

**THE FIRST FLOOD**<sup>1</sup>

Genesis 6

**Intro:** This past week has been a week which we will not soon forget. In some ways I hope that we will never forget it. Snow, ice, then moderating temperature and heavy rains have caused one of the worst floods in Oregon history. The damage and loss to homes, personal possessions, and property has been devastating. Highways have been covered with mud or washed out altogether. Worst of all, there has been some loss of life. It has been a very sobering time for everyone. Hundreds of people have given volunteer service in order to help in any way that they could. That part has been very encouraging and very heart-warming. Radio and TV have given long hours covering the flooding, and have been of help in countless ways.

However, the interpretations which have been put on the storm and the flooding has been very disappointing, to say the least. We have heard over and over statements to the effect that "Mother Nature is in charge." A few people, very few, have thanked God when they have experienced a deliverance of some kind. Some have taken the name of the Lord in vain when they have been telling about their experiences in the storm. But that has really been the extent publicly, from what I have heard, of any reference to God throughout this whole week. But Mother Nature has been mentioned over and over. From what I can gather about people's comments, they are not talking about a person. In fact, I am surprised that we have not heard from women's liberation groups objecting to the name, Mother Nature. Gloria Steinem, or somebody like her, should have suggested that we speak of Father Nature. But then, when the storm is over, and things get peaceful again, they would want to go back to Mother Nature.

The truth is that there is no Mother Nature, neither is there any Father Nature. But there is a God in heaven who rules over all of the affairs of earth. We live, not in a world which has evolved itself, but in a world which was created by God. And God has never relinquished His control over the earth. Man has chosen to ignore God, or to recognize God suddenly in a time of disaster (so that he can blame God), but all of the rest of the time man is pleased to live as though there is no God. Solomon spoke of man's tendency to blame God when he wrote in the book of

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<sup>1</sup> This message was given on Sunday after a week of severe flooding in western Oregon and SW Washington.

Proverbs,

The foolishness of man perverteth his way, **and his heart fretteth against the Lord** (Prov. 19:3).

— As terrible as the consequences of this Flood of 1996 have been, and as terrible as many other floods have been throughout human history, there was one flood that was worse than any flood that has ever come on the earth. We read about it in the Bible. The first time the word flood appears in the Bible is in Gen. 6:17; the second is in the next chapter (7), verses 6, 7, 10, 17.

What makes the record in Scripture so very valuable is that it is a true record, telling us not only what happened, but explaining the reason for the flood. The flood which came on the earth in the days of Noah was **THE FIRST FLOOD** that the world ever experienced. In fact, as far as we know, that was the first time that it had ever rained on the earth! It rained for forty days and forty nights. The constant downpour itself must have been very terrifying to people who had never seen rain before.

But the tragedy was not fully calculated until we see what the result was. We read about this in Gen. 7:21-23. (Read.) Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives, were the only survivors. Thank God, according to — His promise, there never has been another flood like the one the Lord brought upon the earth in those days, and there never will be. The whole population of the earth was destroyed; only eight people survived.

Before I go any farther in the story of the flood in Noah's day, let me call your attention to a verse which the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Rome, telling us the importance of the OT. Here it is. I am reading Rom. 15:4:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

— God has given us His Word, called here "the things" which "were written aforetime," because He wanted to teach us something for it. And He has preserved His Word so that in our generation we could learn. However, the truth is that our generation has not learned what God would teach us. And one of the main reasons we have not learned is because we (and I say "we" meaning people generally) -- our generation does not read the Bible. And so we are missing a lot which God intended for us to learn. We learn things from the Bible that we cannot learn from any other source. So if we do not read the Bible, we are making the worst mistake

we could possibly make. Our eternal destiny is bound up in what God has told us in His Word. If you ignore the Bible and its message, you do it to your eternal loss.

So what does the Bible teach us about floods?

Contrary to most of what we have heard this past week,

## **I. THE BIBLE TEACHES US THAT THE LORD BRINGS FLOODS, NOT MOTHER NATURE.**

We all have to agree that floods are not a blessing (unless through them we wake up). No, floods are not a blessing; they are a curse. Now water is a blessing. We couldn't live without water. Not only do we need water in order to live, but our waterways give us some of the most beautiful scenes that we have on earth. God has created the beauties of nature for us to enjoy. Lakes, streams, rivers, waterfalls, the seas give us constant pleasure. Much of the food we eat comes from the waters of the earth. Water enables us to grow food. The living creatures of the earth are just as dependent as we are upon water. Rains keep the water supply of the earth sufficient for all life on the earth. Without water we would not have beautiful flowers and trees which we all enjoy so much.

Where did all of this come from? Did it just happen? Is it the result of a process of evolution? Anybody who believes that is just not thinking straight -- to state it as kindly as I can. Where did we come from? Where did this earth come from? Where did the sun come from, and the rain to water the earth? God made the earth and all that is upon the earth, and everything of nature that exists above the earth. But not only did He make it; He sustains it. He keeps it going. He controls it all. If the Lord were to withdraw His hand from the operation of the universe for a millionth of a second, or less than that, all of the universe would immediately be in chaos! The Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ, God's Son, upholds all things by the word of His power. See Heb. 1:3.

Where does the rain come from? Listen to what the Lord Jesus Christ had to say on one occasion about both the sun and the rain:

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust (Matt. 5:44-45).

God makes the sun rise, and God makes it rain.

Many years before our Lord was only earth, the prophet Jeremiah wrote these words, speaking of what the Lord does:

15 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.

16 When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures (Jer.

51:15-16).

We have had trouble with the wind also this past week. God is responsible for that, too.

What is happening, then, when we get too much rain, and we have floods, and when we get too much wind which adds to all of the destruction? Obviously God is displeased, and He turns that which He intended to be for our livelihood into a measure of great destruction and suffering.

And so there is a very important lesson to learn from **THE FIRST FLOOD**. It is this:

## **II. A FLOOD IS A JUDGMENT FROM GOD.**

Let me read to you Gen. 6:17. (Read.) Mother Nature did not destroy life on the earth in Noah's day; God did it!

But why, you ask? Scripture answers that question for us, too.

## **III. THE REASON FOR THE JUDGMENT.**

Look at Gen. 6:5-7, 11-13.

Do you think that God is ignorant and blind to what is taking place on the earth today, especially in our own country? We live in a generation of people who do not like to talk or even think about God. And so we don't like to talk in terms of sin, or wickedness, or evil, or unrighteousness. We like to think that right and wrong are no longer absolutes. We like to think that we can all decide what is right or wrong for us, but that we have no right to tell others what is right or wrong for them -- but please don't call any wrongdoing sin! This is why we as a nation don't want to read the Bible, nor to hear it taught. It makes us uncomfortable. It makes

us realize that everything is NOT OK when we want to think that it is.

Let me tell you that nothing escapes the eye of God. You may be able to hide your sins from the people in your life, but you can't hide a single thing from God -- not even your thoughts.

On the authority of Scripture let me say today after we all have witnessed THE FLOOD OF 1996, as it has been called, that God is speaking to us. And He is not only speaking to us; He is speaking to our whole country, and to the whole world. Dr. Lewis Johnson called me on Friday and wanted to know how the flood waters had affected us. And then he said this significant thing. He said, "Portland is getting a lot of publicity in Texas these days." Our daughter Carolyn who lives in Orlando told us on the phone that she had seen the terrible pictures of our flood on TV. What has happened in Oregon and Washington is not just a warning to us; it is a warning to the whole world. God is displeased with what is going on on the earth.

But I can hear somebody saying, "Oh, what happened in Noah's day (if you are foolish enough to believe that) has nothing to do with us today. Is that right? Listen to these words of our Lord Jesus Christ:

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all (Luke 17:26-27).

This means that in spite of the message God gave to the world when He destroyed all living creatures except for those who were with Noah in the ark, span all of human history from the days of Noah until the Lord returns to the earth, and you will find people in that future day still doing what they were doing in Noah's day in spite of the warning that God gave then, and the warnings that He has continued to give every times there is a flood on the earth. And I don't need to remind you that our country has been ravaged by floods this Fall and Winter! God is speaking to us, to our nation, and to the whole world!

But let me conclude by asking, Is there any hope? Yes, there is. The same flood which has caused so much destruction in our states of Washington and Oregon, has also a message of hope for us.

**IV. A MESSAGE OF HOPE TO BE FOUND IN "THE FLOOD OF**

1996.”

“The flood of 1996” is not over for many people. Some may never recover their losses, and where family members have drowned, that is the most serious of all losses. But with others, homes will be cleaned up, or rebuilt. Our highways will be cleared off, and rebuilt where they have been washed away. Yet we can be thankful that our rain did not last for forty days and forty nights. If it had, we in our generation would have been destroyed, too. But God has sounded another warning. And this is an act of the grace of God. But we need to listen to what God is saying in this great tragedy. We need to forsake our sins, or perish -- not just in another flood (although a worse one could come on us), but perish eternally.

We are told by the Apostle Peter in 2 Pet. 2:5 that Noah was “a preacher of righteousness.” The implication in Gen. 6:3 is that he preached the Gospel for an hundred and twenty years while he was continually building the ark. This is why the Apostle Peter also spoke in 1 Pet. 3:20 of “the longsuffering of God,” and how God was waiting while Noah was preaching and building the ark. What was God waiting for? He was waiting for people to believe Noah’s warning of God’s judgment, not just a judgment of water, but of eternal judgment, and to repent of their sins, and obey God.

A flood is a warning of God’s displeasure with the kind of lives people are living on the earth, but even in a flood there is a message of mercy because God has promised that He will never again destroy the world by water. That is what a rainbow means. However, the day is coming when God’s mercy will turn to wrath, and all who do not know our Savior will fall under the judgment of God from which there will be no escape -- ever!

**Concl:** Sometimes I feel like we need to apologize to the world for the ridiculous things that are going on today in churches and in so-called Christian organizations outside the church. But this is where we need to call people back to the Scriptures. Our Lord Jesus told a group of religious Jews to search the Scriptures because there they would find eternal life because there they would find the Lord Jesus Christ. There is not a person living on the earth today who is not a sinner. The difference is that some are saved sinners, and all others are still under divine judgment facing an eternal hell.

How can a condemned sinner be transformed into a saved sinner whose

life will be changed? There is only one way. You must come like Noah did. He was just as deserving of the judgment of God as anyone else was, but he “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8). Finding grace, he believed in the promise of a coming Savior, was cleansed of his sins, and declared to be righteous before God. So if you are not trusting in Christ for your salvation, come to God and humbly seek His grace that you, too, may believe that Christ died to save sinners, and that His death is sufficient for the forgiveness and cleansing of all of your sins.

Before I close, let me give a brief word to those of us who know the Savior. It is so easy for us to get caught up in the sins of a wicked world -- if not in actual acts of sin, at least in our thoughts, and often in what we read, or in what we look at -- people, pictures, books we read. These are days when we need to “cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” Let me read in conclusion what Paul wrote to the church at Rome in Rom. 13:11-14:

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

These are not days for us to be compromising with sin. These are days in which we need to be walking with the Lord, and seeking to please Him every day that we live. May God enable us by His Holy Spirit to do just that.