

Coming Flood, Coming Savior, Genesis 6:9-8:22

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Introduction

Good morning, my name is Brad and I'm one of the pastors here. This summer we are walking through the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis in a series subtitled, Creating Culture. One of the things that delights my heart most during this series is the opportunity to introduce new preachers to Antioch. As you know, that first happened a couple weeks ago when Pastor Patrick shepherded us through Genesis 4—and I want to say publicly—did a fantastic job (not to mention it being his first time preaching at Antioch!). And next week Jeremy Shelton will be leading us through Genesis 9 as part of his church revitalization residency. I want you to know, raising up and giving opportunity to other faithful preachers doesn't threaten me, it encourages me, and I hope it does you as well.

Open your Bibles with me as we pick up where we left off last week. Today's passage is Genesis 6:9-8:22; you can find that on page 5 if you're using one of the Bibles in the chairs. The title of the sermon is "Coming Flood, Coming Savior," which you can see playing out in the main idea, that says The story of God's flood and Noah's ark points us to God's coming flood and our coming Savior. We'll break down the passage in three large sections which basically structure things as before, during, and after the flood:

- 1) God prepares his people before the flood - 6:9-22
- 2) God protects his people during the flood - 7:1-24
- 3) God promises peace to his people after the flood - 8:1-22

Let's be honest, today's passage is massive, and so we'll have to move through it pretty quick or we'll be here all day. In most of my sermons I usually hold my cards until the end so to speak, meaning I wait until the conclusion to make all the connections to our Savior, Jesus Christ. But today I want to put my cards on the table from the very beginning. Even though every story in the Bible ultimately points us to Jesus, I think the story of the flood does so in a way that's unforgettable and life-changing—at least it has been for me. So from the very beginning I want to focus on showing you how this story points to God's coming flood and our coming Savior.

With that said, I invite you to posture your hearts to receive the word. And still we offer this blessing,

May the Word preached here today echo in our hearts and among the nations. And all God's people said, *Amen*.

Exposition

I don't know about you, but having grown up in church, the way I learned the story of Noah's ark was in Sunday School. It seemed to be everywhere, not just in my children's Bible: it was on posters and murals and cartoons, usually with smiling faces and giraffe heads sticking out of the top; and certainly no rainclouds or floating bodies to represent, you know, that part in the story about the whole destruction of humanity. I was even at a church one time that had built an entire playground model of an ark (which we can order our own now for a few thousand bucks).

If you didn't grow up in the church, at least you had the ability to learn about the flood through important works like *Evan Almighty* (thanks be to Morgan Freeman) and the more simply titled, *Noah* (thanks be to Russell Crowe). If nothing else, as Louisvillians you all live less than two hours away from the only life-size model of Noah's ark according to its biblical proportions, the Ark Encounter.

So all that to say, we all have the opportunity to learn plenty about the story. At least enough to land on the most common interpretation of it, which is something like this: obey God or you'll get judged. Or, to put it more simply: be like Noah. But what does the Bible say? And perhaps more importantly, why does it matter to us today? Well, let's dig in and find out together.

1) God Prepares His People Before the Flood - 6:9-22

We start before the judgment, as God prepares his people for the flood. Read with me, beginning in 6:9:

⁹ These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. Genesis 6:9-12

Very first thing, what stands out here is the clear contrast between Noah and the rest of humanity. In the last sermon we acknowledged how there certainly was something special about Noah so that he “found favor in the eyes of the Lord”—here’s that special something:

- First, he was “righteous”. Righteous is a Bible word that simply means a right relationship with God. Someone we call “good” in our day would be called “righteous” in the Old Testament. Noah’s life had this posture: “You are God and I am not, therefore I will relate to you and others rightly.”¹
- Second, he was “blameless”. This is a word in the Old Testament more commonly applied to animals than people, referring to the sacrifices that were supposed to be without blemish. When applied to people like Noah and Abraham and Job it carries the sense of whole-heartedness, which is interesting to our consideration of soulfulness in this series, with attention to the whole person, the head, the hands, and the heart. Although all of God’s Old Testament people were called to be righteous, very few were blameless.²
- Third, Noah “walked with God”. This is the same description of Enoch, the mysterious man in chapter 5 who apparently delighted God so much that he was spared from death.³ Let’s not complicate the phrase: Noah had an intimate relationship with God like friends who walk together. It wasn’t his renown as a warrior that made him stand out (sorry Russell Crowe), but his simplicity.⁴

How was it that Noah came to have this simple walk with God? That we don’t fully know, but we can rest assured that God was at work in his life. Also, if you do the math in the genealogies prior to this chapter, it becomes clear that Noah was the first man born after the death of Adam. So unlike everyone who came before him, Noah grew up knowing without a doubt that he was going to grow old and die. Perhaps, as we learned last summer in our study of Ecclesiastes, the reality of death was used by God to sober Noah, to wisely fight the popular idea that he could be God; to simply walk humbly with his God.⁵

¹ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), Kindle Edition, Loc 2284-2289; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 308

² Wenham, 308; Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1967), 93-94; Ross, Loc 2284-2289

³ Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5

⁴ Leon R. Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 163

⁵ Wenham

Now compare that with the rest of humanity. Rather than being righteous and blameless, they were corrupt and violent. Corrupt gives the sense of people so self-destructed that the flood is simply God affirming what they've already become. Violent describes how they then treated one another. This makes sense in light of last week's passage, which showed us that trying to steal God's glory for ourselves always leads to seeking control over others.⁶

Obviously, Noah stood out like a light in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.⁷ But just because Noah was righteous and blameless in his day doesn't mean he was sinless. If you have any questions about that, just read chapter 9 when he gets off the ark! I think Noah was described so positively not just to contrast, but to compare, to point us to the God-man Jesus Christ, who in every way would be righteous and blameless, and one who walked with God in the midst of a dark world where, across the ages,

¹ The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good. ² The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. ³ They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. Psalm 14:1-3

In contrast, Jesus was *the one* among all the corrupted of whom God the Father could say,

"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17

Jesus was the last remaining stitch of a ruined creation that God could look upon and say, "Behold, *this* is very good."⁸ This is who we're meant to see through Noah.

Let's continue on, in v. 13:

¹³ And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶ Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above,

⁶ Ross, Loc 2289-2293; Kidner, 94; Wenham, 309

⁷ Philippians 2:15

⁸ Genesis 1:31; Wenham, 309-310

and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷ For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. ²¹ Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.” ²² Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him. Genesis 6:13-22

The first obvious reality that hits us here is that God is going wipe humanity off the face of the planet with a flood. And this is where I get uncomfortable with covering a nursery's walls with happy images of Noah's ark. In a Bible that's full of genuine descriptions of our world's darkest stories, this is probably the second darkest story of all. Can we just acknowledge the weight of this for a minute: *everyone and everything were going to die*. I know acknowledging that might tempt us to feel ashamed over the presence of this story in the Bible. Saddened, yes; ashamed, no—because the Lord isn't. We read in Psalm 29,

¹⁰ The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever. Psalm 29:10

Now there are other ancient flood accounts with strikingly similar details to the biblical story, but here is one of the places they differ tremendously. In other flood accounts there is no emphasis on sin as the reason for such judgment. Instead, the gods are annoyed at humans for things like breeding too fast and interrupting their sleep by being too loud.⁹ The Lord, however, is not ashamed to sit enthroned over something as devastating as the flood. Why? Because he is just, and sin deserves judgment.

Therefore the temporary judgment that God brings upon ancient humanity points us to the eternal judgment that God will bring upon all humanity. Peter makes the connection for us:

³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever

⁹ Ross, Loc 2298-2299; Wenham, 300-303

since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God,⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.⁷ But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. 2 Peter 3:3-7

And so a refuge from this judgment and destruction is desperately needed! In Noah’s day, this meant an ark. Now the description of the ark is mind-boggling, yet the details provided by the Bible aren’t so much for an architectural understanding, but for another couple of reasons.

One, in many ways it parallels the design of the Old Testament tabernacle, the sacred tent where God literally came to dwell in the midst of his people. That’s where priests made atoning sacrifices for the sins of the people, and where the ark of the covenant containing the Ten Commandments was kept, upon which God’s presence abided like a throne. Throughout the Bible, whether it’s the garden of Eden or the ark or the tabernacle or the temple, wherever God allows his presence to abide and his glory to appear, that’s where the life of his people are preserved.¹⁰

And so we begin to see how the Old Testament ark is preparing us to be blown away by the reality of the New Testament ark. What is the New Testament ark? It’s the body of Jesus Christ. In his incarnation he became the one place upon which God’s presence abided and his glory appeared, the sole instrument through which our lives might be preserved from the coming judgment. Now to make this connection might feel kinda weird, like “Are you saying we need to somehow go into Jesus and then come out of him like Noah did the ark?” Uh...yeah! In fact, there was a man named Nicodemus who asked a very similar question to Jesus himself, and

⁵ Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again...born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” John 3:3, 5

So what do we think is happening as Noah enters into a watery chaos and eventually comes out brand new? It’s seems a whole lot like being born again. Keep that in mind, we’ll come back to it a bit later.

¹⁰ Wenham, 313

But for now, there's a second significant reason the Bible gives all these details about the ark and its construction, and it's to show that "Noah did all that God commanded him". Why is this refrain in the story so important? Because it shows us how an ark could've been a vessel of salvation in the first place. An ark wouldn't have meant squat if there wasn't a man righteous enough to save anyone!¹¹ In the same way, the body of Jesus Christ impaled to a cross wouldn't mean squat if he wasn't righteous enough to save anyone! But instead the Bible tells us

we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin...⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, Hebrews 4:15, 5:8-9

Once again, when we look upon the perhaps boring details of the ark, we're meant to see the glorious realities of Jesus Christ.

2) God Protects His People During the Flood - 7:1-24

That brings us to our second movement in the story: God protects his people during the flood. Read with me in 7:1:

7 Then the Lord said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. ² Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, ³ and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴ For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." ⁵ And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him.

⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. ⁷ And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸ Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, ⁹ two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. Genesis 7:1-9

As Noah, his family, and the animals make their final preparations to enter the ark after decades of building it, there is one thing I want to emphasize about those preparations.

¹¹ Ross, Loc 2301-2307

Notice that God instructs Noah to take pairs of both clean and unclean animals. This shows us that, one, Noah knew the difference between clean and unclean even before God's law clarified it—truly, he was a righteous man.¹² But it also shows that God was preparing Noah to be able to make a sacrifice. For the Bible will go on to teach that

²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of [the] blood [of a sacrifice] there is no forgiveness of sins. Hebrews 9:22

And this wasn't just any ol' sacrifice, but the perfect sacrifice of clean animals without blemish. Again, it wasn't enough that Noah was a blameless and righteous man; if God was to have mercy on humanity after the flood, Noah would have to make a sacrifice for them. And God was providing what was needed for such a sacrifice.

Why does this matter? Because it points us to the reason why Jesus Christ had to die. Ever thought about that? If Jesus was God, all-perfect and all-powerful, why didn't he just snap his fingers and save everyone? In fact, people even threw that very question at him while he hung from the cross.¹³ The truth is, being blameless and righteous before God was great for Jesus' relationship with God, but in itself it did nothing for sinners like you and me. A perfect and clean sacrifice had to be made—and thanks be to God it was, as the author of Hebrews continues,

[Jesus Christ] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. Hebrews 9:26-28

See, the story of Noah points us to the sacred truth that, in Christ, God provided everything that was needed for a sacrifice that would save.

But what other treasure is here? Let's continue reading, in 7:10:

¹⁰ And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth. ¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. ¹² And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³ On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife

¹² Wenham, 317

¹³ Matthew 27:40

and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, ¹⁴ they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. ¹⁵ They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ¹⁶ And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the Lord shut him in.

¹⁷ The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸ The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹ And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. ²⁰ The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. ²¹ And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. ²² Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³ He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. ²⁴ And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days. Genesis 7:10-24

The time had come for Noah and his family and the animals to enter into the ark. What would be the point of all their preparations if they didn't actually leave everything else behind and personally step in? The only safe place *on the planet* wasn't near the ark or on top of the ark, but *inside* the ark. As simple a concept as that is, it actually helps us to understand one of the most profound teachings about Jesus in the New Testament. One of Paul's favorite refrains is the simple little phrase, "in Christ". You see it in lots of places, such as the widely known verse that says,

*¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17*

What's the big deal about this phrase? Well, that's a whole other sermon in itself. But for our purposes this morning, the picture of the ark being opened up and the righteous entering in¹⁴ is pointing us to Jesus as the only safe place from the fire of judgment that is to come. Being a Christian is essentially living out the heart cry of the old hymn that says, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, *let me hide myself in thee*".¹⁵ 'Everything in this world is going down in a flood of judgment except you Jesus, so I'm betting everything on you—please let me in!'

¹⁴ Psalm 118:20; John 10:9

¹⁵ Augustus Toplady, "Rock of Ages"

Yet not just in a way that gets you out of hell, but that transforms you into a new creation. Remember, the whole scenario of going through the flood is like a watery re-birth, including forty days and forty nights of waiting, where it must have seemed on the surface like nothing was happening, yet within the ark the seed of humanity's new beginning was quietly growing. Isn't that somewhat like the forty weeks of waiting for a baby to be born?¹⁶ This seems to be pointing us to God's work of making, not just us, but all things new *in Christ*.

And this is an important place to remind us, this is truly *God's* work. One particular detail in this story makes this especially clear, but it's easily overlooked. We read it in verse 16, where after Noah had entered into the ark,

the Lord shut him in. Genesis 7:16

It wasn't Noah or his sons or ropes tied to elephants; it was the Lord himself who shut him safely inside (not to mention it was God who kept it from leaking and steered it). Now this clearly is an act of God's tender care and involvement in saving his people.¹⁷ But it's more than that. Even though God allows us to participate in our own salvation to the extent that we feel our responsibility to respond when he reveals himself to us, this little details reminds us that, as the author of Hebrews says, Jesus Christ is "the author and finisher of our faith".¹⁸ What does it matter if you climb your way into Christ by faith if the door stays open and the first wave of doubt that washes in wipes you out? So God has made sure that door is shut and sealed, as described in Ephesians 1:

*¹³ In [Christ] you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were **sealed** with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14*

So in the midst of this overwhelmingly depressing reality of God's coming judgment, we get this overwhelmingly encouraging reality of God's coming Savior, who sends his own Spirit upon us that we might not only be saved, but saved to the very end.

And this is only possible because the flood of judgment actually does come. Over and over in chapter 7 we are reminded that the watery chaos "prevailed"; it was triumphant

¹⁶ Kass, 164

¹⁷ Kidner, 98; Kass, 166

¹⁸ Hebrews 12:2, KJV

like a victorious army, taking away the last breath of its enemies.¹⁹ Why does that matter? Because it points us to the reality that Jesus took on the full weight of God's judgment; that they prevailed over him on the cross as

Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. Mark 15:37

And in so doing he didn't just overcome death, he condemned a world who refuses to believe him. In the same way, the ark didn't escape God's flood of judgment—it took it head-on and was wasted by it; that's why it's left hanging dead on a mountaintop and buried by history. Doomsday preppers might be described as trying to resurrect a modern-day ark for themselves, but the reality is the only vessel fit to survive doomsday is the resurrected God-man, Jesus Christ. That's why the author of Hebrews urges us,

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. ⁷ By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. Hebrews 11:6-7

When we look upon the frightening nature of the flood, it's meant to remind us of the victorious nature of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

3) God Promises Peace to His People After the Flood - 8:1-22

And so this brings us to the final part of the story, that God not only provides protection to his people during the flood, but he promises peace to his people after the flood. Read with me in 8:1:

***8** But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. ² The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³ and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, ⁴ and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵ And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.*

¹⁹ Wenham, 324-325

⁶ At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷ and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸ Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. ⁹ But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. ¹⁰ He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. ¹¹ And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹² Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

¹³ In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. ¹⁴ In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. ¹⁵ Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶ “Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁷ Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” ¹⁸ So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. ¹⁹ Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark. Genesis 8:1-19

This section begins with a precious statement that serves as the centerpiece of the whole story: that “God remembered Noah”. This doesn’t mean that God suddenly realized he had forgotten Noah, like a parent leaving their child in the car. This is the Bible’s way of saying God was actively keeping his promise to Noah.²⁰ And God’s Old Testament people would’ve delighted in this statement because over and over they too would face judgment for their sins. In fact, the Old Testament can sometimes read like one bloodbath of judgment after the next. But along with every single plunge into punishment would come a promise: that a remnant would be saved and God’s people restored.²¹

Ultimately this points us to a delight that belongs not just to Old Testament believers, but to New. The purpose of Jesus taking on the judgment of God for the sins of the world was so that he could “purify for himself a people for his own possession,”²² a remnant who will survive the coming fire of judgment and belong to God forever. The

²⁰ Ross, Loc 2338-2341; Wenham, 326

²¹ Ross, Loc 2334-2338

²² Titus 2:11-14

New Testament doesn't sugarcoat it—the closer we get to the return of Christ, the more costly it will become to follow him. And yet the story of Noah encourages us,

⁵ if [God] 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...⁹ then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, 2 Peter 2:5, 9a

and how to keep a remnant of people for himself!

And just as we discussed earlier, he does this in large part by means of his Spirit, who dwells with his people. We return to him because the story does, through the entrance of a mighty wind and a dove. There seems to be this interesting relationship between the dove and Noah, which shouldn't surprise us since Noah is the one soulful human on earth who fulfills God's great mandate to subdue the earth and have dominion over every living thing.²³ The dove comes and goes, eventually bringing the good news of a new creation. We can't even imagine the relief of this after months stuck inside the ark, knowing nothing but that the outside was a watery chaos. The dove returning with an olive leaf, and then not returning at all, proved the promise true: God was making all things new.²⁴

This matters to us because it points us to our own very real hope in the midst of the despair that threatens to consume us in chaotic seasons. How do we know God's promises are true? Ever feel like he's gone silent on you? There was around 400 years of literal silence from God prior to the moment in history when a dove would play a significant role again. We read in Matthew 3,

¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him, Matthew 3:16

It was a promise that God, through Christ, was making all things new. And to further prove it, one day after Jesus' resurrection, that same Spirit would come "like a mighty rushing wind" and turn these twelve wimpy deserters into mighty men who walked with God.²⁵

²³ Genesis 1:28; Kass, 164; Wenham, 329

²⁴ Kidner, 99; Wenham, 328-329

²⁵ Acts 2:2

How would he do it? By coming to *rest* on them, just like a dove *rested* upon Jesus; just like a dove *rested* upon Noah.²⁶

And there's something more here than just a dove. Guess whose name essentially means "rest"? For this we go back to chapter 5, where Lamech fathered a son and

*Now he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will give us **rest** from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has cursed." Genesis 5:29, NASB*

Yes, Noah was the man through whom God gave rest to a world weary with corruption.²⁷ But do you see where it all points? To a man through whom God now offers rest forever from the painful toil of our hands, our fruitless efforts to please God on our own. Because of Jesus' labor for us on the cross, his resurrection from the grave, and his intercession for us this very moment from the seat of his throne in heaven,

⁹ So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰ for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. ¹¹ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. Hebrews 4:9-11

We aren't Noah-ians—the rest provided through him wouldn't last long. We are Christians—striving to enter eternal rest in the new heavens and the new earth by keeping our eyes on Jesus Christ. And if indeed we lay down our own efforts and trust his promises, we'll be led to worship, just as I hope has happened for you at some point in this sermon. We see this very movement at the conclusion of the story, starting in verse 20,

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹ And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ²² While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." Genesis 8:20-22

²⁶ Acts 2:3

²⁷ Ross, Loc 2341-2342

What's going on here? Well, it seems like rather than Noah falling on his face first thing and kissing the ground, he falls on his face first thing...and worships. Once again, it's a way of saying, "You are God and I am not." It's also a way of confessing on behalf of humanity their evil that had ruined the world. And it's a way of being in awe of his Creator and Savior. And the genuine expression of a broken and contrite heart was pleasing to God, as it *always* is; and he desired to dwell with his people again and be their God.²⁸

Picture with me Noah, who actually hasn't spoken a recorded word in this whole story, tears streaming down his face, singing something like this from Psalm 116:

*⁵ Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;
our God is merciful.*

*⁶ The Lord preserves the **simple**;
when I was brought low, he saved me.*

*⁷ Return, O my soul, to your **rest**;
for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. Psalm 116:5-7*

And then he kisses the ground, and his family. And after he finally pulls himself together, he says to himself,

*¹² What shall I render to the Lord
for all his benefits to me?*

*¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the Lord,*

*¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people. Psalm 116:12-14*

Conclusion

This is where I want to end, though I confess to you I have had no idea how to end a sermon like this. There has been too much to take in. The connections from the coming flood to our coming Savior, the overwhelming truths of our salvation...what else is there to say? What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits to us? Do we just walk away resolved to try harder and do better as good Christians?

²⁸ Ross, Loc 2348-2358

I think we answer this the same as the psalmist, resolved to lift up the cup of salvation he has already poured out, and call on the name of the Lord. To respond in worship and awe. And also resolved to pay our vows to the Lord in the presence of his people. In other words, to say with our lives, "You are God and I am not, therefore I will relate to you and others rightly." To see that what we admire in Noah is now made possible for us in Jesus Christ. Not a life marked by mighty deeds done to catch God's eye, but a life of simply walking with him, for the delight of who he is, until the day we see him face to face.

Communion - On the night that he was betrayed, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it, broke it and said to his disciples, "This is my body, which is broken for you; eat this in remembrance of me." He also took a cup of wine, and after blessing it, gave it to his disciples and said, "This cup is the new covenant marked by the shedding of my blood. For as often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you announce the Lord's death until he returns." **Today we are announcing that Jesus Christ became all these things we have talked about today so that we might simply walk with God.**

Our tradition here at Antioch is to come forward and break off a piece of bread and dip it in the juice. There will be stations here in the front; gluten-free bread will be available to your right. If you're a baptized believer, come and remember who you are and whose you are. If you're a believer but not yet baptized, before coming to the table, we would love to help you first come and declare your faith publicly through baptism. If you're not a Christian, this sacred symbol is not for you, but rather than taking communion, we encourage you to take Christ. He has made himself available to you this very moment. There will be pastors in the back to talk and pray with you about any need you have. Let's pray.

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