

Thanksgiving and a Promise

Genesis 8:15-22
SS Lesson for 11/25/2018

Devotional Scripture: Isa 54:6-10

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Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson examines the events to show that righteous Noah was a grateful man by worshipping with **Thanksgiving God's Promise**. In addition we see that God made a promise that is to the whole world that is still valid today. The **study's aim** is to realize that God's goodness to us demands a response of gratitude. The **study's application** is to turn to God in gratitude when we experience His goodness.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Gen 8:20

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

8:1-3. The heavy rains lasted 40 days (7:4, 12), but the waters continued on for 110 days (cf. 7:24, "The waters flooded the earth for 150 days"; KJV has "the waters prevailed"). The 40 days were part of the 150 days, with apparently lighter **rain** falling (or subterranean water upheavals continuing for another 110 days).

8:4-19. The ark rested in the mountains of Ararat 150 days after the rains began. Assyrian records may identify such a name in Armenia of eastern Turkey, but the precise location remains unknown. After it was clear that the earth was suitable for habitation, the eight people and all **the animals** left **the ark**. This was 377 days after they had entered it (cf. 7:11 with 8:13-14). The theme of "rest" seems to be quite strong throughout the story. The ark rested (v. 4); at first **the dove could find no place to set its feet** (v. 9; lit., "could not find a resting place for its feet"). When the ark came to rest on Ararat, this was more than a physical landing on dry ground. It was a new beginning; the world was clean and at rest.

8:20-22. Leaving the ark, **Noah** made a sacrifice to God, which was a **pleasing aroma** to Him. The people of God are a worshiping people, as Israel would learn, and that worship was to take the form of giving God some of the best of what was His. The redeemed of the Lord offer Him the praise of their lips (Heb. 13:15), the best of their possessions (Prov. 3:9), and the willingness and humility of their spirits. Noah received God's grace, walked with God in obedience and righteousness, was preserved from judgment, entered a new age with people's wickedness temporarily removed, and responded with worship and sacrifice.

After Noah made the sacrifice, God promised **never to curse the ground** in this way again. The continuity of seasons is evidence of God's forbearance.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

In our area of Ohio, we get some pretty nasty summer storms. We are then subject to high winds, driving rain, and lightning. These are normal, and we are usually not unduly alarmed by them. I was driving home after one of these storms one day and happened to glance up into the sky. There above me was something so beautiful that it took my breath away. I was awed at the sight of a perfectly formed double rainbow. I pulled into my driveway and sat in my car a moment, gazing as it gently faded. In our world, we tend to overlook the wonder of a rainbow. We take it for granted, glancing at it and then going on with our lives. Place yourself in Noah's shoes. You have spent many days on a ship, surrounded by animals needing your attention. Perhaps tempers are flaring as your family members start to irritate one another. Finally, the ark reaches ground. Walking down the gangplank, you realize that the world you left behind is gone. Familiar people and familiar towns no longer exist. As the animals leave your lifeboat, you know you are starting over. More than that, the world you are stepping into has been purified, freed (for now at least) from the troubles of ages past. These truths could elicit only one response from Noah. Before he did anything else, he built an altar and offered praise to God for His mercy. While Noah praised God, he looked up to the sky. He must have marveled at a sight he had not seen before. As he looked at the colors splashing across the heavens, he heard God speaking once more of a covenant (Gen. 9:12-17). Even though we tend to forget it, that covenant endures to this day. Because our God does not change His mind (cf. Num. 23:19), that promise remains true. As a wedding ring is a symbol of a promise, so the rainbow is also symbolic of God's promise from long ago. As we have said, however, it is easy to forget about this promise. When I saw the double rainbow, it made me wonder, Is this a promise that God has remembered His original promise? Is He reassuring me that He has not forgotten? I think that we need reassurance at times. When was the last time you thought about God's rainbow promise from long ago? We may put it into the back of our minds as something given to someone in history. In fact, it applies to us as a great demonstration of God's mercy. When we see the rainbow, it is often after the strongest rains. It appears to remind us that God has sealed His promise and will keep it (cf. Gen. 9:13). This was a reason for Noah to rejoice. We sometimes face the storms of life. When the deluge threatens to engulf us, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. We need to remember that Christ has gained victory for us (Col. 2:15). Because of this, we need not fear (John 14:27). His death and resurrection seals the victory of His people. The next time you look at a rainbow, what will you remember? How about the cross? Both the rainbow and the cross are symbols of God's promises that still ring true. His promises give us reasons to offer Him praise.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

The Thanksgiving (Gen 8:15-20)

15 Then God spoke to Noah, saying,
16 "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you.
17 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."
18 So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.
19 Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.
20 Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

Thanksgiving for deliverance (15-16)

Deliverance from death (2 Cor 1:9-10)

9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

Deliverance from calamities (Job 5:19-21)

19 From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will befall you. 20 In famine he will ransom you from death, and in battle from the stroke of the sword. 21 You will be protected from the lash of the tongue, and need not fear when destruction comes.

Deliverance from troubles (Ps 34:19)

19 A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all;

Deliverance so that we can comfort others (2 Cor 1:3-4)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

Deliverance from trials (2 Peter 2:9)

9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

Deliverance from temptation (1 Cor 10:13)

13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Deliverance that sometimes brings double blessings (Job 42:10-11)

10 After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before. 11 All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the Lord had brought upon him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring

Thanksgiving for restoration (17-19)

Restoration that cannot be hindered by distance (Deut. 30:4)

4 Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back.

Restoration that proves God's grace (2 Chron. 30:9)

9 If you return to the Lord, then your brothers and your children will be shown compassion by their captors and will come back to this land, for the Lord your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him."

Restoration that is promised (Acts 3:21)

21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

Restoration of the soul (Psalm 23:3)

3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Restoration of joy (Psalm 51:12)

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Restoration of God's pleasure (Psalm 85:4)

4 Restore us again, O God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us.

Thanksgiving through worship (20)

Worship of God only (Matt 4:10)

10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

Worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24)

23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

Worship to glorify God (Phil 3:3)

3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—

Worship with reverence and awe (Heb 12:28)

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

Worship with reverence (Ps 2:11)

11 Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.

Worship in the splendor of God's holiness (Ps 29:2)

2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.

Worship to bring glory to God's name (Ps 86:9-10)

9 All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name. 10 For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.

Worship our God and Maker (Ps 95:6-7)

6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; 7 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice,

The Promise (Gen 8:21-22)

21 And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

22 "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease."

Promise to remove curse (21)

A curse that consumes the earth (Isa 24:5-6)

5 The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.

A curse because of disobedience (Gen 3:17-19)

17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

A curse because of not living according to Word (Gal 3:10-13)

10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." 11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

A curse because of being an evildoer (Matt 7:22-23)

22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

A curse because of being disobedient (Deut 28:15)

15 However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

A curse because of turning away from God (Jer 17:5)

5 This is what the Lord says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord.

A curse because of continual sin (Heb 10:26-27)

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Promise of sustainment (22)

God sustains by upholding those who fall (Ps 37:23-24)

23 If the Lord delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; 24 though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand.

God sustains from birth (Ps 71:6)

6 From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you.

God sustains through a willing spirit (Ps 51:12)

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

God sustains because He will never forsake His own (Ps 55:22)

22 Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

God sustains because He promised to do so (Ps 119:116)

116 Sustain me according to your promise, and I will live; do not let my hopes be dashed.

God sustains because He always finishes what He starts (Phil 1:6)

6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

The Preservation of Man and Animals (7:6-8:19)

The ark, now complete, having been constructed over many years according to the divine design, is entered at God's command (7:1) by both man and animals. Before the flood began, God shut the door. I would imagine that had God not done so, Noah would have opened it to those who later wanted in, but the day of salvation must come to an end.

The source of water seems supernatural. It may well be that it had never rained before (cf. 2:6). Now the rain came in torrents. In addition the 'fountains of the deep' (7:11) were opened. Water, both from above and below, came forth for forty days (7:12). The waters prevailed on the earth for a total of 150 days (7:24), and then subsided over a period of months. Five months after the flood commenced the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (8:4; cf. 7:11). It took considerable time for the waters to recede and for the ground to be dry enough to walk on. It was a little more than a year that Noah and his family spent on the ark. At the command of the Lord they gladly (I am certain) disembarked.

The Promise (8:20-22)

Noah's first act upon setting foot on the earth was to offer sacrifices to God. It was a further evidence of his faith, and surely an expression of his gratitude for the salvation that God had provided.

In response to the sacrifice of Noah, God made a solemn promise. I want you to understand, however, that this was a commitment made within the Godhead—it is a promise God resolved to Himself. The expression of this determination is given to Noah in chapter 9. This is what God purposed within Himself:

And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease (Genesis 8:21-22).

God's resolve is that He will never again curse the ground or destroy every living thing as He has just done. Why would God make such a commitment? Surely He was not sorry for what He had done. Sin had to be judged, did it not?

The problem with the flood was that its effect was only temporary. The problem was not with creation, but with sin. The problem was not with men, but with man. To erase the slate and start over is inadequate, for what is needed is a new man for creation. This is what creation eagerly awaits.

For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Romans 8:20-21).

God has therefore determined to deal differently with sin in the future. While sin has suffered a temporary setback at the flood, it will be dealt a fatal blow at the coming of Messiah. It is at this time that men will become new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17). After men are dealt with, a new heaven and a new earth will be provided as well (2 Peter 3:13).

God's promise of ultimate and final salvation is renewed in response to Noah's expression of faith through a sacrificial offering. Until that day when this salvation is accomplished, God assures man that measures like the flood will not occur again.

The Meaning of the Flood for Men of All Ages

First of all, the flood is a reminder to us of the matchless grace of God. While unbelievers found judgment, Noah found grace (Genesis 6:8).

To a certain extent, all of the people of that day experienced the grace of God. It was not until 120 years after the revelation of a coming judgment that it actually came upon men. That 120 year period was an age of grace in which the gospel was proclaimed.

The difference between Noah and those who perished was their response to God's grace. Those who perished interpreted God's grace as divine indifference. They concluded that God neither cared nor troubled Himself at the occasion of men's sin.

Noah, on the other hand, recognized grace for what it really is—an opportunity to enter into an intimate relationship with God, and at the same time, to avoid divine displeasure and judgment. Noah's years were spent in walking with God, building the ark, and proclaiming God's Word.

The grace of God is clearly evidenced by this promise: "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22).

Here is the irony of our day. As in the days of Noah, the perishing unbeliever looks at life as it is and asks "How could God be there at all and not do anything to right things—to set things in order?" He concludes that God is either dead, apathetic, or incapable of dealing with the world as it is, disregarding the warning of 2 Peter 3:8,9:

But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about His promises, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:8,9).

As Noah, the believer recognizes that life as it is a reflection of the sovereign control of a gracious God over all of life:

For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16-17).

The continuation of all things as they have been—day and night, summer and winter, springtime and harvest—causes the Christian to bow the knee to God in praise and submission to His providential care. The non-Christian, however, has twisted this promise of God's providential care into an excuse for sin:

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation' (2 Peter 3:3-4).

They fail to recognize that men are given this time to repent and to be reconciled to God. But just as the time of grace finally expired in Noah's day, so it will for men today:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10).

Our Lord taught that the days preceding the flood would be just like those preceding His final appearance to judge the earth:

For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be (Matthew 24:37-39).

These days were not described in terms of debauchery or decadence, but of normality—business as usual. Men in the last days will be doing what they always have. There is nothing wrong with eating and drinking, giving in marriage, or buying and selling. What is wrong is doing so without God, and supposing that we may sin as we please without paying its penalty. The age of grace will end. Let us respond rightly to God's grace.

Second, we are instructed in the matter of the wrath of God. We learn from the flood that while God's wrath is slow, it is also certain. Judgment must eventually be meted out to those who reject God's grace.

Be very clear that while wrath and judgment are certain, they do not delight the heart of God. Nowhere in this passage is there one scene of suffering and anguish described in detail. Even Noah's eyes were kept from beholding the torment suffered by those who died in the flood. The ark had no portholes, nor picture windows to look out on the destruction God wrought. The only opening was that at the top of the ark to allow light to shine in.

God does not delight in judgment, nor does He needlessly dwell upon it, but it is a certainty for those who resist His grace. Do not deceive yourself, my friend, there is a time when the offer of salvation will be withdrawn.

Sometime ago I visited a woman who was dying of cancer. I was unable to share the gospel with her on my first visit because she had to be taken to therapy. When I knocked at the door on my second visit, her husband came

and opened it far enough for me to see the woman, obviously failing in her sickness. When he asked her if she wanted to talk to me, she shook her head no. I never saw her again before her death.

Many people seem to think that they will wait until one foot is in the grave and the other is on a banana peel to be saved. It usually doesn't happen that way. God still closes the door of salvation. When we have lived our lives in sin and rebellion against God, we most often will not be given the luxury of making a deathbed decision. It sometimes happens, I grant, but seldom.

Then, too, God's judgment is often allowing things to take their own course. The account of the flood seems almost like creation reverted to the conditions of the second day of creation (cf. Genesis 1:6-7).

In the book of Colossians we are told that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe (Colossians 1:16-17). Men who reject God live as though God did not exist at all. In the Great Tribulation, God is going to give men seven years to discover what living without God is like. God's restraining and controlling hand will be withdrawn and chaos will reign. God's judgment is often giving men both what they want and what they deserve—the natural consequences of their deeds.

Finally, let us consider the subject of the salvation of God. In the case of Noah we must observe that God's way of salvation was restrictive. God provided only one way of salvation (an ark) and only one door. Men could not be saved any way they wished, but only God's way. Such is the salvation which God offers men today.

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me' (John 14:6).

The salvation of the ark was also instructive. It provides us with a picture of the salvation that was accomplished in Christ. It was for those in Moses' day a type of Christ. The difference between those who were saved and those who perished in the flood was the difference between being in the ark and being outside it.

Those who were saved and those who died all went through the flood. But those who survived were those in the ark which sheltered them from the effects of God's divine displeasure on sin. Those outside the ark, as well as those within, knew the ark existed and were informed that God had warned of a judgment to come. Some chose to ignore these facts, while Noah acted upon them.

So it is today. God has said that there must be a penalty for sin—death. Those who are in Christ by faith have suffered the wrath of God in Christ. On the cross of Calvary the wrath of God was poured out upon the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ. Those who trust in Him have experienced the salvation of God in Christ. Those who refuse to trust in Him and be in Him by an act of the will, must suffer the wrath of God outside of Christ, our ark. Knowing about Christ no more saves a man than knowing about the ark saved men in Noah's day. It is being in the ark, being in Christ, that saves!

God's way of salvation was not a glamorous one. I believe that many would have been on board the Queen Mary if Noah had built it, but not on the ark. There was little appeal to the eye on that ark, but it was sufficient for the task of saving men in a flood.

Many refuse to be saved if it cannot be achieved in some glorious way, one that is appealing and acceptable. I would not want to spend a year cooped up with noisy, smelly animals any more than you, but that was God's way.

Our Lord Jesus, when He came to offer salvation to men, did not come as One Who had great personal magnetism or appeal either. As Isaiah spoke of Him 700 years before His coming,

He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him (Isaiah 53:2).

Many would come to salvation if it appealed to them in the flesh. God's salvation is not of this kind.

Sometimes Christians fail at this same point. They think that God's way is a glorious one all the way. All miracles and magnificence. No suffering, no pain, no agony, no heartache. I must tell you that God's way is not always as glorious as we might wish, but it alone is the way of deliverance and peace and joy.

And this salvation which God provided was one that was entered into by faith in God's revealed Word. Noah probably never had seen rain, nor heard the clap of thunder. But God said that there was to be a flood and that he was to build an ark. Noah believed God and acted on his faith.

Noah's faith was no academic faith—a mere faith in principle, but an active faith—a faith in practice. He spent 120 years building that ark, committing himself to the God he knew. Our faith, too, must be active.

Noah, we are told, was a preacher. I do not believe that he often spoke from behind a pulpit, but from behind a plank and a hammer. It was Noah's lifestyle that condemned the men of his day and warned of the judgment to come. Noah's whole life was shaped by his certainty that judgment was coming.

We who are Christians know that our Lord will again return to judge the world. I wonder how much it has affected our daily lives? Can your neighbors and mine tell that we are living in the light of a coming day of judgment and of salvation. I sincerely hope so.

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/8-flood-genesis-69-822>)

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. Waiting is difficult, but we trust God, who knows the road ahead (Gen. 8:15)
2. Caring for God's creation honors Him (vs. 16)
3. Only God can restore what sin has destroyed (vs. 17)
4. God protects us as we follow His direction and submit to His timing (vss. 18-19)
5. As the One who delivers us from our trials, God deserves our worship (vs. 20)
6. Worship leads us to see our sins in the light of God's holiness, grace, and glory (vs. 21)
7. God shows .faithfulness to mankind, and believers respond to Him with praise and worship (vs. 22)