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Noah: An Heir of Redemption Genesis 3

Introduction:

Last week we learned about the tragic fall of Adam and Eve. We learned that at the heart of Adam's sin was the same motive that Lucifer had when he rebelled against God: to be like God.

God then gives Adam and Eve the price tag of their sin which will serve to remind all of humanity of the curse of sin: For the woman, what was designed to serve as a reminder of life will now serve as a reminder of death through the pain of child bearing, and for man: reaping food from the ground was meant to remind him of life, but now farming the ground will be accompanied by pain to remind Adam of death.

But what we learned last week that gave Adam and Eve hope and gives us hope today is the promise of a Messiah (in Genesis 3:15) who would bring redemption to many. As a result of Adam's faith in God's promise of redemption, he names his wife Eve, which means mother of the living because he believed that she would give birth to the One who would crush Satan and restore people to Paradise once more.

What has taken place in the lives of the first couple and their descendants since we last left off is that Adam and Eve had a son by the name of Cain, who they believed to be the seed that God had promised would reverse the curse of sin. Eve's response to her first born son was, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord."

Literally Genesis 4:1 reads, "I have brought forth a man, even the deliverer [the one who gives life]."¹ I think that Adam and Eve really believed this about their first born son, but they were painfully wrong, for the truth of the matter is that Cain was everything but the deliverer, the one who gives life.

What we learn from God's story is that Cain took the life of his own brother out of a fit of jealous rage because Abel's heart was right before God, and things didn't get any better, for out of Cain's descendants was born Lamech.

Lamech was no angel, for he was the first polygamist who boasted in killing a boy. But that is not the end, for while Cain's descendants gave way to a very wicked generation, Adam and Eve

¹ James Montgomery Boice. *Genesis, Vol. 1*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998. p. 250.

had a third son: Seth (who was godly); as a result of Seth's birth people began to call upon the Lord.

What we have developing in Genesis 4-5 is the development of a wicked line of descendants from Cain and a godly line of descendants from Seth. Francis Schaeffer has termed these two lines of descendants "the two humanities."²

What you have going on here is the development of one group of people who called upon Yahweh as their God, but the descendants of Lamech wanted nothing to do with Yahweh.

So now that we understand what is going on, there are three things we learn from the flood account...

The Propensity of Man's Heart is Wicked (Genesis 6:5-8)

⁵*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* ⁶*And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.* ⁷*So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them."* ⁸*But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.*

What we see here is the result of Adam and Eve's sin. It is here that we get a real look at the sinfulness of the human heart [depravity]. This is what is meant by verse 5, "...the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Verse 11 shows us that this evil was breaking out everywhere, "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence." We get a glimpse of the gravity of this evil in verses 1-4...

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them,² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.³ Then the LORD said, ^z "My Spirit shall not abide in¹ man forever, ^afor he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years."⁴ The Nephilim² were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.³

So what is going on here? Some believe the Nephilim were giants in Genesis 6, but I am not so sure. The word Nephilim in Hebrew is also translated in other places as violent men. *The*

² Ibid., 269.

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament understands them as "powerful, arrogant, polygamous people."

The next question that we need to answer is who are the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men?" There are several views concerning this passage...

- The "sons of God" are fallen angels who had sexual relations with human women ("daughters of men").
- The "sons of God" represent the godly line of Seth (the seed of God) and the "daughters of men" represent the ungodly line of Cain (the seed of Satan).
- The "sons of God" are kings (believed by the people to be "sons of the gods") who practiced rampant polygamy by taking any common woman they wanted ("daughters of men").

So what is meant in Genesis 6:1-4, is that the kings of the land, who were regarded as gods, took as many wives as they wanted and this was their sin. The offspring in verse 4 became the powerful princes which Genesis calls, "the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown" who tried to extend their fathers' power by tyrannical injustice (men of the name).

As time progressed so did the polygamy and violence in Noah's day. So evil were the people in Noah's generation that the Bible tells us, "every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." In other words, there was rampant immorality, violence, and polygamy, and this was the intention and motive of every human heart except for one man, Noah.

The resounding lesson we learn from the Bible is that each and every one of us has the same problem Noah and his generation has, a corrupt heart. Listen to Romans 3; it gives us a picture of the motives of Noah's generation and every generation that has proceeded from him to our day...

As it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. ¹³ Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." The venom of asps is under their lips. ¹⁴ Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. ¹⁵ Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ in their paths are ruin and misery, ¹⁷ and the way of peace they have not known. ¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes."

This is the condition of the human heart, and what we need to understand here is that we all have the potential to be like those in Noah's generation just like we have the potential to fly planes into building for the purpose of killing thousands, but it is by the grace of God we have not worked out our depravity to that end.

Noah's generation was pretty close to working out their depravity fully, and so God was fed-up and the well of His patience ran dry, which leads me to our second point...

The Patience of God is Limited (Genesis 6:7-17)

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³ And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶ Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷ For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die.

Somehow we have gotten it into our minds that God is an "aw-shucks" God. Somehow He is painted as a God who shrugs at our sin and simply passes it off, "aw-shucks that's ok son/daughter..." If we learn anything from the life of Noah, it is that God is not an "aw-shucks" kind of God.

Sin is serious stuff and God takes it that way because He hates sin! When it comes to the issue of sin, there is a limit to His patience. There comes a time when God says ENOUGH is ENOUGH! We see this all throughout the Bible...

- We see God's patience run dry when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Over and over again we see how God dealt with Israel's sin of idolatry when He used a foreign pagan nation to take them captive because of their unfaithfulness to Him.
- And one day God will permanently eradicate sin at the Great White Throne Judgment.

What we see in Genesis 6 is the first time God judged sin in a cataclysmic way. What does He decide to do? Destroy mankind. Look at verse 7, listen to what He says, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them."

This was not some freak accident or some chance happening, God caused it! But, God caused it for a reason: "...the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that EVERY intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." So God delivers three hammer blow statements that deliver Genesis 7:21 ...

- *I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.* (verse 7)
- *I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.* (verse 13)

- ...*behold, I will bring a flood of water upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die.* (verse 17)

And what we read in Genesis 7:21, shows us that the flood was not just some flood on earth, this was an “Aquatic Holocaust;” listen to that verse, “And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind.”

This is not some simple children’s story; this is a horrific event that happened in history. Millions of people were swept away by the great flood that God caused. We’re talking all kinds of tsunamis, tidal waves, and rushing rivers of mass destruction specifically delivered for the purpose of wiping out humanity.

This phenomena happened. Every culture has a flood account, much of their accounts are distortions of the one we have in Genesis 6-7, but nonetheless there are accounts of a world-wide flood; some even believe they have found the remains of the ark on Mt. Arrat.

The fact of the matter is this: God wiped out many, many people because His patience for them to repent and seek Him ran dry, so He needed to deal with sin because His character demanded it, so He did. But if this was the end of the story, we would not be in this auditorium talking about it; praise God that He is faithful to His promises...

The Promise of God’s Redemptive Plan is Sure (Genesis 6:18-22)

¹⁸ *But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.* ¹⁹ *And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female.* ²⁰ *Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive.* ²¹ *Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.* ²² *Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.*

So what we have seen so far is a dark picture of human depravity. The gene pool from Cain all the way down to Noah’s generation represented the seed of the serpent and the gene pool from Seth represented the seed of God. The problem is that somehow these two groups became one wicked mess.

And just at this point we see the dark thunderclouds of God’s wrath against human sin over the horizon of human history; we see the rays of God’s mercy and grace peek through, and the promise of redemption dawns.

Notice verse 8, “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.” We don’t read that Noah earned God’s favor, it doesn’t say Noah was perfect and as a result found favor with God. No, Noah simply found favor with God. The word “favor” here also means “grace.” This is the first place we see this word used, “*Noah found grace.*”

We know Noah was not sinless because we discover later on after the flood he got drunk, but regardless of his sin problem, Noah found grace with God. James Montgomery Boice put it this way,

...here for the first time grace is explicitly mentioned. Since this is said of a time when the evil of a degenerate race was at its zenith, it indicates that so long as life lasts, regardless of the extent of the evil, there is always opportunity to find God's grace where alone it can be found, namely, in the work of Jesus Christ in dying for his people's salvation. Noah may not have known details about the future work of Christ, but he looked forward to the deliverer and ordered his life accordingly.⁴

So what does God do with Noah? He enters into a covenantal relationship with Noah, look what God tells Noah, "I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you."

God establishes a covenant with Noah to bring the promised Seed [Messiah] through Noah. Notice that Noah does not establish a covenant relationship with God; again here we see a God who seeks out the people with whom He will establish a relationship. Noah was not looking for God, God looked for Noah and Noah became a recipient of God's grace.

What were the terms of the covenant established with Noah? First, God established the way he would save Noah and his family from condemnation, namely, the ark. Secondly, God decided who would be the recipients of His saving grace. We need to understand that Noah was passive in this whole deal of how God would save him and his family. In Genesis 9 we learn that God established the rainbow as a covenantal reminder that He would never again destroy the living with a flood.

What we will see in the weeks to follow is that God is a covenant keeping God. He established a covenant to bring the redeemer with Noah, He will establish a covenant with Abraham that his seed would bless all nations, He would promise the circumcision of the heart through a prophet like him, and He will establish one with King David in which his descendent will sit on the throne forever.

All of God's covenants were unilateral (no dependence of the covenant's fulfillment dependent on man), and by His Grace alone. What we will learn in the weeks to come is that the Old Testament covenants that God established with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David point to one that is not conditional on our obedience but the obedience of the Son of Man: Jesus Christ. This is the One person that the Bible tells us, "all the promises of God find their Yes."

Today we remember that covenant, it is the one that the Prophet Jeremiah foretold in Jeremiah 31:31-34...

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 318.

³¹ Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The Bible tells us in the New Testament that this covenant has been established with us through the work of Christ (Hebrews 8:1-13; 10:1-18).

But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises... For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. (Hebrews 8:6-7)

What God did for one family through a giant boat, He did for millions through His Son on a Roman cross, listen to how Peter describes how Christ established the New Covenant with us...

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹ in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

We are saved from the floods of God's wrath by our identification with Jesus Christ as a result of our full faith and confidence in His work on the Cross and His resurrection; Jesus is the rock on which all who want salvation must stand.

We remember the New Covenant that Christ established through His death, burial, and resurrection in the practice of communion.

This is exactly what He told his disciples shortly before his death...

¹⁴ And when the hour came, he reclined at the table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of

*God comes." ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (Luke 22:14-20)*

"...for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:28-29)