



Lesson 7

The Flood

Introduction

In our last lesson we saw that, before the Flood, the earth was an evil place. Because of this God said that He would destroy it. However He directed Noah to build the ark and made it a place of salvation for Noah and family during the Flood. God waited 120 years, giving the entire world an opportunity to repent, and then Noah was called into the ark.

The Flood

A careful reading of these early chapters of Genesis shows us that probably there had not been rain on the earth before this time. The land had been watered by mist (2:6), perhaps heavy dew. We can imagine the shock of all the people on the earth when the rain began and did not stop.

Look at what happened.

1. Noah had prepared everything, the ark was built, the animals collected together, food gathered for them (6:20-21) – what a huge task this had been but God had not yet invited him into the ark. We simply read:

“Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.” Genesis 6:22

It is James in his New Testament letter who tells us *‘faith without works is dead’*. Noah’s absolute belief that God would indeed judge the world was shown by the way he responded – doing all that God commanded him and so he was ready when the day finally came. Our lives should be like this. If we really believe that Jesus is coming back to judge the world and set up God’s kingdom, then surely we will do what God asks of us so that we will be ready whenever he comes.

2. Finally the Lord spoke to Noah; *‘Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation’* (7:1).

Noah’s response was immediate.

“On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark,” Genesis 7:13

What wonderful faith Noah had. He had waited for this day for 120 years and was absolutely ready the same day that God spoke to him. He could only do this by being ready every day – he did not know the day in advance.

3. Once Noah and his family were inside the ark, the Lord shut him in (7:16). No-one else could now get in, the door was shut and salvation was denied to any latecomers.
4. God waited another seven days before beginning His punishment of the earth.

“In seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground
... And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth.
In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.
And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights.” Genesis 7:4-12

We can imagine how people outside the ark behaved during these seven days. Noah had gone into the ark and nothing had happened! There would be laughing and mocking, they would think he was some sort of madman. How quickly they would change when it began to rain. They would go to the ark to see if they could open the door to get in and as the waters rose, they would become aware that they were going to





die, to drown in the Flood. When Jesus returns there will be people like this, they will suddenly realise they had been very foolish not to obey the Gospel in their lives and they will offer Jesus all sorts of reasons why he should save them, however he will send them away and they will perish. If we want to be in God's kingdom, now is the time to get ready for it, when Jesus comes it will be too late.

It will be a terrible thing to be rejected by Jesus who will look at people who claim to be his disciples and say to them *'go away, I do not know you!'*

"The bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."
Matthew 25:10-13

The Bible describes what this long period of flooding did to the earth; 'And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind'.

After the Flood (8:15-22)

The Flood lasted a long time and all the earth was covered by the waters, they were seven metres higher than the highest mountain (7:20). Gradually they subsided and the ark rested on Mount Ararat (this is in modern Turkey).

Finally God instructed Noah to leave the ark and make a fresh start on the earth.

"Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh- birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth- that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth."
Genesis 8:16-17

The first thing that Noah did when he came out of the ark was to build an altar and sacrifice animals to God. They are described as 'clean' and were animals that were acceptable to God as a sacrifice. When Noah took the animals into the Ark he was commanded to take two of each kind (one male and one female) except for 'clean' animals. He was told to take seven of each of these so that they would be available for sacrifice and worship of God after the flood.

This act by Noah tells us what was in his heart. It was a new beginning and he was determined to put God first. The sacrifice he made was a 'burnt offering'. The whole animal was offered up to God, it symbolised a total commitment to Him. There was to be no place for the selfishness of life before the Flood that had caused God to destroy the earth.

God was pleased with this, the smell of the burning animal rose up as an acceptable aroma to Him. It was not that He got pleasure from such animal sacrifices but He was pleased with the hearts of men who came to Him in this way. Like Abel before him, Noah recognised that, without the shedding of blood there could be no forgiveness of sin.

A New Beginning (9:1-17)

After the Flood there were only eight people alive on the earth. God's command was very similar to the one He gave Adam and Eve in the beginning, they were to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. But now there was a change in the relationship between people and animals. For the first time man was given permission to eat fish and meat as long as he did not eat the blood. This belonged to God alone. However, as people killed animals for food and caught fish, then those living creatures would grow to be afraid of them, so:

"The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered."
Genesis 9:2



A New Covenant (9:8-17)

Finally God made a covenant with Noah. He gave a solemn promise that never again would He destroy the earth by water. As a sign of this covenant He put the rainbow in the sky. We know that rainbows occur when the sun shines through rain, usually as it is coming to an end. God said that the rainbow would remind Him that He had promised that it would never again rain so heavily on the earth that it would be destroyed by a worldwide flood.

Every time we see a rainbow in the sky, we too are reminded of the faithfulness of God's word and the covenant He made that still stands today.

Drunkenness and Cursing (9:20-27)

As the earth began to be filled with people once again, we read that Noah planted a vineyard, made wine, became drunk and lay naked and asleep in his tent (9:20). This should remind us of the first time we met sin in the Bible, when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit they knew that they were naked and tried to cover themselves. His youngest son, Ham, went in and saw his father in this state. This was a matter of great shame. Instead of quietly covering up his father, he went and told his two brothers and it was left to Japheth and Shem to do this job for their father. They went into Noah's tent walking backwards so that they would not see their naked father and laid a garment over him.

How did Noah know about it when he woke up? It seems that there had been some gossip about it, for Ham told his son Canaan, furthermore the gossip had been unkind and disrespectful of the head of the family and Noah was very angry about it. Look at what he said.

"When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said,

"Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant." Genesis 9:24-27

All the nations of the earth are descended from Ham (the father of Canaan), Shem and Japheth.

1. Japheth was the father of men and women who settled in the Western world, particularly Europe.
2. Shem was the father of the Semitic people, in particular the Jews.
3. Ham was the father of people who settled in Africa.

SUMMARY

In this lesson we have learned the following key points.

- God sent a flood upon the earth to destroy wicked men. He was patient with them for many years but finally they were beyond saving.
- We are warned that just before the Lord Jesus Christ returns people will behave in a godless way as they did in the time of Noah. God will not allow this wicked world to continue forever but will send His son to judge and punish it.
- The rainbow is God's sign that He will never again destroy the world by a Flood.
- We are all descended from the three sons of Noah.

