

Our Covenant God – Part Twenty Three

Noah's Flood – a picture of baptism

1 Peter 3: 20b-22 (NKJV) when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

Peter mentions the Flood as being a picture of baptism. He said that Noah and his family were saved through water. Indeed, the Ark certainly is one of the best pictures of what baptism is all about.

The word translated 'baptism' is a very interesting word. It means a complete immersion. It was used in the trade of those who dyed fabrics. If you had, for example, a piece of fabric that you wanted to make red you would get a bowl of red dye and baptize that cloth in that red dye. You would completely immerse that cloth into the red dye and then pull it up. The end result would be that the cloth would now be red. This is what baptism is all about. That cloth went down into the red dye and came back out looking like the red dye.

Thus, baptism is complete immersion that does not leave you looking the same as you did before because you have now absorbed the substance that you were baptized into.

In the same way as the red cloth, when you are baptized into Jesus you are fully immersed into Jesus and you now look like Jesus. When you are baptized into the Body of Christ you are fully immersed into Body and you now look like the Body.

That red piece of cloth now has the red dye in it. When you are baptized into Jesus you now have Jesus inside you. That red cloth cannot be separated from the red dye because it is inside its fibers. In the same way, you cannot be separated from Jesus because He is inside you. When you have been baptized into the Body of Christ you cannot be separated from it. You are part of the Body, no longer a separate entity. This is what baptism is all about.

This is why God always operated with people in terms of covenant: because in covenant the two become one (Gen 2:24).

Noah's Ark was a type / shadow of Jesus. Noah and his family entering into the Ark is a picture of us being baptized into Christ.

Some people believe that if you are not baptized into water you are doomed eternally. We know that this is wrong because it is by being IN Jesus that we are saved. After all, the thief on the Cross accepted Christ and Jesus said that he would enter into paradise with Him that same day. The thief could not jump off his cross and quickly get baptized into water!

Close your eyes and picture the Ark. See Noah and his family with the animals inside and nothing but water outside.

Now ask yourself:

1. Were Noah and his family baptized (immersed) into the Ark or into the Flood waters? _____
2. Was the rest of humanity baptized (immersed) into the Ark or into the Flood waters? _____

Can you see that the **water** of the Flood saved no one? The situation was quite the opposite, actually: it killed the people. **It was the Ark, not the water, which saved the people as they went through the**

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Flood. In the same way, it is by being immersed (baptized) into Jesus that we enter into Him just like Noah entered into the Ark and when we pass through the waters, which symbolize death and judgment, we are kept safe and cross over to the other side.

Romans 6:3-4 (NKJV) Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Let's recap: The waters of the Flood represent death and the dry Earth after the Flood represents life after death. This is why in Romans 6:3 Paul said that when you were baptized into Christ Jesus, you were baptized into His death. Whomever and whatever the Flood waters touched died. The Flood waters never touched Noah – but they DID touch the Ark. Noah was inside the Ark. So, when you are baptized, it basically means that you are safe inside Jesus and that He will carry you over from this life, through death, into eternal life.

In the same way, because you are inside of Christ, you have actually crossed over from death to life, in other words – because He rose from the dead, and you are in Him, you are already living eternal life from the day you believed into Him.

John 5:24 (NKJV) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in [the Greek actually means INTO] Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."

Death and resurrection into newness of life: that is what Jesus was referring to as being "born from above" (or born again).

Born from Above (Born again)

When Jesus had a conversation with a man named Nicodemus in John 3 about being born from above, He was surprised that Nicodemus did not understand the concept. Although the Bible does not explain why Jesus was surprised at Nicodemus' ignorance, Judaism itself sheds light on this because, even today, the Jews have a ceremonial cleansing which involves complete immersion (i.e. baptism) into a mikvah. The mikvah can be a river, lake, ocean or a cistern in the ground. It must hold "living water", i.e. water that is moving, not stagnant. In a mikvah, they pass through the waters, symbolizing death, and when they came out on the other side, symbolizing resurrection, they are cleansed and declared to be "born from above".

Another interesting note about Jesus and Nicodemus' conversation is that John specifically states that Nicodemus came to Jesus "by night." In those days they had no street lights and so any bright light outside would have been the light of the moon. The term "born again" is really "born from above" in Greek which goes long with the idea of the new moon. The new moon is not really "new" but renewed in the heavens. In the same way a person is also renewed in the heavens. The moon has no glory of its own. In Scripture it is symbolic of the believers who reflect the glory of the Sun (Jesus). A full moon is symbolic of the believer who has reached his full glory and brightness, glorified body and so on. That's why certain biblical festivals occur on full moons.

We have seen before that a man is born into the first Creation through his mother's womb, becoming a son of Man. When he dies, if he is in Christ, his physical tomb becomes a womb as he steps out into eternity as a son of God. Baptism illustrates that, because we are in Christ and He has already made that journey from death to life, we are already living the reality of being a New Creature.

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This chiasm structure reveals the focal point of the Flood account to us: **GOD REMEMBERED NOAH AND EVERY LIVING THING WITH HIM ON THE ARK**. Remember that “to remember” in the Bible does not mean that you forgot. It simply means that you are now filling your mind with thoughts of the object of your remembering. Thus, the chiasm reveals that the Flood starts with Noah, ends with Noah, and the center point is God filling His mind with thoughts of Noah. For God, Noah was the most important element of it all. It was all about the redemption / salvation of Noah.

As a side note:

Paul often used chiasms in his epistles. In fact, we would understand his writings far better if we analyzed his chiasms when studying his letters. We also see this principle of the first being last and the last being first throughout Scripture. For example: Cain was first and Abel last, but Abel became first and Cain came in last. Ishmael was first and Isaac last, but Isaac became first and Ishmael ended up last.

Homework Question # 1: Using chiasms, what do we find to be the center / focal point of the Flood?

Framing: Another Hebrew literary technique that we are going to examine today is “framing”. We have looked at framing briefly in part twelve of this study.

We find very interesting patterns in the Bible. Those patterns are hidden in people’s lives. They are hidden in the stories. They are even hidden in the wording of the text. These patterns illustrate and echo the themes in the Bible. One theme is that the end will be like the beginning. Things will end up like they started (except they will be vastly improved!). In the beginning of the Bible we read about the Creation of the whole universe and at the end of the Bible we read of the Recreation of the whole universe. So it ends up like it all started – only better. We often see this same pattern hidden throughout the Bible where the first line of a block of text is the same or extremely similar to the last line. This is called framing and is a typical Hebrew literary technique. The first and the last lines are then like a picture frame and whatever is in between is the picture inside the picture frame. Whatever is outside of the frame may belong in a bigger or a different picture frame but it doesn’t belong in that specific picture.

(Excerpt from part 12 of this study)

When God established His covenant with Noah, we find a beautiful example of framing. You can see this on the next page. The covenant is the picture inside the frame. As you read the covenant, notice again that this was a covenant that God established with Noah and his descendants. In other words, God gave this covenant to every human being that would ever live on this Earth after the Flood because Noah became the father of all mankind.

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Framing:

8 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying:

9 "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, 10 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.

11 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."

12 And God said:

"This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

13 I set My rainbow in the cloud,

and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth

14 It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth,

that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud;

15 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.

16 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."

17 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."

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Repetition of words: This is another Hebrew literary technique, which we have seen before.

8 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying:

9 "And as for Me, behold, I establish My **covenant** with you
and with your descendants after you, 10 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**.

11 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**."

12 And God said:

"This is the sign of the **covenant** which I make between Me and you,
and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

13 I set My rainbow in the cloud,

and it shall be for the sign of the **covenant** between Me and **the earth**

14 It shall be, when I bring a cloud over **the earth**,

that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud;

15 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.

16 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**."

17 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**."

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Homework Question # 2: Using the framing technique, what are the terms of the Noah covenant; i.e. what has God promised everyone – even those who reject Jesus and what must people do in return?

Homework Question # 3: In Noah's covenant, "the earth" and "covenant" are repeated seven times. Knowing that seven means completion / maturity / perfection, what do you think that means?

The sign of this covenant is the rainbow, as we have seen in parts six and seven of this study. Every time that we see the rainbow, we are reminded that God will never again destroy this Earth with water.

Homework Question # 4: Imagine that you were in that Ark with Noah. You had never seen rain your whole life until the day that the world as you knew it was destroyed! You bob along aimlessly in an Ark on the surface of a water-covered Earth for over a year. Then, one day, you step out onto dry land on shaky legs. What a relief! You feel the warm sun on your back and you want to hug the ground itself! You touch everything, you smell all the flowers, and you eat the fresh fruit off the trees. It feels like Heaven on Earth! But then... you hear the rumble of thunder and lightning splits the night sky wide open as raindrops splash onto your back. What emotion would you feel and what does that tell you about God's gift of the rainbow?
