



HG250: Mountain Top Experiences
Ararat: Mount Of Promise

Genesis 8:1-4, 20-22, 9:1-17

Home Group Study Notes

8 January 2023 - Revd Paul A. Carr



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group
with you, along with any previous notes and other
resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



Welcome (10 mins)
Ice Breaker

At the beginning of this new year, share your hopes, fears and ambitions for you personally and, if you have any, for Emmanuel for 2023.



Looking Upwards (10 mins)
Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



HG250: Mountain Top Experiences ***Ararat: Mount Of Promise***

Genesis 8:1-4, 20-22, 9:1-17

Home Group Sermon

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Introduction This morning we begin a new Home Group series looking some of the ‘mountain top’ experiences of God’s people in the Bible. Interestingly, mountains are mentioned 570 times in the Bible and about one-third had at least one major event occur on them. It may have been a time of blessing and challenge or times of affirmation and rebuke.

The story of Noah is probably one of the first Bible stories we ever learn as a child and today we begin our series by looking at *Mount Ararat: Mount of Promise*. And, whilst the song: *Mr Noah built an ark* is an amusing, fun song we (used to) teach our children in Sunday school, it almost hides the fact that it is a song about God sending a flood as a judgment on the earth because man had become so sinful and evil, so immoral, so lawless, and so violent - all except Noah and his family.

The Bible isn’t the only book that reports the flood. It probably comes as a surprise to many people when they hear that most cultures have traditions about a worldwide flood that swept the earth. In fact, there are 270 different flood traditions around the world firmly established in many ancient cultures. It’s evidence that the stories have all come from one original source: the survivors of the flood themselves.

The point of this tragic story is not only to record the great flood and judgment of the past, but also to lead us to consider the final judgment and salvation yet to come and God’s promises for the future. I’m going to quickly go through Genesis chapters 6 to 9 this morning. Many people think this is a story about Noah and his family but it’s actually a story about God! But let’s just spend a few moments reminding ourselves about the story of Noah.

1) God told Noah to build an Ark Genesis 6:9 tells us: “*Noah was a righteous man blameless among the people of his time and he walked with God.*” God revealed to Noah that he was going to destroy all of humanity for its wickedness and only Noah and his family would be saved, but he must build an ark to save his family and two of every known animal. Genesis gives us the dimensions of the boat that God has designed and Noah just got on building! Can you imagine the ridicule Noah must have received from the people, building a huge boat, miles from a river or lake and telling them God’s judgment was coming? But Noah believed enough to act on what God had told him to do and he did so with great determination.

2) God had the day of the flood ‘fixed’ in history The Day of Judgment had been predestined. One week before the flood, God told Noah that he had seven days to prepare before He would send a terrifying flood of water, 7:4, to: *‘wipe from the face of the earth every living creature.’* And, sure enough, on the seventh day, the judgment of God fell in the 600th year of Noah’s life and on the 17th day of the second month.

When God says he will do something, he does it. He’s not a God who is as fickle as we are, constantly changing His mind but a God who is faithful and keeps his word.

3) God opened up all the springs of the earth Note exactly what the Bible says, vs11: ‘... *all the springs of the great deep burst forth and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.*’ I guess this is describing that all the subterranean waters underneath the earth’s crust, caverns, springs, rivers, lakes, and perhaps seas of water, were violently broken up. It seems as though the crust of the earth cracked under the violence of quake after quake and the waters burst forth from under the crust of the earth in huge, gigantic tidal waves. We only have to remember back to the scenes from the Tsunami in 2006 to recognise the destruction water can cause when the earth quakes.

4) God opened the floodgates of heaven But imagine the additional destruction when ‘...*the floodgates of the heavens were opened.*’ A violent torrential downpour fell upon the earth. The torrential downpours continued, without any break for forty days and forty nights, but the churning and surging of the waters continued for 150 days, 7:24 even over the highest mountain peaks. It would continue for almost a year over the rest of the earth (ten months in 8:5). This kind of violent, quaking movement, and erosion of the earth’s core and landmasses would drastically affect the shape and geological formations of the earth. Absolutely nothing, no mountain, no valley, no body of water, no island, no continent, no landmass, could possibly be the same after so violent a quaking and flooding of the earth. We all know the destruction the pressure and force of water causes and how it drastically changes its environment.

5) God’s Word is fulfilled in judgement When God warns us against sin and judgment, He means it. He will judge us if we reject, deny and do not live for Him. God fulfilled His Word; He did exactly what He said he would do. The magnitude of this act of God is beyond comprehension. It is unparalleled. An act of immense power, strength and might, an act that only God alone could do - the Sovereign Lord and Creator of the universe. God destroyed all life (Genesis 7:21-23a). There is no doubt this is a tragic scene, yet it is a righteous (or just) act by holy God. Despite His warnings, man continued to curse, reject and rebel against Him. Man continued to live immoral and lawless lives, filling the earth with violence. The tragedy of man’s terrible evil and the justice of God are so significant that the judgment is repeated three times 7:21-23.

Remember what the Lord Jesus said about the people of Noah’s day: the last generation upon earth would be just like his day. In what way? The people of Noah’s day were living selfish, indulgent, and materialistic lives right up until the end. Luke 17:26-27: “*Just as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark.*” And, whilst they were doing this, they were not heeding the warning of judgment against sin: “*Then the flood came and destroyed them all.*” However, I’d want to suggest that the people of Noah’s day were drowning long before the flood came upon the earth. They’d rejected God, even denied and rebelled against Him, even cursed and swore against His name. They rejected God even up until the floodwaters burst loose.

6) God brings salvation in judgement Noah is a living example of the mercy of God. He and he alone had believed and followed God. He and he alone had obeyed and based his life upon the Word of God and the warning of God. God saved Noah and all those in the ark with him (Genesis 7:23b). This, too, was the fulfilment of God’s Word and of His promise to save Noah. God will save any person who believes and follows Him, any person who fully obeys and bases his life upon His Word and His warnings.

Even in the midst of judgment, God was saving people, and we have the list of who they were: Noah; Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Noah’s three sons; Noah’s wife and the wives of his three sons. The great salvation of God in the midst of judgement: the ark of safety. God was also saving the animals: at least two, a male and a female, of every kind of species. Note that this information is given three times: in Genesis 7:1-4, 7-9, and now on the very day when the flood broke loose, Genesis 7:13-16. Why is this information emphasised so much by Scripture? I guess there is one primary reason: it emphasises the eternal mercy and grace of God. Even in the midst of judgment, even as judgment fell, God was merciful. Noah had lived in the midst of a lawless and immoral society, but he had stood firm for God and bore testimony to the righteousness judgment of God. Therefore, God had mercy upon him and his family.

7) The Ark: A type of Christ The OT is full of what we might call ‘types of Christ.’ Whether this be situations, events, people, that draw a parallel with the person and work of the Lord Jesus, and this story is one of the most powerful. I want just to bring some of these parallels to your attention.

- Just as the ark was Noah’s refuge from God’s judgment so is Jesus the believer’s refuge from the judgment of eternal separation from God.
- God Himself designed and planned the ark, even to the minutest detail (Genesis 6:14-16). God Himself designed and planned the coming of Jesus to save the world.
- There was only one door to the ark (6:16). Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6).
- Some kind of pitch/tar covered and sealed the ark. The Hebrew word for pitch (*kopher*) is the same word for atonement, which means to cover (Genesis 6:14). The blood of Jesus Christ covers the sins of the believer and cleanses and seals the believer before God (Romans 5:9; Romans 5:11).
- God Himself gave the great invitation to come and enter the ark (Genesis 7:1). God Himself invites man to come and enter the safety and security of His Son. (Matthew 11:28; 22:2-4).
- The ark was a vessel of refuge, a place of safety and security from the torrential judgment (Genesis 6:17-18; Genesis 7:10-24). Jesus is the believer’s refuge from the coming judgment of hell and eternal separation from God (John 3:16).
- The ark saved Noah and his family through the waters of judgment (Genesis 7:10-24). The waters of baptism symbolize the saving work of Christ for the true believer (1 Peter 3:20-21).
- God called Noah to separate from the world, from its wickedness, evil and doom, by entering the ark (Genesis 7:1). God now calls people to live a life of separation through Christ (John 15:19).
- The ark was secured by God Himself (Genesis 7:16b). God Himself secures the believer through the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 10:28-29; Jude 24-25).
- God kept the door of mercy, the door of the ark, opened right up until the end. But when it was time for judgment the door was shut. There had been a time for grace, but there was also a time for judgment (Genesis 7:16b, Matthew 25:1-13).

8) The Ark came to rest on Mount Ararat And so, the ark came to rest on Mount Ararat, 8:4. The name Ararat means sacred land or holy land. However, it wasn’t a mountain, as we sometimes think it is, but a mountain range with two peaks in the Assyrian/Armenian mountain range (modern day Turkey). Scientists and archaeologists believe they have found the ark itself embedded in the ice. When the waters eventually subsided, and after God told Noah to come out of the ark and to bring the animals with him, Noah built an altar to the Lord and the Lord reaffirmed his commitment to the seasons 8:22.

9) God made a Covenant with Noah In Genesis 9:1: *“Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.’”* Noah is given permission to eat anything that moves on land or sea. It’s almost a repeat of the covenant God make with Adam.

The theme of covenant is fundamental to our understanding of scripture. It exists wholly for a blessing. It was binding. God was faithful to it. It was everlasting. God also made covenants with Adam, Abraham, Moses and David. We'll look at some of those during this series.

Firstly, this covenant was established, not only with Noah, but with all living things. This is made clear in verses 9-10 and verses 16-17. *"Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you..."* (9-10). In verses 17 we read, *"This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth"*.

Secondly, this covenant was established for all time. Look at vs 12: *"And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations..."* And in vs 16 this covenant is called an *"everlasting covenant between God and every living creature"*.

Thirdly, notice the promise of this covenant, 9:11: *"I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth"*

Fourthly, notice the terms of this covenant. What is required of human beings for God to keep his end of the bargain? Nothing. It is a gracious and merciful covenant, not dependent upon the performance of man.

Fifthly, God's covenantal transactions are always accompanied by signs — visible tokens which symbolize the invisible features of the covenant. The Old Covenant by circumcision, the New Covenant by baptism and the Lord's Supper. To the covenant of mercy with Noah, God attached the rainbow as a sign. It's not that rainbows did not exist prior to the establishment of this covenant, but that God made use of the rainbow as a sign of the covenant.

Next time you see a rainbow, be reminded that as a Christian, you will never experience God's wrath/anger. Oh, we will go through tough times, but we will never experience His anger. And when you remember that, rejoice. Rejoice that even with serious health problems, God will spare you from His anger. Even though you may have difficult situations at home, rejoice, because that rainbow reminds you God will protect you. Even though you may be lonely and frustrated with challenging circumstances, rejoice, because that rainbow reminds you that you are eternally safe, not in a wooden ark, but in the most secure shelter of all, our Lord Jesus Christ. Look for the rainbow and rejoice in what it means.

And Finally ... Some Great Lessons from Noah's Ark. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark. Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone might ask you to do something REAL-LY big. Speed isn't always an advantage. The cheetahs were on board, but so were the snails. Don't forget that we're all in the same boat. Remember that the ark was built by amateurs and the Titanic was built by professionals. Remember that the woodpeckers INSIDE are often a bigger threat than the storm outside. Don't miss the boat. No matter how bleak it looks, there's always a rainbow on the other side.

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Emmanuel Church Text for 2023

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26



Looking Upwards (40 mins)

Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1: From recent newspaper headlines or front page stories, illustrate any ways in which our society/world resembles the one in which Noah lived.

2: Read 7:1-16. How do you think Noah and his family feel during the long months of building the ark on dry land, rounding up all the living creatures and embarking with them?

3: In what situations have you felt embarrassed because of your obedience to God? How can you be encouraged and challenged by the obedience of Noah?

4: Noah's first act, after emptying the ark, is to offer a sacrifice to God, 8:20. What does this reveal about his priorities amid the pressure of urgent tasks calling for immediate attention?

5: In 9:8-17 God makes a covenant as unconditional as it is undeserved. What do we learn about the extent and purpose of this covenant? How is the sign of the rainbow especially appropriate to the promise?

6: How has God's grace been evident throughout this story? How has His grace been evident in your life lately?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

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