

Moses, Noah, the Ark, and Jesus (Genesis 6:13-22)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on March 22, 2009

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We're going to look at verses 13-22 this evening, what's traditionally been called the story of Noah and the Ark. But I want you to know this is really a story about God. It's about God's judgment on man's sin, and God's grace, His special sovereign grace that saves from His wrath to come those whom He has made righteous by grace through faith.

We don't have any words of Noah recorded in this chapter or chapter 7, 8, even most of 9 – it's all God's words, God's actions and God's power. For nearly 4 chapters we hear of Noah but don't hear any words from Noah. God is doing all the talking, detailed commands for detailed obedience. This story is much more about God than it is about Noah. God's favor / grace is what preceded / produced Noah's righteousness in the word order of v. 8-9. We never hear Noah speak to God, in contrast to others in Genesis who when God spoke to them, talked back or objected in some way (ex: Adam, Eve, Cain, Abraham, Sarah, Lot, Lot's wife, Jacob, etc.). But Noah by grace just obeys; a righteous man who lives by faith. Noah obeys without complaining, arguing, deliberating, hesitating.

Genesis 6:8-22 (NASB95) ⁸ But Noah found favor [grace] in the eyes of the LORD. ⁹ These are *the records of the generations of Noah*. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. 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. ¹⁵ "This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶ "You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷ "Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. ¹⁸ "But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ "And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every *kind* into the ark, to keep *them* alive with you; they shall be male and female. ²⁰ "Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every *kind* will come to you to keep *them* alive. ²¹ "As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather *it* to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them." ²² Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.

The first thing we learn about God in this passage is how serious sin is to Him. If you've ever had the thought that sin is not really a big deal to God, this passage destroys that notion once and for all.

Genesis 6:5-7 (NASB95) 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. ⁶ The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 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."

Sin is bad. God is holy. God never winks at sin or sweeps it under the rug or excuses it or shrugs it off. This is our unchanging God's attitude toward sin, including sorrow, grief, godly righteous anger, and indignation. *When you understand God's holy just hatred for sin, we should not be surprised that He judges so many but should be surprised that He saves any!*

The fact that God does not destroy and drown us all again like this is not because we are less sinful, it is only because God made a covenant as we'll see in Genesis, a commitment to never again destroy the world by water. The wages of sin is death, and in many cases God is patient and long-suffering (in the early days before the flood even allowing them to live hundreds of years) but death does still come to all. And for those who die apart from a *salvation*-covenant relationship to the Lord there is eternal separation and wrath in fire. God will still destroy the lost world in the coming day of the Lord, but by fire that time.

2 Peter 3:2-11 (NASB95) **you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets [the OT, including Genesis 6 esp. in this context]** and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles.³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts,⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was **from the beginning of creation [Genesis].**"⁵ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water,⁶ **through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.**⁷ **But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.**⁸ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.⁹ **The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with **intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.**¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

Right end-times theology should produce holy godly living in you. Right theology of God must include both His love *and* wrath, both His patience *and* anger. He doesn't choose to save all, and yet we also read that He doesn't take pleasure in the death of the wicked. There is His revealed will which is for all to come to repentance, and yet we know in His sovereign will, most will not. As we saw in our last message, Scripture seems to teach a genuine compassion God has on those He never saves - a common grace, a general love - and yet there is also His special love, sovereign saving covenant love we see in this passage that was only on Noah and His family.

How does God destroying the world of humanity here except for 8 people fit with "for God so loved the world?" Well, John 3:16 is not the last word or only verse in John 3 ... Jesus kept talking:

¹⁸ "...he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰"For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed ...

³⁶ "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

So we learn that sin is very serious to God and deserves His wrath which is always just toward man who is always responsible, and who loves his sin and is doing exactly what he wants in rebelling against God. Sinners are totally depraved, radically corrupt, and in fact "corrupt" is the very word we see repeated in Genesis 6:11-13.

In the Hebrew, the repeated root word is used for “corrupt” in v. 11, then again in v. 12, and then as a verb “corrupted,” and then another form of this verb at the end of v. 13 “I am about to *destroy* them.” The word can have the idea of corrupted in the sense of *ruined* – if we wanted to re-translate the text to capture the consistency of word choice it would read:

v. 11 “Now the earth had *gone to ruin* ...

v. 12 “God looked upon the earth, and behold, it had *gone to ruin*, for all flesh had *ruined* their way ...

v. 13b “I am about to *ruin* them”

In other words, God’s decision is to destroy what is virtually self-destroyed or self-destroying already. Sin is self-destructive. Not only was the earth corrupt(ed/ing), but v. 11 adds that it was full of “violence,” the Hebrew word *hamas* (that word sound familiar?). There’s a terrorist group today called *hamas*, and they don’t speak Hebrew but they sure have some involvement with the Hebrews, namely violent acts of terror against the Jews as part of a long-term feud that has roots later in Genesis. *Hamas* according to one source I read is an Arabic word that can be translated as “zeal / fighting spirit” – God will judge such violence as well as heart sin.

Allen Ross writes: ‘The obvious theme of this narrative unit is divine judgment on sinners. The account shows God to be the judge of the whole earth, judging the wicked and the world in which they did wickedness. In this judgment God made distinctions between the righteous and the wicked (cf. also Gen. 19 [Sodom]) and also between the clean and the unclean (vividly portrayed in the animals chosen for the ark). The clean animals may have been for sacrificial purposes, showing that that which is clean belongs to God, just as the righteous belonged to God.

A related theme is the deliverance from judgment by divine grace. God preserved his remnant from the flood by prior announcement and special provision. One teaching would be that those who claim to be recipients of grace should walk with God in righteousness. Other Scriptures (e.g., Ps. 1) show that an untarnished, separated believer [saved by grace] in this life can look forward to being separated from sinners in the judgment.

These two motifs of judgment on sinners and deliverance from the judgment had a special significance for Israel. On a smaller scale but in a similar way, the Lord judged the wicked Egyptians with water and brought Israel through the flood of the sea to worship him on the other side with sacrifices (Exod. 14–15). It is not surprising that many expressions used in Noah’s account—the judgment on sinners, the deliverance of the righteous, the walking in righteousness, and the sacrifice of clean animals—are also used in the instruction of the nation in the law [and its separation theme]

... the great flood would be a most effective way of purging the world—certainly the most graphic. It would wash the earth clean, so that not a trace of the wicked or their wickedness would be found. God thus purified the earth of all but the remnant. Later the law used the terminology of washing with water as a symbol for purging before worship (e.g., Lev. 8:6, 21). The New Testament also drew on these motifs (e.g., Titus 3:5).¹

There are many connections with biblical truth and themes in Gen. 6. Like all of Scripture, the ultimate story line is God, and God is the big idea and overarching end of the theme, history is His story.

But I want you to notice how the great God who reveals Himself here (in holiness, anger, wrath, justice, and judgment) also reveals the gospel here. This is not only a true historical account of a flood and an ark and a man named Noah, I want you to see some clear connections with Moses and the Law, and beyond him the One who fulfilled the law, and whom all the types point to, Jesus Christ

Last time we saw several comparisons between Noah and Adam:

- Vs. 10 mentions Noah's 3 sons. Adam also fathered 3 sons and Genesis traces their lines as well (Adam's son Seth was where Noah's family came from, and Noah's son Shem was where the Messiah would come from).
- End of v. 9 says "Noah walked with God." So did Adam.
- Both *blameless* before him (Adam even originally perfect).
- Both received God's grace and promise before judgment is pronounced (Gen. 3:15 and Gen. 6). Both allowed to live instead of dying when God brings His judgment.
- Both are the recipients of the blessing and charge to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28 v. Gen. 9).
- Both enter a new world with only their wife and family.
- Both were workers of the soil by the sweat of their brow.
- Both sin through the fruit of a tree (Noah with wine later).
- Both father a wicked son who is under a curse (Gen. 4 tells us about Cain, Gen. 9 about Noah's son Ham).
- As Adam's conduct accounted for the spiritual shape of the pre-flood world, so Noah's conduct for a post-flood planet.

So there are interesting parallels from Noah looking backward, but what may have been even more noticed and more intentionally linked in connection to the original readers is the forward-looking connection with the original author (compiler?) of Genesis, Moses. OT Israelites would not fly by these words as quickly as we tend to:

- When they read in Genesis 6:9 that Noah was "blameless," Moses and the Israelites receiving the Torah (God's law) would have recognized that word "blameless" was a prominent Hebrew word in the Law of Moses for sacrificial animals that were blameless.
- They would have also noticed the word for "pitch" in v. 14 is the root of the word in the Hebrew Law for covering or atonement.
- Also the word "covenant" in v. 18 was familiar to Torah readers.
- The word *ark* in v. 14 in particular would stand out because it is a Hebrew word only used in one other place.

Exodus 1:22-2:10 (NASB95)

1:22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive."

2:1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. ² The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. ³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a **wicker basket [same Hebrew word translated "ark" in Genesis, only 2 places this Hebrew word is used]** and covered it over with tar and **pitch [also material used to seal ark in Genesis]**. Then she put the child into it and set *it* among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him. ⁵ The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile; and she saw the **basket [ark]** among the reeds and sent her maid, and she brought it *to her*.

⁶When she opened *it*, she saw the child, and behold, *the* boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, “This is one of the Hebrews’ children.”⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?”⁸ Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go *ahead*.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother.⁹ Then Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give *you* your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him.¹⁰ The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. And **she named him Moses, and said, “Because I drew him out of the water.”**

So the original readers of the book of Moses would not have missed noticing the two uses of this word “ark” – not the word for “ark of the covenant” (different Heb. word) and not the normal word for a boat or ship. Noah’s ark been described here as:²

‘Not shaped like a boat; not shaped like a ship. It wasn't designed to sail ... It was a cruise to nowhere. There wasn't anywhere to go. It was only designed to float. There were no oars, there were no sails, there was no pilot, there was no captain, there was no steering wheel ... no navigator. [The mother of Moses similarly used a little one of these also called an “ark”] ... made out of reeds and covered it over with tar and pitch. She put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile." ... And his sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him." They didn't know. There wasn't any guidance system on it, it wasn't a remote control box, it was just there in the river ... The little reed basket [ark] that floated Moses above the water.

In both cases the arks were a refuge from death by drowning.

- Provided to two pretty outstanding men.
- Noah, who was to be a father of a new humanity and Moses who was to be a father of a new nation as it were.
- Noah who was to lead his people into a new world and Moses who was to lead his people into a new world.
- Two believers, two preachers, two leaders of a new people.
- Each of them preserved above the waters of drowning by an ark.
- Noah was God's instrument to save humanity and Moses was God's instrument to save Israel ...
- This word “ark” is reserved for two remarkable water preservations of two very remarkable men who were delivered from drowning by God's gracious provision to introduce a new day in a new world and sustain the life of God's people.

Kent Hughes points out other striking parallels with Noah and Moses, who is compiling or writing this chapter for the Israelites after they were delivered from Egypt and before they entered the Promised Land:³

- Just as the great pitch-covered ark preserved Noah and his family from a watery death, so the tiny pitch-covered ark/basket preserved Moses (cf. Gen. 6:14 and Ex. 2:3).
- Moses, the greatest man of the old covenant [both men also received a covenant from God, Moses] experienced a salvation through an ark parallel to that which saved Noah, the man who “found favor in the eyes of the LORD.” [an ark which the NT parallels to what saves in the New Covenant, according to 1 Peter 3, which we’ll look at later].
- Then later, as Moses opposed Pharaoh, he witnessed God’s judgment by water when God unleashed the waters of the Red Sea, flooding destruction over the armies of Egypt

- That was a microcosm of the original deliverance of Noah, and it likewise preserved a people to serve God.
- Lastly, Moses was given explicit instructions for building the tabernacle, just as Noah had been given detailed instructions for the ark, even down to the specifications regarding clean and unclean animals [important in the Mosaic law regarding sacrifice – we also see Noah sacrifice to God after the flood]
- These parallels suggest that Moses saw a comparison between the salvation in the ark of Noah during the forty days and forty nights of rain and the salvation in the presence of the tabernacle during the forty years in the wilderness.

So the language in Genesis 6 looks backward as well as looks forward. The *Expositor's Bible Commentary* develops this further:

‘important similarities between the account of the building of the ark and two other narratives in the Pentateuch, viz., the account of Creation in Genesis 1 and the building of the "tabernacle" in Exodus 25 ff. Each account has a discernible pattern: God speaks (*wayyo'mer / wayedabber*), an action is commanded (imperative / jussive), and the command is carried out (*wayya`as*) according to God's will (*wayehi ken / ka'asher siwwah 'elohim*). The key to these similarities lies in the observation that each narrative concludes with a divine blessing (*wayebarek* Gen 1:28; 9:1; Exod 39:43) and, in the case of the tabernacle and Noah's ark, a divinely ordained *covenant* (Gen 6:8; Exod 34:27; in this regard it is of some importance that later biblical tradition also associated the events of Gen 1-3 with the making of a divine covenant; cf. Hos 6:7). Noah, like Moses, followed closely the commands of God and in so doing found salvation and blessing in his *covenant*. It is not hard to see in these examples the lesson intended by the author of the Pentateuch [at the end of the writings of Moses]. It is stated directly to the readers in Deuteronomy 30:2-3: "... obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today ..." The author's purpose in drawing out the list of specifications for the ark in chapter 6, as with the details of the building of the tabernacle, is not so much that the reader might be able to see what the ark or the tabernacle looked like, but rather that we might appreciate the meticulous care with which these godly and exemplary men went about their tasks of obedience to God's will. They obeyed God with "all their hearts."⁴

It was a detailed obedience, a diligent obedience, for Noah a daily obedience despite difficult opposition and mocking for perhaps a hundred years! It's been imagined that when Noah finished laying out the frame for this massive boat nowhere near any body of water, as he laid out the 450-foot long keel, and began to install the ark's ribs, imagine the ribbing and abuse he took. People could probably come up with a lot of "Noah jokes" in a century! Imagine the taunts that came at the expense of Noah and his own: "How many of Noah's sons does it take to drive a spike? One to hold the spike, and one to ..." Each one who would mock Noah's family probably thought they were clever and the first to come up with it, while Noah's thinking "yeah that was funny the first time decades ago!" But Noah remained obedient, doing exactly what God said.

Such faith despite persecution is what we also see in the NT church. So I want to close with some of the details of this text that point forward beyond Moses to Christ and His salvation. The New Testament frequently uses imagery from Gen. 6 in the gospel.

VERSE 5: “**sin**” (wickedness / evil, depending on your translation) – the gospel begins by affirming we all are as sinful and wicked and deserving of God’s judgment as much as anyone here / else.

VERSE 8: “**grace**” – Noah received grace from God, special grace, sovereign grace, supernatural grace, saving grace, which is the only way a man in a sinful world can be made pleasing to God. “**faith**” – seen throughout this chapter by Noah’s obedience.

Hebrews 11:7 (ESV) ⁷By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household ... and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. [cf. Phil. 3:9]

VERSE 9: “**righteous**” – Noah was only righteous by grace through faith, like Abraham a few chapters later who it says believed the Lord and it was credited / reckoned to him a righteousness that doesn’t come from the law but comes by faith. Romans uses Genesis 15:6 to prove this righteousness is a gift to us that is not our own but is by faith, an imputed / foreign / alien righteousness that is from God to a sinner by grace through faith.

“**blameless**” (v. 9b) – the only way God can be just and justify the ungodly is if a blameless sacrifice is substituted for a sinner, as the original readers would have been well familiar from the Law, that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Of course the whole sacrificial system itself was a shadow and picture that required the Messiah, the true and perfect Lamb of God to live a blameless life which can then be imputed to our account as our sins are imputed to Christ’s account on the cross of Calvary.

VERSE 14b: “**cover / covering**” (“... *cover* [the ark] inside and outside with *pitch / covering*”) – this word for the sealing that kept the water out of the ark is the Heb. root verb used in the Law for covering over by *atonement* [Heb. “*kippur*”], *making propitiation by sacrifice*, and its related noun form at the end of this verse usually refers to *the price of a life, ransom as substitute* [Heb. “*koper*”]. Jesus Christ alone could truly atone, His life-price blood is the only covering that can seal us to keep out the waters of God’s wrath by His sacrifice, substitution, propitiation, ransom.

VERSE 16: “... **the door** of the ark” – Jesus said in John 10:9 “I am the door, if anyone enters through me, he will be saved.”

“**ark**” – 1 Pet. 3 says Christ is not just the door, He is our ark itself

VERSE 18: “... **My covenant**” – Jesus also said at the last supper, “This cup is the New Covenant in *my* blood ... for the forgiveness of sins.” The covenant with Noah saved them physically through the storm, but the New Covenant saves all in it eternally in Christ.

VERSE 18: “... **you and your sons and your wife**” – the covenant head or representative has the blessings passed on to all who count him as their head. This is the argument of Romans 5 of all who are in Adam as their head and all who are in Christ as their covenant head, saved through the obedience of the One.

VERSE 22: “And Noah **obeyed** ...” – those who are righteous are marked by a life of obedience to the Lord. Putting those key words together in the order they appear in Gen 6 we’re saved from sin, by grace, through faith, and made righteous, by the blameless sacrifice, a covering atonement, for all who enter through the door of the One who is the way the truth and life. They can experience the New Covenant forgiveness of sins, and as Acts 2:39 says this promise is for you and your sons and all who are afar off, as many as our Lord will call to Himself! And true believers lives are then marked by obedience. Is it a stretch to connect these words to Jesus and the gospel? Jesus Himself saw connection to Himself in Gen 6:

Matt. 24:37 “the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah”

John MacArthur concludes this way: ‘who is the one saved from judgment? ... One graced by God's favor unearned. One who believes God's word and he is regenerated as well as declared righteous, justified, covered with righteousness, regenerated to walk with God in obedience. One who has secured a future promise and [thus] living in a present pattern of obedience ... it's no different for us. That's the kind of person you must be to escape the judgment. Jesus Christ is our ark of safety. He is the one that rescues us. Peter writes, 1 Peter 3 about the days of Noah during the construction of the ark and he says, "Baptism" (now that is immersion into Christ) "saves you, not the removal of dirt from the flesh, not water, but ... Jesus Christ." Noah got into a boat; we get into Christ [our ark, and there's room for more] and we rise above the judgment. Jesus alone can lift His people above the waters of destruction and bring them safely to His eternal kingdom.’⁵

¹ Allen Ross, *Creation and Change*, p. 189-190.

² This section taken from John MacArthur, sermon on Genesis 6:13-22, www.gty.org

³ Kent Hughes, *Genesis*, p. 133.

⁴ *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 82-83.

⁵ MacArthur, *Ibid.*