

The Flood

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[0 : 0 0] Today's scripture passages are found in Genesis 6, 7, 8, and 9. These verses are found in your bulletin.

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.

So the Lord said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. 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. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark and cover it inside and out with pitch. For behold, I will bring out a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh, in which is the breath of life under heaven.

[1 : 0 4] Everything that is on the earth shall die. 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.

In the 600th year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the 17th day of the month, on that day, all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened, and rain fell upon the earth 40 days and 40 nights.

On the very same day, Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark.

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.

They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh, in which there was the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him, and the Lord shut him in.

[2 : 2 4] The flood continued 40 days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and arose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters.

And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. 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. And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

In the 601st 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.

In the second month, on the 27th day of the month, the earth had dried out. Then God said to Noah, Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you.

[3 : 42] 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.

So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife, and his sons' wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

Then God said to Noah, and to his sons with him, I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.

And God said, This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations. I've set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh. And the water shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

[4 : 54] When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it, and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.

God said to Noah, This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth. Good morning.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Eric Scott. I'm the youth guy here at Watermark Church. This past week, we had a very special celebration. It was Tobin's birthday.

And we as a staff decided to do a skit to celebrate, not make fun of, celebrate Tobin on his birthday. And for some reason, I can't think of why they chose me to play Tobin in this skit.

And I had to dress up like Tobin. I think I wore this exact outfit, actually. And I had to say a number of lines that Tobin always says.

[6 : 04] One of those lines that I've been thinking a lot about this week is many Sundays he'll get up here and he'll say, Today's passage is possibly the hardest passage in the Bible to preach on.

And the first couple times you hear him say that, you're like, Okay, this one must be a really tough one. And then you hear him say it like five times or eight times, and you're like, Where is the actual hardest passage to preach on?

But as I thought about that line this week, I realized the secret. The secret is, whatever passage you have to preach on this week automatically is the hardest passage in the Bible to preach on.

So today we're going to be looking at the flood. The past couple weeks we've been going through the book of Genesis. Tobin started us off two weeks ago looking at creation. And he said, If you look at the Bible's story of creation, it's different than every other ancient creation narrative.

In all of the other ones, there's creation out of chaos, out of a conflict, out of a lack. But in the Bible, you see God creating out of an overflow of his goodness.

[7 : 14] And because of this, he makes the creation good. He creates man in his own image and gives him this worth that you don't find in any other creation narrative.

He creates man and woman and makes them for community. He places them in a garden together and they're naked and unashamed, the Bible tells us. And Tobin pointed out that that is not just a physical thing, but also an emotional thing where they were fully known by each other.

They had no fears, nothing to hide from each other. And last week, we had Michael Ramston come in and he talked about the fall. Adam and Eve, they had one command from God not to eat the fruit from one tree.

They believed a lie that that fruit would make them just like God. They ate the fruit. sin entered the world. And with that, alienation came in. And Michael went through this comprehensive list of the types of alienation that entered the world with sin.

There was internal, psychological alienation where we are not at peace with ourselves anymore. There's spiritual alienation where we're separated and cut off from God. There's social alienation where we are cut off from fully being able to interact with one another.

[8 : 28] There's ecological alienation where the world around us is a broken place and it is breaking down and we have global warming. There's vocational alienation where the jobs that we were created to do don't satisfy us and don't function like they were created to.

And then there's physical degradation where our bodies break down and eventually we die physically. And Michael said that this picture of death that enters the world at sin is the most comprehensive view of death that you can ever find.

But that despite humanity's rebellion against God, despite the fact that we had failed so terribly, despite the fact that we had brought this death on ourselves, God did not simply hit a reset button on creation to start over.

He decided that he was going to rescue this creation. And so today we're going to start looking at the story as it moves forward. If you follow the story, the first two chapters of the Bible, Genesis chapter 1 and 2, tell of creation.

Genesis 3 is Adam and Eve eating the fruit. In the next chapter, Genesis 4, Adam and Eve have two sons, Cain and Abel. And Cain murders Abel in cold blood because God accepted Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's and Cain was angry about it.

[9 : 48] And then you get to Genesis chapter 6 where it says, the thoughts and intentions of man's hearts were only evil continuously.

It's a sort of big, rapid jump. Eat a fruit, three chapters later, the thoughts and intentions of man's heart are only evil continuously.

I think, for me at least, when I look at that, it's like, what happened here? Why did this escalate so quickly? But the thing is that it's actually a very logical progression.

In the garden, God created Adam and Eve to have a relationship with him. He created himself as the center of their lives. And then, by eating the fruit, by disobeying him, they separated themselves from him and cut themselves off from this life.

Moving forward, humanity is operating in the sense of separation, in the status of separation from God and spiritual deadness. And that, as the human actions get worse, it's not that humanity's condition is actually becoming worse and worse and worse, it's just that they're showing more and more symptoms of their state that's already inside themselves.

[11 : 10] The fact is, ever since Adam and Eve eat the fruit, humanity is dead, separated from God, alienated. And the question's not how did it escalate so quickly in just three chapters and a few generations to, from eating a fruit to being only evil continually.

The question is, how much grace did God have to show to restrain it from just happening instantly like that? But we get to Genesis chapter 6. The thoughts and intentions of man's hearts are only evil continuously.

It's a great, happy way to start out this passage, right? And we see God looking in at this situation and he says something has to be done about this. This cannot endure.

I'm going to wipe out everything on the earth. And he decides to send a flood, to destroy everything, but out of this creation he's going to save one man and his family.

He's going to save a man named Noah. He's going to save a couple of every type of animal out there so that they can repopulate the earth after this destruction is complete.

[12 : 25] Now as a kid I was always sort of taught that God saved Noah because Noah was a good guy. But if you look at the Bible that's not actually what it tells us. It tells us that Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

Noah received grace. Noah, just like everyone else in his day, was a sinner. Noah, just like everyone else in his day, deserved death for his sin.

And the one thing that saved Noah from being destroyed in this flood with the rest of creation was grace. And so I think, again, I have a question that I ask when I look at this story.

why didn't God save more people? He sends a flood on the earth, he saves eight people. Why not more? But I think that's the wrong question.

I think the question is why would he save any at all? Why would he choose to show grace? Because it was only by grace alone and not by their merit that they are chosen to be saved in this situation.

[13 : 27] So God comes to Noah, he says, Noah, I want you to build an ark. He says, go for wood, here are the dimensions that you have to build, build it, fill it with animals, and I'm going to send a flood, I'm just going to wipe everything out, you're going to be on there, you're good to go.

And as God comes to Noah, Noah obeys. We see that repeatedly in this passage. God tells Noah to do something, Noah obeys. Noah can't see the full picture, but every step of the way, as God tells him what to do next, he does it.

And every step of the way, as Noah obeys, God shows himself to be faithful. God takes care of Noah, God protects Noah and his family.

And I think, just as a side note, Noah can be a great example to us in this. If you look at the story, God comes to Noah, gives him a command to do something which had never been done before, in preparation for an event that had never happened before.

If you look for any human logical explanation for why Noah should have done this, there was none. The Bible tells us that before Noah's time, it had never rained before on the earth.

[14 : 38] Noah lived in a dry area. And God says, build a big boat. And Noah's like, okay. He starts building.

There had never, if Noah looked for a logical reason to build this boat, to obey God, he never would have found one because it didn't exist because the things that God was saying were going to happen had never happened before.

And yet, Noah trusted God's goodness. Noah trusted God's faithfulness. Noah obeyed. Noah built the boat. And God rescued him. And I think a lot of times in our lives, we feel God calling us to do something.

And we're like, I need to find a logical reason why I should obey God. But the thing is, he's God. And sometimes, there's no logical, reasonable explanation for why we should do things other than that God said to do it.

And everyone else will look at us and say like, that's weird, what's he doing? But if God tells us to do it, then God will be faithful to protect us and keep us safe and take care of us through that.

[15 : 42] And so, Noah obeys. Noah builds the ark. God protects him and his family. Noah loads the animals onto the ark.

They get everything ready. And then, the doors of the ark close and the rains come. And if you look at the story of the flood, it's actually really interesting. In many ways, it's an undoing and redoing of creation.

If you look at the story of creation in Genesis chapter 1, you have, it starts out with just, there's darkness over the face of everything and there's water everywhere and the spirit's hovering over the water. And then, the days of creation come and God makes light and then God separates the water below from the water above and he brings chaos, he shapes chaos into order.

He makes land, he makes plants and trees, he makes the sun, moon, and stars, he makes birds and fish and animals on the ground, he makes man in his own image. And as you look at the story of the flood, basically all of this happens backwards.

birds. So, day one, the light was created. In the flood, the clouds come in and cover up the light and darkness is here once again. Day two of creation, you've got the waters below on the earth separated from the waters above, but in the flood, the rains come and these waters are once again combined.

[17 : 01] Day three of creation, you've got the land coming up out of the water, but as the flood comes, it comes up and it covers up all of the land. Day four of creation, the sun, moon, and stars are created and again, they're covered by the clouds so that they can't be seen temporarily.

Day five of creation, the fish are created, they can sort of survive the flood, I guess, but the birds, the birds are wiped out. And then day six of creation, the animals that go around on the ground and man are created and again, they are wiped out by the flood so that by the end of the 40 days, we're back to the state where water is over the face of everything.

We're back to the very beginning of the creation story where there's just darkness and water. And it's at this point that God begins to restore this work of creation.

And interestingly, he doesn't, like Michael said last week, he doesn't just hit a reset button, he saves a remnant from the original creation to come back and repopulate this new creation. creation.

But as we look at the story, the clouds part and light comes in again in day one. The waters below and the waters above separate as the rain stops, mirroring day two of creation.

[18 : 19] As time goes by, the waters on the earth lower and the land once again comes out and trees and plants begin to grow, mirroring day three of creation. The sun, moon, and stars, they'd always been there, but they become visible again, mirroring day four of creation.

The first animal that Noah sends out of the boat is a raven, a bird, which was created on day five of creation. And the second animal he sends out, the story tells us, is a dove.

And then finally, the ark lands and they unload and all of the animals created on day six leave the ark. And the parallels don't end there.

after the creation narrative, God tells man in Genesis 1 that he has been created in God's image. And in Genesis chapter 9, after the people get off the ark, God reminds them of the fact that they have been created in his image.

In Genesis chapter 1, God gives man rule over the earth. In Genesis chapter 9, God again tells them, you are in charge of these animals. In Genesis, the creation narrative, God gives this command to be fruitful and multiply and build the earth.

[19 : 32] And in Genesis 9, this command is repeated. The parallels are amazing. And there's one more parallel that's there as a reminder of the effects of sin that remain after the flood.

Because in the creation story, we see Adam and Eve after the creation has been completed. They're in this garden. Things are good and they're naked and they're unashamed. And they're together.

And this nakedness is a sign of trust, of obedience, of faith in God, a perfect community. But with Noah, after the ark lands, he goes and he plants a garden of his own.

He plants a vineyard. Out of this vineyard, he makes some wine. He drinks the wine and gets drunk. And he lays naked in the tent in his garden.

But unlike Adam and Eve, whose nakedness in the garden was a picture of faith and obedience and trust, Noah's nakedness in the garden is a sign of sin and shame that remains from human rebellion against God.

[20 : 41] His son walks in and sees him and Noah ends up cursing his own son because of this. So we can see that God takes the creation that had been there.

He wipes it out. He brings back man and the animals. But the effects of sin that God had been working to wipe out are not fully wiped out in this creation.

Although he had wiped out the sin around Noah's family, he had not wiped out the sin within Noah and his family. And so as I looked at this story this week and I thought, how does this make a difference in my life?

I found a few different ways. The first way is that all of my community must be centered around God. If you look at Genesis chapter 1, God creates man and woman and as he creates them he puts himself at the center of their community.

He creates Adam out of the dust and the first thing that Adam sees when he comes to life is God. And he knows himself as created in God's image in this relationship with God.

[21 : 46] And when God decides to make a woman he doesn't just say oh, here's a woman Adam. He puts Adam to sleep, takes Adam's rib and makes a woman and the first thing that the woman sees when she comes to life is God because her boy is asleep.

And she sees God and she understands herself in this relationship with God and it's only after she's established the fact that she is in this relationship with God first and foremost that God introduces Adam and Eve to each other.

And as they go through life together they understand that although this is good although they are meant to be together God is ultimately the one at the center of it. And with the fall that understanding is lost.

At the fall human community in many ways replaces God in our lives. So that when you look at Genesis chapter 6 as God's explaining why he's sending the flood it talks about how the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive.

Many people think that this means that the guys who believed in God were going and marrying any girl regardless of whether she believed in God or cared about God or whatever and they were putting their desire to be loved and their desire to be with someone in a relationship before their desire to be in a relationship with God.

[23 : 10] And this community that God created for good to point us back towards him instead becomes an idol that replaces him in these people's lives and that drives them away from God.

And this is something that I see in my life all the time. Like I love love being around people. Like I think I have a problem because I just like I get energized by being around people I enjoy being around people and when I'm by myself for too long I'm just like I want to scream because I want to be around people.

And I think in many ways this is a good thing right? This is an echo of that need for community that God created within us. But in many ways this is also a product of my fallen state because when I reach this point I just want people around me so badly that I reach out and I cling to people and rather than seeing them as gifts from God to help point me back to them I see them as tools to help fulfill my desire to be loved.

Rather than using them to help me worship God I use them as idols that point me away from God. And in these times rather than engaging in true gospel community I look for people who I think will make me feel good.

I look for people who I can be comfortable around. And rather than using community for worship it drives me away from God. Rather than having God at the center of my community I put myself at the center of my community.

[24 : 40] And everyone there is there for me. At least in my mind. And this story reminds me that God has to be at the center of my community. In this story when man puts himself at the center of his community rather than God God wipes him out and after the flood he again places himself at the center of human community by making a covenant with man.

The first thing off the boat he makes a covenant reestablishing himself as the center of our community. And so in my life I need to put God at the center of all my community.

The second thing that I saw from the story of the flood that I think really impacts my life is that I need to remember this one this one's gonna like make us cringe a little bit I think when we hear it.

but remember God's role as judge in the earth. See I think we don't like to think about God in his role as a judge because it's uncomfortable it's not fun it's not safe.

And I think there are two main reasons why we don't like this. First off we want God to exist to make us happy. At least I do in my life. In my life I am the person that I spend the most time with.

[26 : 02] Everything that I do I think back to how will this impact me? When I look around at the world I think I want to be happy. I'm aware of how everything else in life impacts me.

And I want God to be just as concerned about making me happy as I am. And I think that's probably a pretty universal thing. Am I the only one? I hear giggles so I think I'm not the only one.

I think they're nervous giggles. I don't want to confess that that's actually me too. And so I want God to exist to make me happy. And if God is judge and if God's judgment can mean that he sends a flood that wipes people out that seems contrary to their happiness.

Because part of happiness would seem to be being alive to enjoy that happiness. And so the fact that God is judge goes against my desire here for God to exist to make me happy.

We think God's job is to give us good grades in school help us get the right job get the right promotion find the right spouse have the right kids have a great house and put us in a position where we can get everything else we need in life on our own.

[27 : 20] I think that a lot of times is the definition of happy that we assign God to give us. But the thing is if you look at the Bible that's not God's role.

That's not why God exists. It's actually not that God exists to make us happy but that we exist for God's sake. Colossians chapter 1 verse 16 says Now we fall into that list under visible things and things on earth.

So we're included in that list and it says that we have been created by God for God. We exist for God not Him existing for us. If we continue looking at the Bible Psalm 46:10 says Be still and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth. The purpose of the earth existing is not for Eric Scott to be happy and comfortable.

The purpose of the earth existing is for God to be glorified. And again in Ephesians 2 when it's talking in this wonderful passage about God's work of saving us when we were rebels and aliens against Him.

[28 : 51] It says that God's work of saving us was not so that He could show how wonderful and amazing we are but so that in the coming ages He might make known the riches of His mercy in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

He saves us so He can show off how great and amazing He is. we exist for the glory of God which means that God has the right to do with us what He pleases and if that includes judging us when we deserve it then He has the right to do that according to the Bible.

Now the second reason that we don't like the idea of God being a judge is that we don't actually think we're that bad. we look around ourselves and think Hitler he was a bad guy I'm not him I deserve another chance Stalin he was a bad guy I'm not that bad I haven't killed that many people yet I deserve another chance and as long as we look around ourselves at broken humanity we can always find someone worse than us to compare ourselves against so that we can say I think I deserve another chance and we think of God as operating on this same scale like we're a little better than someone else maybe he's a little better than us but that doesn't give him the right to judge us right?

The problem is that's not how the scale works it's not that Hitler is here and we're here and God is here the problem is that God is totally different than us that he is perfect he is good and we are not that we as his creation owe him our allegiance and we instead have been rebels and traitors and turned against him and as a result of this it's not that we deserve to just be looked down on a little and be like sorry you're not as good as me but we deserve death and so as we look at our state we see that God has the right to judge us because we exist for his sake that we deserve to be judged because we're sinful and we are not up to his standard and that just doesn't make any good news does it?

If we look at this problem of God being judged if we put ourselves in the story of the flood basically we see that we're drowning with everyone else and we deserve to be drowning with everyone else which at least in my book is not good news but there is good news in this story see the flood was an act of love the flood was an act of love because God's greatest concern among us is setting his people apart for himself because he knows that the path to true life lies in a relationship with himself and that sin is a barrier to that relationship so in the flood when God acts to wipe out sin he's tearing down the barriers that keep Noah and his family from being able to experience this perfect relationship with him that God cares so much about his people being able to have this right relationship with himself that he would sacrifice everything including the rest of creation in order to accomplish it and tear down the barriers that keep it from happening and as we look at the story of the Bible there is one other place where we see the great extent to which God will go in order to tear down every barrier that keeps his people away from himself there's one other story in the Bible that shows the great extent to which God hates sin the great extent to which God wants this sin torn away from creating a barrier between us and him and unlike the flood this other one event is absolutely successful in its work and that one other event that shows how great

[33 : 15] God's love is for us how much he desires to have this barrier of sin taken away from our relationship with him is the death of his son on the cross the cross is how God's role as judge can be good news to us because although we deserve his judgment although he has the right to judge us he steps in and he takes our place and takes his full wrath upon himself so that we don't have to bear it the cross is the place where God's justice as one who is perfect and cannot be in the presence of sin and God's love as the one who wants to rescue the sinners who have turned against him come together and where once for all sin is defeated and destroyed and we who stand deserving of judgment can be set free without God having to give up his justice and I think as long as we try and downplay the role of God as judge we're going to create a lot of problems we're going to downplay the severity of our sin because if God's not actually going to judge it then I can do whatever

I want we're going to downplay the importance of salvation because if Christianity is a life system that works for me and Buddhism works for someone else and atheism works for someone else then they found what works for them no problem but if there is a God who is judge then it's not just about finding what works for you it's about finding truth because the truth is if God exists as a judge like the Bible says that he does there's going to come a day of judgment and the only hope for us just like the only hope for Noah of being saved is grace and that grace is found through the cross and so if it is true that God is a judge as the Bible says that he is we must emphasize the importance of salvation in our lives and the lives of those around us because Christ's work on the cross is the only way to escape this judgment if we downplay God's role as judge we downplay God's love for us because if there's no judgment coming on us what's the point of the cross what's God showing us in the cross the thing that makes the cross so powerful is the fact that God is a righteous judge that God does have wrath coming against us for our sin and that he stepped in and he took our place that the judgment that we deserve fell on him instead of us if we downplay

God's role as judge we're going to rob others from the opportunity to hear about this great salvation because we're not going to be inspired to tell them about it and so understanding that God is judge is hugely important in the story of the flood and the one other way that the story of the flood should impact my life is to give me hope because as we look at the Bible's story of the flood and its effects God works this great catastrophe that wipes sinful humanity off the face of the planet but it does not ultimately succeed the sin around Noah's family is wiped out but the sin within Noah's family remains and it carries through to today so that each of us is sinful each of us rebels against God each of us lives in this broken world each of us feels the effects of this broken world every day the Bible promises us that a day is coming when God's going to step in and he's going to make all things new that a day is coming when there will be a new heavens and a new earth and that God's people will live with him forever in this new earth and that it will be free from sin that what was accomplished in part in the flood will one day be accomplished in full that we can live in this place of perfect joy perfect peace perfect happiness with God forever and that the accomplishment of this is made possible only through the cross and the death of his son so let's pray father we thank you for the fact that you love your people we thank you for the fact that you are committed to do anything to tear down the barriers that keep us from you we thank you for the cross for you stepping in and bearing the judgment that we deserve for dying in our place for taking the punishment for our sin for defeating its power once and for all we pray that as we go throughout this week that this reminder of your power of your justice and of your love will empower us to love our neighbors to share your good news with them and to walk in a way that is obedient to you and to live with hope of the day when you will step in and once for all make all things new and that we will be able to live with you forever on this new earth in Jesus name amen you