

Lesson for September 7, 2008

Old Testament Survey

Noah, the Ark and the Flood (Genesis 6:1-10:32)

The story of Noah and the flood began with an unusual period in history. In Genesis 6 we have the account of what some believe to be angels taking on the form of human beings and taking human wives. The result of this union was a superhuman race called by some "the nephilim," which is a Hebrew word for "sons of God." Some translations of the Bible use the Hebrew word "nephilim" instead of translating "sons of God" into to English. There are at least two instances that we know of when angels took on the form of human beings. One instance was when Gabriel in Daniel 8:16 and Daniel 9:21-22 taught Daniel. The second instance was when the two angels destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19:1-10.

The other popular interpretation of this passage is that the "sons of God" are actually from the line of Cain and the "daughters of men" were from the line of Seth. Cain's line was said to be a godless line and Seth's line was said to be a godly line. The "giants" as recorded in the King James Bible is the Hebrew word "nephil" and can also mean bully or tyrant.

Genesis 6:4 also tells us that the offspring of this unholy union became mighty men, which were from old (literally "ancient") and that they were men of reputation. There are also verses that tell us that angels do not marry and are not given in marriage. (Matthew 22:30) The last bit of information that sheds light on this passage is found in Jude 6-8.

Regardless of which interpretation you hold to, it is clear that the result was a race of people who rebelled against the Lord and defiled themselves in very kind of debauchery that their minds could imagine. The Lord finally decided to start over by destroying the entire population of the earth; mankind, animals, birds and even insects. The only thing that saved the world from total annihilation was the faithfulness of Noah. Noah found grace in the sight of God and God spared Noah and his family from the universal flood. The story of the building of an ark is the means God used to preserve the human race and the animal life that was on it.

God gave Noah specific instructions as to how the Ark was to be made. From the type of wood, to the dimensions, the construction of it, God instructed Noah. This boat would be the salvation of Noah, his family and the animals and was a perfect type of Jesus Christ and the provision of salvation for mankind in the future. This project took 120 years to complete and no one turned to God in that time and as a result they were all destroyed by the flood.

The Ark that Noah built, according to God's instructions, was an amazing boat. Its size was 450 feet long X 75 feet wide X 45 feet high. It had three floors and had windows at the top for light and ventilation. It also had stalls and pens for the animals and finally it had pitch on the inside and on the outside to seal it.

After the flood had subsided and the Ark was on dry ground, Noah, his family and all the animals left the Ark and began new lives. Noah sacrificed to the Lord and the Lord made a covenant with him that never again would He destroy the earth by water. This is called the Noahic Covenant.

Noahic Covenant (Genesis 8:20-22; 9:1-27)

A covenant is an agreement (testament) between two parties. God's covenants with man fall into two categories: 1) *Conditional* - if man will keep the conditions of the agreement then God will fulfill the promise that was given 2) *Unconditional* - God will fulfill His promise that was given regardless of man's response to the condition of the agreement. God's covenants to man are always based on His grace and always line up perfectly with the dispensations found in Scripture.

This *unconditional* covenant was given by God to Noah and his family after the flood and was a promise never to destroy the earth again with water (the rainbow was given as a permanent sign to God's faithfulness). It also reestablished the proper order in nature. God gave specific unconditional promises regarding Noah's sons and their future. The Noahic Covenant coincided with the Age of Human Government in the Dispensation of the Gentiles.

The Ark is a perfect type of Jesus Christ. Just as Noah and his family were secure within the Ark, the Church Age believer is secure "in Christ." The baptism of the Holy Spirit places the believer into union with Christ and that union can never be broken.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is neither seen nor felt. It is a fact stated in the Word of God for us to believe. Technically, it is when the believer is placed into union with Jesus Christ at salvation. There are seven baptisms in the Bible and the baptism of the Holy Spirit is but one of these. The word for baptism in Greek is "baptisma" and literally means, "to dip." It was used to describe the dyeing of a garment or the drawing of wine by dipping the cup into the bowl. John the Baptist and Jesus used the word to describe water baptism as submersion, therefore, the accurate interpretation of the word is "to dip into or submerge."
(1 Corinthians 12:13)

When a person trusts Christ as Savior they are “dipped into” or “submerged” into the “body of Christ.” This, of course, is speaking of positional truth, signifying our union with Christ. Water baptism for believers has always been a picture of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Submersion into water pictures how the believer becomes united with Christ. (Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:4-5)

The doctrine of eternal security is the Scriptural teaching that once a person becomes a believer in Christ, that person is secure “in Christ” *forever*. (I John 5:13)

There is sound doctrinal reasoning for knowing that a believer is secure forever. The most important fact to note is that eternal security depends upon God’s faithfulness, not man’s faithfulness. It is the life of God (eternal life) that He imputes (credits) to every believer at the moment of salvation, which assures us of an eternal relationship with Him. The Bible says that believers are guarded in the “hand of God.” We are also given a guarantee in the Person of the Holy Spirit, Who indwells every believer. The Holy Spirit Himself is the seal that secures forever our eternal life. Since salvation is a grace function and has nothing whatsoever to do with human effort or human merit, losing your salvation through sin would negate God’s grace – a blasphemous thought. (John 10:28-29, 14:16-17)

If a believer could lose his salvation through sin, who is to be the judge of which particular sin cancels his salvation? If you merely have life until you sin again, then you do not have eternal life. A lack of understanding or believing in the eternal security of the believer results in lack of confidence in God and His Word. Assurance of salvation should be dealt with in spiritual childhood and cease to be an issue once a believer has begun to learn and apply Bible doctrine. Confidence in God is a priestly function and is obtained by the consistent study and application of God’s Word. The more doctrine you learn and apply, the more you know about God and the more confident you become in His plan and purpose for you. (Romans 8:38-39; I John 3:21-22)

Once you have gained confidence in your salvation, you can relax knowing that regardless of what people or circumstances do to you that you are eternally secure in Christ. This divine viewpoint mental attitude has the result of confidence towards God and courage towards man. Since you are not trusting any member of the human race, including yourself, to secure your salvation you can have complete confidence in the “powerful hand of God” to keep you secure forever. (Isaiah 41:10; John 10:28-29)

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Once Noah and his family were safely inside the Ark, it was sealed with pitch to prevent any leaking. In the same manner, the Church Age believer is sealed by God the Holy Spirit.

The sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit is our assurance from God of a secure future. The word in Greek for sealing is “sphragizo” and means to secure, to signify ownership, or to authenticate.

God seals the believer at salvation with His seal. “The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” What exactly does the Holy Spirit seal for the believer? We are told in Ephesians 1, where Paul enumerates certain spiritual blessings that belong to all believers. In verse four he states that we are the elect (chosen for privilege) of God and that we are made holy (set apart) and blameless before Him (a reference to our position in Christ). In verse five we are told that we have been predestined (a predetermined plan for each of us) and that we have been adopted into the family of God. Verse six tells us that we have been accepted in the beloved. In verse seven we learn that we have been forgiven and redeemed and in verse eight and nine we are told that God’s will has been revealed to us. In verses ten and eleven we find out that we have an eternal inheritance as a result of being in union with Christ. And finally in verses twelve and thirteen we are told that God places His seal on these blessings by sending His Holy Spirit to indwell us because of our faith in Christ.

The reason God the Holy Spirit is our seal is that He is the One Who is able to search and know the “heart” of man. The heart in Greek is the word “kardia” and refers to the soul, which is a compartment in the mind of a person. It also refers to the center of man’s will, intellect and emotions. It is *not* referring to the pumping organ. The reason the word for heart is used to designate the soul is that the physical heart circulates blood to the entire body. In like manner the soul circulates information. It is doctrinal information circulating in the soul that the Holy Spirit uses to teach and guide the believer.

Every believer is sealed at the moment of faith in Christ (salvation). We know this from an examination of Scripture in the original language. The correct translation, for example, of Ephesians 1:13 is “In whom ye trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also *having believed* (not after you believed) ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” The sealing work of the Holy Spirit is immediate and simultaneous with our faith in Christ.

Noah lived after the flood for three hundred and fifty years. His example of faithfulness despite the adversity should be a great encouragement to all of us as believers.