

INTRODUCTION

Tonight even though I am preaching from Genesis, I am going to be talking about Jesus. I’ve started this series called, “Big Events of the Old Testament,” and this is the second of about 39 messages I have projected to talk about the Big Events historically in the Old Testament. The first ten generations of human history can be summarized in these three words “Creation, Curse, and Catastrophe.” Tonight we are going to look at Noah and the catastrophe that came across the whole earth. There is widespread archeological evidence that every culture has some story of a flood. So what we are talking about tonight is not just some idle event that took place in a little corner of the world. Many, many cultures have stories about a flood dating back, we believe, to this flood. Those of you in the oil business know there is geological evidence that there was at one time a great flood on planet earth. There is meteorological evidence. I have been told and read that if the polar caps of our planet melted, every square foot of land on earth would be submerged. When you think about it, the idea of a worldwide flood is not at all far-fetched. We’re going to see tonight there was a deep spiritual reason behind the flood that came.

I. THE WICKEDNESS BEFORE THE FLOOD

Tonight I can only hit the high points on this, but I want to mention three things about “Noah’s Navy” and the flood that came. First is the wickedness before the flood.

Genesis 6:5-8. “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on this earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, ‘I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.’ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”

Favor here is the word *grace*. “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” It’s the Hebrew word, *chen*, which appears 38 times in the Old Testament. The Bible says mankind had become so wicked that every imagination of their heart was evil all the time. Sometimes we think we live in the worst age that’s ever been. I do think things are bad, but you can go back all throughout history and as long as there has been sinful mankind; their imaginations have been toward evil.

Then there are two scriptures I want to refer to as we think about the flood and what the New Testament says about it. In Matthew 24:37-38, Jesus is talking about his return, the second coming and he said, “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark.” You’d expect Jesus to talk about how terrible things were morally, ethically, politically and spiritually but Jesus is actually saying, “Mankind has always been evil. There have always been sinful men and women and there will always be. They did not expect the flood.” and Jesus said, “The time that you are not even expecting it that’s when I’m going to come back.” He says, “Everything is going to be going along as normal.” I believe as we approach the year 2000 there will be an increasing number of people out there who write books and talk about how they think Jesus is going to come back in the year 2000, the second millennium after the beginning of Christianity. It will be interesting to see what

happens around the nation on the eve of the year 2000, the expectancy for the return of Jesus. I am almost convinced and I am willing to speculate very clearly that I don't think Jesus is going to come back on the eve of the year 2000, because so many people will be expecting him to come back. He said, “I'm coming back at a time that you think not.” I think that's probably the very least available time for him to come back. So he said, “Things were bad but they were just going along as normal. People were eating and drinking.” Anybody been doing any of that today? “People were marrying and giving in marriage.” He says, “They didn't expect it until the flood came.”

Look at the New Testament reference to Noah over in the roll call of faith in Hebrews 11:7. “By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.” In other words, things were bad and God looked at Noah and said, “Noah. I'm sorry I have done this, so I am going to destroy the world and Noah, I'm going to save you and your family. I want you to obey me precisely and you will be delivered.”

II. THE WAY THROUGH THE FLOOD

The second thing is the way through the flood. Anytime God sends judgement he always provides a way to escape it.

Genesis 6:13-14. “So God said to Noah, ‘I'm going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I'm surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.’”

The Hebrew word for *pitch* is actually the Hebrew word for “atonement.” There are a lot of spiritual pictures here.

Genesis 6:15-7:1. “This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.’ Noah did everything just as God commanded him. The Lord then said to Noah, ‘Go into the ark, [literally it is the word that means *come* into the ark] you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation.’”

The New Testament said, “Noah had enough faith to trust God and believe God and to obey him completely and to build an ark.” When you think about it, it becomes a bit comical. God appears to Noah and says, “Noah, Listen! I want you to build an ark.” Noah says, “What's an ark?”

Nobody had ever seen an ark. God said, “It’s a big boat and this is how big I want you to make it because I’m going to make it rain.” Noah said, “What’s rain?” The Bible says up until the flood came it had never rained on planet earth. Genesis 2:5-6 says a mist rose from the ground and watered the earth. If you look at the time line, it appears as if Noah is about 500 years old when God talks to him and it doesn’t start raining until he is 600. So that was 100 years. Noah lived to be almost 950 but for almost 100 years, he was out in the middle of the desert building an ark.

Can you imagine Noah out there working on this ark for 60, 75, 80, 90 years, getting it pretty close to completion. Lets just say he’s out there toiling along, working out there in the desert building this ark and lets just imagine some little kid walks up eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and says, “Mister, whatcha doing?”

Noah says, “I’m building an ark.”

“What’s an ark?”

“It’s a big boat.”

“Why are you building a big boat?”

“Because God’s going to make it rain.”

“What is rain, Noah?”

“Well, the water is going to fall down from the sky, water is going to come up from the earth and it’s going to flood the earth. Listen, kid everybody who’s not on this ark is going to drown!”

Can’t you imagine that little boy’s eyes got big as baseballs? He probably went running away from there running yelling, “Daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy! I was just out there in the desert and I was talking to Mr. Noah and Mr. Noah said it’s going to rain and it’s going to flood and everybody’s going to drown if they’re not in his ark!” Daddy says, “Don’t worry, son. I want you to know, son when I was a kid when I was a kid that old fool, Noah, was out there in the desert telling the flood story and building on that ark. Don’t pay attention to that old fool Noah! By the way, son, not only when I was a kid but when my daddy your granddaddy was a kid that fool, Noah, was out there building on an ark. Don’t you believe it! Don’t worry about it.” Don’t you know the amount of criticism and ridicule Noah got for building an ark for all of those years? He is doing it by faith and in obedience to God.

Can you imagine him going down to the First National Bank trying to float a loan to build that thing? There’s not a bank president anywhere who would have loaned money for a project like that BUT he’s faithful to God. He’s obedient to God. He builds the ark. He stores food in it and starts gathering the animals together. When God sent the rain, that’s when everybody on the outside realized they were in trouble. Notice how the Bible is so precise to tell us exactly when the flood started. I think there is a reason for that. I will show you later.

Genesis 7:11-16. “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. The animals going in were male and female of every living

thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the Lord shut him in.”

God said, “Everything’s ready. Come into the ark.” and Noah and all of his family came in and then the Bible says there was only one door and God put them in there and God shut the door. It was God who shut the door. It wasn’t Noah who said, “Shut everybody out!” GOD shut the door! And he said, “There is only one way through this flood and the ark is the only way through the flood.”

I heard someone say, “What would it have been like on the ark? Can you imagine the smell for forty days and forty nights? What did they eat?” Someone else answered, “Well, I know they didn’t go fishing because they only had two worms.” I don’t know what they ate, but it must have been something for forty days and forty nights in that ark. The main thing is they were safe in that ark. When the judgement of God fell, they were safe.

I told you I was going to talk about Jesus tonight. You can find Jesus on just about every page of the Old Testament. When I introduced this series last week, I told you the wrong way to read the Bible is to start in Genesis 1 and read all the way through it? The best way to understand the Bible is to have a good working knowledge of the New Testament, then when you read the Old Testament, you see how the New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed and the Old Testament is by the New Testament revealed. In other words, you won’t fully appreciate all of these great Old Testament stories until you understand they are a picture of Jesus.

1. Jesus and the Ark: Planned and designed by God

The ark in which Noah, and his family, and the animals were in is a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ. There are three ways that they are alike. Number one Jesus was like the ark in that both were planned and designed by God. The ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. Did you know for years and years, up until this century, shipbuilders read those dimensions and said, “A boat that size would not even float!” Why? Because for centuries boats short and narrow. Tall boats had to sail by the wind and people said, “Hey, a boat that size won’t even float!” Today the dimensions of the ark parallel almost exactly the supertankers of today: Long, wide and low to the water. People today who build ships say, “That is almost exactly the dimensions of a supertanker, a boat that can carry a heavy load a long way.” Isn’t that amazing? God knew what he was doing from the very start!

What about Jesus? Jesus was uniquely designed and planned by God. There has never been another like Jesus. He is as it says in John, 3:16, “the only begotten” the *monogenes*, “One of a kind, no other, unique Son of God.” The ark was not Noah’s idea—it was God’s idea. For Jesus to come into the world as a man wasn’t man’s idea. It wasn’t the idea of Jesus it was all planned by God. Galatians 4:4 says, “I the fullness of time Christ was born of a woman,” and it was a plan God brought from his heart.

2. Jesus and the Ark: Inside was the only safe place

Another way Jesus and the ark are similar are for both Jesus and the ark, inside was the only safe place when the judgement fell. In Noah’s case the judgement was the floodwater from above and

below. The only safe place was in the ark, because God's judgement was served against every other place and every other person. When God's judgement falls on sinful mankind, the only safe place is in Christ Jesus! That's why the apostle Paul time and time again speaks about how important it is for us to be IN Christ. Just as there was only one door into the ark, I am here to tell you there is only one place you can go to escape God's judgement and that's Jesus Christ. Do you remember I said this is a way through the flood? Jesus said in John 14:6 "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Light. No man comes to the Father, but by me." I can imagine there were a lot of people swimming up to the ark clawing onto the sides of it beating on the side of it "Let me in! Let me in!" because they realized Noah's faith and obedience would save him from the flood. Jesus said, "On that day there are going to be many people who cry out 'Lord, Lord. In your name we did many wonderful works!'" Then they are going to realize they lacked the faith and they lacked true obedience. There is only one way and the only safe place is IN Jesus just like the only safe place was in the ark.

3. Jesus and the Ark: Absorbed God's Judgement

Here's the third way: Both Jesus and the ark absorbed God's judgement. In other words it was the ark that protected Noah and the animals, because the ark absorbed the water. It absorbed the rain. It absorbed wave after wave after wave after wave of judgement. On the cross, the Lord Jesus absorbed the punishment and judgement of God. Wave after wave after wave of God's judgement against sin fell on the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross. IN Christ is the only safe place, because he already took our punishment upon himself. If you want to escape God's judgement, there is only one door. God says, "Come in" and then he shuts you in. God invited them to come in. They didn't have to work for salvation. All they had to do was enter into salvation. Do you think once they got inside the ark they sat on a La-Z-Boy recliner for forty days and forty nights? No! They had to work! I imagine they were shoveling food and everything else you can imagine! They didn't have to work to get in it. All they had to do was enter in to God's plan, but then they worked once they got in. That's a picture of salvation. You don't work for salvation. All God says is, "I invite you to come in." You enter in by faith but once you get in you work from your salvation. So that's how it's like the ark, and that's the way through the flood.

One reason I know the Bible is written by God and not by some clever man or clever men is because if the Bible had been written by clever people, they would have left out any reference to any of these Bible characters that are less than glowing and less than ideal. In other words, they would have glossed over all the mistakes and the failures of some of the great characters of the Bible. For instance, if man had been writing the Bible, we never have known about the incidents in David's life about Bathsheba. They would have just covered it up like people try to cover up things today from the president and our leaders. That's just human nature "Let's cover it up!" Not God! God says, "I'm going to show you the whole picture. I'm going to give you the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!" If man wrote the story of Noah, it would have ended after forty days and forty nights and then after they sent the dove out and finally the dove comes back and they settle on dry ground and they come out and they were fruitful and multiplied and that would have been the end of the story—but it's not the end of the story. Some of you might not even know what happened to Noah after the flood.

III. THE WEAKNESS AFTER THE FLOOD

There’s a great lesson to be learned there and that’s the third point of the message. I call it, “The Weakness after the flood.” First, look at God’s faithfulness. Genesis 9:11 says God was faithful after he delivered Noah and the family and those animals. “‘I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.’ And God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.’” Every time you see a rainbow, it’s God’s sign of his covenant that never again will he ever destroy the earth with a flood. God said, “I’m going to be faithful to my word and here’s the sign of my covenant.”

If you look at God’s faithfulness, you have to contrast that with Noah’s failure. God’s faithfulness was seen in the rainbow, but Noah’s failure was seen in the sin he committed after he came out of the ark. As I said, I wish this wasn’t in here. This almost leaves a bad taste in your mouth. Look Genesis 9:20: “Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of his wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered [naked] inside his tent.” Isn’t it sad that after the flood, after that great deliverance of God, after the rainbow, Noah planted a vineyard, made some wine and when the wine was fermented, he drank it, got drunk, took off his clothes, laid there and exposed himself to one of his sons? That was a terrible sin in the eyes of God. That’s why Noah had to pronounce a curse. After the story of the deliverance, that just kind of leaves a bad taste in your mouth. How could that happen? How could this man who was righteous in his own generation, how could this man the Bible says in the New Testament “showed faith and was obedient” it was accounted unto him to righteousness. How could he do that?

First, the New Testament makes it clear: He did not lose his salvation. He still was accounted righteous, because of his faith and obedience. It just shows you sometimes even God’s heroes, these people listed in Hebrews 11 have failures in their lives. In fact, someone said Hebrews 11 could well be called, “The Roll Call of Failures.” instead of “The Roll Call of Faith.” I don’t think it’s flooding and most everybody in this room has entered into Jesus and you are going to escape the eternal judgement. But there is the *danger* in the life of every Christian that you can come toward the end of your Christian life and you can fail miserably! You can be so weak that you fail the Lord and end up with a spiritual black eye. The final word God says about Noah is in Genesis 9:28, “After the flood Noah lived 350 years. Altogether, Noah lived 950 years, and then he died.”

1. Noah focused on a project instead of God

During the entire last third of his life, the only thing God had to say about him was “He lived, and he died.” How in the world could a man like Noah fail? I would suggest a couple of dangers you need to avoid, because they are dangers that I think trapped Noah. First of all he focused on a project instead of God. I think that it is apparent he focused on a project (building an ark) to escape the flood. Once the project was completed, his vision and his excitement and his zeal were finished. I realize we are getting ready to build a new worship center. Under God I hope we

never, never, never focus on the project of God and lose our focus on the God of the project. Any kind of building program can never become a goal! It can never become an end in itself. It is only a means to an end. That's why I have said many, many times. "We're not building buildings here. We're building relationships! We're building relationships with God relationships with each other" and if we ever forget that and ever start thinking we are in the building business or we're in the banking business, we'll miss God in a hurry. So be careful you don't focus on a project instead of focusing on God.

2. Noah got lazy after the challenge

Here's the second danger I think Noah fell into: He got lazy when the challenge was over. He had already succeeded in the greatest challenge of his life. I promise you never again in his life would he ever face a challenge as daunting or a mountain so high to climb as he had already climbed and so he just got lazy, got drunk and exposed himself.

I've been told by some retired people that it's really easy when you reach retirement age to say, "The biggest challenges of my life are behind me. I've done my job. I've raised my children. Now, the biggest challenges I'll ever face are behind me so it's time to coast." Please don't have that attitude. Please don't say, "I'm going to coast until the cemetery." "I'm going to coast until the rapture." That's exactly what Noah did! Never let it be said about me or never let it be said about you that in the last one third of your life, the only thing God said about you was, "He lived and he died. She lived and she died." Never become spiritually complacent. The difference in Noah and the difference in us is that we never accomplished the greatest challenge. The greatest challenge is still out there, because as long as there are lost people in East Texas, we cannot get lazy and we cannot get complacent.

CONCLUSION

I want to finish with this interesting little insight into this whole story. I think it may be something some of you will learn for first time. Some people today still struggle. They say, "How could a God of love send a flood and destroy how many? Tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands? We don't know how many and all those animals those innocent animals. How could a God of love do something like that? That seems to be so capricious! How could God be that unkind and uncaring and unloving?" He's not! I want you to see God is so loving and so kind that he goes to extraordinary ends to try to warn people that his judgement is coming! And not just through Noah.

I'm going to have you write down four names and some numbers beside them The first name I want you to write down is "Enoch." Turn to Genesis 5:21. "When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah." Write "Methuselah" under Enoch. I want you to remember Enoch was the father of Methuselah. Now, look at verse 25. "When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech." Beside the name Methuselah, write down 187. That's how old he was. Underneath Methuselah write the name "Lamech." Methuselah was his father. Look verse 28 "When Lamech had lived 182 years" so beside the name, Lamech, write 182. "He had a son. He named him Noah." How old did we say Noah was the day the flood came? He was 600 years old. It says in Genesis 7:11, "In the 600th year of Noah's life" so beside Noah write

600. Draw a line under 600 and add up those three numbers. They come to 969. Go back to Genesis 5:27. Can anybody tell me who the oldest living man in the Bible was? How long did he live? 969 years! Are you ready for this?

Dr. John Phillips says one meaning of the name, Methuselah is, "When he dies, it will come!" That's what Enoch named his little boy Methuselah. Enoch was a prophet of God. He was the first one to prophesy the Second Coming Jude says. When Enoch named that little boy, he was saying, "Listen, wicked world! When he dies, judgement (the flood) will come." How long did the people on earth hear that message? 969 years. I think God's timing is so impeccable; that the day the first raindrop fell was the day Methuselah died. Why do you think God let a man live 969 years? Because his mercy is everlasting! He let Methuselah live 969 years so his very life could be a warning! "When he dies, it will come. Repent, repent, repent!" You see the New Testament says, "God is not wrong. His timing is right!" and the Bible says, "God is long-suffering toward us. Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God will give you at least 969 opportunities to hear the gospel and to respond.

OUTLINE

I. THE WICKEDNESS BEFORE THE FLOOD

II. THE WAY THROUGH THE FLOOD

Similarities between Jesus and the Ark:

1. Planned and designed by God
2. The only safe place
3. Absorbed God’s judgement

III. THE WEAKNESS AFTER THE FLOOD

The dangers Noah fell into:

1. He focused on a project instead of God
2. He became lazy



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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes