

Reading Schedule for January 9-15, 2017

As the saying goes, “It went from bad to worse.” We will begin with the well-known events of the flood. This is the kind of event that many people are skeptical about because it is supernatural, and it is God’s punishment for the wickedness on the earth. Whether the flood covered the whole earth, or just the part of the earth where the people lived, is probably not that crucial to the story because the text does not specifically say the flood covered the whole earth. The point is that people had drifted far from God and disobeyed his desires for mankind. Noah would be a reflection of what God would do in the future through one man who had reconciled the world to God. May God inspire you as you read this very intriguing section of Scripture.

January 9 – Genesis 6:1-22: “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.” (v.9) I mentioned to you that Noah was specifically chosen by God to represent his righteousness. But he is not sinless. We will read about that in a couple of days. This means that Noah was wholeheartedly devoted to God and ready to obey him. You see this very clearly through the amazing event of Noah building an ark. The ark took over a hundred years to build (I know that there are specific references to the date but I don’t see them in this chapter). If Noah can be a man devoted to God among a people of great wickedness, you can too. It takes walking closely with God. These days are days of commitment at New Harvest. The Lord gives promises to those who wholeheartedly seek him. Let Noah be an example for you. May his life and faith in God inspire you. How do you respond to the man, Noah? What difference does that make in your life?

January 10 – Genesis 7:1-24: “On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark.” (v.13) Even the final step of going into the ark had to be an amazing step of faith. In Hebrews 11, as we read about the people of faith, Noah’s faith is recognized, and it meant that he was an heir of righteousness. He believed God, and in reverence to God built an ark to save his family. The idea of animals of every kind is fascinating. This is another miracle that people have a hard time believing. The evidence of God taking care of the details is an inspiration to me. Too often I worry about the details, of which I have no control, and God has everything under control. Noah did what God asked him to do, and God took care of the rest. I know he is still doing the same. How does this chapter stir your heart?

January 11 – Genesis 8:1-22: “Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.” (v.20) This is a response of gratitude. God had done a miracle for Noah and his family, and he appreciated it. Noah is a great example of obedience in faith, but he also shows a clear example of gratitude and worship. To me it almost seems as if God is promising mankind blessing and protection because of Noah. You realize that God started over with Noah. That is an amazing truth. Again I am stirred in my heart because Noah trusted God and walked closely with him in a culture that lived contrary to the Lord. I’m sure the people of Noah’s day believed in God because of the marvel of creation, but they did not have an allegiance to God. It seems similar to our day. Many people believe in God, but when it comes to allegiance and wholehearted commitment, that is rare. I hope you will find Noah’s example to be encouraging to you. What part of this chapter was impressive to you?

January 12 – Genesis 9:1-17: “Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.” (v.16) It is very impressive to think that the rainbow represents God’s promise to uphold human life on the earth. He says there will never be a flood again to destroy the earth, the seasons will come as expected, and the rainbow will be a reminder that God keeps his promises. The earth’s order and seasons are still preserved, and rainbows still

remind us of God’s faithfulness to his Word. We have a covenant God and when he makes a promise, he keeps it. We live under the new covenant, as Jesus established a bridge to God through his shed blood. As we receive Christ we live under that covenant. The promise is he will never let go, and he will take us to be with him in heaven forever. Aren’t you glad that God is a covenant God?! How do you respond to these verses today?

January 13 – Genesis 9:18-29: “Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent.” (vv. 20 & 21) This is a confusing section, and I separated it out for today’s thoughtful reflection. It reminds me that even Noah was vulnerable to sin. This is true for you and me. I think this is included to show us that even godly people can sin, and their bad influence affects their families. The mocking attitude that Ham displays towards his father is not acceptable. From the very beginning God wanted children to honor their parents. This is a short reading, and it deserves some personal reflection as you contemplate your vulnerability to sin. During these days of commitment, we are emphasizing the need for obedience. If you love the Lord, you want to obey him. The devil is relentless – just ask Eve. Sin is crouching at your door – just ask Cain. The wickedness of the world is multiplying – just look around you. Even Noah, our example of faith, gave in to sin. How will you fortify yourself against sin? How is God calling you to obey?

January 14 – Genesis 10:1-11:9: “Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.’” (11:4) Originally, I had thought I would have us just read chapter 10, and the genealogy of Noah, but I felt like that was informational, but not inspirational. The tower of Babel is well-known and applies directly to our lives. This represents a monument to the people rather than to God. It is a major achievement in building a structure of such size and elevation. This was most likely the focal point of the city and could be as high as 300 feet in the air and a widening structure down to its foundation, similar to a pyramid. It is clear that this displeased the Lord and he brought punishment on the face of the earth. He did not wipe out the people, he actually confronted their pride. Without the common language, they could not make a name for themselves. The Lord sometimes scatters us to remind us of our dependence on him. Self-sufficiency and human effort can accomplish some things, but it is never pleasing to God. Only that which is done in allegiance to him and by his Spirit does he reward. “Without faith it is impossible to please him.” How do you understand the tower of Babel?

January 15 – Genesis 11:10-32: “Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.” (v.31) This is the key verse of another list of people. You will notice their ages shortening as was predicted in Genesis 6:3. Some would live longer than 120 years, but this would become the average age for people in this era. Obviously the most inspirational part of this story is that Abram set off from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. It does not give the reason here, but we read in the very next verse of chapter 12 that God told Abram to go “to the land I will show you.” We don’t read the reason for Abram’s father leaving, but God will use it in a purposeful way, as he would establish his people through this man of faith. God loves to honor our faith. How is the Lord speaking to you through Genesis?

Prayers: Pray for the making of disciples as we increase our commitment and obedience to the Lord. Thank you for praying 10 minutes a day for the family and ministry of New Harvest.