experienced a period of rapid freezing along with massive blizzards. Even the great frozen continent of Antarctica contains frozen fossils of plants and animals that once lived in warm, even tropical, environments. The fossil evidence proves that Antarctica was once filled with lush vegetation and abundant life. In other words, the earth as we know it today bears little resemblance to the pre-flood planet.

The initial conditions after the flood would almost certainly be intensely difficult and volatile. Life would hard for the earliest antediluvian generations. Instead of year-round growing seasons producing an abundance of food, there would be seasonal periods of growth followed by harsh winters. All of the early post-flood civilizations were forced to settle in the warmer and more moderate climates, as the colder regions became uninhabitable. Although

there are few details provided in the Bible, we still can learn some things about the post-flood world in Genesis.

- ❖ Read Genesis 8:22. What critical details does this verse provide? What can we infer about the climate of the pre-flood world based on what we read in this verse?

- ❖ Read Genesis 9:1-7. What do we learn in this passage about the changes in man's diet and his relationship to animals? What other consequences would these things have on the post-flood world?

- ❖ What is the significance of Genesis 9:4-6? Why did the LORD forbid eating meat with blood in it? How should we view capital punishment today in view of God's clear command?

The God of Covenant

After Noah worshipped the LORD — making atonement for his sin with burnt offerings — he was able to approach the LORD in faith. In response, God made a covenant with him. A covenant is a formal agreement — a good-faith promise made between two parties. Sometimes a covenant can be conditional and therefore prone to be broken or violated, but also a covenant can be unilateral, meaning that it is as good as the one who upholds his end of the contract. God's covenant with Noah was unconditional, eternal, and also universal.

Genesis introduces the Biblical concept of covenant, which becomes one of the most essential threads that is woven throughout God's story of redemption. The LORD is a God of covenant. He makes covenant and keeps covenant with His people. As we will see in the next lesson, God usually provides a sign, or symbol, as a reminder of His faithfulness — none of which is more visible and beautiful as the sign he gave to Noah.