



GENESIS

God's Grief & The Flood



SESSION 24

A Few More Science“y” Thoughts from Last Week...

- 1 Many scoffers ridicule the biblical account because they do not accept the idea that there is enough water on the earth to accomplish a global flood of this magnitude. Where did all this water come from?



- 2 How does the flood of Genesis help explain the fossil record as we know it today?



Read Genesis 7:17 - 8:19

Some Theological Perspective

- 3 In what descriptive ways does this chapter give evidence of God's judgment?
- 4 In what descriptive ways does this chapter give evidence of God's grace and care?
- 5 Just imagine for a moment what the experience of being in the ark was like for its occupants. All the terror was not just on the outside. In an age where we are too often tempted to pray, "Lord, give me patience and give it to me NOW!" What lessons can we learn from Noah and His Family about how to handle difficult and scary situations?
- 6 Theology will always lead to prayer. We listen to God and then echo His words back to Him in prayer. If you want to know what someone believes, listen to the way that they pray. Luther wrote many prayers throughout his career. You may be familiar with his morning and evening prayers and his mealtime prayers in the Small Catechism. When Luther revised and translated the liturgy

from Latin to German, he often corrected the prayers or wrote new ones. Luther first translated the Baptismal Rite from Latin to German in 1523. He also pared down the rite, getting rid of many of the extra rituals, such as the blessing of the baptismal font. In 1526 he revised it again, streamlining it further to keep the baptism from getting lost in the midst of all the other traditions. This revision became known as the "Baptismal Booklet" (*Taufbuchlein*) and was added to the Small Catechism. There were many things that Luther removed from the Baptismal Rite, but he made one major addition: the "Flood Prayer." In his introduction to the Baptismal Booklet, Luther emphasized that the prayers should be prayed slowly and clearly, so that the parents and sponsors could pray along silently in their heart.

The Flood Prayer was not included in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's hymnals for most of our history. But with the Lutheran Service Book (LSB), we now have the Flood Prayer back in our liturgy. This is the version included in the LSB (pp. 268-69):

Almighty and eternal God, according to Your strict judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all. You drowned hard-hearted Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, yet led Your people Israel through the water on dry ground, prefiguring this washing of Your Holy Baptism. Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood, and a lavish washing away of sin. We pray that You would behold (name) according to Your boundless mercy and bless him with true faith by the Holy Spirit that through this saving flood all sin in him which has been inherited from Adam and which he himself has committed since would be drowned and die. Grant that he be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, being separated from the multitude of unbelievers and serving Your name at all times with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope, so that, with all believers in Your promise, he would be declared worthy of eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

✚ What are at least three that Luther's Flood Prayer teaches us about Holy Baptism?

- ✚ First, Holy Baptism _____ sin. Just as the flood drowned the evil and violent people in Noah's day, and Pharaoh and his army were drowned in the Red Sea, so all sin in you is drowned and put to death. This includes both the original sin you inherit from Adam along with all the sins that you have ever committed. This drowning is not something that happens only at your baptism, but every time you confess your sins you are drowning them again. Luther says in the Small Catechism, "What does such baptizing with water indicate? It indicates that that Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die, with all sins and evil desires..." Baptism is the _____ that God has forgiven and will forgive.
- ✚ Second, Holy Baptism _____ you. Were kept safe in the ark. No matter how much the water and God's wrath raged around them. The Israelites were kept safe by the pillar of fire that guarded them as they crossed the Red Sea. In Holy Baptism we are brought "into" Christ. Nothing can separate us from the Love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8: 28-39). Not even _____ can keep us from eternal life in Christ.
- ✚ Third, Baptism leads _____ us to a life of service and praise. Luther prays that the one being baptized would serve God "all times with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope." In baptism you are made a member of God's holy priesthood and called to a life of service to Him. The sacrifices you offer are not the blood of sacrificial animals but the sacrifice of praise to God and acts of love towards your neighbor. This is the life to which you are called through your baptism because in baptism God has placed His name upon you and made you a member of His family.

Some Application

MATTHEW 24:36-44

But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

- 7 Concerning the verse above, what applications can we make for ourselves as we study the flood considering God's promise to send another worldwide judgment on the earth?
- 8 Consider the pictures below. When the fountains of the great deep burst forth, stubborn, sinful humans learned a lesson far too late—finite creatures cannot snub their mighty Creator forever. It's hard to imagine the fear and terror that gripped the unbelievers as they experienced the raw power of the waters that wiped them off the face of the earth. Each occupant of the ark undoubtedly felt that same vulnerability as their ship was lifted high above the earth and tossed upon the waves. Year by year natural disasters remind us we too are finite creatures living in a damaged creation.



In the flood we stand face to face with God's terrifying wrath. We picture thousands, perhaps millions of terrified men, women and children seeking higher ground, only to be swept away in the raging waters. That doesn't seem consistent with the God of love and grace who sent His only Son to save the world. Many people have the same difficulty when they are confronted with the Bible's teachings about hell. We are asked, "How can you call God loving if He punishes people in the flames of hell forever without any relief, without any chance of escape?" •

† What are some reasons people reject the idea of hell?

† How would you answer someone who said the God of the Bible is unjust, cruel, vindictive and perhaps even genocidal?

9 Our culture's emphasis on tolerance may have something to do with this accusation. We are bombarded by the idea that each person should be free to live as he or she chooses. And we try to extend that obligation to God.

† Why does our culture consider tolerance so important?

† How strongly do you react when someone questions or challenges your lifestyle or beliefs?

10 We close this session with one final passage. It warns us against casting aside God's wrath and the sacrifice Jesus made to satisfy that wrath.

HEBREWS 10:26-31.

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

† Why should each of us take this important reminder to heart?

† Why might pastors and other church leaders need this reminder more than other Christians?