

OBEDIENCE, DELIVERANCE, AND JUDGMENT

(SUNDAY, JUNE 15, 2014)

Scripture Reading: Gen. 7; 2 Peter 2:4-11

INTRODUCTION

When we started our series on Genesis 1-11, I mentioned that these opening chapters can be divided into two main sections that both follow a similar pattern: creation, fall, judgment, and redemption.

The first section begins obviously with Genesis 1 and the account of creation and ends with Genesis 6:8 with the grace of God extended to Noah.

The pattern then repeats with the account of the flood, the story of sin and scattering found in Genesis 10 and 11, and concludes at the end of Genesis 11 with the introduction to Abraham.

As we think of the theological significance of the flood we can say it includes elements of judgment, creation, and redemption.

The flood was the second greatest earthly judgment, second only to the judgment of the cross.

The flood brought about a new world. It is an act of re-creation. There are connections between each of the days of creation and the account of the flood in Genesis 7-9.

The flood is also an account of redemption.

As we examined last week, Peter stressed the flood is a type fulfilled in baptism. Noah and his family were saved through water.

There is so much to consider then in studying the account of the flood.

There are many important theological things to consider.

There are many important geological things to consider.

As I studied Genesis 7 throughout this week, three things are emphasized in our text.

Obedience. Noah obeyed what God commanded him to do. Noah had a testimony of righteousness before God in his wicked generation.

Deliverance. Genesis 7 repeats several times that Noah and his family went into the ark along with the living creatures that God also saved. In the midst of the mighty waters of the flood, the ark was kept safe on the surface of the waters.

Judgment. Our text repeatedly uses words of judgment. Destroy. The waters which increased and prevailed over all the earth. All flesh died that moved on the earth. For 150 days the waters prevailed.

Obedience – Deliverance – Judgment

God demands total obedience from you. In Christ you have complete righteousness and deliverance from God's total judgment.

We will look at Gen. 7 under these three headings.

1) GOD DEMANDS TOTAL OBEDIENCE

Before we look at these three main points, I want to briefly discuss the outline of Genesis 7.

Gordon Wenham suggests three main parts based on who is speaking and acting in each section.

The first four verses comprise the first section, where we see God speaking to Noah.

In verses 5-16, what do you see? We see Noah doing according to what he was commanded by God to do.

The final verses 17-23, then focus on the waters of the flood. Here we see emphasis on the great destruction of the flood.

And in these three parts we see a fair amount of repetition.

There is emphasis then on Noah's obedience, the deliverance Noah and those on the ark experienced, and the unimaginable judgment of a world-wide flood.

The first point I want to emphasize is that God demands total obedience.

What we see in this chapter and in the previous chapter is that God was gracious to Noah.

But God did not have discussion sessions with Noah but told him exactly what to do.

I think we can say from this chapter and others that in terms of what God commands, He doesn't negotiate.

He gives you commands. He expects that you obey those commands.

Now you may not like people that give you absolute commands, but God has the complete right to give commands that must be obeyed without any exceptions or qualifications.

This is not God being harsh. He is loving, gracious, and patient with you.

But when God commands you to do something, you must not think of trying to find exceptions or qualifications.

You see this clearly in the 10 commandments but the many other places in Scripture where God gives commands.

Matt. 5:48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Eph. 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Eph. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

1Pet. 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

The great command given to Noah in chapter 6 was to build a massive ark from *gopherwood*, collect the animals that God would send, and gather the massive quantities of food and water that would be required for the approximately one-year journey.

Gen. 6:22 Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

Here in chapter 7, the ark has been constructed, the food has been gathered, and now what remains is for Noah to enter the ark with his family and all the creatures.

If we turn back to Genesis 6:3, we can say that Noah perhaps had as long as 120 years to build the ark and make the necessary preparations.

Gen. 6:3 And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”

Genesis 5:32 states that when Noah was 500 he begot three sons – Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

And now here in Genesis 7:5 we read that Noah was 600 when the flood began. So some have suggested Noah had 100 years to build the ark and make preparations.

Whether Noah took 120 years or 100 years to build the ark, he did obey all that God commanded.

Now, Noah had just seven days to obey the final command that he take on board all the living creatures that would be preserved along with his family.

We see also in Genesis 7:1 the testimony of Noah found also in chapter 6.

because I have seen *that you are* righteous before Me in this generation.

As I emphasized earlier, this wonderful testimony first speaks of God’s work of grace.

How did Noah have a faithful testimony when literally the rest of the world save for seven people were set on total wickedness, violence, and rebellion?

It can only be because of God’s grace.

So again what we see in verse 1 is not the reason why Noah found grace but the evidence of grace that was indeed given by God.

If you are not just chasing after the world's pleasures, but there is a hunger for God and a desire to serve Him, then this also confirms you have been shown God's grace.

A testimony of living righteously must always be accompanied by a recognition that you have been shown God's grace.

Psa. 119:1 Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD!

Psalm 119:176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; Seek Your servant, For I do not forget Your commandments.

We should never skip over the introductions of the letters in the NT.

Very often they bring together holiness and grace.

Rom. 1:7 To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* **saints: Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 15 and 16 show that Noah obeyed the command of God.

Gen. 7:15 And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which *is* the breath of life. **16** So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.

We might read this and say, of course, Noah would enter the ark and bring the animals that God required.

But we must consider that this obedience was a great test of faith.

John Calvin of all the commentaries I read brings this out this point in his comments.

However this might be, it was no light trial for Noah to leave of his own accord, the life to which he had been accustomed during six hundred years, and to seek a new mode of life in the abyss of death. He is commanded to forsake the world, that he may live in a sepulcher which he had been laboriously digging for himself through more than a hundred years. Why was this? Because, in a little while, the earth was to be submerged in a deluge of waters. Yet nothing of the kind is apparent: all indulge in feasts, celebrate nuptials, build sumptuous houses; in short, everywhere, daintiness and luxury prevail; as Christ himself testifies, that that age was intoxicated with its own pleasures, (Luke 17:26.)

God demands total obedience from you. In Christ you have complete righteousness so that you can obey.

2) GOD PROVIDED DELIVERANCE FOR NOAH AND HIS CREATION

At least four times this text speaks of the deliverance extended to Noah and his family and to some of the living creatures.

You see in this verses 1-3.

Again in verses 7-9.

There is again repetition in verses 13-16.

The final mention is at the end of verse 23.

What is the reason for the repetition?

One commentator says this is an example of what is called panel-writing. What's panel-writing?

Panel-writing is a style found throughout Scripture where there is repetition of words or phrases done intentionally to emphasize key things in the text.

Some say the repetition means different people wrote the text which was somehow edited together.

A much better understanding is to appreciate the literary style found throughout the OT.

The repetition emphasizes that God did provide deliverance for Noah and representatives from all the creatures that God created.

In chapter 7 we learn something not found in chapter 6.

Look at verses 2 and 3.

Gen. 7:2 You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that *are* unclean, a male and his female; **3** also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth.

For clean animals and birds, 7 pairs were to be taken rather than just one pair, male and female.

Let's consider two things from these verses.

First, we again have an example of a connection with the early chapters of Genesis and the law that was later given to Israel.

What examples have we see already in Genesis?

- 1) Sabbath
- 2) The Garden of Eden as a type of sanctuary
- 3) Sacrifice

And here the distinction between clean and unclean animals.

Second, how many extra animals did this require Noah to take? Is there room for 7 pairs of clean animals?

John Woodmorappe has thought a great deal on this question. Guided by the discussion found in the law, he estimates 13 clean animals would have been brought on the ark in 7 pairs of male and female.

Remember for animals the classification for being clean is that they chew the cud and have a cloven foot.

He also says we should rule out from this animals not mentioned in Scripture as being clean though they might meet these two classifications. Giraffes for example have no place in Jewish tradition as being clean animals even though they do have a cloven feet and chew the cud.

The classification of clean animals also has a connection with animals that are domesticated and have some sort of a relationship with humans.¹

What about for clean birds?

It is hard to give an exact number here because there is great variety among the birds. Scripture gives a good listing of birds classified as unclean and we have some birds that clearly are listed as clean and able to be offered as sacrifices.

Given the fact that birds are generally speaking quite small, there is no real burden in taking 7 pairs of clean bird kinds.

Woodmorappe says that clean birds would come from 3 orders –

- 1) Galliformes – turkey, grouse, chicken
- 2) Anseriformes – ducks, geese, and swans
- 3) Passeriformes – perching birds. And from this order likely only the sparrow, *Passer domesticus*.

As I stated two weeks ago, Noah likely would have needed to bring approximately 16,000 animals on the ark, 8,000 pairs of male and female.

¹ John Woodmorappe, *Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study*, 8.

We observed from Genesis 6, that Noah did not have to go on a safari to gather the necessary beasts, cattle, creeping things, and birds.

No, it was God who brought all of these animals to Noah.

Gen. 6:20 ... two of every *kind* will come to you to keep *them* alive.

The final boarding process took place in the last week before the great flood began.

Also as I mentioned two weeks ago, the reason that Noah and his family and the other animals were preserved is not simply because Noah built a big boat.

Noah was preserved because of God's covenant with Noah that we read about first in Genesis 6:18.

Because God is always faithful to His covenant promises, Noah and his family were able to survive what must have been one of the most unpleasant boat rides of all time.

Noah and his family were delivered. The animals on board were delivered.

This hardly was a pleasure cruise.

Nothing like travelling on the *Allure of the Seas*, a Royal Caribbean cruise ship nearly 1200 feet long that can carry over 6,000 passengers

It was a deliverance from the evil of the world through water. It was a deliverance from death through God's covenant faithfulness.

2 Peter 2:9 *then* the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

Rom. 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? **32** He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

3) GOD BROUGHT A JUDGMENT OF TOTAL DEVASTATION TO HIS CREATION

Verse 4 contains the key word of judgment in this passage – the verb destroyed.

This same verb is repeated another two times in verse 23.

23 So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who *were* with him in the ark remained *alive*.

This verb is found also in Genesis 6:7.

Gen. 6:6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. **7** So the LORD said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.”

The account of this great destruction has to be interpreted theologically, literally, and historically.

There is no conflict in looking at the text from these different perspectives.

Theologically we see that the judgment of the flood is connected with God’s work of creation.

The earth on days 1 and 2 of creation was entirely covered by water.

I mentioned in an earlier sermon, that it is estimated that without mountains or sea basins, there is enough water on the surface of the earth to cover the entire earth to a depth of nearly 2 miles.² Today, the average depth of the oceans is 12,080 feet.³

The division of dry land and oceans created on day 3 was removed. All the animals that lived on land that were created on days 5 and 6 were completely destroyed.

The categories used in this account, for example in verse 21, also connect back with creation.

In verse 22, the phrase breath of the spirit of life, is quite similar to Genesis 2:7 where we find the phrase, breath of life.

In verse 18, we read the ark moved about on the surface (face) of the waters.

This description is very similar to Genesis 1:2 where the Spirit hovered over the face of the waters.

Many are very happy to see these theological connections but then do not want to interpret the account literally and historically.

However, if we are honest, the text does not give us this option.

One of the key aspects showing this is not to be taken as a parable are the dates that we find throughout the flood account.

Let’s consider some of the dates given.

We begin with verse 4 with God’s announcement that the flood would begin in another week.

Verse 11 precisely dates the start of the flood – 600th year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the 17th day of the month.

² *Creation Answers Book*, 178.

³ [Wikipedia Article on Oceans](#).

Verse 12 says that flood began with heavy rain that lasted for 40 days and 40 nights.

Verse 24 says that the waters prevailed on the earth for 150 days.

This careful chronology continues in chapter 8, which we will note next week.

Why would the Holy Spirit include this careful dating unless we were to understand this account literally and historically in terms of a world-wide flood?

Listen the comments of the *New Bible Commentary* which in this case wants to play it safe as it were and not commit to the truth presented so clearly in this text.

With our modern geographical knowledge, we automatically understand the story to be describing a total inundation of the globe, but if the story was being told from Noah's perspective (whose geographical horizons were limited), a somewhat smaller flood might have appeared universal.⁴

In a paper I could share with written by Richard Davidson of Andrews University, he gives 30 reasons from the text in Genesis why we must understand the flood as being a global flood.

We are not just talking about a couple of points that maybe could go either way. We are talking about whether we are going to accept the clear Word of God or be pressured into accepting the evolutionary worldview of man.

Davidson writes this in the conclusion of his excellent paper:

The questions of the historicity and worldwide nature of the Genesis Flood are not just a matter of idle curiosity with little at stake for Christian faith. They are pivotal in understanding and remaining faithful to the theology of Gen **1-11** and the rest of Scripture. The many links with the global creation in Gen **1-2** noted in this study not only support the aspect of universality in the Flood, but serve to theologically connect the protology and eschatology presented in the opening chapters of Scripture. The Flood is an eschatological "uncreation" of the world and humanity followed by a "re-creation" of the new world. "Thus, the story of the Flood - and this is theologically the most important fact - shows an eschatological world judgment... The world judgment of the Flood hangs like an iron curtain between this world age and that of the first splendor of creation."⁵

Historically and we can also add scientifically, the account of the flood is essential if we are going to properly understand the geology and history of God's creation.

⁴ *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A Carson et al., Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 65-66.

⁵ Richard Davidson, "The Genesis Flood Narrative," 76-77.

Just as the account of creation is so ridiculed so the account of the universal flood is ridiculed. We have looked at the passage in 2 Peter 3 before, but listen to how Peter 2000 years ago presented the attack on creation, the flood, and its connection to the 2nd coming of our Lord.

4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation.” **5** For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, **6** by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. **7** But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

CONCLUSION:

God demands total obedience from you. In Christ we have complete righteousness and deliverance from God’s total judgment.

Prayer

Hymn: 243

Benediction – 2 Peter 3:17-18

You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever.
Amen.