

Chapter Eight

What Did Noah Know That I Need To Know?

Imagine you are sitting in your church service one Sunday morning and the special guest speaker begins like this–

"I have been diligently studying the Bible and I have come to share the important revelation I have seen.

God is a holy God. He is the most holy God and He cannot tolerate unholiness. Yet the world is growing more and more unholy; America is becoming more and more unholy and God cannot abide it. It grieves His heart and offends His righteousness. So God is left with no other recourse but to come in judgment.

And I have come to tell you that God is going to again cleanse the earth as He did with Noah. God is angry and He is again going to flood the earth and wipe out unrighteous humanity. God has sent me today to tell you we must prepare for another flood."

What would you think? What would you say? What Bible passage would you look for to either verify or disprove what the speaker has declared to be true?

Simple Sunday School Truth

My guess is that even young Sunday school students would dispute the "truth" of this declaration by simply saying, *"What you are saying cannot be true since the rainbow is God's promise that He will never flood the earth again"*. Most of us would know enough about the Bible to say that whatever God is going to do concerning judgment, it won't be with a flood since He made what He called an *"everlasting covenant"* that He will never flood the earth again.

Gen. 9:8-17 tells the story of God promising, *"Never again will I destroy all flesh with the flood"*. It is here that we are told of the rainbow that would be the reminder of

this eternal covenant so Noah's descendants wouldn't go crazy every time it rained. Based on this promise, this "everlasting promise", we would point out that the Bible teaches us what this speaker is saying just can't be true...and hopefully this speaker would not be invited back.

Of Course, God is Mad...Isn't He?

Now, what if someone came and taught that God cannot possibly be mad at us? What if they taught that even with all the seemingly clear Old Testament evidence of God's anger, wrath and punishing judgment, something has changed, something is different now? What if they boldly proclaimed God has sworn He would never be angry at us again?

What would we say? Where would we look in our Bibles to prove that this isn't just another watered down, liberal, "sin doesn't matter" heresy?

But what if this doubtful, possibly heretical declaration was actually true? What if God did promise He will never be angry at us again? What difference would it make? How would we think differently about Him? How would we approach Him differently? Or would we just ignore Him since we wouldn't need to fear His anger anymore?

Or, is it possible, that some people, perhaps a lot of people, might run to Him for the help they have needed for a long time but were afraid He wouldn't give because they were sure He was mad at them?

But if He is mad about our sin, if He's angry because we have failed so miserably, I'm not sure we should try to get too close to Him. It could be dangerous. After all, He is jealous, isn't He? He is vengeful, isn't He? He is angry at us for our gross lack of holiness...isn't He?

What Legally Happened To Sin On The Cross?

Isaiah 53 is the great Messianic chapter that tells us in the most profound, prophetic detail about the coming of Christ, His rejection and crucifixion. This chapter contains the most amazing foretelling of the cross and exactly what would happen there.

This is where we are told that God put the sins of the whole world upon Him and the legal debt was paid. When Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 5:21, "*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf...*" he was referring directly to the legal truth we find in Isaiah 53.

"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our

*transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; **and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**"*

(Isa. 53:4-6 NIV)

This is the great legal declaration that the penalty was paid at the cross. The debt was settled at the cross. All that was owed because of our sin has been paid in full at the cross. The debt of law has been eternally, legally satisfied...at the cross.

But something else happened at the cross and it's of extreme importance to my daily life, my mental health and my emotional well-being. The next chapter, Isaiah 54, tells all about it. And yet it took me thirty years to read it and understand it.

And it has an amazing reference to Noah, the flood and the power of the promises God makes to us if we will believe.

And here it is –

*"For this is like the days of Noah to Me, when I swore that the waters of Noah would not flood the earth again; **so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you nor will I rebuke you.** For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, but **My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, and My covenant of peace will not be shaken,** says the LORD who has compassion on you."*

(Isaiah 54:9-10)

God Is So Serious About This, He Swears

This is one of the most dogmatic, declarative statements in the whole Bible; and I didn't even know it was there for thirty years. Oh, I had read it many times but I never really *saw* it. And I never connected it to the truth in the preceding chapter of Isaiah 53.

No true theologian believes chapter 53 is just for the Jews at some future time. Virtually all Christians believe Isaiah 53 is for anyone, at anytime, who puts their faith in Jesus Christ. He was wounded for us, He was bruised for us, He was crushed for us, and the sins of us all were placed upon Him. All of salvation hangs on this truth.

If all the promises in Isaiah 53 are true for anyone who will believe that *"the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all"*, then the promises in Isaiah 54 are true for anyone who will believe the same God made these promises, also.

Listen to the extreme, emphatic language God uses in making the promises of chapter 54—

"This is like the days of Noah to Me..."

"I swore to Noah..."

"I now swear to you..."

"Until the mountains are removed..."

"Until the hills shake..."

These are definite, absolute statements. God is swearing something here that He declares will stand forever...for any who will believe the promises of chapter 53. And what is God swearing to?

"I will not be angry with you!"

I know we may not be able to even begin to understand or explain what this might mean in our everyday lives, but we must return to this right starting place...*God has sworn He will never be angry with anyone who believes Isaiah 53.*

Could This Be True?

Lest we think God is talking about something else, or somebody else, let's look at the larger context.

"For a brief moment I forsook you,

But with great compassion I will gather you.

*In an **outburst of anger***

I hid My face from you for a moment,

But with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion

on you, Says the LORD your Redeemer.

For this is like the days of Noah to Me,

When I swore that the waters of Noah

Would not flood the earth again;

So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you

Nor will I rebuke you.

For the mountains may be removed

And the hills may shake,

But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you,

And My covenant of peace will not be shaken,

Says the LORD who has compassion on you."

(Isaiah 54:7-10)

Read the whole chapter. As direct result of the sin-offering of the Messiah in chapter 53, chapter 54 makes a whole list of amazing promises.

"Shout for joy...fear not...don't be ashamed...don't feel humiliated...My everlasting lovingkindness...my compassion...I will never be angry...I will not rebuke...I will lay your foundations...I will build you...no weapon formed against you shall prosper...I will vindicate you!"

These are amazing, incredible promises that run through the entire chapter of Isaiah 54. If these things are true for any who believe the offering made in chapter 53, why are we still battling with fear, shame and condemnation about our lack of perfectness?

Could it be that we have believed the legal aspect of what happened to our sin on the cross but we've missed the other half of what was accomplished?

Could it be that we have believed the eternal aspect of salvation but we have missed the part that most directly affects our everyday walk with God?

Could it be that we have missed fully half of the real reason for the cross?

I know I missed it for almost thirty years of my Christian life...and it nearly killed my faith.