

Genesis 6:11-22
Climate Change and Human Sin #2
WRCoB 9.26.21

The great debate continues.

Last week, we looked at the story of Adam and Eve
And their sin's impact on the environment.

Due to their disobedience
God's wonderful creation
Went from a perfect paradise
To thistles and thorns.

I said last week, we Christians shouldn't be surprised
At the idea that changing climate
Is largely human-caused.

Because it's biblical.

And so, from a biblical perspective
We look at human-induced climate change.

Today, we look at the Great Flood recorded in Genesis 6-9.

The story of Noah covers almost four chapters in Genesis.

It is a very descriptive story as you can see
With the details of the ark's size
And the materials to be used to build the ark.

It's an interesting read

And I encourage you to read the whole story.

As with climate change

There is also a debate over the historicity
Of the great flood.

Did it really happen?

Or is it just a story?

According to the website *The American Scientific Affiliation*

A website devoted to science from a Christian perspective
The area where Noah lived was a hot and arid region.

Most likely Noah lived in the region

Between the two rivers Euphrates and the Tigris
In Mesopotamia in today's nation of Iraq.

These rivers are in fact named

In the description of the Garden of Eden in Gen 2.

Robert Ballard, the famous underwater explorer

Who discovered the sunken Titanic

Estimates a great flood occurred around 7,000 years ago

Based on evidence he discovered around the Black Sea.

According to Ballard the melting of the last glaciers

Could easily have produced a flood of epic proportions.

He is currently exploring this region

In hopes of finding more evidence of the great flood.

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The key verses I want to draw your attention to today

Are verses 11 through 13

Genesis 6:11-13 NIV

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence.

12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.

13 So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.

Note that not only the people were corrupt

But the earth itself was corrupt.

The people, due to their violent behavior

I suppose towards each other

And towards the land they lived on

Had corrupted everything.

As in last week's sermon

Human's sin corrupts not only the human heart

Not only impacts the people around them

But corrupts the earth besides.

As a result of all this
God decided to act.

Genesis 6:17 CEV

¹⁷ I'm going to send a flood that will destroy everything that breathes! Nothing will be left alive.

But since Noah was a righteous man
God decided to save him and his family
As well as two of every kind of animal.

God told Noah to build a boat big enough
To house all the animals and feed enough for them.

And so, Noah began to build.

Noah's neighbors must have thought Noah delusional
Building a boat in this hot, arid land.

Not so much when it began to rain nonstop for 40 days.

All told Noah, his wife, his sons, and his sons' wives
Lived in the ark for approximately a year.

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God saved Noah and his family
And two of each living thing
From total annihilation by the flood.

The rest of the population drowned.

The reason God destroyed all living things on earth?

Human sin!

Lefebvre writes in the Christianity Today's article
I quoted from last week

God sent the Deluge as a direct response to human sin.

Pope Francis in a book he co-authored
Said that the flood was due to God's wrath
"against injustice, against Satan... against evil".

The Pope said that today's nations face a

"great deluge, perhaps due to a rise in temperature and the melting of the glaciers... what will happen now if we continue on the same path".

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The United Nations has been instrumental
In raising awareness through their
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

They have had six gatherings beginning in 1990

They conclude global warming is directly caused by
The burning of fossil fuels causing a rise
In global temperatures and warming oceans.

“Consequent changes,” the first report said, *“may have a significant impact on society.”*

The second, third, fourth, and fifth assessments

Found growing evidence that humans were the cause.

This past August, the IPCC’s assessment

Was more of the same but with more urgency.

They now say climate change

Not only *may* have a significant impact on society

But that is most assuredly will.

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According to a news brief in September’s CT

Politicians, scientists, and others concerned people

Will be surprised to learn

That this year’s report

From the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Is dedicated to a Christian.

His premise was that the root problem of climate change

Is due to . . . guess what? Human sin!

“Looking after the Earth is a God-given responsibility,” John Houghton once wrote. *“Not to look after the Earth is a sin.”*

Houghton, who died of complications related to COVID-19 in 2020 at the age of 88, was the chief editor of the first three

IPCC reports and an early, influential leader calling for action on climate change.

He was born into a Baptist family in Wales in 1931.

As a young man he considered his personal decision
To accept Jesus Christ as Savior his most important.

He loved God.

And that love for God
Transformed into his love of science.

He trained and worked as an atmospheric physicist.

He found no problem in synchronizing his love of God
With his love of the scientific world.
Each drove the other.

He believed in the biblical accounts
Of human sin's impact on the environment.

"We haven't lived up to the call to holiness," Houghton's granddaughter Hannah Malcolm explained to CT.

"We've been conformed to the patterns of this world, with the desire for wealth accumulation and the desire to increase our comforts, and that's not the demand that is placed upon us as followers of Christ."

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We would do well to pay heed
To people like the late John Houghton
Atmospheric physicist, devoted follower of Jesus.

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Back to the story of Noah.

As the waters receded
And Noah, his family, and all the animals
Went out from the ark

Noah gave thanks to God
For God's care throughout the weather event.

God, in turn, perhaps with a twinge of regret promised

Genesis 8:21b CEV

Never again will I punish the earth for the sinful things its people do. All of them have evil thoughts from the time they are young, but I will never destroy everything that breathes, as I did this time.

**²² As long as the earth remains,
there will be planting
and harvest,
cold and heat;
winter and summer,
day and night.**

Now many believers turn to this verse to support the position
That God wouldn't destroy again life on the planet.

They contend, let's not worry about climate change.
God's got this.

But I would argue, even if God promised
Never again to destroy the earth

It doesn't mean
We, as the assigned stewards on planet earth
Couldn't destroy it ourselves.

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Pope Francis, in his acknowledgement of climate change
Points to Covid as a lesson on the need for the earth to rest
From the voracious appetite of consumerism.

This past September 2020
Pope Francis wrote that the pandemic
Has shown how the planet can recover
"if we allow it to rest"

The Pope encourages people to live a simpler lifestyle
To help the planet
Groaning under the constant demand
For economic growth.

"Already we can see how the Earth can recover if we allow it to rest: the air becomes cleaner, the waters clearer, and animals have returned to many places from where they had previously disappeared," he wrote. "The pandemic has brought us to a crossroad."

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The science is there.

We cannot afford to deny it any longer.

Here's the thing

As the consequences increase
Because of climate change

The marginalized people in society suffer the most.

As Lefebvre writes in CT

One way or another, the changing climate today will bring changes to human societies. Whether or not God is reproofing specific sins, the increasing storms, droughts, and other consequences will afflict vast segments of humanity. And, as is often the case, the vulnerable will suffer for the failures of the powerful.

The church can and should be a driving force
In this fight against climate change.

The church should embrace the science of climate change
Because we recognize human's complicity

Lefebvre closes his article

Science can highlight the mechanics of climate change, and politicians can regulate behavior. It is up to the church to touch the conscience and bring a redemptive call to the culture.

God calls to redemption.

2 Chronicles 7:14 CEV

¹⁴ If my own people will humbly pray and turn back to me and stop sinning, then I will answer them from heaven. I will forgive them and make their land fertile once again.