

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 8:14-22**

**“13 And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. 14 And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried. 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 Jehovah, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 And Jehovah smelled a soothing aroma. Then Jehovah 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."”**

## **"God's Covenant With Nature"**

**Well I think that I will need to begin this morning's message with the application portion of my message!**

**I had planned to discuss God's Covenant with nature that we see in the text, but with the stunning news that came out this week, some may be thinking that what I was going to share will be all wrong now...**

- **Yes, this week the United Nations, that bastion of unbiased science and politics released a substantial report to let us know that things are pretty much over, as we know them!**

**That's right, the Antarctic ice shelf is collapsing and melting and it is now irreversible! According to the 'experts' ocean levels will rise 11 to 14 feet and life as we know it on the earth will be over! It has been all over the news this week & I can assure you that it was a major topic of discussion in all the government schools! And of course if true, it makes obsolete just about everything I was going to say this morning, so I must begin with the application!**

- **God is in control!**

**We relish this thought when thinking about our individual lives and the life of our Church and communities, but we must NOT forget that it applies to the entire world!**

- **Especially when the environmental scare machine is in full operation!**

**Now I could spend hours debating the truth or falsehood of global warming or even the mathematics of just how far the oceans could rise IF ALL the ice were melted, but it is much simpler to just look at our text where we read:**

**“Then Jehovah 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."”**

**The eternal Triune God who is in control says that all is well when it comes to the question of whether the natural world will be destroyed by man or God.**

**So now that you know where I am going and why it is important in our age, let me step back and remind you of where we are in the Book of Beginnings!**

- **God created all things in six days, including man and woman in His image and declared all to be very good!**

**Adam was warned that rebellion against God's simple command to abstain from a single tree would result in death...**

- **And Adam chose poorly!**

**God in His mercy & grace did not simply destroy Adam and Eve, or their heirs, but instead gave them a promise of salvation that had been covenanted by the persons of the Trinity in eternity past:**

- **Before the foundation of the world.**

**A promised Savior, the Son of God who would come as the seed of the woman, would one day be born and crush the head of the seed of the serpent and save His people from their sins. As history begins to unfold we see the sinfulness of man on the one hand and the faithfulness of God on the other! The sin of man has led to the utter destruction of God's good creation with a worldwide flood that destroyed all things living except those on the Ark who Jehovah remembered because of His promise!**

**Now the flood waters have receded and we are going to see God making a covenant with nature and renewing His covenant with man.**

- **We will look at the first today and the second next week Lord willing.**

**The remainder of chapter nine as well as chapters ten and eleven will continue to show the contrast between man's sin and God's faithfulness as we see the nations of men in rebellion again at the tower of Babel & the Godly line leading to the birth of Abraham.**

- **What I hope we will see over these two weeks is the importance of these two covenants down through history and even for our lives today!**

**So the waters that prevailed have now receded and after more than a year on the Ark it is time for Noah & his family and all the animals that God protected to prepare to leave the Ark.**

**So looking again at our text at verse 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."**

**Noah & his family are to begin anew & we will look at the details of this next week...And just as God brought the animals to Noah to be saved in the Ark, now He sends them forth so "that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth."**

**We have already made the case that when we see about a thousand kinds of animals leaving the Ark going on to produce the diversity that we have in the world today, it should be obvious who the REAL evolutionists are! Noah would have seen much the same type of diversity before the flood and to see the kinds of animals he had on the Ark going forth with this command from the Lord would have been a great encouragement to him!**

- **And it should give us comfort even today in the midst of the environmental propaganda that we are faced with on all sides.**

We are not told how many of each kind of animal God created on the Fifth and Sixth Days of Creation... But now we see God giving these animals the same command as they exit the Ark:

- Be fruitful & multiply on the earth.

Continuing on in our text we read that Noah built an altar to Jehovah, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

21 "And Jehovah smelled a soothing aroma. Then Jehovah 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."

What a dilemma these great truths present for our pagan friends today who worship mother earth...

The eternal all-powerful God has promised the very thing the environmentalists say we must focus on:

- The earth and the creatures God created on it will be protected from judgment due to the sin of man!
- But this comes in the context of the account of how God had just destroyed all things living because of man's great sin!

I have made the case that we as Christians should be the true environmentalists! But we do not worship mother earth, we understand that we are to be good stewards of what God has created.

- Nature and all the animals are God's servants!

They obey all of His laws in nature, they are cared for by Him and they can be used by Him for whatever purpose He sees fit.

- Nature and man are NOT in conflict: They both are called upon to serve and glorify God!

The conflict of these world views is seen clearly in some of the early wisdom of Proverbs where King Solomon tells his son in chapter 12 verse 10: "10 A righteous man regards the life of his animal, But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." *[use the example of the seal cubs or eagle eggs verses the unborn!]*

Now of course these are general truths and you can find exceptions where a skeptic like Madam Currie cares for the sick or a Christian who is cruel to animals or has no regard for the creation. We will see next week that animals will not be given to man for food and thus we have one of those Biblical tensions when it comes to raising children: We must forbid and teach against animal cruelty on the one hand so they are not torturing little creatures but on the other hand we are to give them a proper understanding of domestic animals and those who give their lives so we can have food to eat!

Perhaps seeing how God relates to His own creation should be the best example for us to use in the instruction of our children and of course ourselves.

- So if our application is to remember that God is in control, just what does that control look like?

We see in the creation account and the account of the flood the mega picture of God's control where He can either bring forth all the living things or destroy all of the living things...

- And of course we should know that God does both justly and for His own purposes!

We do NOT get to establish our relationship with the created order on our own terms apart from God!

This is the major error of the modern environmental movement and why we can find no common ground with them.

- So just how does God view the creatures He has made?

Some very familiar verses can help us here if we have eyes to see: I want to begin with the Lord's Sermon on the Mount and then end up in Job...

After telling us to reflect the nature of God in our lives by loving our enemies, Jesus says this in Matthew 5:45, "in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

- The natural order is under God's control and is a blessing to all people!

Jesus goes on to assure us of His care in our lives as He reveals the care that God has for His Creation and it is much more than simply having them follow some cold laws of physics...

Matthew 6:26, "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"

And again at Matthew 6:30, "But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith?"

Later in the same Gospel we learn that God's knowledge and care extends to the smallest of creatures...

Matthew 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."

Yes God's care and control of all things in His creation is exhaustive...

- But we are never to forget the importance of man made in His image and the special place that God has for His chosen people!

But perhaps there is no better place to understand all of this than the final chapters of the Book of Job.

As we saw last week Job was one of the trio of Saints found in Ezekiel's prophecy because He had great faith and patience in some very trying circumstances. But as with all Saints in the Bible Job was not perfect without God's Grace and thus God has to come to Job in the whirlwind to set him straight mostly on the question of who is in control.

I won't have time this morning to go through all that we find in chapters 38-42 but I would commend them to your reading on a regular basis...

- It is a good way to stay humble!

What I find interesting and surely on point for the message today, is how God uses the created order to demonstrate His majesty to Job:

- AND most of the time God is speaking to Job about the creatures that have been sent forth from the Ark in our morning text!

Listen carefully as I hit some highlights and keep in mind that many of the challenges that God puts before Job could just as easily be asked of our biologists and geologists today!

1 "Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: 2 "Who is this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge? 3 Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. 4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 To what were its foundations fastened?"

- This certainly sets the tone of God's challenge and he continues with more questions about the earth and seas.

Now we all enjoy making fun of the weatherman *[or the United Nations reports]* so it is interesting that God then goes on to ask some challenging weather questions as well:

22 "Have you entered the treasury of snow, Or have you seen the treasury of hail, 23 Which I have reserved for the time of trouble, For the day of battle and war? 24 By what way is light diffused, Or the east wind scattered over the earth?"

Then God turns to the animals: 39 "Can you hunt the prey for the lion, Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, 40 When they crouch in their dens, Or lurk in their lairs to lie in wait? 41 Who provides food for the raven, When its young ones cry to God, And wander about for lack of food?"

*[very similar to what Jesus taught]*

Job 39: " 9 "Will the wild ox be willing to serve you? Will he be led by your manger? 10 Can you bind the wild ox in the furrow with ropes? 19 "Have you given the horse strength? Have you clothed his neck with thunder? 26 "Does the hawk fly by your wisdom, And spread its wings toward the south? 27 Does the eagle mount up at your command, And make its nest on high?"

Job 40 opens with Job trying to repent but God continues with tone and content that I think would be appropriate for today's radical environmentalists to hear quite often:

"7 "Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me: 8 "Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified? 9 Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His? 10 Then adorn yourself with majesty and splendor, And array yourself with glory and beauty. 11 Disperse the rage of your wrath; Look on everyone who is proud, and humble him. 12 Look on everyone who is proud, and bring him low; Tread down the wicked in their place. 13 Hide them in the dust together, Bind their faces in hidden darkness. 14 Then I will also confess to you That your own right hand can save you."

- Of course this is exactly what God has just done with the destruction of the world with the great flood!

God then turns to two more great examples from nature for Job to consider talking about them as if Job would be as familiar with them as he was with all the other examples...

15 "Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you; He eats grass like an ox. 16 See now, his strength is in his hips, And his power is in his stomach muscles. 17 He moves his tail like a cedar; The sinews of his thighs are tightly knit. 18 His bones are like beams of bronze, His ribs like bars of iron. 19 He is the first of the ways of God; Only He who made him can bring near His sword." *[ask the kids]*

The New International Bible has a footnote saying "possibly the hippopotamus or the elephant... *[Why we should be careful about the materials we provide for our children]*

I should point out here that while the Bible is silent about what happened to the dinosaurs after the flood, it is clear that they were among the animals carried on the Ark and lived for some time afterwards because Job was familiar with those that God was here describing and discussing.

- And God seems to have saved the best for last and it would make no sense in the context for this creature to have been mythical...

Job 41:1 "Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, Or snare his tongue with a line which you lower?

2 Can you put a reed through his nose, Or pierce his jaw with a hook? 3 Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak softly to you? 4 Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him as a servant forever? ...

10 No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up. Who then is able to stand against Me? 11 Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine.

- Here God makes His major point which is worth repeating...

**“Who then is able to stand against Me? 11 Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine.”**

**God proceeds to talk about His mighty creature and I will read a bit of it so the children can let me know if they think it could just be an crocodile which what the NIV footnote suggests!**

**“Who can approach him with a double bridle? 14 Who can open the doors of his face, With his terrible teeth all around? 15 His rows of scales are his pride, Shut up tightly as with a seal; 16 One is so near another That no air can come between them; 17 They are joined one to another, They stick together and cannot be parted. 18 His sneezings flash forth light, And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. 19 Out of his mouth go burning lights; Sparks of fire shoot out. 20 Smoke goes out of his nostrils, As from a boiling pot and burning rushes. 21 His breath kindles coals, And a flame goes out of his mouth. ... 31 He makes the deep boil like a pot; He makes the sea like a pot of ointment. 32 He leaves a shining wake behind him; One would think the deep had white hair. 33 On earth there is nothing like him, Which is made without fear. 34 He beholds every high thing; He is king over all the children of pride.”**

**Chapter 42 begins with the sincere repentance of Job and may I suggest that it would be appropriate not only for any pagan environmentalist, but also for any godly person as we consider how God judged the world at the time of Noah’s flood.**

**Job 42: “Then Job answered Jehovah and said: 2 'I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. 3 You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 Listen, please, and let me speak;**

**You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' 5 'I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. 6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes.”**

**We are going to respond with the singing of Psalm 104 which has become one of our favorites and as we do so I hope we will remember that God is in control!**

**He has brought judgment with the flood and now He will replenish the earth:**

**As Mr. Watts puts it,**

**“Yet Thou canst breathe on dust again,  
and fill the world with beasts and men;**

**A word of Thy creating breath  
Repairs the wastes of time and death!”**

**➤ God has renewed his covenant with nature and we can rest assured that His Word will stand!**

**Communion Meditation: Colossians 2**

**“9 For in Him [Jesus] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.**

**11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.**

**13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”**