

Noah's Flood: A Guarantee of the Judgment to Come and a Call for Godliness in the Present

(Gen. 5-6)

Last week's Time Magazine cover-article featured popular author Barbara Brown Taylor. Taylor was an American Episcopal priest and is now a professor, theologian, best-selling author and one of the United States' best known preachers.

The article was entitled Barbara Brown Taylor Faces the Darkness. She begins by talking about how darkness gets a bad rap. It's always represented as bad by Christians and then she begins to poetically talk about all the good that comes from darkness—Abraham was visited by God at night, Jesus was worshiped by the Wiseman at night, we rest from our stress and weariness at night, etc., It turns out, darkness is not such a bad thing.

Then Barbara Taylor begins to talk about some disappointments in her life—being hurt by the church, by a failed marriage and lastly, losing much of her faith in God. She said what she once knew with certainty about God used to fit in a large chest, now it's just a small shoe box. She only prays to the "Spirit" now and is less certain than ever about God. This is her darkness, but it's a good thing. After all, she says, in Christianity you find by losing.

Let me tell you what this article is not. It is not, "Lord I believe, but help my unbelief." When people cry out for help in their struggle for faith that is a good thing. This is a celebration of the loss of faith. The whole article is learning to love and embrace the darkness of doubt and losing trust and conviction in God and seeing this as nothing to be worried about. It's simply the journey your faith took.

Sadly, there will be millions of self-identified "Christians" who will read Barbara Taylor's article and find tragic comfort in their own "loss of faith" and they are lulled to sleep on their way to hell.

Can you see Noah, the preacher of righteousness, preaching a sermon like this days before the flood? "Hey, I know you guys are really struggling with your faith. I see your wicked living and I hear your uncertainties about God. Be comforted, this is just the journey your faith has taken you. Darkness can be a good thing. Well, I'm gonna get into this Ark now, good luck with your future!"

Hardly. Noah stands as one of the great men of God in the Bible because he cried against the faithlessness of mankind. He didn't celebrate it, or call it a "necessary journey."

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This morning we are going to look at Gen. 5-7 centering on Noah's Flood. Rather than get into all the little details, I want to simply show you the place of Noah's flood in the Bible and in human history. I want Noah's flood to have one, primary effect on you: strengthen your faith in the judgment to come so that you would live holy before God as Noah (Seth's line) did.

What we have seen so far in Genesis, simply put, is that:

1. God created Adam and Eve upright and they willfully chose to sin against God for their own selfish desires (what you and I do daily) and this plummeted the whole world into moral ruin.
2. Thus, the whole scheme of Scripture is established. The Gospel is the good news that, by faith alone in God's atoning work, we can be forgiven from our sins and restored to fellowship with God (Gen. 3:15).
3. This plan will unfold within the context and strife of two seeds: A. The seed of the woman (righteous) and the seed of the serpent (unrighteous). B. Adam and Eve's first two sons demonstrate this quite well. Abel was a man of faith—devoted to God as expressed through his sacrifice. Cain was a man of flesh—serving God on his terms (fleshly desires) and he can't stand the holiness of Abel so he kills him. Abel becomes the first of countless martyrs.
4. 4:17-24 shows the formation of Cain's lineage (seed of serpent). They defy God's command to be a wandering people by building a city for themselves which is characterized by polygamy and a love of revenge and violence.
5. But the chapter ends with an eye to Abel's replacement, Seth, (v.25-26) who brings about a lineage that is characterized by "being called by (passive) the name of the Lord." (This might be similar to the pejorative way in which the church was first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26).)

Cain's lineage rebels against God through self-promotion. Seth's lineage cries out to God through self-denial (Enosh meaning frail). **ALL THIS IS BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR GOD'S SOMBER PRONOUNCEMENT IN CHAPTER 6 THAT THE WORLD WILL BE DESTROYED WITH A FLOOD.**

In chapter five we are given the genealogy of Adam's/Seth's descendants. The point is not necessarily to exhaustively record every name and every descendent. The point is to contrast Seth's righteous lineage from Cain's unrighteous lineage—two seeds.

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5:1 starts with a reminder that they were made to image God, not themselves.

There are two major contrasts with this lineage and Cain's (4:17-22):

The length of lives for Cain's line is not given while the long lives of Seth's are. This probably communicates that their lives were either shortened due to violence and judgment, or that their selfish lives do not even make it worth recording. Only what's done for God matters!

Seth's line is characterized by godly men:

a. v. 15 Mahalalel – meaning “praise of God.” His life merited God's praise. If that's all that is known about me when I die that's all that matters.

b. v. 21-24 Enoch. He was not for God took him. Heb 11:5 “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.”

He walked with God. “Walked with God” is the highest compliment in the OT—only said of Enoch, Noah and Moses. It speaks to the close, intimate fellowship these men had with God, reminiscent of God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day with Adam and Eve.

The relationship these men had with God was the restoration of some of fellowship lost in the Garden. (i.e., As Enoch walked with God one day, God said, “Let's go to my house today.”)

It's interesting that Enoch is the 7th from Adam's line while wicked Lamech is Cain's 7th. The number 7 is very important in the Bible. It shows the intentional contrast of Cain's line and Seth's line.

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c. 25-27 Methuselah lived 969 years. What's interesting about this is that the year he died was the year of the Flood. His righteousness preserved the land and God waited until his death to destroy the world.

d. 28-32: Lamech (not the bad Lamech of Cain's line) and Noah:

Gen. 5:28-30 Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. 29 Now he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will give us rest (comfort) from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed." (Lamech's statement is poetry in Hebrew showing its importance to the theme of the Pentateuch. What is the significance? Probably Lamech is hoping this is the Serpent Crusher of Gen. 3:15. He will undo the curse! While Lamech is wrong about this, it is yet another contrast from the wicked Lamech of Cain's line. Whereas the Cainite Lamech retaliates against the curse through violence and self-promotion, the Sethite Lamech waits in faith for God's promise of a Savior/deliverer. That is the life of faith which characterizes Seth's lineage.

Saints, this genealogy is powerfully convicting. We learn that godliness was passed down with men of red hot faith—they walked with God, they were praised of God. They woke up every day fixed on the promises of a Deliverer from their sins. These are men who cherished their walk with the Lord and loved His promise. These men were scarce as diamonds. We must imitate their example! May this be your genealogy.

As much as Lamech wanted Noah to be the comforter from the curse, there is only one who brought rest. JESUS: Mat 11:28, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Chapter 6 could not be more different.

6: 1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land (population really taking off), and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. (While Seth's line was godly, the rest of the world is being willfully corrupted by something very demonic. They are exhibiting the same sinful behavior of Eve who also saw that the fruit was beautiful and took.)

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What's going on here? Three views:

Post-reformation view: "Sons of God" is a reference to rulers (Ps. 82, gods) in Seth's lines who were taking women from Cain's corrupt line. But the ruling consensus by commentators is that there's no exegetical grounds for this. Nothing in the text indicates it's the line of Seth and Cain. It seems to be a general statement.

Oldest View: "sons of God" refer to angels because the only time in the OT "sons of God" is used is in reference to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). In this view "Sons of God" refers to fallen angels who are taking physical form and intermarrying the daughters of men. Wenham says, "The "angel" interpretation is at once the oldest view and that of most modern commentators. It is assumed in the earliest Jewish exegesis of the book of I Enoch, Lxx, Philo, Josephus, Dead Sea Scrolls and earliest Christian writers (Justin, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origin)."

Also, Jude very clearly says in Jude 1:6, "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, 7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

The problem the Reformers had with this is that demons are spirit beings and are incapable of sexual activity, especially since Jesus said that angels neither marry nor are given in marriage. Also, God did not send the flood because of demonic activity but because of man's wickedness.

The third view then solves the problem. Since the text clearly indicates demonic activity but places the responsibility on man, we are to understand that the evilness of men opened themselves up to demon possession—demonically controlled men taking woman. Gispens says, "The text presents us with men who are controlled by fallen angels."

3 Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive (lit., "rule in" or "abide") with man forever, because he also is flesh (i.e., since man is just flesh, it's my Spirit that gives him life and I will not always give him life. Life is a gift and it's being used to pursue evil!); nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." (Not man's life span, since we saw it was much longer, but the remainder of time God would sustain man's life with his Spirit. It was 120 years until the Flood! 120 years to repent.) 4 The Nephilim ("fallen ones") were on the earth in those days (in some way that we do not understand the demonic activity of the Sons of God with the daughters of men created a corrupt and mutated race.), and also afterward (After the flood, large, Viking-like men are called Nephilim, but only in that they resembled this original Nephilim. The true, demonic Nephilim were wiped out in the flood and according to Jude these demons were never allowed to do so again (Num. 13:32-33)), when the sons of God came in to

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the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (In the Garden God saw everything he made and it was good. Now he saw every thought of man and it was evil.) 6 The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

There is nothing more tragic in all of Scripture than to read that our Creator God was grieved in His creation of man!

Some translations say the Lord regretted, repented, was grieved, etc. The literal translation is "to change your mind." However, we read in Num 23:19 "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?" I Sam. 15:29 also says the Lord does not have regrets.

When this word "changed his mind" is used in the Hebrew Niphal form as it is here, it is mostly translated "sorrow" or "grieved." The testimony of Scriptures forbids us to think that God is like us who regrets his actions. His act of creation that once brought Him joy now brought Him grief and it is our sin that is to blame.

The pronouncement of judgment:

7 The Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." (I grieve over my creation of them.)

Now, the question that immediately surfaces is, "What is the point of destroying the world in a Flood if they will just repopulate and continue sinning again?" In Gen. 8:21, after the Flood God makes it clear that this does not fix the sin problem and they will continue to do so. So what's the point?

The point is that the Flood becomes an example on the front end of history for all mankind to look back on. For the rest of human history man can know for certain that if God did it once he will do it again.

We can look at all the prophecies leading up to the first coming of Christ in a manger and say, "If He came the first time He'll come the second time." Likewise, we can say, "If He destroyed the world with water the first time, just like He said, He can destroy it again with fire.

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From Creation to the Flood was roughly 1,650 years. In this period of time man descended into depravity and unbelief. God sent Noah to preach salvation. Man did not respond and so God judged the world and saved Noah and his family.

This is a perfect microcosm of human history. That's how the writers use it.

2Pe 2:5 And if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; (The Flood and Sodom and Gomorrah are examples.)

Mat 24:36 "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken (Not rapture. In judgment) and one left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.

Jesus held up the global flood as proof positive that God will judge the world once again because of our sins. It was a real judgment, but only a precursor of a larger one to come—one where death and hell are thrown into the Lake of Fire. NO WONDER WHY PEOPLE WANT TO DENY THE GLOBAL FLOOD.

8But Noah found favor (grace—unmerited favor) in the eyes of the Lord.

Since grace is unmerited we cannot say, "Oh, Noah, in and of himself, was so godly that he won God over. No. Scriptures are very clear we cannot merit God's favor or it's no longer grace. Rom 4:4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

This was not merited grace—there's no such thing. Hebrew linguist, Gesenius, says that the Hebrew structure indicates this had been his state for some time prior. At some time prior God's eye defused a quickening ray, Noah rose went forth and followed God.

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He was a good steward of God's grace and walked in self-denial and obedience—preaching 120 years against that godless culture who thought he was a lunatic.

9 These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God. (like Enoch) 10 Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

13 Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. 14 Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.

(Continues...)

God then continues to instruct Noah to build a massive Ark: 450 long, 75 wide, 45 high, 1.4 million cubic feet which could hold 522 railroad cars. This is about as large as a wooden ship can be constructed. Its structure made it impossible to capsize.

The world finds it laughable that all the different species could fit on the ark. But it is not difficult to show that there was plenty of room for the 18,000 species living today. (Some scientists do number species in the millions but that's because of the way they categorize. For example, they divide the dog family into 36 species when we would see all dog breeds as coming from two dogs (variation within a kind). If this is how one categorizes species then even if the number was 72,000 species of animals, there would still be enough room on the Ark—especially if taken on as babies.

Only 47 % of the ark floor would have been occupied, leaving the rest for food, storage and humans.

If you want all the details I suggest you order The Answers

Book(<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab>) to find how they would feed them all, take care of their waste, how the salt and fresh water creatures would survive the flood waters and much more.

Several times, in Gen. 6-7, the Bible says that Noah did all that God had commanded him. For 120 years Noah obeyed God without wavering.

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Finally, the Ark is completed and the animals, just as they were led to Adam for naming, are led to Noah for preserving.

Gen. 7:11-24

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates (unusual rainfall; waterfalls from heaven!) of the sky were opened. 12 The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

As Noah and his family sat in the Ark, we imagine, suddenly the earth began to tremble. The giant plates on the ocean floor began to shift, sucking cold ocean water under the surface mixing with the molten lava causing massive volcanic explosions, shooting enormous amounts of steam into the air which came back down in torrents of rain.

As the plate tectonics began shifting violently it actually pulled large landmasses below sea level in addition to the waters rising. Land masses began to drift apart, rifts in the ocean floor, mountain chains jetting up from the earth, and the entire world was submerged back into a chaotic wreckage reminiscent of the state from which it was originally created.

17 Then the flood [e]came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth. 18 The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark [f]floated on the [g]surface of the water. 19 The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. 20 The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered. 21 All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; 22 of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. (Just as he said—my Spirit shall not always sustain man.) 23 Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark. 24 The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.

It's easy to read but hard to think about. Henry Morris says that when we consider how long people lived and the much larger families, there was at least 5 billion people on the planet at this time. 5 billion people who were created as sacred imagers of God Himself, but who collectively rebelled against Him and thought and acted out evil all their days! One moment they are eating and drinking as though they have all the time in the world and, suddenly, they are swept away in a torrent of watery judgment.

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To this day we find fossilized schools of fish on mountain tops, sedimentation picked up from a single location and spread almost the entire length of the U.S. A massive rift (Mid-Atlantic Ridge) in the ocean floor like a baseball seam that separates Europe and the Americas, which scientists know is younger than the continents. That is, after the dry land was created something so devastating and cosmic happened to this earth that it split the ocean floor open, spewing lava and boiling water.

Even a general look at a globe reveals how nations were pulled apart like puzzle pieces; you can see where they once fit together. Even a look at a globe is crying out for us to remember the Flood. The evidence is all around us.

And it speaks to one thing: "For the Coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah" (Matt. 24:37).

And here we are thousands of years later. Man is still laughing at the Ark like they did in the days of Noah and laughing at the idea of Christ's return...but He is coming. And people are still flaunting their faithlessness, except now they do it with a backwards collar in Time Magazine and call it religion.

We ought not to be shaken, or lulled to sleep by these things. We are the Noahs of this generation. We must tell this lost world there is hope in the ark of Christ and unimaginable judgment outside Him.