

Genesis. :- Noah and the Flood – Chapter 6, verse 5 to Chapter 9, verse 17:-

Remember that my aim in these studies from Genesis was to learn something of what they said about the reality of the human condition. This week we do not concern ourselves too much with the history of Noah and the Ark. Rather we look at what it says about relationships between mankind and the Lord God.

Background to the story of the Flood:- After the débâcle of Cain and Abel the Godly line of Adam was continued in the birth of Seth (Genesis 4, verses 25 -26). Chapter 5 of Genesis is the genealogy of *“the generations of Adam”* through to the birth of Noah. It is worth noticing that there is a record of prophecy in these verses. Enoch was someone who *“walked with God”* (chapter 5, verses 22 and 24). He is recorded as a prophet in the Epistle of Jude verse 14. He called his first-born son Methuselah. One of the meanings of the name is *“When he is dead it will come”*. Methuselah lived 969 years and died in the year of the flood. In Rabbinic tradition the week before the flood came! He could be seen as a living warning! The Lord God was withholding punishment as long as the old man lived. Lamech, the son of Methuselah called his eldest son *“Noah, saying ‘out of the ground which the Lord has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands.’”* Another prophecy that in Noah the human race would be saved through the disaster of the Flood.

Genesis 6, verses 5 -6:- The condemnation of mankind in verse 5 is comprehensive! We will find that the statement is repeated after the flood. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 15, verse 17 – 20. It is in the hearts of men and women that the problem lies! Read Isaiah 57, verses 15 – 21 and Psalm 51, verse 17. Genesis 6, verse 6 expresses the deep grief of the Lord God when confronted by sin in his creation. He was *“grieved to his heart”*.

Verses 7 – 9:- The condemnation of all living things. Notice that the sin and wickedness of mankind had affected the whole of creation and it still does - see Romans chapter 8, verses 19 – 25. But *“Noah walked with God”*. Even at the worst times in history there has been a faithful remnant. e.g. in the story of Elijah – 1 Kings Chapter 19 verses 4 – 18. Noah not only *“walked with God”*, he *“was a righteous man and blameless”*. His manner of life reflected his inner uprightness. He was *“straight”* in his dealings with others and blameless in character.

Verses 11 – 22:- The effect of sin was being shown in that *“the earth was filled with violence.”* In verse 17 *“all flesh”* includes everything *“in which is the breath of life”*. It was not only mankind that was affected by sin but every living creature. Violence – killing, maiming and injuring was not in the plan of the Lord God for his creation. When sin entered through Adam, the whole of creation was dragged down into violence and corruption.

Chapter 7:- Having done all that God had commanded in building and equipping the ark, Noah is ordered to gather the animals and take refuge in the ark with his family. Notice in verse 16 that it is the Lord who shuts the door. Judgement has come in the Lord’s timing and at his command. The time for repentance has passed!

Chapter 8, verse 1 and 14 – 19:- Here in verse 1 is the statement that *“God remembered”*. Maybe this is from a human perspective! God, being who he is, could not ‘forget’. After a hundred and fifty days God knew that the flood had gone on long enough, and for the sake of his creation – mankind and all the beasts and all the cattle – God begins to remake the earth. As God shut the door on the Ark, now Noah gets the instruction to *“Go forth . . .”* Having seen cattle released after their winter confinement (up tails and away we go!), I can imagine the joy there was as *“every beast and every creeping thing . . . went forth . . . out of the Ark”*.

Verses 20 – 22:- The first thing that Noah did on finding freedom was to show gratitude! The offering was received by the Lord God with a promise that the flood would not be repeated and that the seasons would remain constant. The statement of chapter 6, verse 5 is repeated. The flood has not changed the inward tendency of the hearts of the human race - *“the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth;”*. (verse 21)

Chapter 9, verses 1 – 17:- This was a renewal of the original blessing and covenant with mankind. Now the lives of all creatures are placed under the authority of man. Man himself is set aside as a special creation - *“for God made man in his own image”* (verse 6). The covenant declared that *“never again shall all flesh be cut off . . .”* The sign of that covenant is the familiar rainbow which in many cultures has legends and stories attached to it referring to water and a flood!

Some further thoughts

The Bible associates the rainbow with a manifestation of divine glory. (Ezekiel 1, verse 28: Revelation 10, verse 1) The rainbow has always been a source relating to the divine promises of God’s glory and power.

The spiritual significance of Noah’s rainbow was a sign of God’s love and pledge of His sparing mercy.

In the book of Revelation there is a rainbow mentioned round about the throne of Jehovah. (Revelation 4, verse 3) This is a symbol of mercy to God’s children amidst the coming judgements on the wicked.

Throughout the Bible the rainbow is the emblem of God’s loving faithfulness to His covenant with His people, and the pledge of sure hope to them.