

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
[Adapted from Bethel Bible-
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Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 7**

**THE BOOK OF GENESIS
Chapter 8**

INTRODUCTION

The chapter opens with the statement that God remembered Noah and every living thing that was with him in the ark.¹ God's remembrance does not mean that He had forgotten (a moment of amnesia). Far from it, God's remembrance always shows that He is acting towards someone because He has previously made a commitment and He is keeping his promise:

And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life, from under heaven; *and* every thing that *is* in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee (Genesis 6:17-18).

¹ The Hebrew word translated "remember" is *zakar*. It is often used (e.g Genesis 9:15,16; 30:22; Exodus 2:24; 6:15; 1 Samuel 1:11), implying a remembering with kindness, granting requests, protecting, delivering, (Brown, Briggs, & Driver Hebrew Lexicon).

The chapter divides naturally into two parts: (1) verses 1-19, and (2) verses 20-22. The first part details how the flood ceded and the waters abated, the dry land appeared, the plants grew and man again inhabited the earth. The second part describes Noah's burnt offerings of every clean animal on an altar, which he built. God accepted his sacrifice as a sweet aroma pleasing in His sight. Accordingly God promised not to send another catastrophe by flooding the earth even though man is continually evil in his heart.

This chapter projects the total dependence of man upon God. It shows clearly the sovereign will of the LORD God Almighty to purge the world of evil. God will judge and destroy the wicked and the ungodly but He will be graciously merciful to those who obey Him and receive His grace.

Man did not change even after this catastrophe. It took another event, God's sacrificial gift of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to die on the cross so that man can be redeemed and spiritually regenerated to maintain holiness on earth.

The Floodwaters Retreat

"And God remembered Noah and every living thing" (v.1) gives a breath of hope and optimism in the midst of destruction. God remembered Noah not because Noah was righteous nor obedient to Him, for that would have appeared that God saved him because of the merits of his righteousness. While it is true that Noah was a "just man and perfect in his generation, and walked with God" (6:9), yet it was the grace and mercy of God that Noah and his family and all the other living things were not destroyed.

God's remembrance of Noah moved Him to cause the water to recede. The water, which came from the earth and the rain from heaven, were stopped. God brought about the retreat of the water from the earth and the dry land appeared. The ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. Scripture does not give the exact mountain on which the ark rested. The ark rested on the mountains in the area called Ararat.² At the end of another two and half months the waters had receded and the peaks of mountains in the area could be seen.

The Earth Dried

Noah waited for another forty days. Then he opened the window of the ark and sent out a raven. The raven flew back and forth until the earth dried up. The raven is a scavenger bird, which feeds on carrion (decaying flesh of dead animals). Noah's reason for sending out the raven is quite apparent. He wanted to know how much the water outside the ark had receded. Then he sent out a dove. The dove is a more sensitive bird, which likes low lying grounds, which are habitable. Noah's choice of sending the raven first and then the dove is logically

² Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis, 185. Wenham comments that Ararat is the Hebrew term for Urartu, a kingdom north of Assyria. It was later called Armenia, which is now a part of eastern Turkey. The land of Ararat is mentioned in other places in the Old Testament: 2 Kings 19:37; Isaiah 37:38; Jeremiah 51:27. Observe the plural for "mountains," an accurate translation of the Hebrew text. It implies that the ark not necessarily rested on Mt Ararat, but on one of the other mountains. The location where the ark rested is most central. Access to the Mesopotamian plains is easy. Asia Minor is just to the west; Syria, Arabia and Africa to the south and southwest; Asia to the north and northeast; Europe through Asia Minor in the west; India through Mesopotamia in the east. Leupold comments: "Here is the scriptural centre from which the nations went abroad over the face of the earth" (312).

sensible. He sent the birds in order to ascertain the conditions of the earth. This is interesting. How is it that God did not tell him of the conditions of the earth? The most plausible answer is that what Noah could do to ascertain the conditions of the earth, it is not necessary for God to do so. It was the responsibility of Noah to do that which he could do. Moses received direct revelation from God, but it was his father in law who taught him the most efficient way of administering judicial matters (Exodus 18). God promised Joshua that he would be given the land (Joshua 1) yet he still sent spies to scout Jericho and bring back a report (Joshua 2).

We learn a very important truth. Although we are saved by grace through faith in Christ, and our salvation is certain and assured by God, who is faithful to His Word, yet we are instructed to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). What does this mean? It does not mean that we have to work or earn merits for our salvation. Far from it. It is not faith plus works, as some teach and would have us believed. Salvation is the promised gift of God to whoever believes in the Son of God Jesus Christ who fully paid the penalty of our sins on the cross. It is finished. No believer can add to it. If any believer needs to add to the finished work of Christ on the cross, then Christ's death would be in vain. What does Paul mean? Every born-again believer has the indwelling Holy Spirit. He does the work of sanctifying the believer so that he lives holy lives, enables him to have the power over sin and the world. We work out our salvation to witness the reality of this truth. Believers live holy lives because they are sons of God. Believers do not live holy lives in order to become the

sons of God. As the believers become more and more Christlike, they experience the truth of God's Word and in that way know that they are saved. Similarly, Joshua gained victories over the Canaanites because God had promised him success insofar as he obeys God.

Noah Leaves the Ark

Verses 13 and 14 record that the earth was dry. The word "dry" was used three times in these two verses. Interestingly, the word "dry" (Hebrew, *charab*) in verse 13 means "to be free from moisture." In verse 14 the verb is *yabash* which means, "to dry up of water." It is logical that the *charab* action precedes the *yabash* action. The reverse would be unusual.³

Another feature is the different dates: verse 13, the year was 601, the first month and the first day; verse 14, the year was 601, the second month and the twenty-seventh day. Compare this with the date when the Flood began, an interesting point is observed:

The flood began on the 17th day, 2nd month, and 600th year of Noah (7:11).

The flood ended on the 27th day, 2nd month, and 601st year of Noah (8:14).

The duration of the Flood was twelve months and 11 days. This is the exact period required to equate the year of twelve lunar months, 354 days, with the solar year of 365 days. In other words, the Flood lasted one solar year.⁴

³ Some criticise that verses 13 & 14 as unnecessary repetition, but the different use of the word for "dry" explains otherwise.

⁴ Hamilton, The Book of Genesis:Chapter 1-17, 305.

Noah saw that the earth was dry (v.13), but he did not leave the ark yet. God then spoke to him and directed him to take his family to leave the ark. Noah waited for God's directive to leave the ark. Observe that God spoke to Noah personally and not to the whole family—"Go forth" (v.16). God released Noah and Noah would release the family (v.16b) and the animals—"bring forth" (v.17). And Noah obeyed God and carried out God's directive (vv.18, 19). Notice that so far Noah had not said a word. Noah is a doer more than a talker.⁵

First Thing First

The first thing that Noah did after he came out of the ark was to build an altar and offer burnt offerings to God (v.20).⁶ He did not cook a meal first for himself and his family. But he worshipped God first. It was a great offering for he took of every clean animal and bird. It was a generous sacrifice. By his action he acknowledged that it was God who delivered him and his family from destruction and his faith in God. It was a thanksgiving offering to LORD. Incidentally this is the first time the word "altar" is mentioned in the Bible. Noah's burnt offering to the LORD prefigured the offering of Christ, the Lamb of God on the cross at Calvary.

The LORD God's response was that He "smelled a sweet savour" (v.21). God saw the heart of Noah and his action pleased Him. Has God a nose like us? No, for God is a spirit. The use of such expression is understood as "anthropomorphism"—the use of human

⁵ Ibid., 307.

⁶ The Hebrew word for burnt offering is *olah*. It is a reference to whole burnt offerings going up in smoke to God.

experiences to describe God. And God said in His heart that He would not again curse the ground or destroy it as He had done (v.21b).

Did God make a mistake in destroying the earth, hoping that man would change, but man has not? The conjunction “for” in the clause “for the imagination of man’s heart is evil,” is not understood as causal, “for, because.” If it were taken this way, then God would never again destroy or punish man, because from the start man is continually evil. Rather the conjunction must be understood as emphatic: “*even though* the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” The heart of man is evil from his childhood. Herein lies the depravity of man.⁷ God who is holy and hates sin will punish and condemn man for his sins. But in spite of man’s depravity, this verse reiterates God’s mercy. Thus God does not deal with man according to his iniquities. God promised not to destroy all life in the manner He had done. There will not be another global catastrophe like it. This at least took away the dread fear of another devastating calamity of the same kind.

God, then promised that as long as the earth, the physical world remains, “seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night” will continue to be the same. However, the phrase “while the earth remains” or as long as the earth remains, which implies that the earth is not going to continue forever. God promised that the seasonal patterns would not be affected by man’s conduct for good or evil.

These seasonal patterns meet the needs of man completely. Leupold remarks:

“The basic guarantee covers the regular alternation of “seedtime and harvest . . . Then are mentioned those two elements which, primarily contribute to the proper maturing of the grain, “cold and heat.” These two, by their regular alternation, delightfully relieve one another and make life more bearable. Then are mentioned those two periods in which cold and heat specifically reign, namely, “summer and winter.” Over against these seasons again stand those smaller divisions of time, “day and night,” which in the very nature of man’s constitution are essential to his well-being. So, then, everything between the wide limits of food and sleep and all that makes both possible is fixed by unalterable divine ordinance.”⁸

God has given His promise. Once again God demonstrated His unmerited grace towards man. Man actually deserves nothing from God but punishment and death. However, the final judgement will be something entirely different. At that time it will bring this world and its history to an end.

⁷ Proof of the original sin nature in man.

⁸ Leupold, Genesis, vol. 1, 324-325.

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DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Read Genesis 8:1-5;
Psalm 36:1-12.

TUESDAY: Read Genesis 8:6-12;
James 1:2-8.

WEDNESDAY: Read Genesis 8:13-14;
Psalm 34:1-22.

THURSDAY: Read Genesis 8:15-19;
2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

FRIDAY: Read Genesis 8:20-22; 2
Peter 3:3-18.

Discussion Questions

1. Did God for a moment forget Noah and every living thing in the ark? What do you think is the meaning of the phrase, "And God remembered Noah . . ."?

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2. What do we learn about God's concern for the passengers in the ark (vv.1-5)?

3. What can we learn from Noah's initiative by sending the raven and dove out of the ark?

4. What exemplary characteristics does Noah show in the situation, which he was facing?

5. How long were Noah and his family in the ark (7:11; 8:14,15)? Put yourself in their place and describe how you would feel from the time

God shut the door until he said, "Go forth of the ark."

6. What was the first thing that Noah did when he came out of the ark? What lesson does Noah teach us?

7. How long did Noah take to make those offerings to the LORD? What do you think it meant to Noah?

8. What was the LORD'S response to Noah's first action when he came out of the ark?

9. What does God still say of human beings?

10. What was mentioned for the first time concerning the weather?
