

Our Covenant God – Part Twenty One

As it was in the days of Noah – Part 3

In part twenty of this study, we saw how people had corrupted themselves and deteriorated from people who knew God to people of a debased mind who no longer had any relationship with God because they had rejected him and worshipped false gods. Because they had contaminated the whole Earth, God pronounced judgment.

Genesis 6:5 (NKJV) Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

Was every person's heart evil? No, only those who were sons of Man, not sons of God. Noah's heart was not evil because the Bible describes him as a just and perfect man.

To save Noah, his family, and living creatures, God told Noah to build an ark out of wood. It appears that it took 120 years for Noah and his family to build it. This would be their safe haven, their shelter from the destruction. It would carry them and some of the animals through the Flood and onto dry land.

Methuselah

Before we look at the Flood itself, there is one more point about "as it was in the days of Noah". If you look at the graph of people's lifespans and dates of death, you will see that Methuselah died the same year that the Flood began. Jewish tradition states that he died seven days before the rain began. If so, then Genesis 7:1-4 happened the day Methuselah died.

Methuselah's death is very significant. Firstly, his name has a rather peculiar meaning because it means "when he dies, it will be sent." What will be sent? In retrospect, we can see that it was the Flood that was sent after he died. His name was a prophecy. Whenever anyone spoke his name, they were declaring that the judgment would come once Methuselah died.

Methuselah is the oldest man to have ever lived. He died when he was 969 years old. His long life is a picture of God's patience because it seems that God stretched Methuselah's life out as long as was fitting to give people as much opportunity to repent as possible.

In 2 Peter 3, Peter writes to the church and explains that there will be a final judgment and Creation will be destroyed, not by water this time, but by fire. He likens it to the destruction of the Flood in Noah's day and explains:

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV) The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

This is something I have found to be very strange about people: It seems so easy for us to accept God's judgment but it seems so hard to receive His mercy. It is easy to see Him as being harsh and condemning but difficult to see Him as being gracious and kind. But the truth is that when God declares judgment, He always wants people to repent because He longs to show them mercy. He does not want them to be destroyed. We see this from Adam to Jesus. In fact, one of the most beautiful demonstrations of this is in the book of Jonah where Ninevah had judgment pronounced against her but, because the

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people repented before God, the city was saved. God never changes! He always wants people to live and not die and He expects His people (that's us) to have the same heart towards sinners (ask poor Jonah)!

Ezekiel 33:8 (NKJV) When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

Peter tells us that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness." Can you see him preaching repentance to the people as he built the Ark? And yet, only eight people entered the Ark. People were so divorced from God that they would not even repent.

The Flood

According to *Noah's Ark & The Biblical Flood* by Joseph Meier (DVD), nearly 200 ancient cultures with the capability to keep a written or oral history have records of an all-encompassing flood – one with astounding parallels to the biblical flood account of Noah's Ark. Only the name of Noah changes.

In fact, clay tablets unearthed from the ancient city of Ninevah in Assyria tells the story of Noah's Flood in great detail. Today these tablets are housed in the British Museum in London. I submit to you that this may be why the people of Ninevah were so quick to repent when they heard Jonah's sermon: they knew all about the judgment of God and that the Flood was real.

When Noah was 600 years old the Flood began. The Bible tells us that "the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." Dr. Walter Brown, Physics Professor at Emeritus – USAF Academy, explains: "We can see on our planet seventeen very strange features which can now be systematically explained as a result of a cataclysmic global flood whose waters erupted from subterranean chambers with an energy release exceeding the explosion of ten billion hydrogen bombs".

Meteorites are now being analyzed that suggest they did not originate in the void of Outer Space but actually here on Earth, launched by the fountains of the Great Deep as the Global Flood began.

In March 1998, a meteorite landed in Monahans, TX. It received much media attention because it almost hit a group of schoolboys who were playing in a field. NASA examined it and found two peculiar things about it: it contained liquid water and salt. This was puzzling to the scientists because asteroids don't have enough gravity to sustain water and they cannot acquire salt.

Others meteorites have been found to contain dormant bacteria. These bacteria could not have originated in Outer Space. There is nothing for them to eat there.

Dr Brown says, "High pressure liquid water suddenly expelled into the vacuum of space will explode with enough energy to place comets and asteroids into large orbits around the Sun. The Sun's energy slowly pushed the rocky bodies, asteroids, away from the Sun and into the asteroid belt which lies between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. This rocky material has been and is still returning to Earth as meteorites."

In other words, when the Flood started, the subterranean waters burst through the Earth's crust with the equivalent force of ten billion hydrogen bombs, sending rocks and snow into Outer Space, and raining rocks and water back down to Earth. This catastrophic event changed the face of the Earth forever, killed all of humanity and caused many animals to become extinct – except for those who were inside the Ark.

The Earth that Adam and Eve lived on looked very different to the post-Flood world.

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The Lessons of the Ark: 1. Atonement

The word "atone" means "to cover". Thus, atonement speaks of covering.

In Genesis 3:7, we see that after Adam and Eve sinned, they knew that they were naked and sewed fig leaves together to make themselves coverings. Then in Genesis 3:21 we see God making them coverings from animal skins. This is a beautiful picture of atonement and it introduced the fact that some sins carried the death penalty and thus would need blood to be shed to atone for them or cover them.

Adam broke the law (God's command), and ate the forbidden fruit. Death was the penalty for breaking that law but his death was postponed 930 years because innocent animals died in his place (atonement).

We see another picture of atonement in the story of Noah's Ark. It says:

Genesis 6:14 (NKJV) Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and **cover** it inside and outside with **pitch**.

The same Hebrew word is translated there twice, once as cover and once as pitch. Pitch is tar. It waterproofed the Ark.

So, God was really saying: Cover it inside and outside with covering, or atone it inside and outside with atonement. Of course, it would not make sense being translated into English that way but it is worthy to note that there is a double-use of the word, which means that it is emphasized strongly.

Thus, the Ark of Noah is a picture of atonement. Atonement kept them afloat. It kept them waterproof. It sealed off all the cracks between the wood. It kept them safe when the world as they knew it ended. It saved them from destruction.

Later on, after the Israelites rejected God on Mount Sinai, God then instituted animal sacrifices as part of the Law of Moses. The blood of those sacrifices would atone for their sin.

Romans 4:7-8 (NKJV) "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."

And so, through the generations, the blood of those innocent creatures atoned / covered their sins... until one day the blood of a Man was poured out on their behalf on a Cross.

Only one man could ever die in their place: that is the Man who walked in their place between the halves of the carcasses in the Blood Covenant walk in Genesis 15:17. That Man is Jesus.

The Blood of Jesus did what the blood of no other could ever do: It did not just atone (cover) their sins. Instead, it washed them away. It completely forgave them. A covering is temporary and it does not change what is under the covering. Forgiveness, however, is a permanent eraser. The blood of animals postpones death, but the Blood of Jesus takes you to the other side of resurrection where death cannot ever touch you again.

Hebrews 10:3-4 (NKJV) But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

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Hebrews 10:12-14 (NKJV) But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Ephesians 1:7 (NKJV) In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

The Lessons of the Ark: 2. Step INTO the Ark

Last week we looked at the principle of believing **into** Jesus Christ. The Ark demonstrates that same principle. The Ark itself is a type and shadow of Christ. Just as Noah entered **into** the Ark, we enter **into** Christ. Whoever was **in** the Ark was saved from the judgment and carried through to dry land. Whoever is **in** Christ is saved from the judgment and will be carried through to the New Earth one day. Right at this time, just as Noah built the body of the Ark, so too, we are building the Body of Christ.

Noah's righteousness did not save him from the Flood. He had to enter **into** the Ark. In the same way, our righteousness will not save us; we have to believe **into** Christ. Just as the Ark was sealed by atonement, the Body of Christ is also sealed by the atoning Blood of Christ. There is no atonement outside of the Ark. They were only covered when they were inside it. In the same way, the Blood of Jesus covers you only if you are **in** Him.

The Lessons of the Ark: 3. the LORD shuts you in

Genesis 7:16 (NKJV) So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.

Another lesson we learn from the Ark is that God is the One who shuts you in. You cannot shut yourself into the Lord. It is God who shuts you in. It is God who secures you inside of His Son. It is also God who determines where the cut-off point is, i.e. when there is no more chance of repentance. No one but God can say when it will all be over. Only God knows when that moment is.

In Mark 13, Jesus speaks of the end of this Creation and says:

Mark 13:31-32 (NKJV) Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

In Acts 1:7, the disciples asked Jesus when the end of this world would come. His answer was: "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority."

The Lessons of the Ark: 4. The Door

In *The Threshold Covenant*, H. Clay Trumbull tells us, "*Often the door, or the gate, stood for the temple, and frequently the threshold was an altar, or an altar was at the threshold.*"

"When the first dweller on the plains of Chaldea, after the Deluge (the Flood), gathered themselves for the building of a common structure reaching God-ward, they, in their phraseology, called that structure Bab-el, or Bâb-ilu, or Bâbi-ilu, the Door of God, Ancient Egyptians called the sovereign head of their national family "Per-ao" (Pharaoh), the exalted House, or Gate, or Door."

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Mohammed is called “the Exalted Door” by the Muslims. In fact, all of the different cults and religions claim that theirs is the way to God and that their spiritual head is the door.

Where do they get that from? I would suggest that it may well have been the Ark because the only way to enter into the Ark was through the door.

Jesus told two parables of the end of this world which make use of this picture of the door being closed:

Luke 13:23-30 (NKJV) Then one said to Him, “Lord, are there few who are saved?” And He said to them, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’ But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’ There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.”

Matthew 25:1-13 (NKJV) “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

“And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

“Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Jesus clarifies this even further by making the statement that He is the Door.

John 10:1-11 (NKJV) “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

We see this principle with Moses too:

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Exodus 33:7-11 Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp. So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door. So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

Homework Question # 1: How does Methuselah teach us about the days of Noah?

Homework Question # 2: What is atonement?

Homework Question # 3: How does the Ark teach us to believe **into** Christ?

Homework Question # 4: What did Jesus mean when He said that He is the Door?
