

11: Genesis 7-9

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Genesis 7

- And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died.
 - Those who reject the Flood and say it can't have happened that he got all animals of all types - they forget one point... that more than half of animals can swim. And those that can swim, he wouldn't take in the ark (why would he?). He also takes from every kind not necessarily every species. He also might take the smallest he can find and they will grow.
- So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.
 - Noah and his family were in the ark but they did not know how long it would last. And this is what happens with us - sometimes we are in a hardship and we don't know how long it will last. But God knows. And God knows how much food they have and how much time they can last in the ark, and how much food they have for animals, and how the animals will grow. God takes all of this into account.

Genesis 8

- Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark.
 - The expressions are human expressions just for our human understanding. "God remembered" doesn't mean that God had forgotten. But rather it means that God determined the time was right.
- And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased.
 - The wind did a lot of things - stopped the fountains, closed the rains, etc.
 - One thing he forgot to mention before is that this idea of a great flood is attested to by many ancient myths and legends from around the world... Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Mexican, etc. So since it's mentioned all over the world, it must have some basis.

- Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.
 - They say this mountain is in Armenia now (near Turkey in Asia Minor)
 - Several years ago they made a discovery that was remnants of a large boat with the same type of wood, preserved under ice for a while...
- 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.
 - Spiritual understanding: The wind usually represents the Holy Spirit. We see that whenever there is chaos, the Spirit of God appears to bring order. For example in Genesis 1 – the earth was without form and void and the Spirit of God hovered over the waters. Now we see that the earth is covered in water, and a great wind comes. The Holy Spirit typically comes to bring life to what is dead (Giver of Life).
- So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth.
 - So Noah opened the window to see what was going on, sent out a raven but he found no way for his feet
- He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. 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.
- And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. 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.
 - This means that there are trees starting to appear!
 - A dove holding a green olive leaf – green leaf is a symbol of life. The dove that carried the leaf is St Mary. We call St Mary “the pure turtledove”. When the dove came back with an olive leaf, their family must have rejoiced in knowing that there was life! That the waters were receding!
- So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.
 - An invitation to leave the ark
- 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. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried.
 - The difference between second month and first month is when Noah looked out, he saw that they could probably walk on the ground but it was still wet... but a month later, the land had dried.
- Then God spoke to Noah, saying, “Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your son and your sons’ wives with you.
 - Noah sent the dove and it didn’t come back – so it must be ok to leave. He took off the covering and looked at the ground and it was dry – so it must be ok to leave. But Noah did not leave until God told him.
 - Patience of Noah – even though his mind, eyes and ears are telling him he’s good, he puts those senses to the side and waits for God

- When we want to make a decision, think about it, research it, ask people, get an understanding – but don't you dare make the decision without praying. Even if in your reasoning and knowledge you see that it's a good decision, lean on God.
- This reminds us of another story in Genesis – when Jacob's sons came and told him "Joseph is alive and he's ruling over Egypt" – Joseph, his favorite son, he said "I must go see him before I die." And what did he do? He went and offered sacrifices to God and prayed and God spoke to him and said "go to Egypt, see your son, I will go with you and I will bring you back"
- Men of God ask and think but don't enter a decision until they have talked to God
- 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."
 - So obviously the idea of taking a male and a female was so they could reproduce
- So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.
- Then Noah built an altar to the Lord
 - Coming out of the ark, they might have thought "we have to plant and sow and figure out what to do with these animals, where to take them, how to raise them... we have so much work!"
 - But before everything, Noah built an altar to the Lord. "Why didn't you pray the 150 days in the ark?!" He prayed before, he prayed during, he prayed after.
 - This is the first time in the Bible we hear of an altar – I'm sure Abel had an altar but this is the first time the word is mentioned
 - Anytime we go somewhere, the first thing we should do is build an altar... pray! Going on a trip, first thing to do when you get there is pray. Going to school, say a prayer. Getting in your car, say a prayer.
- And took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.
 - This shows us why he had to bring 7 of each clean animal. God knew that Noah out of the abundance of his gratitude and love for God he would make lots of sacrifices to God. Noah took of EVERY clean animal and of EVERY Clean bird and offered burnt offerings
 - Imagine that Noah spent several days offering sacrifices – and God likes this. When we go to pray to God and we don't limit ourselves. Many times we pray while looking at our watch. Or we pray just an hour of the Agpeya and rush through it to be done with it. But the one that prays without considering the time or considering the outside world and just wants to be with God – this is what God loves.
 - It reminds us of the story of Solomon who went to Gibeon to pray and stayed up all night praying and offered 1000 sacrifices! Nowhere in the law does it say to offer 1000 sacrifices. He wasn't there on a feast or a special day. He just wanted to pray. And at the end of the night, Christ appeared to Him.
- And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma
 - Of course this is another human expression and symbolic – God loved the sweet aroma of Noah's faith, his love, his thankfulness

- Then the Lord said in His heart,
 - How do we know what God said in His heart? God revealed this to Moses through the Holy Spirit (think of all the days Moses spent on the mountain with God) – God could tell him “On that day I said in my heart...”
- “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake
 - One person made such a difference with God. One person who loves God and who offers sacrifices and who is so thankful
- Although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth;
 - If man’s heart is evil from his youth, then the solution is the Incarnation
- Nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.
 - If God knew that the plan was the Incarnation, why have the flood in the first place?
 - It was a sign for all generations and all nations. This is what evil brings about. And Christ Himself calls it a sign “For as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Matthew 24:37-39)
- “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.”
 - God is saying everything will go back to normal – this is as a new Creation. Let us go back to the seasons as usual

Genesis 9

- So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”
 - The same commandment given to Adam is given again to Noah and his children
 - Instead of one couple (Adam and Eve), there are now four couples
 - This idea of a new Creation is the Church. The Church is what brought forth new life. The Church is our life. The Church is our ark. This is different from what the Protestants preach “between you and God” – one of the Church Fathers said “You cannot call God your Father without calling the Church your mother.”
 - In the New Testament, the Church, the commandment is still “be fruitful and multiply” – “go therefore to all nations baptizing them.” It does not matter to us how many millions of humans there are – but what matters is that they are raised in a spiritual way and enter the New Testament ark and go to heaven
- And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea
 - Same as what Adam got
- They are given into your hand
 - Genesis 2 and 3 God told Adam “from every tree of the garden, eat” and after Adam left Eden, God told him to eat from the ground
 - Now God is allowing for man to eat meat – as if he is making it easier for them to eat
 - This could be one way that man’s life is limited (though of course after the flood there were many changes)
- Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.

- We can take a simple explanation of fasting here. In heaven, they don't eat! No bodies! So when we fast it is a way of trying to be like the heavenly. But then we reach the point of needing to eat – getting hungry. So we say “should I eat like Noah or like Adam?” and say “I'll eat like Adam because Adam was in the garden. Before the Fall, before sin, etc. So fasting is trying to eat like those in heaven and if I can't reach that level or I can't do that all day, the next best thing is Adam and Eve before the Fall of Man.
- But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.
 - Even here before Moses this law is given
- Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of man's brother I will require the life of man. “Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed;
 - All of this is before the Law of Moses. So the Law they depend on thus far is the tradition given to them from their father Adam. But now God is starting to give them some more specific laws. And he starts with this law – “whoever shed's man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed” – He is going back to Cain's mistake
- For in the image of God He made man.”
 - This is a confirmation of what was said before and a reminder of what the most important part of Creation – man was made in the image of God. This is the difference between man and animal – both have blood, but only one has the image of God.
- And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it.” Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: “And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”
 - New promise from God and it's a good one - Noah and his descendants would probably be terrified that if they made any mistake another flood would come. So God gave them a promise. There won't be another flood like this – doesn't mean there won't be floods or rain. But not like this.
- And God said: “This is a sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.”
 - This is a beautiful meaning and a sign. Everyone has seen a rainbow. Many people say “we've never seen a clear sign from God.” – HOW? You've never seen a thunderstorm with lightning and winds and then it goes away and there's a rainbow? This means that God since the days of Noah – 2500 years before Christ – is the same and His word is unchanging. And He set this covenant and you have witnessed it. Of course with physics we can explain why the rainbow appears and that's fine! But when we see it, we see a sign from God.
- It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud;
- And I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” And God said to Noah,

“This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

- God gives the sign to review the promise/covenant
- Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan.
 - The children were all probably born after the flood
 - Noah is giving us Canaan nice and early because we'll be talking about Canaan for the rest of the Old Testament – telling us that he came from Ham.
- These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard
 - So now Noah was full of spirituality thus far – before the Flood, during the Flood, immediately after the Flood. But as things begin to settle down, we don't hear about altars or sacrifices or prayers. And we see that he even descends to drunkenness... it reminds us of David who's heart was after God and lived in prayer day and night while being chased by Saul, but once he took the throne, he started to get lazy and fell to sin. [The same happens with us. We're so full of prayer and holiness and God during Pascha week and then Resurrection hits and we're full of meat and cheese.]
- Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent.
 - Noah who walked with God as a friend, who God revealed His plan to, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord, who was the only man on earth that God chose, who lived a life of prayer, who was described as a just man and perfect, a character the likes of whom would not be repeated... and yet he fell in sin.
 - And it was the first time in history that we learn of drunkenness and the effect that alcohol can have. It's mindboggling that this doesn't scare people away from alcohol – what alcohol did to a righteous man like Noah.
- And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.
 - Abouna seems to read here that Canaan was the one who saw his grandfather naked, and went and told his father Ham, who went and told his brothers. And this is why the curse is pronounced on Canaan – because God in His foreknowledge knew the type of people that would come from him. And this is confirmed in the next verse “his younger son” – but Japheth was the youngest... so it refers here to his grandson.
 - They did not lose or release the respect they had for their father – they covered him so he could sleep in peace and wake up and offer repentance on their own. As opposed to Ham who went and told them.
 - Sometimes our fathers (whether biological or spiritual) - we might find that they make a mistake or have a weakness or they do something we don't like. But we do not lose the respect for them. Instead of bringing it to light and telling everyone. Because Noah, despite his sin, was still valuable and beloved by God.
 - See how Shem and Japheth work together for righteousness... many times we come together and work on gossip and stories and backbiting
- So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him.
 - Younger son confirms that it was Canaan the grandson that saw Noah, since Japheth was youngest of the three
- Then he said: “Cursed by Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren.”

- And he said: “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem; and may Canaan be his servant.”
 - Of course you realize that Abraham comes from the line of Shem
 - And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.
 - Even after you pass a hard time (like the Flood) there is still life after it. Same with Job.
 - During tribulation, you might think it will never end and it is terrible, but God has a plan for after.
 - Moses after 40 years in the wilderness thought his life was over – but God had 40 more years leading Israel planned for him. Joseph after all the time in slavery and prison – God had so much more planned for him.
 - Don’t take your days for granted – but let your days be an introduction to eternal life.
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