

But God Remembered ▪ Genesis 8

Ryan Perz ▪ November 26, 2023

This past week I was at a local coffee shop and noticed a sign in the restroom. It read, “I am exactly in the right place and it’s getting better everyday” —very interesting for a sign in a public restroom.

That sign pretty much sums up where we are at in the Flood story.

Noah and his family are in the exact right place, and it is getting better every day.

The floodwaters stop; the flooding starts to reverse.

- Now I think this is the most important chapter in the flood story.
- My reason for that is not just because I like it, but because of the *Holy Spirit inspired structure* of the story.
- Inspiration of Scripture: Not just words, but also phrases and structure.

The God-inspired structure of the Flood account divides evenly into halves.

Structure of Gen. 6-8.

A. God decrees judgment (6:11-13); God decrees preservation (8:21-22)

B. Noah builds an ark (6:14-22); Noah builds an altar (8:20)

C. The Lord commands to enter (7:1-9); and exit (8:15-19)

D. Floodwater released (7:10-16); Floodwaters reversed (8:6-14)

E. God remembers Noah (8:1)

We are at the turning point-

Even in the darkness of the Ark, Noah is in the exact place God wants, and it’s getting better every day.

Main point: God acts, so his people responsibly wait, obey, and worship him.

God Acts (1-5)

- The first words of the text are some of the most powerful in this story: But God remembered.

—When the Bible says “God remembered”, it is much different than how we usually use the term.

When I say, “I remembered”, it’s because I forgot something.

Ah ha! I remembered where I put my keys! Or, “I remembered that person’s name I met last month.”

Humans remembering is from a memory lapse.

- God’s remembering is not a memory lapse. God is not saying, “Where did I put that family on that boat? ...Oh, now I remember...”.

“God remembers” is code word for *ready to take action*.

One scholar: “God’s remembering always implies his movement toward the object” (Childs quoted in Ross)

Examples:

Rachel — (30:22)

Genesis 30:22 ESV

Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.

Israel

Exodus 2:23–24 ESV

During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

****The rest of Exodus is the Lord taking dynamic action to Redeem Israel.**

The following verses show his actions:

Winds & Windows

- The Lord causes a wind to blow, and shut the windows of heaven (1-2)

The wind stretches back to Creation (1:2) and points to the wind blowing over the Red Sea during the Exodus (Ex 14:21).

The Lord directs the ARK to the exact place he wants it (v4).

- Mt Ararat=describes a mountain range that sits across eastern Turkey, southern Russia, and northwestern Iran.

Winds, timing, location are all part of God' providence.

A good reminder that God is "In the details".

Doctrine of Providence—1689 confession

Confessing the Faith: The 1689 Baptist Confession for the 21st Century (V. *Divine Providence*)

5:2 All things come to pass unchangeably and certainly in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, who is the first cause. Thus, nothing happens to anyone by chance or outside of God's providence

We have a God who acts, who is always moving...and moves toward his people in acts of grace and care.

Responsible Waiting (6-13)

- The following section focuses on Noah's response to grace.

This gives us the balanced teaching of scripture—how providence and our actions work together.

Having a strong view of God's sovereignty and providence does not mean we remain hands-off.

Notice the actions of Noah.

- V6: He opens the window.... that “he had made”.

› The ark was an act of human responsibility.

- V7: He sends forth the raven
- V8: He sends forth a dove
- V9: He puts out his hand to receive the dove back

There is a tendency of some who hold to a Reformed, confessional theology to minimize responsibility. Maybe a lack of urgency of prayer, evangelism, or fighting sin.

God does not call us to be hands-off followers...sitting back passively.

- The next few verses turn our attention to another detail...waiting
- V10 He waited
- V11 He waited more

Noah and his family had to wait patiently.

—The floodwaters rise for 150 days

—It took 150 days for dry land to appear (ARK just sat idle)

—Another 70 days before God commands an exit

Total: 370 days of waiting

Responsible waiting is such a vital part of godliness.

It's how our strength is renewed.

Isaiah 40:31 ESV

but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.

So Christian friends, how do you wait? Is that a big word in your vocabulary?

I never really saw or appreciated how patient Noah was until staying this passage more.

Patience endurance is such a vital key to godliness and faith...and just wise living.

Proverbs 19:2 (ESV)

whoever makes haste with his feet misses his way.

Delay and suspense are not our favorite words in Christian vocabulary. Yet they are often so tied into the work the Lord is doing inside of us, and through us.

- V. 14 we see the hands of Noah at work bringing time in the Ark to an end: Behold!

Here we get a pattern:

Be responsible.

Put your hands to work on things God calls you to.

Wait.

Wait longer.

Then...Behold!

Just to be clear, this is not a synergistic cooperation with God (I do my half, he does his).

It's the clear teaching of the Bible that we are responsible agents; we work and act on his revealed will. Work diligently like the Proverbs teach us.

....And also wait as the Lord calls us to.

And behold his work!

Active Obedience (14-19)

- There is one thing that stands out about Noah's waiting.
- He waits, waits longer...but does not move when he decide it's right.

He waits for God's command (v14 & 15).

Noah only disembarks at God's command.

- This is a parallel to Ch. 7 - Just as Noah and family enter the ark at God's command, so now the exit.

Another discipleship lesson for us: We don't move in the direction that we feel is right; we only move in the direction of God commands.

Climatic Worship (20-22)

- Here we get the reason for the clean pairs of animals: for sacrifice and worship (20-22).

This is the reason that Ch. 8 is the most important...because here we see what is most important: the Worship of God.

- It's important to see that the *first act is worship* —the purpose of grace and redemption.

Exodus 8:1 CSB

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him: This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me.

- › Noah's offering: need for atonement & high calling of whole life worship.

1) Need for atonement

- In this sacrifice, Noah resembles a priest cleansing the land.

"Pleasing aroma" indicates that atoning sacrifice.

- This foreshadows what Israel will do; what will eventually happen in the temple.
- V21 = Human nature has not changed

- › However, God is pleased with atoning sacrifice.

Atoning sacrifice is required to please God...yet Animal sacrifice under the OT law never does it. What is needed is a single offering...from a perfect offering.

Hebrews 9:9 (ESV)

According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,

Hebrews 10:1 ESV

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

Hebrews 10:11–14 (ESV)

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

- › Jesus not only becomes the ultimate perfect priest, but also offers himself up.

It's one thing to offer up birds or flock animals, it's quite another to offer yourself up.

Jesus Christ offered his own life up as a single offering, so that all who trust him can escape eternal judgement.

Isn't that good news!

- › Since the flood is a story of how and why God redeems, then it's fitting that the ultimate goal is worship.

2. Whole life worship

—What purpose does God save sinners? Why does God show mercy?

Romans 12:1 ESV

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

The world will tell you that what central is that you consume and perform.

—The world says that what you consume is what makes you happy.

—The world also says that how you perform is what gives you value.

God's Word tell us—what is central is that you worship God.

- The text ends not with a focus on man, but on God's Promise (21b-22).

When Noah disembarked the ark, I wonder what his initial thoughts were?

Eyes trying to adjust to a new landscape.

Taking in all the beauty and fresh smells that had been missed for over a year.

Maybe it was just the thought: "God remembered me. He cared for my life. He saved me from a thousand deaths".

As God has poured his mercy on you...saved you from a thousand deaths.

It's a simple reminder that God remembers. He cares.

Whether you are a faithful follower of Christ, or don't know if you are a Christian.

--Know this truth about God...he remembers. He cares. He acts. He is not silent and has not forgotten.

--He has you exactly in the place he wants, and through the hope of Jesus Christ, it's getting better every day as we get closer to The Day.

The Lord has remembered us.

May we not forget him!