

TWO THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE FLOOD

6⁹This is the record of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, one who was blameless in his day; Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God looked upon the earth, and, indeed, it was corrupt; for all mankind had corrupted their way upon the earth.

¹³Then God said to Noah, I have determined to bring all mankind to an end, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; surely, I will destroy them together with the earth. ¹⁴Therefore make an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵ This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be four hundred and fifty feet long, seventy five feet wide and forty five feet high. ¹⁶Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within eighteen inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. ¹⁷I will most certainly bring the floodwaters upon the earth to destroy all mortal life from under heaven—every creature which has the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall perish. ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you, and your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹And you shall bring into the ark two of every kind of living creature, male and female, in order to keep them alive with you. ²⁰Two of every kind of bird, and two of every kind of livestock, and two of every kind of creature which creeps upon the ground shall come to you to be kept alive. ²¹Take every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; it shall be provision for you and for the animals. ²²Noah did this; indeed, everything God commanded him, he did. (Gen. 6:9-22)

Introduction

At a New Year's Eve service, a pastor in Baltimore, MD, encouraged his congregation to give their problems to the LORD and leave them with Him. To impress this upon them, he asked them to write their problems on slips of paper. He then had them place these slips of paper into a metal pot and before their eyes he struck a match and set the slips of paper on fire. The congregation watched them burn and turn into ashes in the pot. After the service, the pastor washed the ashes down the drain and set the pot aside to be cleaned at a later time.

The next day he received a call from a woman of the congregation. She had a question, Why did the pastor want to burn the promises of God? As it turned out, the woman had arrived late for the service and she had misunderstood the pastor's explanation of what he was doing. She did not hear him say "Problems," she had understood him to say "Promises." Consequently, she had written a *promise* of God on her slip of paper. The pastor straightened out her confusion, and assured her that God's promises are secure and nothing can destroy them, neither fire nor water.

Later that day, as the pastor was cleaning out the metal pot, he found a single slip of paper stuck to the bottom. He peeled it off and discovered that it was the promise

written by the lady who had come late to the worship service. The slip of paper was partially burned, but the promise could be clearly read. Indeed, neither fire nor water had been able to destroy the promise of God. (*Our Daily Bread*, 12/31/92)

What we learn from the biblical account of the Flood is that the LORD God keeps all of His promises, the promise of judgment as well as the promise of salvation. Commenting on the Flood, the apostle Peter reminds us of this lesson: Despite the temptation to become either careless or anxious, we must remember that the LORD is faithful to keep His Word.

I. Remember that the LORD will Fulfill His Promise to Judge the World

The LORD promised (warned) Noah—and through Noah He warned the world—that He was going to bring a devastating judgment upon mankind:

Then God said to Noah, "I have determined to bring all mankind to an end, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; surely, I will destroy them together with the earth." (Gen.6:13)

"I will most certainly bring the floodwaters upon the earth to destroy all mortal life from under heaven—every creature that has the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall perish." (Gen. 6:17)

"... after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and I will wipe out from off the surface of the earth every living thing that I have made." (Gen. 7:4)

Then, in His appointed time, the LORD proceeded to fulfill His promise:

And it happened that after the seven days the floodwaters came upon the earth. (Gen. 7:10)

The LORD did exactly what He said He would do; He brought a devastating judgment upon all of mankind:

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. (Gen. 7:11)

Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days; and the water increased, ... (Gen. 7:17a)

And the waters rose and increased greatly upon the earth ... (Gen. 7:18a)

And the waters rose more and more upon the earth, so that all the high hills everywhere ... were covered. ²⁰The waters rose and covered the hills to a depth

of more than twenty feet. ²¹Every living thing that moved on the earth perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that creep upon the earth, and all mankind. ²²Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. ²³Every living thing on the surface of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that crawl along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth ...²⁴The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days. (Gen. 7:19-23a, 24)

Sometimes we are tempted to become careless and negligent concerning the LORD's promise (warning) of the coming Judgment Day; the apostle Peter reminds us that we must take serious that divine promise.

At the time of Peter's epistle, perhaps some 30-35 years had elapsed since our Lord's ascension into heaven and the promise of His return. Now scoffers began to make their presence felt within the church. They are described as scoffers who are *"expressing their scoffing"* (2 Pet. 3:3.) As the years have passed by they have become emboldened to express their unbelief in the promise that our Lord Jesus will return in glory and judgment. Now they are vocally raising the question, *"Where is the fulfillment of the promise that he will come?"* (3:4) They are also described as *"living for their own evil desires"* (vs. 3.) The "delay" in Christ's return has emboldened them to live for their lusts, they have convinced themselves that there will not be a day of just retribution.

Peter provides for us an outline of their argument. He quotes them as saying, *"From the time the fathers fell asleep [in death] everything goes on as it has since the beginning of the creation"* (vs. 4.) Their contention is that thirty to thirty-five years have passed since His ascension, and nothing has happened; if Christ were coming back He would have done so by now. Their mistake was the fact that they sought to hold God to a humanly conceived timetable. Note that in His parable found in Matthew 25:19, Jesus, with reference to His own return, says of the lord of the household, *"Now after a long time the lord of those servants returns, and settles accounts with them."*

These scoffers about whom Peter speaks, argued, from the day the fathers died, all things have continued as they were, (i.e.; since the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, nothing has happened.) But what about the mighty acts of God in the days of Moses and Joshua? What about the mighty acts of God surrounding the birth, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus?

They went so far as to contend that all things have continued as they were from the beginning of the creation! They are maintaining that since the time God created the world there has been a consistent and unbroken uniformity; the earth has continued the same and undergone no change since its inception.

At this point Peter refutes their argument by asserting: there is something they **intentionally** forget, the cataclysmic flood in the days of Noah. Peter asserts that

the Flood was of such tremendous and cataclysmic proportions that it must be described as bringing to an end the world that existed at that time.

Referring to the account of creation, Peter reminds the church, *“long ago there were heavens and an earth formed out of the water and in the midst of the water by the word of God”* (vs. 5.) When God first created the earth, its surface was covered with water: *“And the earth was formless and empty; and darkness was upon the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the surface of the waters”* (Gen. 1:2.)

On Day Two of the creation week, *“God made the expanse, and divided the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse”* (Gen. 1:6-7.) As previously noted in the lesson on Creation, H. Ross explains, “God’s ‘separation’ of the water accurately describes the formation of the troposphere, the atmospheric layer just above the ocean where clouds form and humidity resides, as distinct from the stratosphere, mesosphere, and ionosphere lying above (*The Genesis Question*, p.34) On Day Three of the creation week God caused the lower body of water to gather together to form a vast sea, receding to its appointed location and thereby causing a great land mass of earth to appear.

Now Peter goes on to say, *“By those same waters the world of that time was destroyed, being deluged with water”* (vs. 6), he is, of course, referring to the Great Flood. Peter goes on to assert, *“the present heavens and earth are being preserved for fire”* (vs. 7.) Whenever we are tempted to become careless and negligent concerning the LORD’s promise (warning) of the coming Judgment Day, let us remember the Genesis Flood, bearing in mind that the Flood itself was a type of the final Day of Judgment that is yet to come.

II. Remember that the LORD will Fulfill his Promise to Save His People

The LORD promised Noah that He would be faithful to save His covenant people: *“I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you, and your sons, and your wife, and your sons’ wives with you”* (Gen. 6:18.)

Then, in faithfulness to His promise, the LORD brought His people safely through the judgment of the Flood:

For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, but as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, but the ark floated on the surface of the water. (Gen. 7:17-18)

Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that crawl along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. (Gen. 7:23)

The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days. But God remembered Noah ... (Gen. 7:24-8:1a)

He brought them safely into a new creation. Note that the language of Genesis 8 corresponds to Genesis 1, which is describing the original creation. Genesis 8:1 states that God *"made a wind (רוּחַ) to pass over the earth, and the waters receded;"* in Genesis 1:2 we read, *"the Spirit (רוּחַ) of God moved upon the surface of the waters,"* (note: the Hebrew word, רוּחַ, has both the meaning "wind" and "Spirit.") Genesis 8:4 tells us, *"the ark rested in the seventh month;"* in Genesis 2:2 we are told that God *"rested on the seventh day."* Genesis 8:4 also informs us that the dry land re-appeared out of the water; while from Genesis 1:9 we learn that God commanded the waters to be gathered together, and the dry land appeared. According to Genesis 8:15, God sent Noah and the animals out of the ark with the commandment to be fruitful and multiply; Genesis 1:22,28 states that God commanded the animals and man to be fruitful and multiply.

Sometimes we are tempted to become anxious and wonder if the LORD will fulfill His promise to bring us safely into His new creation. The Apostle Peter assures us that we may rest in the LORD's divine promise. Peter assures us that the LORD *"is not negligent"* (vs. 9.) God's very character precludes any negligence on His part: *"God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he spoken, and will he not act? Or has he promised, and will he not fulfill it?"* (Num. 23:19.)

In his first epistle Peter speaks of *"a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time"* (1 Pet. 1:5.) Peter assures us, as an apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the day of the LORD will come (2 Pet. 3:10), at which time there shall appear *"new heavens and a new earth, the home of righteousness"* (2 Pet. 3:13.) Whenever we are tempted to become anxious and wonder if the LORD will be faithful to bring us safely through the last Judgment and into His new creation, let us remember his faithfulness to Noah at the time of the Genesis Flood.

Conclusion

As that Baltimore pastor discovered, God's promises are secure and nothing can destroy them, neither water nor fire. When we are tempted to become either careless or anxious, let us remember that the LORD is faithful to fulfill all His promises. As Hebrews 13:8 informs us, *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever."*