

When God Saw the World as 'Rotten to the Core'

In telling His disciples about the end of the age and His future return to earth, Jesus likened the spiritual condition of those on the earth in that future time to the pre-diluvian days of Noah (Matt. 24:38-39). Their depraved and perverted lifestyles made them oblivious to righteous warnings of judgment from Noah, who is called "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5b).

I suggest there are some Father's Day lessons we can learn by reviewing the biblical record of Noah's flood in Genesis 6-8 and seeing how those times were much like ours, today.

Noah's Flood

First, we are told that at the time of Noah's flood, the sinfulness of the people was so great that "the trend and direction of men's lives were only towards evil" (Gen. 6:5, TLB). As it is today, in Noah's day "the crime rate was rising rapidly across the earth and, as seen by God, the world was 'rotten to the core' ... and all mankind was vicious and depraved" (6:11-12a).

This broke God's heart. He was sorry that He had even made mankind and determined to blot it off the face of the earth, along with the animals, reptiles and birds (Gen. 6:5-7). Noah was instructed to build a big boat (or "ark"), primarily to hold paired samplings of all the creatures to repopulate the earth after the watery judgment.

It rained for "forty days and forty nights." Then the floodwaters eventually receded over a period of 150 days (7:24), and the ark landed on the mountain range of Ararat, located at the junctures of modern Turkey, Iran and Iraq.

After being shut in the ark for approximately one year and two weeks, Noah and his family disembarked and released the animals onto dry land at God's command, so they "may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply" (8:17, NKJV).

Noah's Family

Noah, the righteous preacher and spiritual head of his family, sensitively built an altar and led his family in worship of the merciful Creator-God (8:20-21). From Noah's three sons (Shem, Ham and Japheth) eventually came "all the people who now populate the earth" (Gen. 3:18-19, TLB).

Perhaps responding to Noah's righteous actions and family leadership, God placed a rainbow in the sky as a sign of the covenant He made with Noah to never again destroy the world by water (Gen. 9:11-17).

However, the apostle Peter has warned that God *is* going to destroy the world a second time (2 Pet. 3:6-7)—with fire. This will occur at Christ's Second Coming, as part of "The Day of the Lord" trumpet-and-bowl judgments, as described by the disciple John in the book of Revelation, Chapters 8-11 and 16.

The earth will eventually be purged by fire and cleansed of all sin—but not annihilated. It will continue to exist in a new form during the glorious millennial kingdom reign of King Jesus. Faithful disciples of our Lord will then rule with Him for a thousand years on this renewed earth!

Noah's Father and Siblings

There are yet crucial lessons for us to learn from the Noahic flood. They involve Noah's father and siblings.

His father, Lamech, was 182 years old when Noah was born (Gen. 5:28) and he lived an added 595 years (5:30). Since Noah was 500 years old when he had his three boys (5:32), it would

appear Lamech would have *only* been 682 years old when he became a grandfather!

In his remaining 95 years, he would have known and had the opportunity to influence his other sons (Noah's siblings, Gen. 5:30) and grandchildren for righteousness. He would have lived through most of the epic "Noah and Sons" ark-building experience of nearly 100 years.

Lamech would also have witnessed Noah's "preaching"—by example and words—to his contemporaries of the coming judgment of God. When he died at 777 years of age (Gen. 5:31), it was just five years before the unprecedented and devastating worldwide flood.

Did Noah's father exercise his proper family headship and spiritual responsibility to lead his full family in righteous obedience and worship of our holy God before he died? We don't know, but nothing in Scripture indicates he did.

Lamech's other children and grandchildren would have experienced the same wicked and morally corrupt world and the righteous witness of Noah, warning of a future judgment by a righteous God. But, sadly, we note that they were not in the "ark of safety" when Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives entered the ark and God shut the door (7:13-16).

Our Father's Day Lessons for Today

We all have people around us today—family, friends, neighbors and colleagues—who are living through the typical cycles of life, "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" (Matt. 24:38, NKJV). They may seem to us as good people, but Paul says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Since "the wages of sin is death" (6:23a) if they are not in Christ and remain indifferent and unrepentant, they are as oblivious to God's pending justice and righteous judgment as the people of Noah's day.

Here are three summarized Father's Day lessons from Noah and his father:

- Time is running out for our modern post-Christian society with its deviant thinking and destructive practices.
- The promised justice and judgment at Christ's coming are now sooner than when we first believed.
- God will ultimately shut the door, and those not in Christ will be eternally lost.

Now is the time for you and me to seriously plead with those we can yet influence for righteousness and seek to draw them—with us—to our only hope: Jesus Christ, our ark of safety (1 Pet. 1:3-5). {eo}

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