

## Powerful God – Genesis 6-7

How many of you remember a TV show simply called “24”? It was popular back some years ago and featured a character named Jack Bauer who was supposedly a counter-terrorism specialist and he got into all kinds of adventures and every episode was based on one day – 24 hours - in his life. Now, I had to look all that up because I never watched the show. But I had a friend who just loved it and he kept telling me how much I would enjoy it. I kept resisting and he kept talking about how great it was and so, I was flipping channels one day and it was on, so I tried to watch it. I tuned in just in time to see the great Jack Bauer run into a parking lot and smash the window of a car with his fist. He reaches in and unlocks it, opens the door and sits down and reaches under the dash. He then pulls out a bunch of wires from under the dash, pulls two of them apart and immediately hotwires the car and drives off. And I’m done. I turned it off and never watched another minute of it. Anybody want to guess why?

I can’t stand to watch shows that aren’t at least a little bit believable. You can’t do what Jack Bauer did and I know because, for one thing, I locked my keys in my truck one time and decided I would just break the window with my fist like they do on TV. Do you know what broke? Not the window. Modern cars are made to where you just can’t do that. And do you have any idea how impossible it is to hotwire a car like that? If you have ever done any wiring on a car, you know that is completely impossible. I told my buddy that loved the show about it and how I would rather watch a cartoon than something like that. At least with a cartoon, they aren’t trying to be believable. But I could probably believe Popeye could throw Brutus over a house after eating spinach more than I could believe Jack Bauer hotwired a car. Just stop with that. It’s ridiculous.

The thing is, a lot of people read the Bible like that, especially all the cool old stories in the Old Testament. They like to read about David and Goliath or Daniel in the lions’ den or Samson killing a thousand men. Those are great stories and fun to read and you can get some good morals from them but surely they aren’t meant to be true, right? Except they are true. And there are a lot more of them than that and some are even harder to believe than those. When was the last time you read about Noah’s ark? I hope you have lately. It is found in **Genesis chapters 6, 7 and 8** and when you read through it with an eye toward plausibility, it might as well be Popeye the sailor man. Most of us grew up hearing and reading the story of Noah and the ark and we read in the little story book that Noah brought two of all the animals into the ark and it rained for forty daisy daisies, as the song goes. But there is way more to it than that. Like I say, I hope you got my email to read **Genesis 6, 7 and 8** because I am only going to read a small portion of it, not all three chapters. And as I read this, I want us to think about why God flooded the earth, how God flooded the earth and how would all of this even be remotely possible?

Listen as I read just **Genesis 6:5-22**. *The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. 6 The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. 7 So the Lord said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. 10 Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. 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. 14 So make yourself an ark of*

*cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. 15 This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. 16 Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. 17 I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. 19 You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. 20 Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. 21 You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.” 22 Noah did everything just as God commanded him.*

Okay, let's start with the **first question**. Why did God flood the earth? It says that God saw how evil man was and regretted making them. So, I guess this was God's first mistake. He goofed. He didn't make man quite right this first time and he regretted the mistake. Some versions even say He repented of it so I guess you could say His mistake was a sin, huh? Well, you could say it but it would be blasphemy so probably don't do that. This phrasing has been a problem for a lot of people over the years. A misunderstanding of what it says can lead to a lot of other problems, so we want to get it right.

How many of you have ever read any Shakespeare at all? Most of us had to read Romeo and Juliet in high school at least. Probably the most famous line in Romeo and Juliet is when Juliet cries out from her window, "*Romeo, Romeo, wherefor art thou, Romeo?*" That sounds like she is asking Romeo where he is but it actually means, "*Why is your name Romeo?*" Well, we don't talk like that anymore, do we? The English language has changed a bit since Bill Shakespeare was writing sonnets and love poems back in the day trying to impress girls and English teachers. Well, if you think the language has changed since Shakespeare who lived about 500 years ago, you can imagine how it has changed since Moses wrote this about 3500 years ago in another language that has been translated into English.

In other words, we don't have the right English words to accurately reflect what God was thinking when He decided to flood the earth. Commentators tell us that a better reading of this would be that God, like a good bookkeeper, audited the books and decided the time was right to bring them into balance. God is all-powerful. God is orderly. He is sovereign and He is full of grace. He is also just. And being all these things rolled into One, God allows sin for a time. He allows the books to be unbalanced for a while, but not forever. It says that God saw how wicked mankind was. He saw that it needed adjustment. It is also what happens sometimes to the stock market. When the Federal Reserve guys see that the stock market is headed seriously in the wrong direction, they make an adjustment. God saw that the earth needed a huge adjustment and He was just the One to do it. It does not mean that He made a mistake. It was mankind's continued mistakes that made the adjustment necessary and so God flooded the earth and destroyed everything and everybody except Noah and his family.

That leads us to **question number two**. How did God flood the earth? Well, in **chapter 7, verses 11-12**, it says that "*on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.*" So, that's a lot of water, evidently. It was enough water for a long enough period of time to cover all the mountains. The question that everybody asks is, was the flood global or local? Did God really flood the whole earth or just the part that had people on it at the time or was it just in the area of the Middle East that Noah lived in? The clearest verses that show the extent of the flood are Genesis 7:19-23.

Regarding the waters, *“They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet.”* In these verses we not only find the word *“all”* being used repeatedly, but we also find *“all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered,”* *“the waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet,”* and *“every living thing that moved on the earth perished.”* These descriptions clearly show a universal flood covering the whole earth. (<https://www.gotquestions.org/global-flood.html>)

So, now that leads me to the **last** and most important **question**. How is all of this (or any of this) even remotely possible? In **Matthew 19:26**, Jesus said, *“With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”* If you want to get a laugh, just google, *“Was Noah’s flood possible?”* Page after page of all the reasons why this is just a myth. This has to be a fairy tale because the ark wasn’t big enough to hold all the animals and the eight people and all of their food and fresh water. There is no way for it to rain and even add all the waters under the earth to get that much water on this planet. It couldn’t get here and it couldn’t go away, especially in that amount of time. How could there still be fresh water and saltwater if they obviously had to mix? How come nobody has ever found any evidence of the ark? It must have been an impressive structure. If the ark came to rest on top of Mt. Ararat which is about 17,000 feet above sea level, how did Noah and his family get down, especially with him being 600 years old? How did the elephants get down? How did the three-toed sloth get down and all the way to South America? How did the dove fly down to where olive trees grow in valleys and then fly all the way back up to the boat? I could go on and on. And they all have the same answer. It is impossible. A lot of people try to make it work scientifically and mathematically. They try to take up for God and prove that it really could actually happen. But it’s impossible. It just is.

You know what else is impossible? It is impossible for a meth addict to get off meth. It is impossible for a drunk to quit drinking. It is impossible for a little country church to have any affect for the Kingdom of God. It is impossible for people to be cured of cancer. It is impossible for white people to love black people in this day and age. It is impossible that some of y’all are still married. It is impossible that Belinda can walk. It is impossible for any of us to be worthy of another breath, much less to be able to live in Heaven for eternity but I quote Jesus again when I say, *“With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”* We are sitting in a church building filled with impossibilities and yet here we sit. We sit here as created beings loved by the Creator who can, and by all rights should, thump me right off the planet into Hell and yet, by His amazing grace, I am still here. I am still here and we have seen all of those impossibilities happen. We have any number of us who can testify that God has brought us out of any number of impossible circumstances, many of which were self-imposed over and over again.

We know that the flood narrative is true because it is in the Bible. We know that it is true because Peter, Isaiah and Jesus also believed it. We know that it is true because we know God to be all-powerful and if He can create the universe with a word then He can destroy it with a flood. And while He is all-powerful, we also know Him to be all-loving and just like He protected and provided for Noah, God will protect and provide for His children today. Did you read the part where Noah asks God why and how and then argues with Him that it is impossible? No? Did you see where Noah complained that it was too hard and too much work? Or maybe you read where Noah doubted God and His instructions. No. In fact, there is no record of Noah ever saying anything. But it does say in **6:22** that *“Noah did everything just as God commanded him.”* Oh, I wish that could be said of me! I wish that God could have faith in me that when He told me to do something, I would just do it instead of trying to figure out why and how and then figure out a “better” way and then make excuses for not doing what I was told to do because God’s way was obviously impossible.

If you have a hard time believing all of the stories in the Bible then you must have a hard time believing that the sun comes up in the east every morning. You can't surely believe that cells multiply in the body, that babies are born or that hair grows on heads! At least some heads. Because I dare you to explain how any of that works if there is not an infinite Creator who can and does do miracles! And He wants to do a miracle in your life.

Now, this is the part in the sermon where a lot of pretty preachers with perfect hair and thousands of people in their church this morning will stand up and declare that God wants to do a miracle in your life by lifting you out of poverty. God wants to do a miracle in your life by healing your body right here and right now and all you have to do is have faith (and tithe to their church). I'm not going to say that. I'm not going to say that even though it could possibly be true. God might want to deliver you financially or physically but that is not promised anywhere in scripture. A lot of times God allows us or even causes us to go through a flood or a storm or some great difficulty because He knows that on the other side of that storm, you will look more like Him. That is the miracle. Another miracle that God wants to do in your life is just protect you and provide for you. As a true believer, a disciple of Jesus, a follower of the one, true God, we have God's special favor. God is love and He loves everybody but not everybody is a Christian. But for those that are, those that have surrendered their lives and their will to Him, God shows favor.

**2 Chronicles 6:19** says, *"For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him."* To those of us who are fully committed, we can watch the news in the evening and we don't have to lose our peace. We can have joy – calm delight - in the middle of the horror and injustices of this life. We can see that some crazy people are rioting and looting and tearing down statues and taking guns away from cartoon characters and we don't have to be upset because we know that the same all-powerful God that spoke the universe into existence and the same all-powerful God that delivered Noah and his family is the same all-powerful God that has you right in the palm of His mighty right hand protecting you and providing for you and strengthening your heart.

God sees what is going on and He sees the injustice and He sees the sin and He sees the wrong motives. He sees the back room deals and the double standards. He sees the pandering politicians and the lies they tell to get re-elected. He sees the idols mankind has put up to worship instead of Him and pretty soon – maybe today – He is going to look to Jesus sitting at His right and tell Him to go get His bride. And who is the bride? We are. The church is the bride of Christ. And God the Father – the great bookkeeper – is keeping the books and is only going to allow us to go through so much and then we will be raptured home to Heaven. After that, the world will really descend into chaos and evil until one day the Bookkeeper will once again say, *"That's enough. The account has been audited and the books will be brought back into perfect balance."*

God promised Noah that God would never again flood the earth and sealed that promise with a rainbow but next time God will destroy the earth with fire. One of the places that tell us that is **2 Peter 3:7** that says, *"But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly."* God is love. God is generous. He is good and merciful. But He is also just and as Noah's story has told us today, He is also all-powerful. Are you ready to meet Him? Are you ready to go right now? We aren't guaranteed another breath. Jesus may call us home in the next few minutes. We never know. Make double sure you are ready. Let's go to God in prayer right now and, if you never have before, ask God to forgive you and to cleanse you and to come into your life and change you. All you have to do is believe but that belief will manifest itself in a changed life. Does that describe you? Make sure right now as we pray.