Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Some of you may have heard before that pretty much every culture has a flood story.

* The most famous one is the Gilgamesh Epic. It has been dated to around 650 BC. And it also has a man who builds an ark to survive a global flood. It even ends with its main character, Utnapishtim, sending out birds to see if there was dry land.
* And the Pawnee tribe of North American Indians believe that the Creator destroyed the first people, who were giants, by water, because of their wickedness, and afterwards he created a man and woman who are the ancestors of the Pawnee.
* The Miao people of Southwest China believe that god destroyed the whole world by a flood because of the wickedness of man. But Nuah, the righteous man, his wife, Matriarch, and their three sons, Lo Han, Lo Shen, and Lo Jah-hu, survived by building a giant ship and filling it with pairs of animals.
* And you may have also heard that Chinese words are written with characters. And the word for ship is made up of three characters – ship + the number 8 + the symbol for people/mouths. And the word for flood is made up of two characters – water + total. And total is made up of three characters – together + earth + the number 8.

And they are just a few of the great number of evidences for the account that we begin today – the account of Noah and the flood. For this is the *original* *and true* flood account, given to us, through Moses, from God. And it truly is an *amazing* account, in terms of the technological realities described here. It also contains a number of firsts, as we shall see. And it is a warning about the reality of judgment – God cannot overlook sin and it will be severely punished. But it also further develops and unfolds the story of salvation in Jesus Christ, which is the main story of the Bible. So, let’s begin to work through this passage, which has four sections to it.

1. The first section is verses 9-10 – **Righteous Noah.**
	1. And I am hoping by now that you recognized that the opening words of verse 9 begin a new section of Genesis – one of the ten “*these are the generations of* (insert name),” that are found throughout Genesis. The first one was 5:1 and the generations of Adam, but now we come to the generations of Noah.
	2. And what we are told about Noah is that he “***was a righteous man, blameless in his generation*,” and that he “*walked with God***.” And this is very much an upward progression – he wasn’t *just* righteous, he was actually blameless. And he wasn’t *just* blameless, he walked with God!!!
		1. And we have commented on this in previous sermons – this means that despite being a sinner, like you and me, Noah sincerely strived to obey the commandments of God. And such was his dedication to godliness, God Himself describes Noah as righteous, blameless, and that he walked with God. And as we saw in our earlier reading from Ezekiel, Noah is listed as one of the three most righteous Old Testament persons. And we **must not underplay or ignore this truth**, as some commentators tend to do. Psalm 119 begins with these words: “*Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD!*” And it really is possible to be someone like this, in God’s sight. It does not mean perfection, because that is not possible for sinners. But it does mean a conscious and daily striving to obey God’s commandments. And I hope that each one of us would be eager to know that this is how God views us! Yes? That He sees and is pleased by our efforts to obey Him.
		2. But we have also noted that **the godliness of Noah did not make him deserving of or more worthy of being saved than everyone else alive in those days**. For you may remember from verse 8 that a better translation of that verse is that “*Noah found grace or undeserved favour in the eyes of the Lord*.” So, it is the fact that God graciously chose Noah, before the creation of the world, that led to Noah being in the line of promise, and believing God’s words about a flood, and striving to obey His commandments. So, Noah’s righteousness and blamelessness, ultimately, has its roots in the electing grace of God and Christ’s work on the cross. And that is how it is with all those who strive to obey the commandments of God.
	3. But verse 10 mentions that Noah had **three sons – Shem, Ham, and Japheth**. And I have provided you with a chart in the bulletin that gives us a timeline for the building of the ark. The short version is that because of when they were born and that they needed to be old enough to marry and help build the ark, best estimates are that the passage we are reading now – the command to begin building the ark – was given around 55-75 years before the flood came.
2. But the key point being made about Noah and his family will only become clear in the fourth section of this passage. Before that though, just a couple of quick comments about the second section, verses 11-12, which describe **the wicked world of Noah’s day**.
	1. And in many ways, this is a repeat of the widespread wickedness described in verses 1-8. But the description here mentions “***all flesh***.” So, it was not just that mankind was utterly wicked, but it also the animal world. And we can be certain that this is what is meant because in verse 17 God said that He would bring the flood upon “*all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven.*” Back in chapter 1, God told Adam that he had given plants and fruit as food to beast and birds and mankind, to “*everything that has the breath of life*.” Also, after the flood, God declared that from that time forward He would require a reckoning from animals when they took the life of a human. We can infer then that among humans and animals, there was a continued orgy of violence and killing.
	2. And things were so bad, that the earth was “*corrupt*,” or, literally, “*ruined*.” Thus, the “*very good*” creation of chapter 1:31 was now utterly ruined by man and animal.
3. And that is why, in the third section, in verses 13-17, we see that **the Lord commands Noah to build the Ark**.

* 1. The Hebrew word translated as **ark** basically means ‘box.’ It is the same word that describes the basket that Moses was placed in when he was put in the river. The ark of the covenant is a different word. So, just as the ark that carried Moses would have been a simple box-shaped basket, this ark was to be a simple but much larger box-shaped ship. And in terms of how this shaped ship was perfectly suited to surviving the flood, there are lots of fascinating scientific studies and explanations of this and pretty much everything I am about to mention, which could keep us here for hours. But I will leave it to you to go to websites like **creation.com** to look all that up.
	2. We don’t really know what **Gopher wood** is. Gopher is a transliteration of the Hebrew word here. It could be cypress or cedar or teak, but we just do not know. But again, you will find studies that show how these types of wood are the best material for the conditions that would have existed in the flood.
	3. In verse 14, God told Noah to make **rooms** in the ark. The Hebrew word literally translates as ‘nests,’ suggesting appropriately sized compartments for the different types of animals. And I will mention here that studies have shown that as few as 7000 animals, representing less than 1400 kinds, were all that was needed to repopulate the earth from each animal kind. And that includes the smallest reptiles and amphibians right up to the dinosaur kinds. And remember also that Noah only needed two **infant** animals of each kind. So, there was plenty of room in the ark for all the animals.
		1. What is worth looking up at creation.com is explanations about how the animals were likely housed and fed, and how their and human waste was dealt with, as well as how fresh water and air was circulated. The explanations we saw at the Ark replica in the USA were fascinating and totally believable!
	4. In terms of the **size** of the ark, there is some debate about whether it is a short or long cubit that is in view here. But there is only 25mm between the two. The Ark replica in Kentucky was constructed using the long cubit, which is most likely. So, the ark was approximately 155m long, 26m wide, and 15.5m tall. That’s one and a half football fields long, and as high as a four storey building, and with the storage capacity of 450 standard freight trucks.
	5. Verse 16 is a little difficult to interpret and understand. The Hebrew word translated as **roof** is only found here in the Bible. Many Bible scholars think window is a better translation. And some sort of window was needed to permit light and fresh air to come into the ship. Noah was told to finish it “*a cubit above*.” And this is generally understood as meaning an opening in the roof, with a kind of roof over the opening that was one cubit above, or a row of windows one cubit high all along the ark. And once again, the explanation of these options that you can see at Creation.com are helpful and fascinating.
	6. And in terms of how the ark was built, we see in verse 16 that it was to have three levels inside. And again, you can find wonderful studies and explanations of how this would have worked with all the animals and their care.
	7. It is in verse 17 that God revealed to Noah that the destruction of the world would take place via a flood. And to be exactly accurate here, the Hebrew word, *Hamababul*, is literally **THE Flood**. And it is found only in reference to this flood and in Psalm 29. Other floods in the Bible are described using different, ‘regular’ flood words. But this is THE flood. And Psalm 29, which we read earlier, is a Psalm of praise to God for His majesty and power. It says, “*The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters … The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever*.” And then the Psalm ends with this request of this majestic God: “*May the LORD give strength to His people! May the LORD bless His people with peace*!”
1. Well, that brings us, fourthly and finally, to verses 18-22, which tell us about **The Ark and its Passengers**.
	1. I mentioned in the introduction that there are **a number of firsts** in this passage. The first, as we just saw, is the mention of a flood. Never before has the Bible referred to a flood. But verse 18 is also the first time that we come across the word “***covenant***.” We won’t learn the details of the covenant that God makes with Noah and mankind until we get to the end of chapter 8. But even though this is the first mention of the word ‘covenant,’ it is not the first covenant that God made with man. The first was the one He made with Adam. We call it the covenant of? **works**. It was the promise of eternal life on the condition of obeying the command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Adam broke that covenant. So, God came to Him in Genesis 3 and established the covenant of? **grace** – the promise of eternal life, based on the work of the Lord Jesus, which is received by all who believe in Him. And as we go through the Scriptures, we will come across this covenant with Noah, one with Abraham, one with the people of Israel, one with King David, and then the promise of a new covenant in Jeremiah 31. But they are not actually different covenants; they are further unfoldings or more information about the one covenant of grace! But we will return to this at the end of chapter 8.
		1. Notice though what God says here: “*I* will establish *MY* covenant with you.” This is not some 50-50 thing that God and Noah came up with together. This is God, graciously, establishing and entering into covenant relationship. And that is how it must be because God is holy, and Noah was not.
		2. And it is the same for you and me today. The new covenant is about Jesus Christ. He satisfies the conditions of obedience. He takes away our sin. And He did this when He was on earth and lived a perfectly obedient life and then went to the cross to pay the price for our sins. What we must do is believe this. For then we are justified – we receive His righteousness – and are adopted into the family of God.
	2. But covenant brings us **back to the major point about Noah and his family** that I said we would return to. Ever since the Fall in Genesis 3, and God’s promise to send a seed of the woman who would crush the seed of the serpent, we have been making the point that what we read in subsequent chapters are various strategies of the evil one to frustrate God’s promise, and God’s activity to ensure that His promise comes to fulfilment. And perhaps at no other time in Bible history, save for the cross, did Satan come as close to success as he did here. For God said, “*Everything that is on the earth shall die*.” Well, **ALMOST** everything! For, there was one man left in the line of promise – Noah. And because he was in the line of promise, Satan had not been able to conquer him. Noah was God’s man. And the covenant promise of God is to be a God to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments. And we see that here in that Noah’s wife and their sons and wives were also to be saved.
		1. And this is an important point. For, **the focus of this entire section is Noah**. We are not told anything about the righteousness or otherwise of Noah’s wife or sons or their wives. But because of the righteousness of Noah, his wife and their sons and wives are saved with him.
		2. And this is not to say that they are all elect and saved in the ultimate sense. Only God can know that. But there is a covenant benefit, for them, at least outwardly, via their attachment to Noah. They see Noah’s righteousness, they hear Noah’s preaching, they experience the good things that God gave Noah.
		3. And we see the same point in **1 Corinthians 7**. For there we learn that some in the church were teaching that if believers were married to unbelievers, then the believer would be corrupted by the unbeliever, so the believer should leave. But Paul said, This is wrong teaching! And do you remember his reasoning? He said, “*For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband*.” And the children of just one believing parent are holy in the sight of the Lord. And again, this is not about being elect/saved. It is about being exposed to the blessings of life in the covenant – they see a gospel-shaped life, they hear the gospel preached, and they, at least outwardly, experience the good things that God gives to His sons and daughters. It is one of the reasons why we believe the children of believers ought to be baptized – for they are, at least outwardly, within the covenant.
	3. But Noah also learned here that the Lord would bring **two of every kind of animal and bird and creeping thing into the ark** – one male and one female.
		1. And notice what I said – verse 20 is clear that the animals and birds would “*come in to*” the ark, obviously, by the Lord’s direction. And I make that point because very clever scientists mock the flood account by saying, “How could Noah go and find all the animals? Ha Ha Ha! How dumb the Bible is!” But Noah did not have to find the animals! God brought them to him!
	4. And we don’t have time for a full explanation today, but again there are **many studies that explain how fish and insects and plant life could survive the flood, outside the ark**. But it was land animals, birds, and reptiles and amphibians, etc, that went into the ark.
	5. And there are also excellent studies that explain **what sort of foods** would have been sufficient to feed the creatures in the ark.
	6. And that brings us to verse 22, which is where we see that Noah “*did all that God commanded him*.” And I want to pause for a moment and return to our earlier point about Noah being righteous and blameless in his generation. In **Hebrews 11:7**, Noah is commended for building the ark in “*reverent fear*.” And we just heard that it was a massive ship, built by hand, from timber that Noah and his sons would have had to cut and collect and piece together. And this all took between 55 and 75 years. So, every day there would have been people asking him what he was doing, laughing at his response, and mocking his preaching. And he did all this on dry land. And each day, the sun came out. How tempting it must have been, as days became weeks became months became years became one decade, then two, then from five to seven, to just throw in the towel and be like everyone else. But Noah believed God’s word. Noah believed that a Judgment Day was coming. What a powerful encouragement for us to trust and obey, even if everyone else believes differently than we do or behaves differently than we do.

So, two things as we conclude today:

* 1. We have seen that it is the continual wickedness of all flesh that made the destruction of almost everyone necessary. And I wonder, What is your reaction to this? Do you think this was a fitting punishment, or do you think this was a bit harsh of God? A bit over the top (OTT)? And I ask you this because the flood is a type of, or a sign that points to, a greater judgment to come. In 2 Peter 3:5-7 we read, “*The heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and … by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly*.” And on the Day of Judgment, **Matthew 25:41** tells us the Jesus will say to those who perished in the flood of Noah’s day, and everyone else who refused to receive and believe in Him as their Saviour and Lord, “*Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels*.” So, that is a key message of the Flood – Judgment Day is coming. Hell is coming. Repent and believe in Jesus, now! Don’t put it off till tomorrow.

* 1. But on the flip-side of judgment, the ark is a type of, or a sign that points to, Jesus Christ and the cross and eternal life. I mentioned **Hebrews 11:7** before, which commends Noah as a man of faith. It says that “*he* *became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith*.” So, Noah received the righteousness of Christ and eternal life by faith, meaning that he believed in the promises of God. And what does faith look like for you and me today? **Romans 10:9** tells us: “*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved*.”
		1. Verse 16 tells us that Noah was to build **one door** into the ark. That was the only way to enter the ship of salvation. And when Jesus spoke about Himself as the Good Shepherd, He said, “*Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep … If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture*.” And later on, He said, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*.” I can’t show you Jesus. I can’t show you judgment day or hell or heaven. I can only tell you that is the truth and that He is the only door to salvation. You must choose to believe it. But God’s promise is that “*whoever believes in [Jesus] shall not perish but have eternal life*.” So, if you have not done so yet, please believe in Jesus, today!

What an amazing part of Scripture this is: It is amazing technology! But more than anything else it is a picture of amazing grace through faith in Christ! May the Lord bless His word to each one of us. Amen.