



## TODAY IN GOD'S WORD

*"God's Great Heartbreak?" Relational Imperative pt 3*  
Genesis 6:1-7:1

May 14, 2006

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### INTRODUCTION

The narrative of Noah and the Flood is something so often rehearsed in our religious circles that it is no longer poignant or relevant.

ILL: *And the Lord said unto Noah: "Where is the ark which I have commanded thee to build?"*

*And Noah said unto the Lord: "Verily, I have had three carpenters off ill. The gopher-wood supplier hath let me down—yea, even though the gopher wood hath been on order for high upon 12 months. What can I do, O Lord?"*

*And God said unto Noah: "I want that ark finished even after seven days and seven nights."*

*And Noah said: "It will be so."*

*And it was not so. And the Lord said unto Noah: "What seemeth to be the trouble this time?"*

*And Noah said unto the Lord: "Mine subcontractor hath gone bankrupt. The pitch which Thou commandest me to put on the outside and on the inside of the ark hath not arrived. The plumber hath gone on strike. Shem, my son who helpeth me on the ark side of the business, hath formed a pop group with his brothers Ham and Japheth. Lord, I am undone."*

*And the Lord grew angry and said: "And what about the animals, the male and the female of every sort that I ordered to come unto thee to keep their seed alive upon the face of the earth?"*

*And Noah said: "They have been delivered unto the wrong address but should arrive on Friday."*

*And the Lord said: "How about the unicorns, and the fowls of the air by sevens?"*

*And Noah wrung his hands and wept, saying: "Lord, unicorns are a discontinued line; thou canst not get them for love nor money. And fowls of the air are sold only in half-dozens, Lord. Lord, Thou knowest how it is."*

*And the Lord in His wisdom said: "Noah, my son, I knowest. Why else dost thou think I have caused a flood to descend upon the earth?"*

This is a funny story, but it reflects one of the ways we usually view this narrative. We have one of three takes on this narrative: a children's story, an object of rational arguments, or God whooping up on earth.

This morning, we are not looking for proof of a created earth. We are not telling a dramatic story. Instead, let's look at God's words in this epic narrative. We are granted a rare chance to see God's words, to hear his heart – and we often ignore this extremely unorthodox offering on God's part.

To a certain extent, what we are going to examine are *anthropomorphisms*. In other words, God puts his divine nature into human terms so we can understand it better. At the same time, there is something very real about what God has to say.

## 1. WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO FRUSTRATE GOD? (v 3)

*The LORD said, "My spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh. His days shall be one hundred and twenty years."*

- a. This statement was so opposed to the traditional, theological concept of God that early translators changed the word *strive*. The translators of the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Septuagint or LXX) changed the word to *abide*.
  - i. The patient, all-loving God of our theologies – frustrated? The God of heaven and earth giving up on the human race? What is really going on here?
  - ii. It is important for us to realize that this is not an *angry* God. What is often missing from our perception of God is his personality. He created man to be *with* Him.
  - iii. Man had pushed and pushed at God until he had no desire to fulfill his role in the universe.
- b. Man is *indeed flesh* – God created man to be a whole being – spirit and flesh operating in harmony with Him. But man chose flesh, becoming no more than the animals, choosing satisfaction over completion.

ILL: *When my wife and I moved into our house, we discovered HIGH SPEED internet. A two-way communication, versus "on-demand" dial-up.*

- i. The term *indeed* indicates that man had become completely given over to, abandoned to the flesh. There was no spiritual side to him.
- ii. At this point, God had to choose whether he would continually try to fight with a selfish man or wipe him out.
- iii. See VERSE 12 – "corrupted their way"

## 2. WHEN GOD'S HEART BREAKS (vv 6-7)

*And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in his heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy [wipe out] man whom I have created from the face of the earth..."*

- a. We are, after all, created in God's image. We have a heart – a center of being – and so does he. God's heart *grieved* for the man that he had created.
  - i. He grieved for the lost friendship he created man for
  - ii. He mourned their departure from him when he had nothing wrong to them.

- b. The world that now operated before God was one of corruption and violence
  - i. The sons of God married the daughters of men – the intermarriage of the lines of Cain and Seth.
  - ii. The *nephilim* (mistranslated as “giants” following LXX) – the heroes of Greek epics, the Titans of ancient myth – waged war for war’s sake, killed for killing’s sake
- c. Consider this – God’s nature is intertwined with that of man. Although wholly separate from us, he is somehow connected to us (as intimates can only be) and our absence from His life causes him pain. The cold, un-emotive God of Calvinism and New Age “spirituality” falls short of who he truly is.

### 3. FINDING A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP (VV 13, 18)

*And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth... But I will establish my covenant with you...”*

- a. Violence (literally, rolling or tempest) filled the earth because man crashed against man in the waves of seeking fulfillment without God.
  - i. When man lives as one of the flesh, he becomes an animal – driven by instinct, without the guidance of his true nature.
  - ii. Man’s nature became restless – a seething pot of reckless pursuit.
  - iii. Man began by not being content to garden, then moved to murder, then to marriage – until his passions became uncontrollable.
- b. Contrary to every film and Sunday School representation, God did not surprise Noah with this covenant. If Noah *walked* with God, that means he literally walked with him. God’s covenant with Noah was an agreement between friends.

### 4. EMBRACING TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS (RELATIONAL) (7:1)

*Then the LORD said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and your entire household, because I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation.”*

- a. God and Noah had a walking relationship – not to the degree of Enoch’s but still. Elsewhere, Peter is adamant that Noah was a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5) – that his righteousness before God compelled him to speak to his generation, even though they did not listen to him.
- b. Noah was righteous. I prefer to think of righteousness in relational terms. Like his great-grandfather, Enoch, Noah walked with God. *This does not mean he always DID right as much as he WAS right.* He was connected to God; his spirit active. This was different from his contemporaries who were “indeed flesh.”

- c. After God told Noah, he waited one hundred years before the Flood. Why? Just being right before God didn't make him safe. Walking with God is a coupling of relationship and obedience.
- d. The reason for the Ark was the people outside of it. For a century, the ark preached the sermon Noah was speaking. And yet, no one listened.