

LESSONS FROM THE FLOOD

The great flood in the time of Noah engulfed all of the world (Gen. 7:19–20) in its destructive effects. It was of such cataclysmic power and proportions that only the eventual end of the physical universe by fire is worthy of comparison (2 Pet. 3:5–10). The flood's effects are yet seen in such things as the topsy-turvy fossil strata, the strange angles of layered stone often seen in exposed mountain sides, and the like.

The astute observer sees the more important effects of the flood, however, in the lessons it provides concerning the nature of God.

God despises sin

Wickedness was so pervasive by Noah's time that God regretted having created man (Gen. 6: 5–7, 11–13). God's abhorrence of sin is an inherent trait. Because He could not abide sin, He expelled Adam and Eve from Eden. Their sin brought death upon all mankind (Rom. 5:12). The flood would never have occurred had God been indifferent to sin. May we never think that He does not despise the wickedness of our era.

God's longsuffering is not infinite

He prefaced His announcement of the flood by saying, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever" (Gen. 6:3). Longsuffering is one of God's attributes. He is "...slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth" (Exo. 34:6). He is perfect in this, as in every other trait, but further longsuffering toward the evil that preceded the flood would have been a vice rather than a virtue. As the "iniquity of the Amorite" in Canaan was "full" by the time of Joshua (Gen. 15:16; Jos. 3:11), so shall the wickedness of men

again some day be full. Only God's longsuffering preserves our world, but both will some day end (2 Pet. 3:9–10).

God requires obedience

Noah found grace in God's eyes because he was "a righteous man, and perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:8–9). His obedience was the key factor in mankind's surviving the flood. Noah did "according to all that God commanded him" (v. 22). God's demanded response from men has always been a faith that prompts obedience (Heb. 11:1–31). By definition, sin is disobedience—transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4).

God rewards obedience

God invited Noah and his family into the ark, saying, "for thee have I seen righteous before me" (Gen. 7:1). As God's deepest grief is our sin, so His greatest joy is our obedience. Our souls cannot be purified apart from our obedience (1 Pet. 1:22). Only those who obey God will be saved by His grace (Mat. 7:21–23). Jesus saves all who obey Him (Heb. 5:9). God's delight in Noah's obedience is typical of His delight in every person who has an obedient heart.

—Dub McClish
Denton, TX

[Note: This article was written for and published in the *Denton Record-Chronicle*, Denton, TX, February 13, 2009.]