

THE DOCTRINE OF THE FLOOD

The biblical account of a great flood that God brought upon the earth in the days of Noah is an important doctrine of the church. Like most other Christian doctrines it has to be accepted by faith in the Word of God. It is generally considered a myth by the non believing world and scoffed at by even many bible scholars. And, humanly speaking' there are many aspects of the record that challenge logic. But God does not have to explain His actions in dealings with us that do not seem logical. As He says in Isaiah 55:8 and 9 we are incapable of understanding every aspect of his ways.

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

The flood, and everything pertaining to it, is found in Genesis chapters six through nine. Chapter six gives the reason for God's judgment with a flood; that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it says it grieved the Lord that he had made man on the earth. And the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it grieves me that I have made them." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. God shows grace unto Noah and his family and directs him to build an ark for the saving of them and a remnant of the animal world. Noah was obedient and the ark was completed.

In Chapter seven God gives Noah the instructions for gathering the animals and his family and getting them into the ark. When this is finished the rains came and it rained for forty days and forty nights and the water rose to where even the mountains were covered. Verses 21 through 24 describes the results.

And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

Chapter eight begins with God causing a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters receded. The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. After forty days Noah opened the window of the ark and sent forth a dove but it found no dry ground to light on. After seven more days Noah sent the dove again and this time it returned with an olive leaf. By this Noah knew that that the waters had receded below vegetation. Verses 15 to the end of the chapter gives us what happened next.

And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, [both] of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark. And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Chapter nine is God's blessing and instruction to Noah and the making of a new covenant.

Verse 1

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

The rainbow covenant that God would never destroy all flesh with a flood again. Verse 8 through 15

And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

To add to the validity of this account in Genesis other writers of both the Old Testament and the New Testament speak of it as a fact.

Isaiah 54: 8-10

In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee

Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

1st Peter:18-20

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

2nd Peter 2:4-5

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.

So, rather than trying to explain all the atmospheric, geologic, and animal husbandry question that could be asked about the flood and the ark we simply accept it as another one of God's wonders like those we see all around us, but can't explain.