

Genesis Lesson 5: Dried Out and Covenant Bound

Read Genesis 8

In our last study, we were in the midst of the flood with Genesis 7:24 stating that “the water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days”. “But God remembered Noah” is how Genesis 8:1 begins. God has not forgotten, nor forsaken, obedient Noah. He gets to work on drying everything out by sending wind and closing all sources of further flooding. I think after more than six months of confinement I might seriously doubt that God still remembers me. It had to be a tremendous sense of relief to just finally be ashore, even if it was on the top of a mountain. Perhaps even more exciting for Noah was finally opening a window. That must have been wonderful on all his senses after being deprived of it for so long.

As you know, he sends a raven out first, most likely to see if the water has diminished enough for the raven to safely land in trees. Later, he sends a dove, which is more of a ground fowl, which would let him know if there is any dry ground, not just dry tree tops. I am humbled and astonished at Noah’s submission in all of this. Despite knowing the ground is somewhat dry because the dove does not return, he still waits on the Lord to tell him when it is time to leave the ark. In Genesis 8:13, Noah even removes the covering of the ark and knows that the ground is dry, but still he waits patiently. In fact, he has to wait almost two more months before God finally speaks and gives the command to “go out of the ark”. We often read this account like “God said this, Noah did this; God said that, Noah did that”,

but when you truly contemplate what God asked of Noah, those “Noah did” statements become very powerful. In writing this lesson, I am overwhelmed with the conviction of such great patience, trust, and submission. Noah was not just the guy who built the ark, he is an extraordinary example of how God wants us to live our lives in complete and utter submission to Him.

The day finally arrives when Noah, his family, and all the living creatures get to step onto solid ground again. Often times it seems we leave our children in Bible class with the impression that the flood was merely a time frame of 40 days and 40 nights. That is hardly the case. When all is said and done, Noah and his family have been on the ark for over an entire year. What relief and pleasure it must have been for them all when they stepped off the ark and back onto the earth.

Think About It

What do you think it was like for Noah to open that window?

Has God or is God currently asking you to wait on Him and, if so, is it easy and is it worth it?

Finer Grounds

What are some things we can do in our everyday lives to help improve our ability to readily submit and wait on our Lord?

Can you think of some verses that we can meditate and study on to help us become more like Noah in submission, patience, and/or obedience?

What is the first thing Noah does when he disembarks the ark? (Genesis 8:20)

According to Genesis 8:22, what things will not cease as long as the earth remains?

Read Genesis 9

It seems almost immediately that God gives Noah direction and knowledge which is exactly what we always need, especially after a tragedy. He lets him know that all the animals will fear him (man) and everything is now eligible to be food for them. The Hebrew word in Genesis 9:2 for “fear” is MOWRA and it means “fear, dread, or terror” and the word “dread” in the same verse is CHATH which means “concretely crushed,

afraid, or terror”. There is no doubt that the animal kingdom in general fears mankind. I watched an episode of a nature show one time that did an experiment. They placed plastic models of a man and two other animals, one of which was a lion’s usual prey and one which was not. Not surprisingly, the lion attacked the usual prey first. Realizing it was not real, it then attacked the other animal. Last, and much later, it gathered the courage to attack the immobile plastic man. I find it very reassuring that we seem to be their last resort for food. That fact is not by chance. Yes, they can and do attack at times, but it is almost always out of self-defense, starvation, or some other provocation. Imagine what life would be like if God had not put that fear in animals. We can thank God for that fear and for allowing us to become omnivores after the flood, which I am also quite grateful for, even if it does possibly contribute to our shorter life span.

Ultimately God wants a covenant and uses the rainbow as a sign to remember that covenant. We do not know if rainbows existed before Genesis 9. We don’t even know if rain existed before the flood, but either way, the rainbow is a consistent reminder of God’s great love and mercy towards mankind. The Hebrew word in Genesis 9:12 for “sign”, OWTTH, means “signal, flag, beacon, evidence, monument, or mark”. The rainbow is a monument and it is evidence. I hope we will stop and thank Him for His great promise every time we get the privilege to see one.

If you were still wondering if God really meant that He destroyed all those on earth except the eight in the ark, He confirms it again in Genesis 9:19 when He states that “the whole earth was populated” from Noah’s three sons.

Finer Grounds

Just like we discussed in our last lesson, God is very clear that this was indeed a global flood.

Life after the flood for Noah consisted of farming. Unfortunately, Noah makes a bad decision and becomes intoxicated from the fruit of his labors. The last part of chapter 9 tells the familiar story of his naked drunkenness and his youngest son's sin surrounding that event. We are not told exactly how Ham sinned against his father, but it is obviously shameful. When Ham "told" his brothers about their father's nakedness in Genesis 9:22, he apparently did so in a derogatory way. The Hebrew word for "told" in that verse is NAGAD and means "exposed, stand boldly out, or announce". Ham certainly was not showing honor to his father. Interestingly, it is Ham's son, Canaan, who Noah ends up cursing. In contrast, Noah's other two sons seem to display a tremendous amount of respect towards their father by concealing his state, averting their eyes, and even walking backwards in order to not shame him.

Think About It

In Genesis 9:1, what does God do and what does He say to Noah?

Ham's son, Canaan, is mentioned in Genesis 9:18, again in Genesis 9:22, and then is the one who is cursed in Genesis 9:25-27. Do you think there is any importance in this and, if so, what?

Have you ever dishonored your brother or sister by verbalizing their sin needlessly to someone else?

Can you think of some verses that condemn this type of dishonor?

Do you strive to honor others by helping them with their struggles instead of gossiping about them?

Can you think of some verses that support this type of honor?

Next time we will delve a little deeper into Noah's three sons and try to learn more about our God and what He desires of us through the account of Babel. I hope you will continue to join us and not allow the things of this life to pull you from the words of life.