

Genesis – Lesson 8

After the Flood

Read Genesis 8:20-9:7

1. (a) List some things that would now be *different* after Noah and his family came out of the ark?

Many things would now be different: 1) Noah and his family would be the *only* human beings on the planet; 2) the climate and general atmospheric conditions would be very different without the canopy; 3) plant life would probably be very different, so Noah and his family would have to learn new ways of survival, and 4) animals would now be forced to learn to live differently as well. Genesis 9:3 indicates that humans would *now* be allowed to kill and eat animals (implying that they did not before the flood), and this would change the relationship of animals to humans (note this in Genesis 9:2).

(b) *Why* would Noah build an altar and immediately sacrifice some of the animals he had so carefully protected during the flood? What might it teach *us* today?

By surviving the flood, Noah would come out of the ark recognizing that he was alive only because of the mercy and grace of God. Without God's *explicit* protection, the ark and everything in it would not have survived. Thus, Noah would have been *greatly appreciative* to the Lord for his hand of grace, and he would *want* to offer to God something in the way of thankfulness. Thus, Noah offered a sacrifice to God to say "thank you" to him, and to recognize that the *only* reason he was alive was because God had saved him. This is the *precise* reaction that human beings should have to the grace of God in salvation; Christians, who have been saved by grace through the wrath of God, should live as *fully grateful* people, and their lives should exemplify this thankfulness in everything they do, especially worship.

(c) What do you learn about *God* from his response to Noah's sacrifice?

Genesis 8:21-22 gives us God's response to this sacrifice: 1) he smelled the pleasing aroma, which was *probably* more about Noah's gratitude than the actual sacrifice itself, 2) he determined *never* again to destroy humanity through a flood, and 3) he promised to continue the regular process of days and seasons throughout the time going forward. These are all indications of the *providence* of God, whereby he carries out his sovereign will in the world, doing what is necessary to keep all things moving in accordance with his purposes and plans. This demonstrates that sin, regardless of its hatefulness to God, does not stop God from providing for his creation; even though humanity is sinful "*from his youth*," God still loves and cares for us, and provides for us all that is necessary to survive. As the giver of life, God never abandons his creation, and provides a *unique* way of salvation for some of them above and beyond what he provides for all.

2. (a) List the *commands* that God gave to Noah in 9:1-7. How are they *similar* to the commands given to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28-29?

God gave the following commands to Noah: 1) be fruitful and multiply (vv. 1, 7), 2) feel free to eat everything on the earth, including animals and birds (v. 3), 3) do not eat *living* animals nor consume the *blood* of animals (v. 4), and 4) do not eat *humans*, nor kill other humans (v. 6). In this case, only the *first* of these commands is similar to the command given to Adam and Eve; just as the entire human race sprang first from Adam, now the race would continue through Noah, so this command is for the purpose of procreation. However, the remaining commands are *new*; Adam was never given permission to eat animals (by implication), and the implementation of these new commands to Noah are *probably* related to a new world order and climate. The immediate eating of animals may have been necessary until plant life could be fully restored, and God may have made humanity carnivorous in order that survival in the new world climate would be possible (see 2b below).

(b) What *changes* between human beings and animals at this point? Why this change *now*?

According to 9:2, a new *fear* develops between the animal world and humanity. The implication is that humanity lived in harmony with animals prior to the Flood, but now animals would be food source to humans, thus they would experience a dread of us and flee from us for survival. It is *possible* that the addition of this dread occurs as part of the *judgment* of the Flood, a *continuation* of the Curse upon the ground that now extends to animals.

Read Genesis 9:8-17

3. (a) Name some of the *elements* of the covenant God made with Noah. How they are a reflection of what God intended to do in *Christ*?

The elements of the Noahic covenant include: 1) a continuing relationship of God with *all* living creatures (v. 9f); 2) that there would *never again* be a worldwide flood to destroy all flesh; and 3) the sign of this covenant would be the rainbow in the sky (vv. 12-17). The covenant with Noah is a *precursor* of the covenant God would make with us through Christ: it would be a permanent covenant with those God keeps through his wrath, that this covenant would protect a people through any dangers that might come due to God's judgment upon the earth, and that the *sign* of this new covenant would be the blood of Christ (as pictured in the Lord's Supper).

(b) Why would God choose a *rainbow* as a sign by which to remember this covenant?

If it is true that *direct* sunlight was never seen prior to the Flood (due to the canopy), then the removal of the canopy would now allow direct sunlight to filter through water vapor in the atmosphere and produce rainbows. This visible manifestation would serve as a *reminder* to God of the fact that there had once been a flood (and a canopy), and it would remind him of his promise never to flood the earth again. Such a sign would *only* be visible in these new atmospheric conditions, and the existence of the rainbow would show forth as a testimony to what God had done and what he had promised to do (and not do).

(c) Compare Genesis 9:11 with 2 Peter 3:5-10. How does the prediction of Peter *coincide* with the promise of God to Noah?

In Genesis 9, God promises never to destroy the earth again *using the means of a flood*. The future destruction of humanity, however, in 2 Peter 3:5-10 is destined to be accomplished by *fire*. Since the *reasons* for the flood *still exist*, in that humanity is still evil all the time, God *must* bring judgment and wrath upon those who rebel against him (as he did in the flood). But, because of his promise never to flood the earth again, *now* God will bring the element of fire against the earth to wipe it out and begin again. This *future* judgment of God will not break the Noahic covenant, since God was *very specific* with Noah about what he would not do in the future.

Read Genesis 9:18-29.

4. (a) What does Noah *become* after the flood? What does his new occupation lead him to *do*?

Noah becomes a vinedresser; he plants a vineyard, grows grapes, harvests them, and ferments them into wine. Since there is nothing written about Noah's occupation prior to the flood, it could be implied that this was a *new* occupation. Unfortunately, Noah becomes drunk with the produce of his vineyard, causing shame to come upon him and his sons.

(b) Why was it *sinful* for Ham to see his father naked (v. 22)?

Seeing someone naked is not, in itself, sinful. So, the sinfulness of Ham must be related to either his *reaction* to Noah's nakedness or his *motivation* in seeing his father naked. Apparently, in some way (maybe by reporting it?) Ham *humiliated* his father. Shem and Japheth *purposely* avoid seeing their father in this way, which might indicate the humiliation that Ham put upon Noah. In any case, Ham is said to have sinned against his father, and he is judged for this by God.

(c) Why was *Canaan* cursed by Noah? How was this *eventually* fulfilled? Why is this significant to the Israelites reading this book?

Although the sin was *entirely* committed by his youngest son Ham, Noah cursed Canaan to reflect the *future* results of this sin through the line of Ham and to *prophetically* indicate the future of the Ham's descendants through this son. We know that the Canaanites were utterly rejected by God as the inhabitants of the Promised Land, and that the Israelites were to destroy them. Their failure to follow God down through the centuries (maybe as a *direct* result of Ham's sinfulness; see also the descendants of Cain in chapter 4) resulted in their rejection by God and their need to be eliminated. All of this, of course, gives *reason* to the Israelites of why it was acceptable to dislodge the Canaanites from the Promised Land, which they would be doing very shortly as they arrived there.

5. From which *son* of Noah were the Israelites descended? What does Noah's words "*may Japheth live in the tents of Shem*" (v. 27) mean to Israel?

The Israelites were *Semites*, wandering tent-dwellers descended from Shem via Abraham (the term *Hebrew* has its etymology in the word *Eber* of 10:21, 25.) Since the sons of Japheth represent peoples that lived along the coastal regions (see 10:5), and the Israelites would eventually encounter them at the "edges" of their territory in Palestine, the hope of Noah was that these people would (eventually) come to live in peace with the descendants of Shem. Moses may have included this prophecy to help the Israelites understand their relationship with these peoples. It can also have a *spiritual* meaning: since Abraham was the father of the Israelites, and through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed in Christ, the prophecy could explain the *global* sense in which all of the elect of the earth would come under the "Jewish" tent for salvation. In other words, since Christ was descended from Shem, and all of the Gentiles from the other sons of Noah, those who come to Christ live metaphorically in the tents of Shem, under the provisions and blessings of *that* specific people in and through Jesus, a Jew.