

Genesis

The Water Recedes & The Ark Empties
6.25.2023



THE JOURNEY
CHURCH

SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 8:1-19

SERMON NOTES:

Consider this thought: when Noah steps onto the ark he is one of billions of people on the planet. When he steps off the boat the next time is the only one. If you want an image that captures the drastic change that happens from the first rain drop to the ark doors opening again, that's the one.

In our passage today we see the waters recede and the ark empty. From it we're going to learn about the importance of patience and waiting on God, and God's view of the primacy of the family.

Exegesis: Genesis 8:1-19

VS 1 -- But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided.

Why does it say that God remembered Noah and all the beasts and livestock on the ark with him? It's not implying that God could have forgotten them. But it is signifying that His wrath and judgment fell on the earth...and for day after day, for 40 days, and then 150 days after the rains ceased (5 months), it could have looked like they were forgotten.

Oftentimes in the dark moments of life we can feel forgotten or that God does not remember us. But He does. He remembers you.

God made a wind blow over the earth and the waters began to subside. Notice the specific wording: God made a wind blow. Don't ever forget that our God is in the Heavens and does all that He pleases, but the "all that He pleases" includes things like the falling of sparrows to the ground or a wind blown on the waters. He is transcendent above and beyond us, but immanent, active, and near.

VS 2-4 -- 2 The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, 3 and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, 4 and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.

At the end of the 150 days the waters had abated and receded. In the seventh month and seventeenth day, the ark hit solid ground again for the first time in a long time. The boat rested on the mountains of Ararat. This is a region around Turkey and Iran. Mount Ararat has become the traditional resting place of Noah's ark. Armenians began to associate the mountain with the ark's landing place in the 11th century AD. Greater Ararat is the highest peak in Turkey at 16,854 feet. Being the highest peak, it would have been the first mountain to appear above the floodwaters; therefore, many assume the ark would have had a greater chance of landing there.

VS 5 -- And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

The waters continue to drop, slowly but steadily. On the tenth month, the first day of the month, the tops of mountains were seen. So about 3 months after the ark settles on the mountain, the water finally drops enough for the mountain tops to come into view.

VS 6-7 -- 6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made 7 and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.

40 Days after this, Noah opens a window of the ark and sends a raven out. Why? Well, the raven specifically feeds on carrion amongst other things. What is carrion? The decaying flesh of dead animals. There would have been plenty of that floating atop the waters and beginning to emerge on the high grounds as water receded. After all, where do you think humans and animals alike fled to as the rains and floods continued? The high ground. The raven went to and fro until the waters dried up. This likely means the raven went back and forth from the ark and away from it.

VS 8-9 -- 8 Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. 9 But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him.

Then Moses sends a dove to see if the waters had dropped further. This indicates to us that Moses' "window" is likely not something you're imagining with great visibility. He cannot tell what is happening outside and needs to use these animals to gauge it. But the dove finds no tree tops or vegetation to land, so she returns to the ark. Noah receives her back and brings her back into the ark.

VS 10-12 -- 10 He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. 11 And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. 12 Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

Noah waits another seven days, a week, before sending the dove out again. This practice of sending the dove out every seven days shows the rhythm of a week and likely corresponded with worship and Sabbath keeping. This second time the dove goes out it comes back with a freshly plucked olive leaf, signifying the waters had dropped further. Now the vegetation is beginning to emerge and blossom. This is important for a number of the herbivores on the ark. Noah knows now that the waters have subsided. Then he waits seven more days and sends the dove out again. This time the dove doesn't return. Consider how patient Noah and his family have to be. They've been on the ark for months and months. The water's appear to have receded, but he waits seven more days before sending out the dove again. The dove's departure for good informs Moses that it has left and found shelter. The water is gone from the earth.

VS 13-14 -- 13 In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. 14 In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out.

This dating of the first month and first day of the month, when taken with the previous information, shows that this happens exactly one month after the release of the dove for the third time. Again, patience. Noah removed the covering of the ark (the roof). He saw the earth for the first time in quite a while, and it was dry. The second month and on the twenty-seventh day, the earth had dried out. It has now been a total of 57 days since the covering of the ark was removed.

vs 15-19 -- 15 Then God said to Noah, 16 “Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm 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 beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

God tells Noah to leave the ark with his family and all the living creatures with him. The animals and creeping things are free to swarm the earth again. They are released. In fact, they are set out to be fruitful and multiply on the earth (a repeat of the original mandate). Everything leaves the ark for good, and they go out by families.

God's judgment fell on the earth, but Noah and the creatures on the ark survived. The rains ceased and receded. And we finally have everyone off the ark. Why is it in a text like this for us to observe and learn?

Application:

1. We must have patience and wait for God's timing.

This can be applied in an infinite number of scenarios. We are not patient people. The allure of instant gratification plagues all of us. If something must be worked for or waited for, we don't want it. This is not different in our walk with God. Our prayer lives often fail because we have no capacity to wait on God. We struggle with feeling abandoned and left because we want God to remove us from suffering instead of enduring patiently and with trust. We begin to doubt and struggle in our faith because God's promises don't always execute on our timing.

The story of Noah and ark, particularly the length of time waiting before moving is a story of patience and waiting to hear from God. Noah didn't jump the gun and dart out of the ark on first sight of ground. He waited. He waited for God's instructions.

When was the last time you waited for something until you felt God directed your actions? Did you wait before having that conversation? Did you wait to see how God led you before moving on to another plan? Now, this isn't a license to be indecisive or never make decisions. What it is is an invitation to trust God to lead you, direct you, and provide answers to your prayers as you endure with patience.

2. Our world needs a recovery of the household.

The exit off the ark is something worth reflecting on for a few moments. Notice that their entrance on the ark is described as pairs, but their exit is described as families. This includes Noah's family, but all also the living creatures with them. One reason is the pairs likely had offspring during this year on the boat. But the other reason is because the exit from the boat reminds us of how God builds a society, and how it will be built in the repopulating of the earth. Notice they're not described as getting off the boat individually, but as families.

The home, the family is vital to a healthy society. The household is the fundamental building block for a thriving society. We live in a society today that possesses a worldview that sees everything as individualistic. "I'm an individual in a world of individuals. I'm an autonomous person that chooses my destiny and forges my way." But this worldview is not a biblical worldview. The biblical worldview emphasizes not the individual, but the household. This is why most of the ancient world arranged the marriages of their children rather than everyone going off and finding their own spouse. Parents worked to find their children a suitable match and a new household was formed. And those households became united to one another as a result. This is also why household voting existed in our country. Women didn't vote, not because people were against women, but because it was unthinkable that a household would be divided in their vote. The vote was cast by the head of house for the house. Now, listen, don't leave here saying Pastor Erik is against women voting. Do not. My point is to show you that our society looks very different today in large part because we've diminished the importance of the household and turned everything into individualism.

But I believe the way we recover our society today is by recovering a vision of the household. Homes with fathers, mothers, and children. This is why marriage between a man and woman is so important, but it is also why these institutions are crushed in our country. Marriage rates plummet while divorce rates skyrocket. More children are born into broken and single-parent homes today than ever before. Those children have the greatest risk for lifetime poverty, drug-use, crime, and much more. Not because they are bad kids, but because of the dissolution of the household.

The way we recover a society is to begin with men who want to take responsibility. Notice over and over it is Noah and his family mentioned. Noah, and his family. His name is on the line. He has responsibility. We need a recovery of men who live under the headship of the King. We need men who seek responsibility and do their duty as God calls. Men thrive under the weight of responsibility. It's good for us to feel that pressure to provide and protect our household. The abortion issue in our country would disappear with the emergence of men who acted like men. There wouldn't be out of wedlock

pregnancies, and if there were, those men would take responsibility to care for the mother and his child. Abortion would disappear if men stepped up.

Michael Foster says, *"As a man goes, so goes his household; as a household goes, so goes the church; and as the church goes, so goes society."*

Do you think it is an accident that the metaphor used to describe the Redeemer of the universe and the people He rescues is that of a husband and wife. Christ and the Church are the bridegroom and bride. The restoration of society comes as people join the bride in allegiance to our bridegroom. And when He returns again for the redemption of all things and remakes society forever, church bells will ring as the bridegroom comes.

The picture of Noah's long-suffering and patience as he rode the waters, then waited for so long after the boat settled on the mountain before being able to exit is a picture of the waiting Israel would undergo as they looked for the Messiah. They waited. They longed for the day of redemption and freedom, just as Noah and the residents of the ark.

But like in our story today, God delivered in His timing.

Galatians 4:4-7 -- 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

When the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son. God knows the timing. He's never early or late. His perfect wisdom governs and guides all His actions. He knows the timing of that family member or friend you're longing to see come to faith.

But today could also be the day your wait is over. For somebody here, it could be the day the Lord calls you on to dry ground. He's calling you to trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and salvation of your soul. If you hear that call in the conviction of your heart, that is the Lord leading you to Himself. Go to Him! Confess your need for Him and believe He will receive you.

We are also in a time of waiting today as we ride the turbulent waves of suffering and trials in this present life. We long for the Day of Christ's return to make all things new. The resurrected and living Christ promises to return to the earth and stop the rains of

rebellion and the floods of suffering and pain. He will come and restore the earth and usher in the New Heavens and New Earth. We're waiting. He calls us to faithful patience and trust in Him as we wait. But rest assured. The days may seem long as we keep waiting. We may question while on the ark why we can't just get off, why He doesn't just come, but we know the Day will come. The door will open, Christ will descend, and He will fulfill all His promises. That's all He knows how to do. So in the waiting we fix our eyes on Jesus and pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, come."

REVIEW:

- ❖ What does it mean that God remembered Noah in Genesis 8:1? Had he forgotten Noah?
- ❖ How do the events in verses 1-19 correspond to Genesis 1:2-26?
- ❖ What is the significance of how God instructed Noah to leave the ark in verses 15-19?

REFLECT:

- ❖ How do we see trust and patience reflected in these verses?

RESPOND:

- ❖ When was the last time you waited for something until you felt God directed your actions?
- ❖ How can you be more patient waiting for God to direct your steps?

MEDITATE:

- ❖ Genesis 8:15-19 - 15 Then God said to Noah, 16 "Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm 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 beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

MEMORIZE:

- ❖ Galatians 4:4-5 - 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

PRAYER FOCUS:

- ❖ Executive Pastor - **Matt Espenshade**
- ❖ Ministry - **Jail Ministry**
- ❖ **Pray for our long-term families:**
 - The Wilsons
 - The Grays

- The Starks (departing in October)
- ❖ **Pray for our mid-term sent ones:**
 - Abby & Katherine (gap year - returning in August)
 - Kaesi (gap year - departing in August)
- ❖ Pray for our short-term teams:
 - Southeast Asia team departed on June 23
 - Central Asia team departs in September
- ❖ **Pray for the lost - Unreached People Group (UPG): Iraqi Arab in Australia**
 - **Population in country:** 72,000
 - **Global population:** 19,653,900
 - **Christian Adherent:** 4.00%
 - **Evangelical:** 1.00%
 - **Primary Religion:** Islam
 - **Primary Language:** Arabic, Mesopotamian Spoken
 - **Summary:** Due to the wars, oppression and unrest in Iraq the past 40 years, many Arabs have left the Middle East and immigrated to Australia. Moving to a modern Western nation has been a shock for most Iraqi Arabs. Their children have been quick to learn English and adopt Western ways. Parents want their children to retain Islamic culture and the strong Iraqi emphasis on the family.
 - **Prayer Focus:** A small fraction of Iraqi Arabs in Australia claim to be followers of Jesus. Pray that these Christians would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to draw Muslims into a living faith in Christ. Pray these believers would cling fervently to Jesus and the truth of the gospel and share freely with their fellow Arabs. Ask the Lord to send loving workers to the Iraqi Arabs in Australia. Pray that Australian churches would sponsor newly arrived Iraqis. Pray that Iraqi Arabs would be open to the gospel.