

Genesis 8 (2011)

- When we last heard from Noah and his family, they were floating in the ark while the waters above and below poured onto the Earth
 - The water level rose for 150 days
 - And now we reach the pinnacle of both the flood waters themselves and the story of Noah

Gen. 8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.

Gen. 8:2 Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained;

Gen. 8:3 and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased.

Gen. 8:4 In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.

- The chapter opens with the statement that God remembered Noah and those who were with him on the Ark
 - If you think that Moses was implying that God forgot about Noah, think again
 - The phrase simply means that God turned again to attend to Noah
 - God was finished with bringing His wrath upon the Earth, and now it was time to attend to the survivors
 - At this point, it's been 150 days, or half a year according to the Jewish calendar
 - So the waters prevailed for 150 days, and then God began to reduce the waters
 - And after 150 days, the Ark rests on the mountains of Ararat in present day Turkey
 - This is now the seventh month, the seventeenth day
 - The Jewish people have had two different calendars in their history but both are based on the moon rather than the sun

- There have been two calendars because God altered the Jewish calendar during the Exodus
 - The calendar was shifted six months, so that the seventh month of the civil calendar became the first month in the new religious calendar
 - So notice here that the ark rested on the seventeenth day of the seventh month - probably according to the civil calendar
 - Since the religious calendar hadn't been given yet
 - So this is also the first month under the religious calendar
 - So the ark rested on the same day that Jesus was resurrected
 - Knowing that the ark pictures Christ, here we see the ark resting on the mountain
 - Resting from the work of saving Noah and his family from God's judgment
 - Just as Jesus rested from His works to save believers from the coming judgment
- The actual process of drying up the water is interesting as well
 - It begins, we're told, with a wind that God causes to blow
 - The word for wind in Hebrew is *ruach*, which is the same Hebrew word for Spirit
 - We see that same word used in Genesis 1:2 when the earth was also a formless deep of water
 - And the Spirit (*ruach*) was moving over the surface of the waters
 - As we said last week, there is a deliberate parallel between the creation account and this story
 - God is "recreating" the world in a sense
 - But the word *ruach* probably means wind in this case
 - Indicating that the new climate has emerged

- Producing winds, clouds, evaporation and the new water cycle that produces rain
- We looked last week at how God accomplished the removal of so much water
 - According to Psalm 104, the mountains were raised and the ocean floors lowered
 - And the water ran down into the trenches as the land rose above the water
 - Naturally, as this great run off happened, gorges are cut into the land and a few pockets of water were left behind
 - These created many of the lakes we see today, including the Great Salt Lake
- Interestingly, we have proof today that many very tall mountains were once under water
 - Scientists today can find fossilized sea creatures deposited on the highest mountains around the world
 - Also, many mountains are volcanic, indicating they were created by volcanic eruptions, as would have occurred during the upheaval of the continents moving
 - Mt. Ararat is a volcanic mountain, but the volcanic rock itself is an unique form of volcanic rock – pillow lava
 - Pillow lava is a bulbous form of lava rock that can only be formed when hot lava emerges from the Earth's crust while under water
 - In other words, Mt. Ararat was formed by an underwater volcano – yet today is 17,000 ft high

[Gen. 8:5](#) The water decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible.

[Gen. 8:6](#) Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made;

[Gen. 8:7](#) and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth.

[Gen. 8:8](#) Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land;

[Gen. 8:9](#) but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself.

[Gen. 8:10](#) So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark.

[Gen. 8:11](#) The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth.

[Gen. 8:12](#) Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again.

- At the point the Ark is resting on land, there is still water in the distance as far as the eye can see
 - Noah can tell he isn't floating any longer, but he is still waiting for a sign he can leave the ark
 - After 2 1/2 months, the tops of mountains become visible
 - Then after another 40 days pass, Noah releases a raven
 - It flies back and forth, as Noah observes, but it never returns to the ark
 - Ravens are unclean animals, so Noah had only two of these birds
 - Why did he risk releasing one and what was the purpose?
 - Ravens feed on the carcasses of dead animals
 - So if the bird is moving back and forth over the waters, it's an indication to Noah that there is still rotting flesh floating
 - The bird is moving from carcass to carcass
 - If the bird had a lack of food, it would have returned to the Ark to be fed
 - When the bird needed to rest, it would have landed on the mountain tops
 - It stayed away from the ark entirely until the land was dry
- After seven days, Noah begins to send out doves
 - We know Noah waited seven days between birds, because when he releases the second dove in v.10, the text says "another" seven days

- Indicating that Noah waited seven days between each bird
 - Why release the dove and why did it return?
 - Doves are clean animals, and they are particular about where they land
 - They will only land on dry, clean ground or trees
 - They do not eat meat
 - And they prefer valleys and low areas to mountains
 - So if the dove found no where to land but returned to the boat, then as v.9 says, the ground was not yet dry enough
 - When Noah releases the dove a second time, it returns with an olive twig
 - Olive trees are unique in that they will grow while submerged under water
 - The trees also prefer mountain sides, so this dove found an olive tree growing on the mountain side that was dry and growing
 - So the olive branch tells Noah that the waters have receded more and plant life is returning to the world
 - But since the dove returns, it indicates that the water is still too high, as the dove didn't want to remain away from the ark yet
 - Finally, after another seven days, the dove is released a third time and doesn't return, indicating that the valleys are appearing and have dried up
 - The water is moving very quickly, hundreds of miles of land are being exposed each day it would seem
- There have been numerous ideas proposed for what God is picturing or symbolizing through the release of the raven and the dove three times
 - The idea I prefer sees the birds as having meaning in relationship to the ark itself
 - The ark is Christ, as we've already established
 - The Ark is still holding the believers who are waiting for the period of God's judgment to end on the Earth

- And these birds are sent forth from the Ark during this time of judgment
- Looking at the raven, this bird is closely associated with Elijah in the Old Testament
 - In 1 Kings 17, Elijah is fed by ravens during a famine brought about by the Lord
- That connection seems to be present here, where we know that before the second half of Tribulation, we should expect to see a visit from Elijah

[Mal. 4:5](#) “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.

[Mal. 4:6](#) “He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”

- The reference to the “great and terrible day of the Lord” is a reference to the last half of Tribulation
 - So the raven flying around the world crowing is a picture of Elijah appearing to the world in those last days and announcing the Second Coming of Christ
 - In the day the Lord returns, we will appear with him, and just as the moment the flood is over, the family of Noah will emerge from the ark
- Next we have the three releases of dove
 - The dove is often a picture of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, as when the Spirit came upon Christ at His baptism
 - In the case of the first dove, it leaves the world and returns to the ark
 - This could picture the way the Holy Spirit is removed from the world for a time at the rapture
 - When the Spirit is only present in Heaven with the raptured Church
 - The second dove returns with an olive twig, indicating that an olive tree is growing in the world

- Since the olive tree is a picture of Israel, this could be a picture of how the Spirit begins again to bring faith into the world starting with Israel
- The first fruits of evangelism during Tribulation will be 144,000 Jewish men
 - The final dove leaves the ark and remains in the world
 - This release might picture the Spirit going back into the Gentile world to bring many tribes and nations and tongues to faith
 - Just as Revelation 7 describes happening during Tribulation
- These are interesting parallels, and though they might be accurate, we shouldn't be too sure about drawing such connections
- Finally, the flood comes to an end

[Gen. 8:13](#) Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up.

[Gen. 8:14](#) In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.

[Gen. 8:15](#) Then God spoke to Noah, saying,

[Gen. 8:16](#) "Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you.

[Gen. 8:17](#) "Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth."

[Gen. 8:18](#) So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.

[Gen. 8:19](#) Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark.

- The flood began in Noah's 600th year, and now in the 601st year of his life, we reach the end
 - On New Years day, 29 days after the third dove release, Noah removed the cover to the window and noticed the earth was dry
 - This means that as far as Noah could see, the water was gone
 - Then he waited another 57 days before leaving the ark

- This was time to allow the uncovered land to dry up and become firm again
- So the total time Noah spent in the ark was 378 days
 - If we remove the extra week they spent before the flood arrived, then the total was 371 days
 - Since the Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar, the 371 days correspond to 365 days on the solar calendar
 - In other words, the flood event has lasted exactly one solar year
- Now the Lord speaks to Noah, probably for the first time since Noah entered the ark
 - The last thing Noah heard from God was “Go in.”
 - Now the next thing Noah hears is “Go out.”
 - And take your family and animals with you
 - And let them fill the earth again
 - Because Noah heard the first command so clearly, he waited obediently to hear the next – a reminder for us all
 - As we hear this command, keep in mind that all the families of the earth descend from just three families
 - Shem, Ham and Japeth produced all the families of the earth
- From this point, mankind experienced a dramatic change in the length of life
 - Noah himself lives 950 years
 - His sons live into their 600s
 - These ages are consistent with the lifespans of men before the flood
 - But the next generation only lives half as long
 - Three generations later, lifespans have been cut in half again
 - And three more generations later, life spans have been cut in half once more

- Many have proposed theories for why length of age dropped off so quickly after the flood
 - Some favor a prominent theory related to the loss of the water stored in the heavens above
 - Somehow the canopy helped men live longer, but then without it, they died
- But that theory doesn't make sense scientifically
 - First, if the long life spans were created by environmental conditions, then Noah and his sons should have seen their own lives cut short after the flood
 - Instead they live as long as those before the flood
 - Secondly, we would expect the length of life to drop immediately to present day levels since the atmosphere changed immediately
 - For example, if Seth's children could live over 400 years under present atmospheric conditions, why can't we?
 - Instead, it took almost 1,000 years before men's lifespans dropped to present day levels
- I believe the answer is much simpler
 - First, we know that all the earth is wearing out and growing weaker as God intended due to the curse on the ground
 - This curse also affects men's bodies, as we taught in Genesis 3
 - Our bodies will weaken over time according to this curse
 - When they were created, Adam and Woman were perfect, so the effects of this curse on their bodies was to slowly introduce weaknesses
 - These weaknesses have taken the form of genetic defects in our DNA
 - As these defects are introduced as a result of the curse, they are transferred to our offspring and build up in the human population of DNA
 - At first, these defects were few and far between, so men lived very long lives, as God designed the body

- Between Adam and Methuselah, the lifespan of men hardly changed at all
- But after the flood, the DNA pool for mankind had been severely restricted
 - Now all future generations of men would come from just three families, who shared much of the same DNA
 - And therefore, they shared the same defects
- Under these conditions, we would expect defects to build up in the population of men much faster
 - And as these defects accumulate in the population, they lead to more vulnerability to disease and a weakening of body tissues, etc.
 - Because Noah and his sons were born before the Flood, they had few defects and lived the usual long life of their ancestors
 - But immediately, their children and especially their grandchildren and great grandchildren saw steep declines in lifespan
 - If you chart the drop-off rate of life spans, it is a near perfect exponential curve, as you would expect for the propagation of DNA errors
- This also explains today why we see so many diseases growing
 - Lifespans have been shrinking since the time of Noah
 - And the only reason we saw a temporary rise in lifespan in the last century was because recent advances in medical science have masked the effect
 - But even now that effect is reversing
 - Now even modern medicine is powerless to stop the march of God's curse in reducing the vitality of the body
- Finally, Noah exits the ark

[Gen. 8:20](#) Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

Gen. 8:21 The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.

Gen. 8:22 “While the earth remains,
Seedtime and harvest,
And cold and heat,
And summer and winter,
And day and night
Shall not cease.”

- After leaving the Ark, Noah’s first act is to build an altar and make a sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord
 - This is the first mention of altars in the Bible
 - The Flood destroyed, among other things, the Garden of Eden – and the glory of God is no longer resting on the Earth in that place
 - In that time, men could approach the Garden though not enter
 - And the Garden served as a type of temple, in that it was a house for God and a place for men to see God’s visible glory
 - With the Garden gone, now men would meet with God on altars of sacrifice
 - This act of obedience and worship pleased the Lord, and because of Noah’s obedience, God makes a promise
 - He promises to never again destroy the Earth with water
 - He will still destroy the Earth as required by the curse in the Garden
 - But He won’t cover it in water again
 - In fact, in v.22 God says that all will remain predictable on the earth from this point forward
 - But notice this promise for regular predictable patterns only continues as long as the earth remains
 - It doesn’t guarantee that the earth itself remains
- But most importantly, notice the short phrase in v.21 that God adds

- He says that though He will never destroy the Earth again with water, don't think that this means the flood has cured man's sin problem
 - God adds that the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth
 - All his life, man has an evil heart, and this promise doesn't change that fact
 - Therefore, it doesn't change God's need to address the sin of mankind
 - Ultimately, God will judgment it completely and destroy every last remnant of it
 - But He will also provide a way to escape this judgment through faith in a Messiah Who removes the penalty of our sin