

# Lessons From the Flood

In recent times, people have struggled to believe in the flood that happened in the time of Noah. Some just deny it ever happened, while others try to downsize it with clever and, apparently logical, scientific theories. It is not our purpose here to prove that it happened, but we would remind you that there is significant archaeological support for the historical accuracy of the Bible.

The careful Bible reader will notice that that flood is mentioned throughout its pages and was accepted as historical by faithful people, who wrote the inspired record. Some of the places where Noah or the flood are mentioned are Isaiah 54, Ezekiel 14 and Hebrews 11. Peter writes about it in both his letters and Jesus himself mentions the flood several times.

The Bible always has a purpose in recording events for us to read, and there are quite a few interesting details from which we can gain spiritual teaching.

## Long Lives

Before the flood, people lived for very long periods of time. One reason for this was that God wanted rapid increase in the population, as He first commanded Adam and Eve:

*Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth (Genesis 1:28).*

Perhaps another reason for the long lives of these people was so they could



teach their descendants about God. For instance, Adam who lived for 930 years, (more than half the time between his own creation and the flood!) could teach his great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandchildren about what had happened in the beginning and why things had gone wrong. After all, these things were bound to be more convincing when heard from the person who had been there.

God always leaves a witness for Himself and so through Adam the knowledge of God and His purpose was available in a very impressive and personal form for almost 1000 years.

## Godly and Ungodly

There are two groups of people mentioned in Genesis 6:2, the 'sons of God' and just 'men'.

Some have claimed these to be actual different types of being. However there is absolutely no evidence for this. These 'men' were merely the ungodly descendants of Cain who broke off from his family and

went and set up cities elsewhere. Just as Cain was not called a 'son of God', neither did he teach his family to be so.

By comparison, the 'sons of God' were the descendants of Seth, a younger son born to Adam and Eve, and who followed in his brother Abel's footsteps as a true follower of God. We read that, as time went on:

*The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose (Genesis 6:2).*

Here we have an important spiritual principle being shown to us. Namely, if we are trying to please God, then we will benefit from trying to develop any serious relationships or allegiances with people who also believe in God and the Bible.

The reason for this is that our basic nature does not like to obey God, but prefers a way of life centred on pleasing ourselves. The more time we can spend with other people who love God and are trying to serve Him, the better. If we do this, then we are bound to find it so much easier to follow His principles.

Things went badly wrong, as the Genesis account explains.



*There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown (Genesis 6:4).*

The offspring of these unequal marriages were certainly mighty, but they glorified the strength of mankind, not of God. Again, we see the importance of having connection with people who respect God.

Prayer is vitally important here. God, who can do everything, can help us to make and keep the right friends. He can also help us choose the right partner, although when (and indeed if) this happens is down to His will and purpose.

## **Responding to God**

*Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart (Genesis 6:5-8).*

The world was in a deplorable state. Yet, even then God's mercy was great. He used Noah to warn people, he was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). He told Noah what His plans were for the earth and gave humankind time to repent – the time it took to build the ark.

Noah and his family were the only people saved when the flood came. We are told that:

*Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God (Genesis 6:9).*

It suggests that, in his life, Noah was going in the right direction with God as his companion. As a result, God placed a great responsibility on him of building the ark and trying to convince those around him that their destruction was coming but they could be saved if they changed their ways.

Noah's faith must have been very great. As far as we know, it had never rained before and there certainly wasn't enough water in the vicinity to float such a huge boat. His words must have seemed ridiculous, and we can imagine that his neighbours laughed at him. But the flood came!

It can be the same for us. Jesus is coming back to the earth to set up the kingdom, because God has promised that in the Bible. We can believe this, because God always fulfils His promises. Other people may think it is nonsensical. It is important not to let this damage our faith. Whatever they may think or say, Jesus is coming!

The Bible warns and encourages us:

*Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?"... For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water... But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3:3-8).*

## **The Promise**

The occupants of the ark survived the flood. When they once again came to rest on dry land, God promised that He would never again destroy the earth by



flood. He gave the rainbow as confirmation:

*I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth (Genesis 9:13).*

God has promised us that Jesus will return from heaven to judge the world and to set up God's Kingdom. He gave us a sign of His commitment – Jesus' resurrection:

*He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising him from the dead (Acts 17:31).*

We can have confidence that God will fulfil this promise too. Let's try to be faithful like Noah, not distracted by the world around us, but trusting God.

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