

## 18. The God of the new beginning

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When we are searching the Bible for something encouraging to read due to our spiritual, physical, or emotional situation, many of us would turn to Romans chapter 8. But a very few people would remember God's faithfulness shown in Genesis chapter 8.

In this chapter, we can find hope and encouragement because the main theme of this chapter is renewal and rest after the tribulation. It tells about the end of a worldwide flood and the beginning of new life and hope for God's chosen people and His creation.

### A. GOD REMEMBERED

*Genesis 8:1-5 Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2 The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. 3 And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. 4 Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. 5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.*

It is not that God forgot about Noah and left His heavenly faucet on. I've done that a few times and flooded my front yard and street. He doesn't have 'Green Valley Moment' as we do. So who'll stop the rain? God!

Our Lord can't forget anything because He knows the end from the beginning. Rather, it means "to pay attention to, to fulfill a promise and act on behalf of somebody." This is using our language to help us get a picture of God. The Lord didn't forget about Noah, and the Lord doesn't forget about us, either.

We can be sure that God never forgets or forsakes His people, not only because of His promises but also because of His character. God is love, and where there's love, there's faithfulness. He can never deny Himself or His Word because He's the faithful God, and He can never change because He's immutable. Because He's perfect, God can't change for the better; and because He's holy, He can't change for the worse. We can depend on Him no matter what our circumstances or no matter how we feel.

Sometimes He works in a dramatic way in our lives. And sometimes months or years go by, and nothing dramatic happens. You're just living the Christian life by faith. You wonder, "Is God even paying attention to me anymore?" He is. And you know what? You just need to do the last thing He told you to do and be faithful there.

Remember this: God always finishes what He starts. That is why He is called the Author and Finisher of our faith.

*Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*

According to Genesis 7:24, the flood reached its peak in 150 days. The torrential rain and the eruptions of water from beneath the earth had both ceased, and during the next 5 months, God caused the water to recede and leave the dry land behind.

Then, those who are analytical among you have this mind-boggling question: “Where did all the floodwaters go?” Never underestimate the power of moving water. It’s possible that the flood greatly altered the shapes of the land and created new areas for the water to fill, both on the surface of the earth and underground. Since there were eruptions from beneath the earth that translate to major earthquakes, whole continents and mountain ranges could have risen and fallen, creating huge areas into which the water could get into. The winds that God sent over the earth helped to evaporate the water and also move it to the places God had provided.

According to an US Geological Society’s report, about 71% of the earth’s surface is water-covered, and the oceans hold about 96.5% of all earth’s water. Water also exists in the air as water vapor, in rivers, and lakes, in ice caps, and glaciers, and all the living beings. Up to 60% of the human adult body is water.

A God powerful enough to cover the earth with water is also wise enough to know how to dispose of it when its work is done.

Before we move on to the next portion of the Scripture, I need to pay attention to v4, please. The ark rested on the 7th month, the 17th day. Do you know what day Jesus rose from the dead? It was on the 17th day of the 7th month on the Jewish calendar – during that month they ushered in the new year with the Feast of Trumpets and celebrated the day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles according to Leviticus 23:23–44. The Passover takes place on the 14th day. Jesus was 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth, so it was on the 17th day of the 7th month that Jesus rose from the dead. It was on this same day that the ark rested.

## **B. WHICH ONE ARE YOU?**

*Genesis 8:6-12 So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. 7 Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. 8 He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. 9 But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. 10 And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. 11 Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. 12 So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.*

What do you know? Noah found his new hobby – bird watching.

Why didn’t that raven come back? The raven was classified as an unclean bird according to the law of God in the OT. The raven went out into a judged world, but he found a feast in the dead carcasses because they were the things he lived on. The bloated carcass of an elephant would have made him a banquet. That is the picture of the old nature of man. The old nature loves the things of the world and feasts on them. But the problem is that we sow into flesh, we shall reap from the flesh.

Noah waited a week and then sent out a dove, which, being a clean bird, found no place to land. The dove went out into a judged world, but she found no rest, no satisfaction, and she returned to the ark. The dove represents the believer in the world.

A week later Noah sent the dove out again, and when it returned with a fresh olive leaf, Noah knew that the plants were growing and fresh life had appeared on the earth. A dove bearing an olive leaf is a familiar symbol of peace around the world. A week later, when Noah sent the dove out the third time, it didn't return; so he knew the water had dried up.

*1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Let me ask you this very personal question: What kind of bird are you? Are you a raven or a dove? You might be thinking, "Did you just call me 'bird brain'?" Well, it depends on your answer. I ask you again: "Which one are you? Do you love the world so much that you don't care about the Lord? Or do you love Him enough to give up those worldly things to please Him?"

### **C. OUTSIDE, EVERYONE**

*Genesis 8:13-19 And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. 14 And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried. 15 Then God spoke to Noah, saying, 16 "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." 18 So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. 19 Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.*

We don't know exactly how long it took for Noah and his family work on this ark, but during that time, he also preached the righteousness of God and told people to repent from their sins. The only return they received was mockeries. He endured them with his faith in God. He was a man of faith whose name is recorded in the Hall of Faith chapter – the Book of Hebrews chapter 11.

Noah had the faith to walk with God when the people of the world were ignoring and disobeying God. He had the faith to work for God and to witness for God when opposition to truth was the popular thing. Now that the flood was over, he exercised faith to wait on God before leaving the ark.

After being confined to the ark for over a year – 370 days to be exact, he and his family must have yearned to get back on dry land, but they waited for God's directions. Circumstances on the earth looked suitable for their disembarking, but that was no guarantee that God wanted them to exit immediately and begin their new life.

To me, this is absolutely beyond amazing. If we were Noah, many of us would run out of the door as soon as the ark rested on the dry ground. But not Noah. He waited upon the Lord's command patiently.

Obedient faith is our response to God's Word, because "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" as it is mentioned in Romans 10:17.

God rewarded Noah's faith, and the faith of his family, by caring for them in the ark for all that time and then preparing the earth for them so that they could leave the ark. Noah was like a "second Adam" as he made this new beginning for the human race. God had brought the earth out of the waters during creation week, preparing it for Adam and Eve, and now He had brought the earth through the flood and made it ready for Noah and his family. The Lord even gave Noah's family and the animals the same mandate that He had given at the beginning: "Be fruitful and multiply."

What was it that caused the rest of mankind to reject God's word and perish? They were like the people in our Lord's parable in Luke 14:16-24 who were occupied with the ordinary things of daily life and unconcerned about eternity. They believed that life would go on as it always had and that nothing would change. They said that God wouldn't invade the world or interrupt the scheme of things, but He did. People today have the same attitude concerning the return of the Lord.

#### **D. WORSHIP THE LORD WHO KEPT THEM SAFE**

*Genesis 8:20-22 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. 21 And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. 22 "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease."*

Noah's first act after leaving the ark was not kissing the ground, rather worshiping the Lord who kept them safe through their sacrifices. We should imitate Noah's gratitude and admiration of God's greatness and deliverance lead him to worship Him.

In OT days, when you sacrificed a burnt offering, you gave the entire animal or bird to the Lord with nothing kept back. "All on the altar" was the biblical law because the sacrifice symbolized total dedication to the Lord. Noah gave himself and his family completely to the Lord. God had graciously protected them and brought them through the storm, so it was only fitting that they make themselves available to the Lord to do His will.

How often we call upon the Lord in our hour of need? But then when He answers our prayer, we all too often forget about Him. That's why we have a long list of prayer requests while we have a very short list of praise reports.

Noah remembered God. He called on the Lord and brought a sacrifice before Him. And we can do the same and we should do that same. One way is by reading the Bible daily and pray daily. Don't say you'd do it if you can find the time. You ain't gonna find time because it is not in your priority. We desperately need to make time to be with the Lord through His Word and prayers.

Another way is by giving thanks to God before a meal. We call it saying grace. I think it's a really great thing to see people bowing their heads in prayer in a restaurant.

I am sure that many of you noticed this chapter 8 started with God remembering Noah because of His faithfulness, but now it ends with Noah remembering God for His faithfulness.

### ***E. APPLICATIONS***

- 1) We should just hold our course. Keep doing what God has told us to do from the Bible.
- 2) We should not love the world or the things in the world. If we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us.
- 3) We should give thanks to the Lord for His promises and faithfulness to fulfill them in every aspect of our life.