

GOD REMEMBERS US
(SUNDAY, JULY 20, 2014)

Scripture Reading: Gen. 8; 2 Cor. 2:14-17

INTRODUCTION

I. Last study in Gen. 7 – obedience, deliverance, judgment.

- A. Noah's obedience – important, God's grace.
- B. Noah's obedience – picture of Christ's perfect obedience.
- C. Great deliverance in the flood – speaks of our salvation in Christ.
- D. Great judgment of the flood – a picture of what all sinners deserve.
- E. Great judgment – foreshadows what Christ would endure on the cross.
- E. Foreshadows the final judgment at the end of all time.

II. These three themes are related to God's covenant promises.

- A. Covenant of redemption – based on Christ's great obedience and His suffering of our deserved judgment so that we could be delivered.

III. Definition of a covenant – O. Palmer Robertson

“A covenant is a bond-in-blood sovereignly administered.”¹

- A. Bond in blood – this relationship has life-and-death consequences.
- B. What does sovereignly administered mean?
 - 1. God is the one who sets the terms.
 - 2. This is not a deal between God and men.
- C. There are a number of OT covenants: Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, and others.
 - 1. They are related and connected in that they find their great fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Westminster Confession of Faith:

There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.

¹ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 15.

D. Focus on the theme of covenant in Gen. 8.

IV. When God makes a promise, He is bound to its fulfillment but not in how He will keep that promise.

A. God may use miraculous or “ordinary means” or any combination He chooses.

1. God fed Israel with manna.
2. God fed Elijah using ravens.
3. In the NT, when Paul was in Ephesus, handkerchiefs or aprons that touched his body were used to heal people and cast out evil spirits.

B. But is the miraculous the normal way God worked in the lives of those in Scripture?

C. Did Paul encourage believers to pray that God might work all sorts of miracles through him?

1. Paul encouraged those in Colossae – pray that God would open to us a door for the Word.
2. Paul was confident that God would bring deliverance through the prayers of believers in Philippi and the supply of the Holy Spirit.

D. God is in no way restricted.

1. He may work in ways that astound doctors and others.
2. He may use the literal hands of doctors.
3. He can provide through the generosity of His people.
4. He provides by giving you strength to work and make gain.

V. Your focus must be to see that God is faithful to His covenant promises.

Rom. 8:32 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?

A. Noah survived the flood because of God’s covenant promise to Him.

VI. **You must wait and rest fully in God’s covenant faithfulness.**

Look at Gen. 8 in two main sections – vv. 1-19 and vv. 20-22.

1) GOD REMEMBERED NOAH AND EVERYTHING ON THE ARK, VV. 1-19

I. Beginning and end of Gen. 8 we see God's covenant faithfulness.

- A. How do we see this in verse 1?
- B. In the words, "Then God **remembered** Noah..."
- C. What a precious verb.
- D. It is not that God first forgot Noah.

II. Remembered – God's covenant faithfulness

Gen. 9:15 – I will remember My covenant

Gen. 19:29 – ...and God remembered Abraham

Gen. 30:22 – And God remembered Rachel

Ex. 2:24 – ... and God remembered His covenant

III. Scripture calls you also to remember.

Deut. 5:15 – And remember that you were a slave in Egypt

Deut. 8:2 – And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness.

1 Cor. 11:24 – Do this in remembrance of Me.

IV. Gen. 8:1 – Center of the account

A. Scripture gives us some details related to the flood.

- 1. We know the size of the ark.
- 2. We know some of how God caused the massive flooding of the earth.
- 3. We know the length of the flood and details regarding the subsiding of the waters.

B. These details in part confirm this is a true, historical account.

- 1. This is not just a parable, myth, or story copied from other legends.

C. We don't know all the details we might like to know.

1. How did God sustain Noah and all the animals through a worldwide flood?

D. We don't have to be able to answer every question.

E. What is key is that God remembered Noah, his family, and all the animals.

V. You don't have to know how God will provide for everything you will need also.

VI. How did God bring an end to the flood?

A. Three things are mentioned in Gen. 8.

1. God made a wind to pass over the earth.

a. Connection with Gen. 1:2.

b. Mighty wind started to cause the waters to go down.

2. God stopped or closed the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven.

a. Not told when God did this.

b. Some versions read, "The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven had been closed."

3. God restrained the rain from heaven.

VII. Significant that we have a number of dates given in Gen. 7 and 8.

A. Starting date - 600th year of Noah's life, in the 2nd month, and the 17th day of the month.

B. Gen. 7:12 – intense rain lasted 40 days and 40 nights.

C. Gen. 7:24 – waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

D. Same 150-day period is found in Gen. 8:3.

1. This period was marked by an intense rain for 40 days.

2. The fountains of the deep and windows of heaven were opened.

3. Sometime during this 150-day period, God closed the mighty source of this water.

4. For 150 days the ark floated on these mighty waters.

E. Verse 4 – Ark rested somewhere in the mountains of Ararat, 7th month and 17th day.

1. This is 150 days after the start of the flood.

2. This is not even quite halfway for the total length of the flood.
3. Another 220 days for Noah and all on the ark to wait for the earth to become fully dry.

VIII. Verse 4 – Then the ark **rested**.

- A. A theologically rich verb.
- B. In this case, the ark touched down in the high mountains in the region of Ararat.
- C. God rested on the 7th day.
- D. Noah's name is connected with this verb.
 1. Noah likely breathed a tremendous sigh of relief.
 2. Many days of waiting, but much more peaceful than being battered by winds and waves.
 3. Noah had to continue to wait as God's covenant faithfulness continued to protect and sustain him.

IX. Verse 5 – 1st day of the 10th month, tops of the mountains were visible.

- A. Other lower mountain peaks became visible.
- B. This was 2 months and 2 weeks (74 days) after the ark first rested.

X. After 40 more days of waiting, Noah opened the window of the ark and sent out a raven.

- A. Ravens are unclean birds as we read in Lev. 11:15 and Deut. 14:14.
- B. Psalm 147:9 and Job 38:41 speak of how God provides for the young ravens that cry.
- C. Raven did not return.
 1. It did not just fly without rest for another 107 days, but was able to live.
 2. Ravens will feed on dead animals and rotting flesh.

XI. After another week, Noah sent out a dove for the first time.

- A. Likely not sent out when the raven was sent (v. 8)
- B. More likely this was another week later.
- C. Dove did not find a resting place.

1. Again a play on words with the name of Noah.

D. Noah waited another week – 11th month, 24th day.

1. Dove returned with an olive branch.

2. What a powerful picture of God's great work and faithfulness.

3. Not only has the rainbow been "stolen" but also this beautiful picture of God's remembering of his covenant.

E. Another week, Noah sent out the dove the 3rd time. No return.

1. This marks day 284 of the flood.

F. Noah would continue to have to wait.

1. There are two more time references in verses 13 and 14.

2. Verse 13 – another 30 days after the last dove flight.

3. Verse 14 – Noah and his family would have to wait 8 more weeks, 56 days.

G. You must wait and rest fully in God's covenant faithfulness.

XI. Finally 370 days after the start of the flood, Noah is commanded to leave.

A. The earth was finally dried.

B. Observe that it was not Noah who made the decision to leave just as Noah did not determine when it was time to board.

C. Imagine being on the ark with thousands of animals for over 1 year!

1. Happiest day of Noah's life?

D. It likely took time for Noah to unload all the animals, but these details are not essential for us.

XII. Consider in summary the timing of the flood.

A. 150 days ark floated on the waters of the flood.

B. 220 days where the ark rested in the mountains while the waters dried.

C. More than 1/2 of the time, Noah spent waiting to get off the ark.

D. This time was very likely a time where the earth was further being reshaped and remade.

E. Time of waiting as God fulfilled His covenant to Him.

2) GOD PROMISED THERE WOULD BE RESTRAINT IN HIS JUDGMENTS, vv. 20-22

I. Verse 20 – Second time in Genesis where sacrifice is mentioned.

A. Significant also that there is mention of clean animals and clean birds.

B. Another connection between earlier chapters of Genesis and the Law later given to Israel.

II. Verse 20 says that Noah offered burnt offerings.

A. A better name for these sacrifices would be ascension offerings.

B. They are to express total dedication to God.

C. How appropriate that this is the first recorded action of Noah after leaving the ark.

D. Noah appropriately foreshadows our Lord and His total dedication to the will of the Father.

E. Oh that God might convict each of us when we are slow in giving thanks or when we lack total dedication to God and His service.

II. Beautifully verse 21 – the LORD smelled a soothing aroma.

A. Tyndale Commentary:

It is especially bold to speak of the sweet savour (AV, RV), since the Babylonian version crudely made the hunger of the gods, ravenous without man's gifts, a reason for their ending the flood. But the Old Testament, with no fear of giving such an impression (cf. Ps. 50:8-15), can use this vivid language which the New is glad to take up (Eph. 5:2).

Eph. 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

B. A soothing aroma – another way of expressing God's acceptance of the sacrifice.

C. Why would God find the ascending smoke from animals soothing?

D. Only as a picture of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Here we have the only basis for anything to be pleasing to a holy God.

2. Here is the only basis for why anything you do can bring pleasure to God – if it is based on the foundation of the perfect work of Christ.

3. John Calvin wrote:

This general rule, therefore, is to be observed, that all religious services which are not perfumed with the odour of faith, are of an ill-savor before God.

III. There are three parts to God's covenant promise to Noah, vv. 21-22.

A. God promised to never again curse the ground for man's sake.

1. What does this mean?

2. Best understanding: not the removal of the original curse imposed after man's fall, but no addition to this great curse.²

3. Very significant.

4. The text says God made this promise knowing the evil still of man's heart.

5. The earth because of man's rebellion deserves to be cursed far more than what we see, but God promised not to bring such judgment.

B. God promised never to destroy every living thing again.

1. We can say, that the earth has deserved such.

2. It is not that God is unmoved by all the evil in the earth.

3. God has promised to not bring again in this age a total destruction of the earth.

C. God promised stability and order for all the earth.

1. What an amazing declaration of God's covenant faithfulness.

2. The earth deserves no such faithfulness, and yet this is what God in His mercy provides.

3. Here is the foundation we can say for all science, farming, and other industry.

4. God does not rule His world by impersonal laws, but according to His covenant faithfulness.

² Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, vol. 1 of *Word Biblical Commentary*. Accordance/Thomas Nelson electronic ed. (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 190.

D. Truly God's covenant with Noah is rightfully called a covenant of preservation – Noah, animals, and to all the earth.

CONCLUSION:

You must wait and rest fully in God's covenant faithfulness.

I. Romans 8:32

Rom. 8:32 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?

II. Genesis 8:22

Gen. 8:22 “While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease.”

Prayer

Hymn: 437

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.