

The World Under Water

Text: Gen. 8:1-22

Introduction:

1. The flood account continues in this chapter with the restraining and the process of the waters receding from off the earth. The faithfulness of God to those on the Ark is demonstrated and their worshipful thankfulness is highlighted upon leaving the ark.
2. This chapter adds further important details to help us in the development of the catastrophist model in opposition to the uniformitarian explanation of geology. Fossils formed in a rapid and catastrophic environment rather than through long, slow processes over millions and billions of years. The record in the rocks is a testament to God's judgment on sin, not a testimony to the evolutionary theory.
3. We will divide the chapter into four parts for our study.

I. THE PURPOSE TOWARDS NOAH (VS. 1-5)

In these verses we witness God's gracious consideration of Noah and His actions that flow from that care, revealing God's purpose towards Noah and his family. Notice the two actions of God that are revealed:

A. God Remembered the Arks Passengers (Vs. 1a)

1. God remembered the human life on the ark.
 - a. The word 'remembered' does not imply that God had forgotten Noah and his family as God cannot and does not forget His children. The word reveals that God is about to act again on their behalf. "The word 'remembered' simply speaks of God's compassion and God's faithfulness. He has compassion on His people's needs and diligently cares for them, and He is faithful to His promises to them."
 - b. We note the same pattern in other verses where God is said to 'remember'. Wiersbe notes, "To remember means to tact on behalf of another. God remembered Abraham and rescued Lot from destruction in Sodom (Gen. 19:29). The Lord remembered both Rachel and Hannah and enabled them to conceive and bear sons (30:22; 1 Sam. 1:11, 19). The Lord remembered His covenant and delivered the Jews from the bondage of Egypt (Ex. 2:24; 6:5).
2. God remembered the animal life on the ark.
 - a. God also remembered the creatures on the ark. This is "a touching indication of the tenderness of God towards his creatures" (Whitelaw).
 - b. Animals are not the objects of God's saving, redemptive love like mankind who was created in God's image. However, they are the objects of His overall care as Creator (Matt. 10:29).

B. God Restrained the Floodwaters (Vs. 1b-5)

God used natural phenomena to bring the end to the flood.

1. The blowing of a wind (Vs. 1b).

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- a. The word 'asswaged' means "to decrease, subside". In this context it means "to go down, to get lower" (Baker and Carpenter). The wind was a part of this process. Not only would the wind aid the evaporation of the water, it would also aid the moving of the water into what would become the post flood bodies of water in oceans, seas, lakes and rivers.
 - b. This is the first mention of wind in the Bible and is significant in light of the atmospheric and environmental changes that have occurred because of the dumping of the water canopy above the earth. "The uniform (near uniform) temperatures of the antediluvian world would have precluded strong winds. With the vapor canopy gone, however, sharp temperature differentials would have been established between equator and poles, and great air movements begun." (Morris)
2. The stopping of the water (Vs. 2)
 - a. The fountains were stopped. God stopped the flow of water from the underground reservoirs.
 - b. The rain was stopped.
 3. The receding of the waters (Vs. 3-5). The waters begin to drain off the emerging lands:
 - a. The process of the receding – "and the waters returned from off the earth continually" (Vs. 3a). This describes the post flood movements of the colossal floodwaters. This process would result in the formation of huge canyons as the waters gouged pathways through the flood sediment. It would also contribute to the formation of the post flood topography with its hills, mountains and valleys. The movement of tectonic plates would have likely been a part of this process also. Henry Morris writes, "Depending on topography, vast interior continental lakes would exist for a time and great rivers would form, scouring out great canyons rapidly and depositing tremendous amounts of alluvium in their lower courses. It is significant that, all over the world, interior lakes and seas show evidence of much higher water levels in the recent past. Rivers also everywhere show that they once carried much greater quantities of water and sediment than they do at present. These and related phenomena provide still further geologic evidence of a worldwide Flood several thousand years ago." One might ask, "**where did the floodwaters go?**" Wiersbe answers, "Never underestimate the power of moving water! It's possible that the flood greatly altered the contours of the land and created new areas for the water to fill, both on the surface of the earth and underground. Since there were eruptions from beneath the earth (7:11), whole continents and mountain ranges could have risen and fallen, creating huge areas into which the water could spill. The winds that God sent over the earth helped to evaporate the water and also move it to the places God had provided."
 - b. The period of the receding – "after the end of the hundred and fifty days" (Vs. 3b). This ties in with the end of chapter 7 that

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states that the flood waters “prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days” (7:24).

- c. The product of the receding – “the waters were abated” (Vs. 4-5). The word means lessened, decreased, diminished, reduced. This led to two events:
 - i. The Resting of the Ark (Vs. 4). The ark's keel runs aground somewhere in the mountains of Ararat before the tops of the mountains can actually be seen. While there are claims the ark has been found on Mount Ararat, it should be noted that the text of Scripture does not specify a particular mountain but a mountain range. Further, the discovery of the ark is not essential to prove the truth of the world-wide flood. The evidence of a worldwide flood is practically everywhere! Interestingly, “the Ararat region, including Mount Ararat itself abounds in what is known as pillow lava, a dense lava rock formed under great depths of water. The mountain also includes certain sedimentary formations containing marine fossils.” This is the second mention of the word ‘rested’ in the Bible. The first is in Gen. 2:2-3 where God ‘rested’ upon completing creation. The Ark is a wonderful type of Christ. “As God ‘finished’ His work of Creation and as the Ark ‘finished’ its mission, so Christ ‘finished’ His work of salvation (Jn. 19:30).” (Morris)
 - ii. The Revealing of the Mountains (Vs. 5). These mountains no doubt had been shaped and formed through the flood. “The mountains on today’s world were largely uplifted during and after the Flood. This very uplift, combined with sinking of the ocean floors, would produce the unevenness required. As this happened, the water would run off the mountains and into the oceans.” The earth’s topography would be very different from what it was before the flood. There is also a time stamp on this event. It took place on the first day of the 10th month. The flood had begun the seventeenth day of the second month (7:11) so this is almost 8 months later.

II. THE PATIENCE OF NOAH (VS. 6-14)

A. The Principle of Waiting

1. God sometimes allows us to have periods of confinement in our lives. Just make sure with God’s help that these times do not become a lapse in faith and a drifting from the Lord.
2. God was silent and yet was providentially and powerfully working on Noah’s behalf at this time (See Vs. 1-5). Do not misinterpret the silence of God to mean He has ceased activity in your life. Noah and his family did not know when it would all end. They simply clung to God’s provision of salvation and waited on Him. Outside, God was working to bring the flood to an end. His Providence also ensured the ark ran aground in a safe and strategic place. His guidance ensured the circumstances were right for Noah and his

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family to leave the ark safely. Someone said “Waiting is a common instrument of providential discipline for those to whom exceptional work has been appointed.” (Stalker)

3. Faith not only works for God; it waits upon God. Noah was a good example of this. He was patient during the long years of building the ark; patient as he preached continually to an unresponsive audience and patient while waiting for the flood to come to an end. 1 Pet. 3:20 “...the longsuffering of God **waited** in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing”.

B. The Progression of Waiting (Vs. 6-12)

This period of waiting was not a time of idleness and inactivity on Noah’s part and reminds us that waiting upon God is not entirely a passive matter. We see the constant intersection of Divine sovereignty and human responsibility in the Scriptures. Noah was active during this time, not only in serving and caring for the animals inside the ark but also in seeking to actively discern God’s will and timing as to when they were to leave the ark. Noah undertakes several initiatives to assess the flood situation:

1. The Sending out of the Raven (Vs. 7). The raven does not return, no doubt finding plenty of rotting flesh to feed upon.
2. The Sending out of the Dove (Vs. 8-12). The dove is a positive symbol in the Bible of youth (Son 1:15, 4:1, 5:12), love (Song 2:14, 5:2, 6:9), innocence (Matt. 10:16) and the Holy Spirit (Lk. 3:22). The dove is sent out three times with one-week intervals between each dispatch:
 - a. The first time the dove is sent out with the raven and returns as she “found no rest for the sole of her foot” (Vs. 8-9).
 - b. The second time the dove is sent out she returns with an olive twig in her beak, indicating not only that the waters had receded further but that the trees and vegetation were beginning to re-sprout (Vs. 10-11).
 - c. The third time the dove is sent out she does not return, indicating that the land has become habitable again.

C. The Period of Waiting (Vs. 13-14)

1. The final period of waiting (Vs. 13)
 - a. On the first day of the first month almost one year since boarding the ark, Noah removes the ark’s covering (possibly one of its windows) and surveys the ground. It appears dry and ready for them to disembark. However, Noah would need to wait till the end of the following month before he heard officially from God that it was time to leave the ark.
 - b. Perhaps this period was the hardest and most challenging for Noah and his family. Often the last period of waiting is the hardest and discipline and patience is needed to not rush ahead of God’s program.
2. The total period of waiting (Vs. 14)
 - a. Noah entered the ark in his six hundredth year, the seventeenth day of the second month (Gen. 7:11).

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- b. Noah leaves the ark in his six hundredth and first year, the twenty seventh day of the second month. This means Noah and his family were on the ark for a total of a year and 10 days.

III. THE PROCLAMATION TO NOAH (VS. 15-19)

A. The Order to Noah (Vs. 15-17)

1. Noah stays where he is until he hears from God. This is wisdom! Only move from where you are at the Lord's clear direction.
2. God commands Noah and his family to disembark from the ark and to bring all the animals with them in order that they might "breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth." (Vs. 17b).

B. The Obedience of Noah (Vs. 18-19).

1. Again, Noah does exactly as God has commanded him, leaving the ark and walking out into the post flood world. Total obedience to the revealed Word of God was what characterized Noah's life from start to finish with the exception of his drunkenness at the end. Genuine faith leads to a life of submission to the will of God revealed in the Word of God.
2. Note: What changes would we expect in the post-flood world? Henry Morris suggests the following:
 - a. The oceans were much more extensive, since they now contained all the waters which one were "above the firmament" and in the subterranean reservoirs of the "great deep".
 - b. The land areas were much less extensive than before the Flood, with a much greater portion of its surface uninhabitable for this reason.
 - c. The thermal vapor blanket had been dissipated, so that strong temperature differentials were inaugurated, leading to a gradual buildup of snow and ice in the polar latitudes, rendering much of the extreme norther and southern land surfaces also essentially uninhabitable.
 - d. Mountain ranges uplifted after the Flood emphasized the more rugged topography of the postdiluvian continents, with many of these regions also becoming unfit for human habitation.
 - e. Winds and storms, rains and snows, were possible now, thus rendering the total environment less congenial to man and animals than had once been the case.
 - f. The environment was also more hostile because of harmful radiation from space, no longer filtered out by the vapor canopy, resulting (along with other contributing environmental factors) in gradual reduction in human longevity after the Flood.
 - g. Because of the tremendous physiographic and isostatic movements generated by the collapse of the subterranean caverns and the post-Flood uplifts, the crust of the earth was in a state of general instability, reflected in recurrent volcanic and seismic activity all over the world for many centuries and continuing in some degree even to the present.

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- h. The lands were barren of vegetation, until such time as plant life could be reestablished through the sprouting of seeds and cuttings buried beneath the surface.

IV. THE PRAISE FROM NOAH (VS. 20-22)

The first thing Noah does after leaving the ark is to build an altar and offer a sacrifice to God. Let's consider five points about Noah's offering:

A. The Priority of Noah's Offering (Vs. 20a)

Evidently the worship and thanksgiving of God was first priority to Noah as a pattern of life as his first act after leaving the ark was to lead his family in worship. How important is worship to you in the following areas?

1. On an individual level.
2. On a family level.
3. On a church level.

B. The Price of Noah's Offering (Vs. 20b)

1. Noah offers at least one of each of the clean animals and birds. This represented a great sacrifice when you consider the relatively small number of clean animals available at that time. "This was probably the biggest sacrifice in history, in proportion to availability of animals" (Sarfati).
2. True worship leads the worshipper to make sacrifices for God. Consider David's example in 2 Sam. 24:24.

C. The Picture of Noah's Offering (Vs. 20)

Several truths are pictured in the offering on the altar.

1. *Adoration* – Noah's offering was an act of worshipful thanksgiving to God. Undoubtedly this sacrifice represented the overwhelming thankfulness of Noah and his family on account of the fact they had been spared God's judgment. The fact we have been spared God's judgment should motivate us to regular thanksgiving and adoration of our God.
2. *Intercession* – the altar also speaks of the place of prayer. Perhaps Noah was also asking God for mercy for him and his family after witnessing the sobering judgment of the world-wide flood as God responds with a specific promise never to condemn the world again with a universal flood.
3. *Propitiation* – the sacrifice on the altar is a picture of substitution and propitiation. The innocent victim is slain in place of the guilty (substitution), thus providing appeasement from the wrath of God (propitiation). The Greek word translated 'propitiation' (Rom. 3:25) is also translated "mercy seat" in Heb. 9:5. The mercy seat perfectly covered the law which was contained in the Ark (Ex. 25:17, 21). This symbolizes propitiation – Christ covering the demands of God's law with His precious, sinless blood.

D. The Pleasure in Noah's Offering (Vs. 21a)

1. The metaphor is of the smoke of the offering being like a sweet-smelling aroma in God's nostrils. "The meaning is that the sacrifice of the patriarch was as acceptable to God as refreshing odors are to the sense of a man." (Whitelaw) This figure of speech reveals the truth of God's acceptance of Noah's offering. Conversely, when

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God is said to refuse to “smell” an offering, it meant it was rejected (See Lev. 26:31; Is. 1:11-15; Amos 5:21).

2. This is also a beautiful picture of Christ’s sacrifice which was well-pleasing to the Father. Eph. 5:2 “And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a **sweet-smelling savour.**” Remember. God will never accept anyone on the basis of their sin-tainted works. He only accepts them on the basis of Christ’s blood sacrifice on the cross.
3. We are also reminded of the truth that in order for worship to please God, we need to approach Him in His appointed way. Noah’s offering was a ‘clean’ offering and hence represents pure worship. There is too much emphasis in modern Christendom on making “worship” enjoyable and acceptable to man rather than God. The result has been entertainment, rock and roll churches that resemble something more like a carnal theatre than house of true worship.

E. The Promise in response to Noah’s Offering (Vs. 21b-22)

In grace, God determined three promises in His heart towards Noah and his descendants. Notice that the inner thoughts of God’s heart are being revealed through the Word of God in these verses. Before formally pronounced His promises to Noah (next chapter) He first determined them in His heart. The promises were:

1. God would not pronounce an additional curse upon the earth. This does not mean that the original curse after the fall was rescinded but that God would not pronounce an additional curse on the earth.
2. God would not send another world-wide flood to destroy the earth.
3. God would ensure the day/night and four-season cycles would continue while the earth remains. The normal cycle of the seasons had been interrupted during the flood for a year but that would not be repeated.
4. Note: Do you see the picture of Christ again? Grace is extended and deserved judgment withheld because of the blood sacrifice. “The continuation of man’s existence is not something man has earned by goodness; rather, its entirely because of God’s long-suffering and forbearance.” (Sarfati)

Conclusion:

1. Have you come to God by His appointed way for salvation?
2. Is God allowing a period of testing in your life? A period of waiting upon Him? Stay faithful and trust that He is working sovereignly for your good and His ultimate glory.
3. How important is worship to you?