

Week 3. The Flood. Class Notes.

[A] THE FLOOD AS JUDGEMENT ON HUMAN SIN (6:5-8 and 11-13)

1. **An Avalanche of Sin** (Genesis 3-6). A story of humanity's spiral downwards into ever-increasing degrees and depths of sin (repeated in Judges and 1&2 Kings). Disobedience (ch 3) murder (ch 4), boastful celebration of murder (4:23-4); sad summary (6:5-8).
2. **The Extent of Human Depravity** (6:5). Contrast 1:31: 'God saw ... very good' Here, the polar opposite (also vv 11-13). Devastating reason (v 5b): 'every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.' [See also Ps 14:3; Jer 17:9]. Us?
3. **God's Response of Grief and Pain** (6:6). Not words that we normally associate with God. Pain' see 'pains of childbearing' (3:16), 'painful toil' (3:17). See also 34:7, 45:5. God like a father whose children have brought him nothing but grief and pain. [See Hosea 11:8-9]
4. **God's Announcement of Judgement** (6:7; also 7:4, 23). The floodwaters will wash and cleans the earth of evil and violence. Read in the light of vv 5-6 and of v 8. Not an angry or vengeful God but the heartbroken Creator who brings judgement; and also (v 8) mitigates judgement.
5. **Yet, a Mitigation of Grace** (6:8). God's choice of Noah to receive grace. Verse 8 comes before v 9!
6. **The *Toledoth* Formula.** '*This is the account of Noah* (v 9)' From 2:4 onwards *toledoth* divides and structures Genesis (See 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; and 37:2). *Toledoth* phrase indicates a significant new beginning. Noah became righteous because he had experienced the grace/ favour of God.

[B] THE FLOOD AS THE PARTIAL REVERSAL, THEN RESTORATION, OF CREATION (chapters 7-9)

1. **The Flood as Judgement involves a Partial Reversal of Creation.** Principle seen in 2:7 and 3:19; in 2:8 and 3:24. 7:11 reverses God's acts of separation from the second and third days of creation (Gen 1). A partial reversal of the creation process.
2. **Salvation through Judgement in the Safety of the Ark.** Main emphasis of Flood narrative is on salvation! - of Noah and family; of animal kingdom; of earth. Salvation through judgement. They pass through the waters of judgement, but in the safety of the Ark. God shut them in (7:16). Pattern found in the Exodus; return from exile; and at the Cross. 1 Peter 3:20-21, floodwaters 'symbolise baptism that now saves you.' Waters of baptism speak

of salvation through judgement. Point to baptism experienced by Jesus on the cross (see Lk 12:50). Throughout that experience Christ was our Ark.

3. The Renewal/ Restoration of Creation (chapter 8). Reversal of judgement of ch 7; restoration; re-creation. Parallels between Genesis 8 and Genesis 1. [*'God remembered Noah'* (8:1): he acts for his good.] (i) (v 1) Hebrew for wind is *ruach*. See 'Spirit' in 1:2. (ii) (v 2) 7:11-12 is reversed; waters separate, dry ground appears (like Genesis 1); (iii) (v 11) '*freshly plucked olive leaf*' – new vegetation/ life (see, 1:12, 30). (iv) (v 17) animals to '*multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number*' – reflecting 1:20, 22; (v) Noah, respond to God with perfect obedience (6:22; 7:5, 9, 16). In its initial moments at least, the restored creation proves as obedient as the first creation prior to the Fall – although that did not last for long as the events of 9:18ff show!

[C] **GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH** (6:18; 8:20-9:17)

1. **When did the covenant relationship begin?** Formally ratified (8:20 onwards). But established with an already 'saved' people (so with Abraham; and with Israel)

2. **Aspects of this Covenant**

- **God's Covenant** (6:18). God's initiative, and his responsibility for maintaining it.
- **Universal Covenant.** Involves Noah's seed/ descendants' (v 9). Noah as representative head of new family of humanity. Benefits of belonging to a covenant family today. Nations come from Noah (ch 11).
- **Covenant with the Animal Kingdom (9:10).** God's care for them, commitment to them; and implications for our care for and stewardship of that same animal kingdom.
- **Covenant with Creation.** See 9:11, 13. 'Earth' as in Genesis 1. Noah is regarded as the king of creation, under the divine King – much as Adam was in Genesis 1-2.
- **A Promissory Covenant.** Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth, or all life on the earth (9:11, 15); also 8:21-22, especially v 22. Positive. God will ensure the continuity of the creation order.
- **An Everlasting Covenant.** (9:12, 16).
- **An Unconditional Covenant.** It doesn't depend on human response to it.
- **The Sign of the Covenant** – the Rainbow. A sign for God (9:14f). He will not forget.
- **God's Answer to the Continuing Problem of the Sinfulness of the Human Heart (8:21).**
- **The Basis for the Covenant in the Sacrifice of Christ. (8:20f)**