



## The Essentials Series

Week 2 – Noah & The Flood Gen 6-9

St. George's Episcopal Church

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### Toledot structure

- The basis for the internal structure of Genesis as a unitive whole.
- These key phrases divide Genesis into ten parts or books.
- Modern Bibles are divided into chapters, which as one scholar put it, “were decided upon at night while riding on a horse.” Our modern chapters remove us from the internal organization of the book as a whole (e.g., the prologue of creation ends at 2:3 instead of, what should have been, 1:34).
- Each book/toledot represents a new initiative of divine working in salvation, narrowing the lens of the story to focus on the people and events that it wants us to know about. Other peoples or branches of various genealogies are there on the periphery, but not important to the story's focus (e.g. Cain's wife).
- Often the content or story is not about the titular head (e.g. the account of Terah is actually all about Abraham)

Intro/Prologue – Cosmic Creation (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

Book 1: The account of the generations of the heavens and the earth (Gen 2:4 – 4:26)

Book 2: The account of Adam (5:1-6:8)

Book 3: The account of Noah (6:9-9:29). Noah is halfway between Adam and Abram.

### Setting of Noah

- Introduce Noah and his family: Noah is righteous in God's eyes. What does the story tell us about Noah, that is, why is he righteous?
  - Noah technically does nothing to merit being righteous, only that God has deemed him righteous in His sight. This is an example of the imputed righteousness of Christ through faith (cf. Romans 3:21ff; 4:1-25)
  - It is Noah's faith that produces obedience (cf. Romans 1:5); he trusts God, therefore he does what God tells him to, namely, build an ark.
  - Repetition of the phrase, “Noah did all that the Lord commanded him to do”, contrasts with Adam who did not do all that the Lord commanded.
  - Evil and sin will still persist after Noah, so he is not the final ‘seed’ promised, but he does demonstrate a faithfulness Adam did not. Jesus is the truly faithful human, who does all that God commands.
- Contrast with the wickedness and evil of humanity.
- What does this story tell us about God and His view of human evil?

### The Flood and the Ark

- What is the intent of the flood?
  - Judgment; purging of the Serpent's seed; preservation of the righteous seed of the woman through Noah's line and God's creation in microcosm with it.
  - Foreshadow of the great Final Judgment (see Rev. 19-21)
  - Global vs. local – Genesis itself indicates global, hard to verify. Most ancient cultures the world over have a flood story though!
  - Compare with other ANE flood stories where overpopulation is the god's motive for the flood; in Genesis it is a divine ethical dilemma, where a holy and good God is pained by the evil in his world, and justly judges it but also graciously preserves for himself a faithful remnant to inherit his new creation (see below).
- What is the ark?
  - A giant floating cargo box, yes. But more.

- Where do its plans/designs come from? God. This foreshadows the measuring of the Temple (see Ezekiel) and echoes the creation in ch 1. God sets the bounds and assigns the function
- The only other time the Hebrew word for 'ark' is found in the OT is in Exodus when Moses is put in the basket.
- The ark itself is a foreshadow of Christ, the True Vessel who brings the elect through the judgment and into new creation. Thus when Paul speaks of being 'in Christ' we are in our true ark of salvation.

### **The Covenant**

- First time the word 'covenant' is used in the Bible (Hebrew: *berit*), 6:18. Clearly God has made covenants before, as in Eden, but this is the first time the term is specifically used.
  - Covenant is a relationship based on promises. Sometimes they are conditional (if I do 'x', you do 'y') sometimes unconditional (I will do 'x'.)
  - Covenants require consummation (sealing) and succession (passing on).
  - With each toledot Genesis becomes more focused on the proper passing and preservation of the promised Seed (3:15), and the sealing of blood that ratifies the covenant.
- In this account, God is preserving for himself, through his own working, a faithful remnant in the face of global (or national) apostasy and evil.
- It is important to note that once everyone is in the ark, it is God who shuts the door (7:16). What is the significance of this little detail in the story?

### **New Creation**

- The flood is a story of judgment, but also of faith, salvation, and the hope of new creation, see Revelation 21 for the culmination of new creation.
- When Noah and his family exit the ark, along with the created order in microcosm, the hope of new creation is clearly on the table.
- God makes a promise never again to flood the earth, the sign of this promise is the rainbow.
- 9:1, God restates the creation mandate, repeated almost verbatim from Gen. 1:28. The difference is that now animals are permitted to be food, except blood.

### **New Testament and Noah**

- Noah/Ark/Flood prefigure the coming judgment:
  - Matthew 24:36-51-Jesus refers to Noah wrt the coming Judgment Day.
  - Just as in Noah's time right up to the flood people were going about their daily business (eating, drinking, getting married), so it will be when Jesus returns.
- Noah/Ark/Flood prefigure baptism:
  - 1 Peter 3:18-22. Peter argues that Jesus Christ died a substitutionary death once and for all for us, "the righteous for the unrighteous". He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, and as such also preached to the 'spirits in prison'. These imprisoned spirits are those who "in former times did not obey; when God waited patiently as in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few (eight) were saved through water. And Baptism, which this prefigures, now saves you.
  - Thus the waters of the flood are not viewed uniformly in what they prefigure, although the references are related: in one water represents judgment, in the other the waters of baptism

Next Week: Noah to the Tower of Babel – Gen 9:1-17; 11:1-11:9

### **Additional Resources**

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Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Gospel and Kingdom* [vol. 1 of 'The Goldsworthy Trilogy']. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000.

Horton, Michael. *God of Promise: An Introduction to Covenant Theology*. Baker Books, 2006.