

# The importance of tracking hurricanes!

## Genesis 6:9-22

Each June we enter what is known as Hurricane season. Predictions vary from year to year. This particular year, the National Weather Service is predicting ten named storms with two that are supposed to hit land.

When I lived in Florida, there was often concern about hurricanes. We always tracked them with the news for safety purposes. Back then, meteorologists did the best they could, but often that was not good enough. Then came Nexrad Doppler radar. With its advent there was more accuracy and more speed in weather predictions. There were also more lives saved!

Well, the original Doppler radar started showing signs of a devastating storm some 1500 years after Creation. But although there was plenty of warning (some 100-120 years) all who heard it ignored. All that is, except for one righteous man and his family. A man named Noah; this is his story.

The first thing we see is a cautious family in verses 9-10. As we look at this family we see a word about *Noah's faith* (v. 9). We're told that we're learning about the generations of Noah. The word generations means "to go in a circle." Just as planets orbit around the sun, so Noah's life orbited around God. I like what Matthew Henry says: "it is easy to be religious when religion is in fashion; but it is an evidence of strong faith and resolution to swim against a stream to heaven, and to appear for God when no one else appears for Him: so Noah did, and it is upon record, to his immortal honor."

The Scripture also says he walked with God (a statement applied only to one other - Enoch). The idea expressed by the Hebrew is to walk habitually. This is not a casual afternoon once a month stroll, but a day by day, minute by minute dependence. What a contrast Noah is to those we saw in 6:4 - mighty men, men of renown. Noah was probably detested by those of his day. They may have even called him old, kooky Noah! But while those men of renown were exalted by the world, Noah was exalted by God. Let me tell you, in the end, it doesn't matter what people think of you. What matters is where you stand in God's eyes. Noah heard those words, "well done, good and faithful servant." Will you?

We also see a word about *Noah's fruit* (v. 10). Noah had three sons. This doesn't seem like much, but all of us are ultimately descended from them! We'll learn more about them in future studies, and it won't all be good either! But to their credit here they listened to their father. How contrasting they are to many children today. Most young people today operate from the premise that "Dad's out of touch," or "he doesn't understand." We speak of a generation gap, and use other such descriptions to describe the conflict between generations. The truth, however, is that children would be amazed at how "in touch" their parents are. God has put them over children for their own good. Thank God these boys realized that and obeyed!

An immediate contrast to this cautious family is given next. Notice in contrast to this cautious family the carnal flesh in verses 11-13. In these three short verses, we see a stark contrast to Noah and his family. It also sounds very much like reading the morning paper. We read of corruption and violence. And where does it exist? In "all the earth"

the scripture says. Where can you go today that such is not true? If you know, please, let me know so I can go there! The sad truth is that such exists all over today as well.

Notice first of all that **God reviews the earth** (vv. 11-12). 2 Chronicles 16:9a says, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth." In Noah's day, God saw the corruption and degradation. We may wonder if God notices today. Does He really see the immorality that is rampant? The deception without shame among so many? The scourge of selfishness and self-centeredness? Even the corruption within the church? Does God really see? Let me tell you - He sees!

John Phillips, in his commentary, says, "the sins that produced the Flood have risen again in the world and are fast reaching toward heaven." I believe God is reviewing the earth even now, waiting for when the time is right, when He'll say to His Son, go get your bride. The time will certainly be short then (only seven years of tribulation left), but I believe it's equally short now. Make sure you're not living like this carnal flesh, but like faithful Noah, trusting God in all His promises!

We also see that **God reveals the end** (v. 13). The end, God says, has come. This phrase comes from a word meaning "to cut off." God's patience was exhausted, yet He still remembers mercy in His wrath and reveals His plan to Noah. In Matthew 24:3, the disciples asked Jesus, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" After sharing some of the details, Jesus summarizes by saying, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:36-39).

Are we not eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage? Life goes on, and we go about our merry way, oblivious to the sin all around. In fact, we often find ourselves taking part in sin. Oh, we justify it; everybody's doing it, it's not that big of a deal. But God still says, it's SIN! Just as He revealed the end to Noah, He's revealed it to us - judgment will come!

So in response we learn about a certain flood in verses 14-22. Can you imagine the reaction of Noah? Heretofore there had been no rain. What sense did it make to build a boat? Yet we see a wonderful example of obedience even when God doesn't seem to make sense. We also see a beautiful picture of Christ.

We see first of all, **the finished work of Christ** (vv. 14-16). Note the ark was to be pitched within and without. The Hebrew word used for pitch (kaphar) is the same word in the Old Testament used for atonement! Lexical scholar Spiros Zodhiates says it is "probably one of the most important words in the Bible." It is first used here in verse 14. Most of the time, the word is used in a sense which means to "cover" sin with the blood of a sacrifice. Here, I believe, it foreshadows that great covering of sin in sacrifice of Christ. Where would Noah and his family be safe? Inside the ark. Where are we safe? In Christ! When we are in Him, we have been covered completely.

Note also that Noah is given specific instructions for building this ark in verses 15-16. We see the length, breadth, and height of the ark defined. Many say such a boat wouldn't be able to hold very much. But I remember an exercise from Sunday School when I was a child. We were studying about Noah and the ark. Our teacher took us

outside to a big field beside the church. We began to measure the dimensions of the ark. The field, as huge as it was, wasn't even big enough to contain this boat. Let me tell you, it was a big boat! We also see details about the window, the door, and the decks.

The point of all this is to show us that it is God who tells us how to be saved! Noah could have said, "you know, this box boat won't do. We need to make it round." Then it would have bobbed all over in the water and they probably would have all died! He could have said, "this boat's not necessary. We'll just store up some food in cave and hide out there." Then they would have all perished!

Many today are saying such things as faith alone is not enough; you have to work and prove your worth to God. Or perhaps they say the cross is too barbaric and they prefer to simply live a good and moral life counting on that to be sufficient. But the fact remains that God says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). He has given the directions for salvation - it's the finished work of Christ.

What a beautiful picture here. Noah, the ancient carpenter points us toward the Carpenter of Nazareth. Noah, who covered his family, points us toward the one who covers us. Noah, who sheltered those who trusted him, points us toward the one who shelters us through our storms. Noah, who brought those with him through the wrath of God's judgment on the world, points us toward the one who brings us through the wrath of God's judgment on sin. Indeed, this is a picture of the finished work of Christ!

This certain flood also speaks to us about *the faithful word of the Creator* (vv. 17-22). His word describes **a place of protection** (vv. 17-20). God pledged to save all who would believe His word. Could others have been saved? I think so. While building, Noah also preached (2 Peter 2:5). Had people believed, there would have been a place of protection for them too. But there had to be a response of faith on their part. This is how it is today as well. God calls (note v. 20 - Noah didn't round up the animals; rather they came to him in response to God's call), and we must respond in faith. When we do, there's a place of protection in Christ.

But not only that, there's also **a place of provision** (vv. 21-22). These folks spent a good deal of time on this boat; more than just forty days. In fact, they spent one year and seventeen days in the ark! Genesis 7:11 tells us the Flood started in the 600<sup>th</sup> year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> month, the 17<sup>th</sup> day (they had gone inside the ark seven days prior to the start of the Flood). Genesis 8:14 says they came out of the ark in the 601<sup>st</sup> year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> month, the 27<sup>th</sup> day. That's one year and seventeen days total, which means a lot of food for the people, much less all the animals! Yet there was enough for all for the ark was a place of provision. In Christ there is provision for any need you have!

In the late 70s, a hurricane was skirting the coast of Florida, where I then lived. I remember going out to play golf in the wind. I thought it would be cool to hit the ball with 100 mile per hour winds behind me. I realize now it was stupid! Fortunately, the hurricane stayed far enough away that we only experienced wind. Such was not the case for some coastal communities, however. There was much destruction. What a storm!

In 1989 (I believe that was the year), when we were in seminary, we had some friends from Charleston, South Carolina. They were concerned over a storm called Hugo - and for good reason as it wreaked havoc in their hometown. It even left Karen's

grandmother in Monroe, North Carolina without power for some seven or eight days. What a storm!

In the early 1990s we were tracking a hurricane in the Atlantic. Although we were in North Carolina, we tracked it out of concern for my sister in West Palm Beach, which was the area it was originally predicted to hit. Fortunately, the storm turned more southward. Fortunately, that is for my sister, but not for the residents of Homestead, Florida just south of Miami. I can still see in my mind vivid pictures of devastation and destruction that the news media broadcast from that hurricane named Andrew. What a storm!

Five months after moving to Pennsylvania, Hurricane Fran began brewing in the Atlantic. While we lived in North Carolina, we never worried too much about hurricanes because we lived inland far enough that we wouldn't take the brunt of a storm. But nobody told Fran that! She rolled through Raleigh and central North Carolina. We had friends who lost close to one hundred trees in their yard. We saw video of the destruction. And even nine months later when we returned to the area you could still see the impact of the deluge. What a storm!

Let me warn you tonight - a hurricane is coming, but not a hurricane of wind and pounding rain. This hurricane contains fire. 2 Peter 3:3-7, 10-13 says, "First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. . . . But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness."

Just as surely as God brought judgment on the ancient world through the Flood, He'll judge this present world again, but by fire, not by Flood. I ask you, are you prepared for that judgment? There's only one way to be prepared! Know Jesus Christ personally, the one who brings you through any storm.