

Monday - Week Three

Lesson Six: The History of Noah

Read: Genesis 8:1-9:23

Summary: After the flood the history of the world started over with a small group of people. We see encouraging events (worship, etc.) as well as discouraging ones (Noah's drunkenness).

Background and Comments

- Imagine what Noah saw when he came out of the ark. Countless people and animals had been killed in the flood; the earth must have looked barren and in ruins from the terrible devastation of the flooding. How did Noah react? He built an altar and worshiped God.
- God's promise in Genesis 8:21-22 has probably saved this world many times. Despite the world's wickedness (which God understood perfectly well - read v 21) He would never again destroy the world with a flood (9:11). God even gave us a sign to remind us of this promise: the rainbow. The pre-flood world probably did not have any rainstorms (because of the vapor canopy, etc.) so there had been no rainbows to this point in the world's history (note: this is a guess of Christian scientists).
- Ham sinned by looking at his father's nakedness (the Hebrew word for "look at" means to enjoy something, to relish it and to be amused by it - and in some contexts can mean to lust after). Later Noah cursed Ham and his son Canaan (who had the same sinful characteristics as his father). This curse was fulfilled when the Israelites conquered the land of Canaan. The Canaanites had perpetuated the sins of lust and sexual immorality of their forefather Canaan.

Lessons for Today

- Genesis 8:1 is beautiful: But God remembered Noah ... Of course God never forgets anything. The phrase "God remembered" shows us God's love for us. The next time you are down and discouraged call this passage to mind: God remembers me.
- Many of the Old Testament heroes of faith had family problems. Here Noah's family problems take center stage. The Bible doesn't pull punches when it describes people.

Read: Psalm 11, Matthew 11.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for all of Your promises given in the Bible. Help me to remember them at all times, especially when I am going through tough times. I ask this in Jesus' name; Amen.

Tuesday - Week Three

Lesson Seven: the Tower of Babel

Read: Genesis 10:1 - 11:9

Summary: The world's population grew after the flood; Genesis 10 catalogues that growth for us. Sin also grew after the flood; Genesis 11 catalogues that growth for us.

Background and Comments

- Genesis 10 gives us background information for the rest of the Old Testament. As you read through these names and places you will find many familiar ones that will show up again and again in the Old Testament. It seems that people of European descent trace their lineage back to Japheth.
- God had told people to populate the whole world. This pocket of people disobeyed God by wanting to build a name for themselves instead. They decided to build a great tower as a monument to themselves and their way of life. If this tower had become a reality many other people might have flocked to this city to become part of this humanistic enterprise (humanism is the idea that the world revolves around human beings and not around God). God's world would have turned its back on God once again.

Lessons for Today

- Today we hear quite a bit about the global economy and the family of humanity. Obviously everyone in the world ultimately is a relative of Noah. This leaves no room for racism. More importantly racism is sinful when we remember that Jesus gave His life for all people.
- God's grace comes shining out in the account of the Tower of Babel. God could have stopped the building of the tower in any number of ways: a huge earthquake, a plague that killed the people, or even a firestorm from heaven. Instead He confused their languages and brought work to a halt. Can you think of a time when God changed your action in a loving way?
- This is a humorous part of the Bible. Can you imagine getting to work in the morning and not being able to understand the person you have been working with for years? There must have been plenty of frustrated people that day!

Read: Psalm 12, Matthew 12.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, help me to put away the sin in my life. Amen.

Wednesday - Week Three

Catechism Review

Read Questions 6-8 and extra material on pages 29-32

1. What event separates the Old Testament from the New Testament?

2. What event connects the Old Testament and the New Testament?

3. How would you answer this question if someone asked you: "Why are there so many Bibles?" (Did you notice the tricky part of the question?)

4. Someone has said that reading the Old Testament is like going on a treasure hunt looking for references for Christ. How many references to Jesus can you find in the Old Testament? List them.

5. Jesus is the center of the Bible. He is also the center of your life. Simply recalling that fact during the day can have a tremendous impact in your life. Think about where you will be at the following times today. How will recalling that Jesus is the center of your life make a difference at each time?

10 AM _____

Noon _____

3 PM _____

6 PM _____

Read: Psalm 13; Matthew 13.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Jesus means everything to me. Thank You for sending Him to suffer and die for me. In His name I pray; Amen.

Thursday - Week Three

Lesson Eight: Abram

Read: Genesis 11:27 - 12:20

Summary: In these verses we meet one of the main characters of the Old Testament: Abraham. His great faith impresses us.

Background and Comments

- Abram's father Terah decided to move from Ur to Canaan but for whatever reason stopped when he came to Haran. (Look at the maps included at the end of the devotion guide to find out where these locations are). Abram set off for Canaan with his father because God wanted him to. Acts 7:2-3 tell us that God came to him in Ur and told him to go to a land He would show him.
- The life spans after the flood went down quickly. The post-flood world was not as "human-friendly" as the pre-flood world.
- Abram followed God's second call (Genesis 12:1) even though he did not know where God would lead him. This was not a blind leap of faith though; Abram knew that God had things planned out and would bless him. When we trust in God we don't take blind leaps of faith either. We know that God has things in control and will do what is best.

Lessons for Today

- God's promise to Abram in Genesis 12:2-3 is worth further study. God told Abram that all nations in the world would be blessed through him. Peter and Paul both quoted this blessing in reference to the spiritual blessings Jesus brought to all people (Acts 3:25 and Galatians 3:8). You have been blessed through Abram and his descendant Jesus. In a very real way Abram is your spiritual father. As you read Abram's story in the next weeks pay close attention to him; learn all the lessons you can from this hero of the faith.
- Abram trusted God enough to follow Him to another country but not enough to protect him from the Pharaoh. God had promised to bless the whole world through Abram and Sarai's descendant. Abram should have known that God would keep them both safe in Egypt. How is doubt in God's promises always "stupid"?

Read: Psalm 14; Matthew 14.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, forgive me for all the times when I doubt Your promises; remind me that Your Word is the strongest, most sure thing in the world. You will never let me down. I pray in Jesus' name; Amen/

Friday - Week Three

Life Questions

Topic/Question: What does the Bible say about abortion? How can I witness to what the Bible says?

Bible References and Considerations

- There are many part of the Bible that speak to the issue of life:
God is the creator of life: Genesis 1:27, Job 33:4, Psalm 100:3
God creates life in the womb: Genesis 25:21; Genesis 29:31; Job 10:8-12;
Job 31:15; Psalm 199:13-116; Isaiah 44:2; Isaiah 44:24
Children are a gift from God: Genesis 33:5; Psalm 127:3-5.
- Some churches cloud this issue by teaching that abortion is not wrong. These churches have departed from God's Word and will fall under God's judgement because they led people away from the truth.

Practically Speaking

- The abortion industry is just that: a money making industry. For many people this is not a moral issue at all but an economic one. Some doctors who are not qualified to be medical doctors find employment killing little babies and earn large salaries doing it. This industry will do whatever it takes to keep the money flowing in. This is one case when it is perfectly God-pleasing to pray that God would frustrate their efforts.
- What is the church's response to be regarding the evil of abortion? Certainly we need to clearly proclaim God's will in this area. God hates abortion; it is a form of murder. The church's chief purpose is not to legislate morality however. The church exists to turn hearts to the Lord through the preaching of God's law and Gospel. In the final analysis this turning of hearts is the only thing that will put a stop to the evil of abortion.
- What about protesting at abortion clinics (peacefully) and writing letters to our leaders? Certainly Christian citizens have a responsibility to make an impact in our country. Any activity that does not break the law falls within this responsibility. The most useful work continues to be talking one on one with people who are considering killing their little baby.

Read: Psalm 15; Matthew 15.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, forgive our nation for killing millions of babies through abortion. We plead for Your continued mercy and patience as we work to end this evil. Please bless our efforts. In Jesus' name; Amen.