

## THE FLOOD - Genesis 6-9

### The World's Greatest Events #3

In 1835, the state of the art passenger ship was a steamship called the Lexington. This beautiful vessel claimed the title of being the fastest in the world- it would steam through the ocean waves at 16 miles per hour. The Lexington was 205 feet long, weighing 488 tons. She ran a route between N.Y. City and Providence R.I. for four years until her builder, Cornelius Vanderbilt decided to sell her in 1839 for 20 thousand dollars.

But the Lexington is not remembered today for the many passengers that she shuttled back and forth through the Long Island Sound. She is rather remembered because of the change she made in media coverage in our country. One year after Vanderbilt sold the Lexington, she was making her routine trip under new ownership when a fire broke out while she was still 2 miles from shore. Only a hand full survived clinging to flotation devices in the icy waters. 136 people drowned. The next day, all of the newspapers along the eastern coast carried the story of the Lexington's disaster- but the N.Y. Sun alone carried a 7 column story that included what is regarded today as the first illustrated article. The N.Y. Sun had a vivid lithograph print of the burning ship. This lithograph print on the newspaper started a new age in newspaper reporting, and most of us today cannot even imagine a newspaper without pictures scattered throughout it. But this lithograph print also started a career for a young 26 year old lithographer who along with his partner found a market for spectacular scenes of great destruction. They soon realized from the public response to the Lexington burning in the ocean that the public wanted to see these disasters, these great tragedies. So Nate and Jim after this lithograph of the Lexington, became known in their day as the disaster experts. Whenever there was a human tragedy, Nate and Jim were called to the scene immediately to give a visual image of it so that these pictures could be run in newspapers throughout our country.

It is interesting that time has almost completely erased the reputation that Nate and Jim had in their day of being depictees of human tragedies. Perhaps that is because of the sophistication of the mass media today in bringing all sorts of gory scenes right into our living rooms. But perhaps it is also because of the lasting quality of beauty. For Nate and Jim remain well known individuals, but they are remembered today for gentle country sides, for Christmas card settings of long ago- Nathaniel Courier and James Ives.

People have always been fascinated with human tragedy. Especially, disasters occurring at sea. Perhaps this is because of the mystery of the sea, our fear of so much that is unknown about it. But whatever the reason, salvage expeditions of the Titanic or other sea tragedies still find their way to the front pages of newspapers.

There is a judgment that is recorded in the bible that dwarfs all other sea disasters that have ever

happened. This sea disaster is of such a magnitude that it would have to be included with in the top ten list of world events. People have always been fascinated by this event. Almost every major ancient civilization has a flood story in its traditions. Expeditions are formed even to this day to try to recover the remains of the ark. This event was recorded in the Bible by Moses some 3,500 years ago, but we can't be dogmatic about the exact date when it occurred. We do know many of the details, however, for God gave them to us through Moses. And God revealed the account of the world-wide flood not to satisfy our curiosity but to teach us some very valuable lessons for living.

The account of the world-wide flood is recorded in Gen. 6-9. Gen. 6:1-7 gives to us the reason for the flood. Gen. 6:8- chapter 8 gives to us the execution of the flood. And Gen. 9 gives us the aftermath of the flood- God's covenant with Noah. In this account we have the first world-wide judgment of God. It is critically important that we see this- for there has been promised by God a second world-wide judgment.

\*The first world wide judgment has already occurred many years ago; the second is yet to occur in human history.

\*The first world wide judgment was by covering the earth with water; the second will be executed by covering the earth with fire.

\*But despite the differences between the 2, there are also many similarities. Both are worldwide judgments of God; both are executed in the midst of similar worldwide conditions.

1. Notice with me the reasons for God's worldwide judgment in the flood. READ Gen. 6:1-7.

GE 6:1 When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup> the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. <sup>3</sup> Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

GE 6:4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days--and also afterward--when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

GE 6:5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. <sup>6</sup> The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. <sup>7</sup> 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."

Now there has been much discussion concerning the identity of the sons of God and daughters of men. We don't have time to delve deeply into this controversy this morning. Let me just give to you the 3 major views:

a. sons of God are the descendants of the godly line from Seth given in Gen. 5. The daughters of men are the ungodly line from Cain given in Gen. 4. The results of this unequal yoking of godliness with

ungodliness was the watering down of the true worship of God and the greater acceptance of pagan, worldly practices to the point where true worship of God became almost wiped off the face of the earth- there was only one righteous family left. This appears to be the most natural interpretation from the immediate context.

b. But there are others who have advocated that the sons of God were fallen angels who took upon themselves human bodies and they married with natural human beings, the daughters of men. And it is true that the term sons of God does apply to angelic beings sometimes in the Bible, and this interpretation could possibly explain the angels who left their unique positions and are now bound in chains (Jude 6,7) and the existence of the gigantic creatures- the Nephilim. Many fine Bible teachers have held this view in the past.

c. A third more recent and minority view is that the sons of God were rulers- kings and princes- while the daughters of men were common people. These rulers took many wives in polygamous relationships and used their power to subject great masses of people into slavery.

Whatever the view- and probably the 1st or 2nd is the best (I lean toward the 1st)- there are several observations that are clear from the text, and it is interesting to note the parallels to our day:

a. There was some kind of breakdown in the family structure. In describing this time, Jesus uses the phrase marrying and giving in marriage up to the day when Noah went into the ark in Matt. 24:38. The continuous nature of the verb indicates some kind of breakdown in the family structure- whether people constantly marrying new mates or taking on multiple mates in polygamous relationships.

b. The breakdown in the family structure lead to great wickedness- so much so that every inclination of the thoughts of human hearts were evil all the time. The human race had become obsessed with sin. They couldn't get enough of it.

c. And this wickedness lead to great grief in the heart of God and a decision that he had to make to execute judgment so that the human race could be spared. The human race was down to one righteous family. It was Noah and his family- and that was it. So then, the Bible makes it clear that the flood was an act of judgment from God because of the intolerable wickedness of the human race. God is concerned with the actions of his creatures. And he is deeply grieved when he sees cultures fall into wicked and sinful practices.

2. But let's move on now to look at the execution of God's world-wide judgment.

READ Gen. 6:11-22

GE 6:11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. <sup>12</sup> God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. <sup>13</sup> So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy

both them and the earth. <sup>14</sup> So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. <sup>15</sup> This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

GE 6:22 Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Now this account raises many questions in our minds. How could Noah fit 2 of every kind of animal into one ship? How could Noah care for all of these animals? How could God cover the entire earth with water when all of the water that we have in our atmosphere today is not sufficient to do it? If every cloud were wrung dry, and every glacier along with the ice caps at the north and south pole melted we still wouldn't have enough water to cover our mountains. Now, we don't have time this morning to go into detail in answering all these questions- refer to The Genesis Flood by Henry Morris and John Whitcomb- but let's just address a few.

\*one of the common misconceptions regarding the flood was the size of the ark compared to the number of animals required to go into it. Most people just assume that it would be impossible to fit 2 of every kind of animal on the earth today into one ship.

\*Let me take you into the ark this morning. Imagine with me that this sanctuary is the ark. Imagine this sanctuary 4 times as long, almost twice as wide and twice as high from the peak. That is roughly the size of the ark.

\*So if you can imagine a sanctuary of this size, you can get a feel for the size of this ark. It was huge. It was not until 1884 that we know of another ship that was built as large as the ark- the Euria.

\*The ark had 3 levels- so imagine a floor 2/3rds of the way up to the peak and then 2 more stories above that. This would give the ark 95,700 sq. ft. of deck area- a total volume of 1,396,000 cu. ft. It would be equivalent to a train 1,044 cars long. And it is interesting that long before the day of modern shipbuilding, God's ratio in building the ark was 6-1- the best for stability in open seas.

\*Alright, you might be thinking. The ark was a huge ship- but was it really big enough for 2 of every kind of

animal.

According to Ernst Mayr, a leading taxonomist, there are approximately :

\*3,500 different kinds of mammals

\*8,600 birds

\*5,500 reptiles and amphibians

\*18,000 fishes

\*1,700 tunicates

\*4,700 Echinoderms

\*815,000 arthropods (insects)

\*88,000 mollusks

\*25,000 worms

\*5,000 sponges

\*15,000 protozoans

8 of these major types live in the water

1 can survive in the water

1 is too small for consideration- insects

So there are 3 major kinds of animals to consider- mammals, birds and reptiles, totaling 17,600 distinct kinds.

If you take 2 of every kind, you have 35,200 individual animals. The 7 of the clean animals is such a small number that we really don't have to consider it in our calculations.

\*Mayr tells us that the average size of a land breathing animal- mammal, bird, and reptile - is a sheep. And we must always remember that all of the animals, but especially the larger ones, could have been babies. Nothing in the account indicates that the animals were adults.

According to H.W. Vaughn in the book "Types and Market Classes of Live Stock", if sheep are transported by rail across the country, they can comfortably be transported 120 to a railroad car.

\*So then if we let a train 1044 cars long represent the square footage in the ark, only 293 cars would be needed to transport all 35,200 animals- or not even a third of the space of the train. That would allow Noah to give the animals even more room for greater comfort, and still allow ample room for food supplies.

\*But how did Noah care for all these animals? After all, a zoo today employs many more employees than just the 8 in Noah's family for fewer animals. And what about the natural animosity that some animals might have for others- lions and sheep for instance.

\*In Pycraft's book entitled "Hibernation" he makes an interesting statement that I believe gives a possible explanation to this seeming dilemma. He writes, the capacity for "hibernation and estivation occur in every

group of vertebrates save birds, and its pre-disposing causes, immediate and remote, are by no means uniform."

\*Hibernation and estivation are the abilities that animals have to sleep for long periods of time living off stored up fat. Hibernation is a winter sleep occurring when food is not as plentiful; estivation is a summer sleep during severe times of drought and heat. We are familiar with certain types of animals like bears that regularly hibernate, but most animals do not hibernate today because there is food enough for survival. But it is interesting that all types of mammals and reptiles have the innate ability to hibernate during extreme conditions according to Pycraft. There would be no condition more extreme than a world-wide flood. Could it be that a great majority at least of the animals hibernated throughout the flood?

\*Now let's address the water issue briefly. Yes, it is true that every drop of water in our atmosphere today would not cover the tops of the mountains. But the reason for this is not just the volume of water; it is the depths of the ocean floors and the height of the mountain ranges. If the earth were a cue ball, there would be water 2 miles deep over its entire surface. It very well could be that some of the ocean floor depths and mountain top peaks were extended by the pressures of the flood, and that the earth was not as extreme in its heights and depths before the flood came. So you see this objection as well does not hold water.

\*And there are so many other of the natural phenomena that have been discovered that could not be explained in any other way than by some world-wide catastrophe like a flood.

-huge fossil graveyards in the Rocky Mountains at the end of canyons where literally millions of animal bones have been deposited. They obviously were swept down there by some torrent of water

-the estimated 5,000,000 mammals that are preserved frozen in Siberia and Alaska- many with their hair and flesh intact, some even with green leaves in their mouths and undigested food in their stomachs. These animals were obviously going about daily life when some catastrophe suddenly overtook them.

\*Now my purpose this morning is not to completely answer every objection raised to a world-wide flood. Time would not permit this and I frankly don't have the ability to do this – flood apologetics is not my field of expertise. But I hope that you have been able to see that many of the objections that are just assumed don't hold water upon closer scrutiny. And if you want to research this subject out more thoroughly, I would be happy to loan you books that have been written by scholars who are experts in this field.

3. Now we could go on and on with this interesting subject- but we must conclude by looking at 2 lessons to be learned from God's judgment in the world-wide flood - one of comfort, one of warning.

The first lesson that we need to learn should give tremendous confidence and comfort to us. God knows how to rescue his people from troubles. READ 2 Peter 2:4-9

2PE 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into

gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; <sup>5</sup> if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; <sup>6</sup> if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; <sup>7</sup> and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men <sup>8</sup> (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)-- <sup>9</sup> if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

God knows how to take care of his people during times of disaster. Noah and Lot are exhibit A and B in God's abilities to care for his people, Peter says. Here are 2 of the greatest tragedies known to man- the world wide flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet in both cases, God took care of his people.

What confidence this truth should give to us today. What tragedy could we ever face that is greater than the world wide flood or Sodom and Gomorrah being buried by fire and brimstone? If God spared Noah and even Lot who was a carnal believer, will he also not come to our aid in times of trouble?

But there is also a warning found in the flood for it is a picture of an event yet to come on planet earth.

READ 2 Peter 3:3-13

2PE 3:3 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. <sup>4</sup> They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." <sup>5</sup> But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. <sup>6</sup> By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. <sup>7</sup> By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2PE 3:8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

2PE 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

2PE 3:11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives <sup>12</sup> as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. <sup>13</sup> But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

This passage contains a warning. The Bible 2,000 years ago predicted the very day in which we are

living. You can't find a better definition of the theory of uniformitarianism than Peter gives in verse 4. "Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." There is no supernatural. Everything runs by natural laws. Since the beginning of time, all that there is has developed slowly and systematically without divine intervention. The theory of evolution and all of our modern dating methods are based upon the theory of uniformitarianism.

But Noah is Peter's argument against this type of thinking. The flood proved that God will judge human wickedness, and that he is able to judge quickly and thoroughly. Just as he judged the world once, he has promised that there is coming another world-wide judgment. And just as the people of Noah's day scoffed at him and didn't listen to the warning, so the majority today are scoffing at God's word. But those who are wise will heed the warning that Peter gives.

What is that warning? It is found in verse 14- So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him.

Don't confuse God's patience with weakness. God is able to carry out catastrophic judgments. He has done so in the past and he has promised that it will happen again in the future. So make every effort to be at peace with him.

Are you at peace with God this morning?