

We Live, We Love: Stories from Genesis Noah and His Messy Menagerie

The story from [Genesis 6-8](#)

Biblical stories are stories of our Christian faith. These stories inform us about the development of our faith, who we are and whose we are. They tell us how God dealt and continues to deal with His creation. Biblical stories imply that God is kind, caring, graceful, lovely, kind, compassionate and responsible to His creation. They tell us about events that resonate with our daily lives and from which we can take consolation when we find ourselves overwhelmed. These stories/ parables, imageries, from Genesis to Revelation imply that though sometimes we choose to turn away from God, God is still at work to sustain, promote, and help His creation.

Pastor Kathy talked about Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel the past two Sundays. She talked about how **Adam and Eve** disobeyed God and hide from God and went somewhere in she called Australia. But God had compassion on them and went in search of them and brought them to safety. She told us that though **Cain killed** his brother Abel, out of jealousy, God lovingly defended him.

This morning, we will look at one of the controversial stories in the Bible. **The story of Noah** and the flood. But before we proceed, it is important to know that these biblical stories and events developed in the Ancient World called Near -East now modern Middle East. The discoveries of modern science and studies have shed further lights on some of these Near Eastern events and stories like Noah and the Flood in the Bible. However, biblical interpretations may change from time to time but it does not change how God relates with his creation. From biblical perspective, God is the author of nature and the one who inspires the biblical stories. In this light we should believe that Noah and the flood narrative in no way conflicts with what is discovered in the natural world.

The biblical stories are record of encounters between Almighty God and ordinary humans that lived thousands of years ago. John Walton a biblical scholar states “the Bible was written *for* us all, but it was not written *to* us today”. Thus, for us to understand what the story of Noah and the flood means we first need to understand what it meant to those who wrote and received it.

Ancient Israel were people who expressed themselves in terms of their geographical surroundings to communicate a message or God’s messages. **The image of flood** covering the face of the earth and killing all creatures but one man and a few creatures was a way to express God’s message and to make a point.

When we read this story through the lens of ancient history and literature, we see that ancient Israel like many other ancient Near Eastern people thought much about their surroundings. These people were without any scientific means or evidences. They see the universe as it appeared to them every day.

They thought that rain comes from an ocean up the sky and that this ocean surrounds the whole earth. These people for the most part thought the earth as simply the edge of their surroundings, cities and nations.

Hear is a snap shot of the three stories: **God created** it all perfect, he did everything for His creation that He could have; and then the fall (Adam and Eve) that brought a curse. God forgave them and brought them back.

And then man created another problem this time through Cain and then another curse. God intervened again and saved the human condition.

And then man continued to create problems, from problems to problems until God was grieved.

Then came the flood as the text indicates. This time the human race suffered and everything with breath in his nostrils suffered. Only a single family and few animals were saved

After this comes the mercy of God. For this reason we now look at Noah and his family and the remnants of the animals. The text indicates that Noah walked with God, he was blameless and he was righteousness.

Imagine what Noah may have gone through during this time of the flood. **Secondly imagine all the animals in the boat. What kind of struggle they all might have gone through. Imagine the lion, goat, python, kangaroo, dog, rat, tiger the antelope, hyena, the, elephant all in one place. Are these animals friendly to each other? Looking at the geographic channel today, don't some look at others as a great treat for lunch or dinner?**

What a menagerie or collection

What an intervention Noah must have done knowing how these animals behave in modern days. If you watch the geographical channels today you will definitely say his was a miracle...and indeed it could have been

Think of this: The fact that **God** warned Noah,

The fact that God waited for him to build the ark or boat and gave him an idea how to deal with all the wild animals...

The fact that God walked Noah through the flood indicates an act of kindness and mercy, compassion. ...Something we call the Grace of God.

What do you think of this story...is it just a human invention or is it an account of a divine inspiration?

It is my belief that **God** chose to communicate his message through ordinary people like me and you, accommodating Himself to our limited knowledge in order to draw us to Him and understand who He is. We may have scientific data today but God did not give the ancient Israelites scientific data nor did he gave them new styles of literatures. They expressed themselves in their context.

The text or event implies that it was because of the wickedness of man, sin and evil that on the earth that caused the flood.

My take on this will be to look at sin and evil today in our modern world and if God will do the same to send a natural flood just because of what is happening in the world today....

When we look at what is evil and sin and what is good in our modern days we begin to see a slightly different trend to that of the ancient world that caused the flood

We have our own flood in the nations and world today. The cause of our **own flood today** is segregation, racism, looking at others as outsiders, labelling people with names, drawing lines between people, "we and they".

Evil is stopping people from accessing good things like good medical opportunities, food, shelter, education and even peace. Evil is when we tend to demonize, demoralize and denigrate other people to the point that their dignity and humanity are at risk. Evil is when we sit at homes and do nothing about the plight of others but still we say we are compassionate and we are God's people. Evil is when we do things we are not supposed to do and not do the things we are supposed to do.

The cause of our own flood today is saying you and youyou don't belong here...can you leave? This is not your country. One of the questions people ask me since I have been in this country is "where are you from...? My answer most of the time has been "I am from San Jose. And some will continue... I don't mean that...then that's is when I answer my question. Ok you tell me where you are from...

From this text, I **see God's grace** at work in restoring His creation. Irrespective of natural disasters, irrespective of our difference and catastrophic events in the world like the flood, tsunami, earthquake, genocide. God is still at work and invites you and me to join in this work of restoration.... Our flood can only subside if we amend all the barriers that kicked others out of sight.

That Grace is here... now? It is for me and you and all of God's creation. It is in you and me and all of God's creation ...God's grace is for us in us to work as people to better our communities. That Grace is for us to draw strategies for our world, our community so that our children, now and those yet unborn of every race, color can look at each other's faces in the future and see God. God's grace is for me and you to accept one another as we are irrespective of our differences.

God's grace is for us to be in **constant conversation** about the way forward in making our communities a better place so that others can come in and experience what it means to be united in Christ.

The biblical flood story proclaims the marvelous news of God's grace and love for his creation. That love is also manifested in the live and works of Jesus. Let us take it and use it. Amen.