

Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

For reply: Email: truthfortoday@aol.com

Broadcast Date: 30 November 2014

No. T0861

Speaker: Mr. Brian Donaldson

Back to the beginning: The Flood

Today's talk is perhaps one of the best known Bible stories of all. Our children sing about it at Sunday School and it is referred to regularly in popular culture. It has even been the subject of a recent Hollywood blockbuster. How we all love the story of Noah's ark and the animals going in two by two! It has been reckoned that there are approximately 270 different "flood" stories in various people groups and cultures all over the world. The story of the flood would have been passed on from Noah's family down through the generations, disseminated at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) and entered throughout most cultures of the world. Because of faith in God's Word, we believe that the earth was covered by a flood, but the geology and fossil record of our earth would also point very forcibly to this having been the case at some point.

However, our story today is far more than just a pleasant story for children to read and sing about. It is far more than a great story to use pop up figures of animals in children's books so they can learn which animal is which and it is certainly far more than the subject of a long epic movie to excite and entertain us. This story tells us a great deal about the character of God, the condition of the human heart and the ways in which God can deal with us in a righteous and just way. We heard last week about Noah in the lead up to the flood and all the preparations he had to make. Where we start today, in Genesis 7:10, is where it all came to fruition; all the preparations were done, all the hard work completed and all Noah's responsibility was over. It was now God's time!

The book of Genesis is the first book of the Bible, and we find where it all began as the name would suggest. We often refer to it as the "seed plot of the Scriptures." In Genesis 7:10 we read; *"And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth."* Noah had preached for 120 years and nobody, other than his immediate family, had availed themselves of his offer of salvation from impending doom. Surely God had waited long enough, surely they had had long enough and if they were going to come forward they would have by now?? I am sure like me, you would have thought, "That's it, time's up, let's get on with it", but not God! God has a nature of grace, mercy and longsuffering and does not will the death of any, so, He waited another seven days. In Ezekiel 18:32 we read, *"For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. 'Therefore turn and live!'"*

Seven is generally referred to as the perfect number and this suggests to me that even in judgement the ways of God are perfect. There would have been no uncertainty for Noah; it was exactly as God had told him. Then in Genesis 7:11, the flood came. It was in the 600th year of Noah's life. Everybody born after this point would have nothing like the length of life that Noah and all those born before this point would enjoy, such was the seismic event that was about to take place. The earth was to change forever. The God who had designed and created it and all that lived on it was about to destroy it and then change it forever.

Genesis 7:11 goes on to say that the fountains of the deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened. This was far, far more than really heavy rain for 40 days and 40 nights. We have seen how bad that could be in recent years in our own country, but in this day it was quite different. It was this breaking up of those deep fountains that caused the earth to be so fractured and, as it were, the geology of the earth to be turned upside down. It would also appear to be very likely that at this point the one continent that God had made, split apart. This would have caused a very quick and sudden drift of continents and therefore remove the need for millions of years as many believe. However, we must rely only on the One who was there at the beginning, the Creator God. As it is the Holy Spirit of God who moved Moses to write the account of the flood, so we must look at the fossil record in the light of this and not the other way around.

Our God is One who never changes, He always keeps His promises and He has again warned of coming judgement. Acts 17:31 tells us that *"He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."* That man is Jesus Christ. The way of salvation that Noah was given was to prepare an ark. The way of salvation that God now has prepared for the judgement yet to come is through the death of Jesus Christ at Calvary's cross, approximately 2,000 years ago, and His subsequent rising again.

Let's think again about these rising waters. Prior to this time there had never been rain. The earth was held in a kind of bubble and was nourished by the dew that came down. In Genesis 1:7 we read about *"waters which were above the*

firmament.” That all changed during these 40 days and 40 nights. When God acts in judgement things are never the same again!

What a joy it must have been for Noah to see God vindicated and to see his family in the ark with him. Genesis 7:13 tells us, *“Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them.”* They were men and women in their own right and yet, in spite of all the unbelief they had seen around them, they believed Noah and his preaching and followed him into the ark. It is obvious, therefore, given the intimate knowledge of their father’s life that they would have had, that they must have also witnessed a life that was in line with his preaching and that both were a powerful enough testimony for them to follow. As Christian parents, in particular fathers, let us ensure we are giving a lead and teaching our family in a way that will cause them to follow as Noah’s did.

We must also note from this verse, as we will see in future weeks, that the three sons of Noah are the seed from which all the peoples of the world subsequently can be traced. From Shem the Jew, Ham the African and Japheth the European. It is a little picture of the fact that God’s salvation is available for all. John 3:16 tells us *“whosoever will.”* I am reminded of the wee boy who was asked what whosoever meant. He replied, “It means you, me and everybody else.”

In Genesis 7:14 we are reminded that all flesh is not the same. This is further backed up in 1 Corinthians 15:39 where we read that *“all flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish and another of birds.”* This directly contradicts the terrible lie so prevalent in today’s society that we all came ultimately from a slimy pond, each flesh evolving from a previous one and improving as it progressed. This is not God’s way and we do well to note this from Genesis 7:14, *“each after their kind.”*

I ask you today, dear listener, at this very basic level. Do you want to believe that everything we are and have come about through millions of years of chance and circumstances or that you were carefully and uniquely formed by the hand of a living and loving God?

Today we have many kinds of dogs, many kinds of cats and many kinds of birds etc. Back then, there would not have been the same number of different species. There is no doubt that animals have adapted to their circumstances and survival of the strongest and fittest has obviously taken place. This is still evident today. However, this is not evolution. It is merely adaptation but *“each after its kind”*, within its species.

So while we see in later verses that Noah had different kinds of birds on the ark (see Genesis 8:7-8), he would not have had as many as there are today. There may have been only one type of dog and one type of cat which would have meant more than enough room for all the animals and anybody else who wanted to take up God’s offer. Indeed some have calculated that the dimensions of the ark were not only perfect for a box that would float and withstand the deluge but could also hold 125,000 sheep. That is a lot! They went in, in their pairs, male and female. We saw earlier in the chapter (Genesis 7:2-3) that of the clean animals there were seven pairs and the unclean animals two pairs, but the point in this verse is that male and female are different, both obviously equally important however. Whatever pressure may be on us today to appear the same, God still views the males and females as unique and different. The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians develops this theme further. In 1 Corinthians 11, before he exhorts the Church in respect of their conduct at the Lord’s supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), he instructs them in respect of Headship (1 Corinthians 11:1-16), how men and women should show this and the distinction between their roles within the Church. I merely mention this in passing for further contemplation as it is not the subject for today.

Then at the end of Genesis 7:16, when all were safely on board, we read those wonderful words, *“and the Lord shut him in.”* The children’s chorus says:

*“all were safely stowed away
before that great and awful day.”*

Anon

Noah didn’t have to worry if he had shut the door properly. Was it locked? Was it watertight? Would the seals hold against the deluge? God had taken care of it! In the same way, dear Christian friend, let us not concern ourselves whether what we have done, or indeed not done, will be good enough to deliver us from the coming judgement of God, as we referred to earlier in Acts 17:31, but rather rejoice as Noah no doubt would have done on that day. Let us rejoice in the light of the epistle to the Hebrews 6:19 which says, *“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.”*

If Noah and his family would have been filled with joy in God’s salvation when the door was shut, let us think for a moment of those who were left outside. What would they be thinking as the rain came on and the fountains of the deep were starting to break up? What about when the water started to rise? What about when the ark started to float

and people started to drown? At what point would they realise that Noah was correct and they were doomed? I am sure some realised more quickly than others but that didn't matter; they were all too late and the door was shut. God's offer of salvation was past. Jeremiah in his day lamented, *"The harvest is past and the summer is ended and we are not saved!"* We read this in Jeremiah 8:20 and those outside the ark could have said the same thing. However, the hymn writer, some years ago, could take the same sentiment and bring it into our own situation by saying.

"The harvest is passing and the summer is ending."

Frank M. Davis 1839-1896

If there is anybody under the sound of this word today who has not yet availed themselves of God's offer of mercy and salvation, then I must warn you that some day Jeremiah's word will be true for you. But in the meantime there is still time; the harvest has not yet past, the summer has not yet ended and the door of God's ark of salvation has not yet been shut. The door will be shut when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to take His own to be with Himself or when you pass from this world into eternity by way of death. This is a solemn warning, but the story of Noah's flood is a solemn one and we could not speak of it fully without making this point.

Genesis 7:19-20 make it very clear that this was a global flood; nowhere or no one was exempt or could have escaped. This takes our thoughts to the words of Hebrews 2:3 which asks the question, *"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"* The judgement of the flood was inescapable and so too will be God's future righteous judgement against sin. Many mocked Noah and no doubt many would have just ignored him. The verse in Hebrews refers to "neglecting." The dictionary says this is "to treat carelessly, to pass by without notice, to omit by carelessness, to fail to bestow due care upon." How many people in the world today are doing this in respect of the cross of Christ, God's way of salvation for us now? Many do mock the crucifixion of Christ, but perhaps many, many more are just neglecting it. Our prayer today is that nobody who is listening to this talk will be in this perilous situation. If so, then make it right today. Come to Christ in repentance today, put your trust in Him and enter the ark of God's providing.

Genesis 7:21-23 depict the awful fate of the whole of creation as everything was wiped out as God had promised. A scene so terrible that we recoil from the enormity of it and find it difficult to understand how God could do this to His fair creation. We read in Isaiah 28:21 that God's work of judgement is a "strange" or "awesome" work. Similarly, in Romans 11:33 we read, *"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and His ways past finding out!"* Isaiah also tells us in Isaiah 55:9, *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."* So rather than wonder about God's strange work in judgement, we need to concentrate, marvel at and accept His mighty plan of salvation through the work of Christ.

What we see in the flood is a single judgement that both destroyed the inhabitants of the earth and changed the earth itself. God's future judgements against sin will be in various ways and at different times. As we will hear in future weeks, after the flood God promised that He would never destroy the earth again with a flood (Genesis 9:11) and the rainbow is the sign of this promise (Genesis 9:12-13). However, when all God's ways with the world are complete, Peter tells us in 2 Peter 3:10 that, *"the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."* Before this happens, however, God will have already judged each and every group of people who have ever lived; the Old Testament characters, the New Testament people and also every person who has lived since Christ was here on earth. Everybody will be judged in the light of the cross of Christ. The unbeliever will stand before the Great White Throne and the believer at the Judgement Seat of Christ. Revelation 20:11-15 tell us about the fate of those who choose to "neglect" the great salvation that God has so graciously provided for us. It was these very verses that brought me to faith in Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 5:9-11, the Apostle Paul tells the Christians that they should be mindful of the way they live their lives in order to be pleasing to God: *"For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ."* This is more of a review than a judgement. It is at this point all the things that are not of worth will be burned up and we will be finally made perfect to enjoy His presence in actuality for ever. When the terrible judgement of the flood was going on, what must it have been like for Noah and his family? We have already mentioned the wonderful joy he must have experienced knowing that he and his family were safe and secure when God shut the door, but what about as these flood waters rose and the carnage unfolded? We do well to notice and remember that the ark only had one window on the top and one door as we are told in Genesis 6:16. So God having shut the door and the only window being in the roof, the only direction that those in the ark could look was upwards toward heaven.

As we contemplate the "strange and awesome" ways of God's judgement, if we look around at the views, opinions, standards and morals of this world we may be confused and uncertain. If we look within our own hearts, we may very well be disappointed and perhaps even fearful. However, if we do what Noah had no option but to do and keep looking up and see things from God's perspective we will be refreshed, encouraged and enthused to serve Him more and

more as we have opportunity to do. When the judgement was over, Genesis 7:23 tells us, "*Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive.*"

Our Lord Jesus in John 14:6 tells us, "*I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" In the same way that there was no other way to escape the judgement in Noah's day but to be in the ark, there is no other way to escape the coming judgement than to be in Christ. John 14:6 however takes us far beyond just merely being saved from judgement. As Noah looked up through his window, he would be reminded of the God of mercy but he did not have a complete understanding of that God. Our Lord Jesus brings us into the knowledge of God as our Father which is a wonderful and most blessed privilege that these Old Testament saints did not have.

Genesis 7:24 tells us that the waters remained for 150 days; a very specific period of time from the rains starting to the day that Noah and his family were able to leave the ark and repopulate the earth once again. Our God is a God of order and all His plans are already in play. Nothing can thwart His timings and ways. 2 Samuel 22:31 says, "*As for God, His way is perfect.*" Noah was instructed by God in respect of many things but he never knew how long it would be till the waters would recede. Let us obey God in the things we are instructed about and trust His time for the things we are not.

May God bless us all through the consideration of His word today.

Please Note:

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1. Large Print copies of this document are also available upon request.