

Sin and Mercy: Part Three
(Genesis 6-7)

As we saw in part two the sinfulness of humanity had exploded. But now, in part three, God explains to Noah that He was about to send a worldwide flood. In other words, God's mercy was about to end for that generation. It would end in a worldwide flood that would totally reshape the earth and destroy man.

However, God instructed Noah to build an ark, to make it watertight, and to fill it with pairs of animals (6:13-22). Noah was also to bring onboard extra animals that were clean (7:2). In selecting these animals Noah was instructed to gather clean and not clean animals, God makes this very clear. In choosing the animals God made a distinction, and this distinction had to do with sacrifice (8:20).

Hebrew scholars tell us that the word "seven" in verse 2, literally means "seven seven." And this could indicate "seven pairs" of clean animals, or it may indicate three pairs plus one extra, and the one extra would be for food.

Now the account of the flood emphasizes Noah's obedience (6:22; 7:5). In chapter 7 and verse 1 "the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." Then in verse 4, God said, "For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth." Verse 10, "And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth." Verse 16 informs us that "the LORD shut him in." Mercy ended!

Noah obeyed God by faith, for in the pre-flood world there was no rain (2:5, 6). By taking God at His word, Noah believed in that which he had never seen, prepared the ark, condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith (Hebrews 11:7).

Furthermore, we see God revealing Himself in the flood. We see His awesome power in submerging the earth. The floodwaters arose for forty days and nights (7:4, 12, 17). The firmament water canopy collapsed, and the subterranean waters erupted (7:11). The mountains were covered, and all earth-dwelling creatures perished (7:20-23).

We see God's power in the destructive force of the flood, and we see His power in the way He protected Noah and those who were with him. We also see the patience and mercy of God. He did not send the flood right away, but He allowed the earth 120 years to repent (6:3). Every day that Noah was required to build the massive ark was another opportunity for someone to repent. We also see God's mercy and grace in the way He delivered Noah and his family and the animals in the ark.

Only eight souls were saved from the flood and the rest perished. Jesus said, “For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe [Noah] entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; ...” (Matthew 24:38-39).

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