

# GENESIS

## 8:1-22

### Genesis 8:1-22

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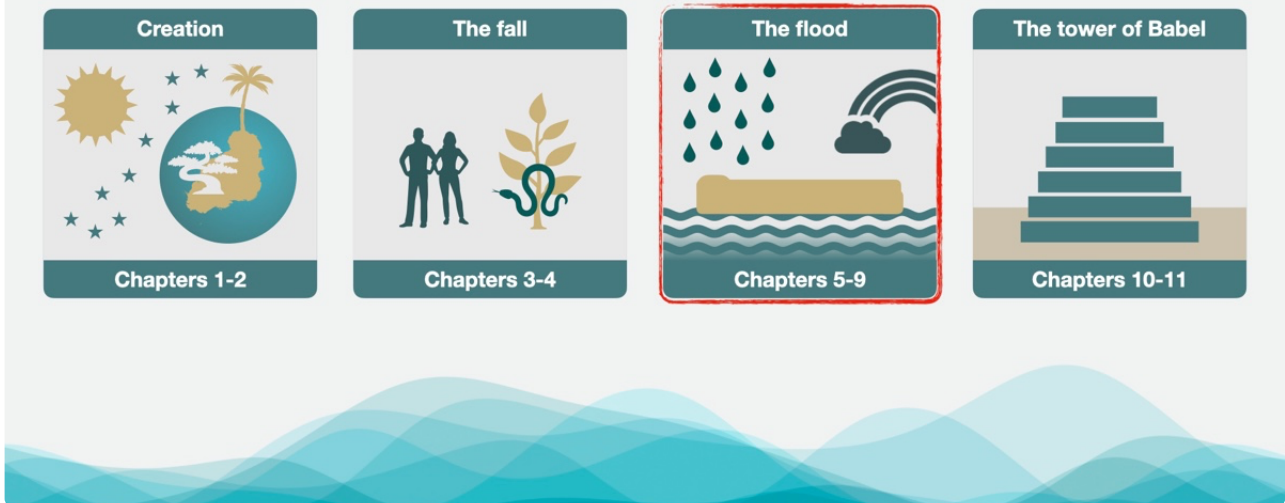
Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 17th September 2023 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

**Reading:** Ephesians 5:1-2

### Introduction

Since the beginning of July we've been studying the first book of the Bible — Genesis — and in our previous study, back at the end of August, we got as far as the end of chapter 7.

# The events of Genesis



And that means we're in the middle of what Moses writes about the third major event that this book describes, being Noah's flood.

As a quick recap, in chapter 5 we saw the genealogy from Adam to Noah — ten generations that, amazingly, proclaim the gospel through the meaning of their names.

As chapter 6 began, we *read* how the world had become wicked — yet one man stood out who walked with God, and was not only a just man, but was perfect in his generations; that is, Noah and his family had not intermarried with the giant offspring of the angels that were living on the earth at that time. We then saw the instructions that God gave Noah on how big to build the ark.

Then last time in chapter 7 we saw God command Noah to enter the ark, along with his family, seven pairs of clean animals, 7 pairs of birds, and one pair of all other animals — male and female. And after 7 days, the flood came — it's source being both rain from above, and the fountains of the deep (that is, underwater springs or eruptions — and we looked at that a little in our last study). And by the end of chapter 7 we *read* that the waters prevailed on the earth for 150 days (that's 5 months).

So then, we're very much in the middle of the flood itself, and as we continue into chapter 8, we get some additional detail and timings of what took place.

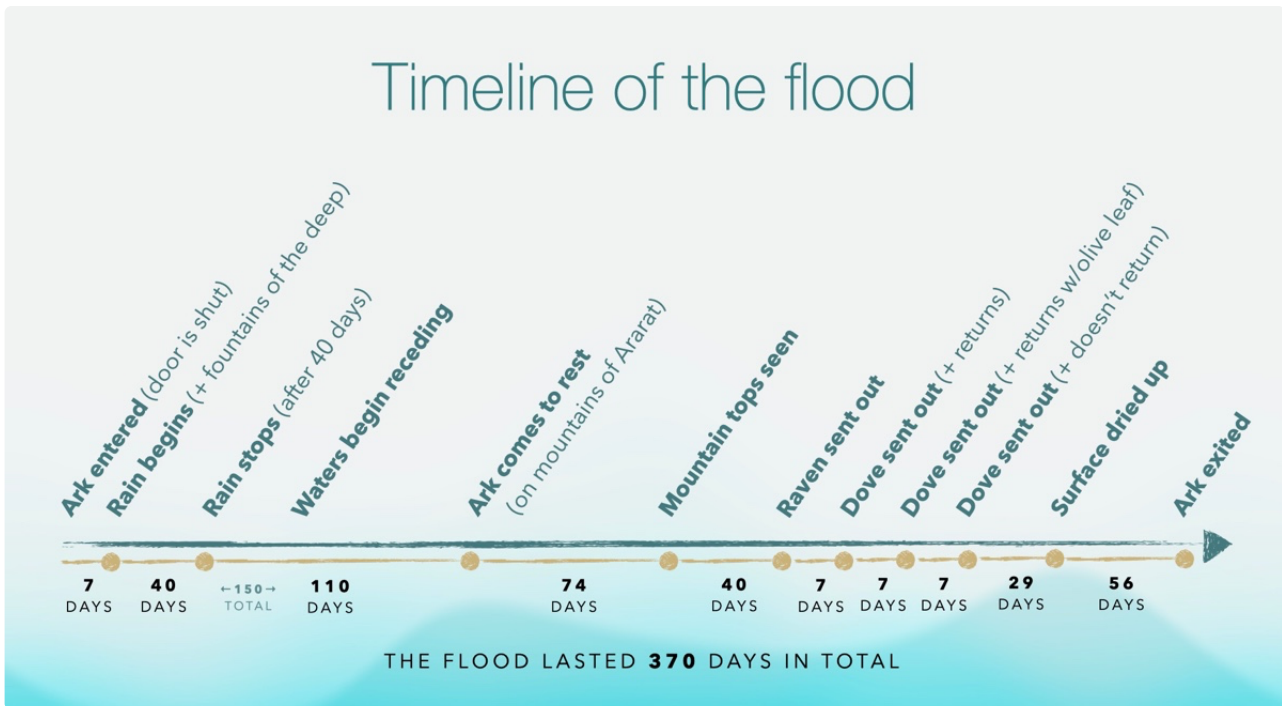
## Overview of chapter eight

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- **v1-14** — The waters recede, dry land appears
- **v15-19** — Noah is told to leave the ark (and does)
- **v20-22** — Noah offers a sacrifice, God promises not to flood the earth again

In the first 14 verses we read that the waters receded, and dry land appeared. And in verses 15-19, once the earth had dried out, God commands Noah to leave the ark, which he does. Then in the final 3 verses we see that Noah offers a sacrifice to God, and God promises not to flood the earth again — we can only imagine how reassuring that was to Noah, after all that he had witnessed.

As we go through this chapter, we'll find there are a lot of details about the flood, so I want to start our study today by putting all those together into a timeline, so you can see where we're headed:



And actually, to do so, we need to start back in chapter 7 where we read in verse 5 that Noah entered the ark as God commanded him, and then 7 days later the flood came (in the 600th year of his life, in the second month, and 17th day of that month). The following verse then tells us that it then rained for 40 days and 40 nights, just as God had said it would.

At the end of the chapter, in verse 24, we read that the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days — that's 5 months, and includes the 40 days — bringing us to the 7th month and 17th day of that month, when the ark comes to rest on the mountains of Ararat. That date is given to us in verse 4 of chapter 8. And it was at some point within those 150 days that the waters began receding.

We're then told in verse 5 that it was not until 74 days after the ark landed, that the mountain tops were seen, after which Noah waited a further 40 days and released a raven — that is a crow or similar type of bird. In verses 8-12 we read that 7 days later he released a dove, which returned to him. 7 days after that he released the dove again, and it returned once more — but this time with an olive leaf in its mouth. Then he finally sent it out for a third time, and it didn't return, signalling that the waters had receded and vegetation was growing once more.

In verse 13 we're told that 29 days later, in the 601st year of Noah's life (in the first month and first day of the month), Noah saw that the surface of the ground was dry, before in verse 14 we learn that a further 56 days later the earth itself was dried — and it was that day which Noah, his family, and all the animals that were with them, left the ark.

Put that all together and we see that the flood lasted for 370 days in total (with Noah on the ark for 377 days). That's a little over a year. In fact, to be accurate a year and 10 days. And you *might* be thinking I can't count, as there's 365 days in the year (or 365.25 if we're going to be really precise). But actually, it's helpful to know that it wasn't until much later after the flood that years were reckoned to be 365 days long. Rather, calendars were based on a 360 day year (just as we have 360 degrees in a circle) — and there's some interesting speculation as to why that was, which certainly isn't that no-one had figured out the right length of a year. And as far as Biblical prophecy goes, that is also measured in 360 day years — which is important to know when considering the timings of various events throughout scripture, including in Revelation.

But of course, with all that information, let us not forget that the Bible is there for our *transformation*. So, as we go through this chapter verse by verse, I urge you to consider how this applies to your life.

## Chapter eight

Let's dig in, first reading verse 1 of chapter 8...

### Genesis 8:1

Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.

So then, God remembered Noah. That doesn't mean He hadn't forgotten him, but rather He remembered him constantly — just as God never forgets us in the midst of *our* trials (even when it seems to us that God is silent, as perhaps it felt to Noah; as we read no mention of him hearing from God between the door closing and the day he was instructed to leave the ark). But, with Noah in His thoughts, God began to bring an end to the flood. Again, that doesn't mean Noah heard from God at this moment, but God was still doing things for Noah's good nonetheless — just as He does with us.

And it wasn't just Noah that God had in His thoughts, but every living thing that was in the ark. Even the ants. And the spiders. And that reminds me of Jesus' words:

### Matthew 10:29-31

Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

God's care for *us* is greater than we can imagine.

Now, here in verse 1, we also read that "...*God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.*". Evidently, evaporation was taking place as a result of this that was lowering the flood waters. But, possibly, there was even more this could have lead to — for just as air blown across cool water or liquid is the basis of air conditioning, so this wind may have had a cooling effect. To what extent we don't know, but there are those who believe this triggered what is often referred to as the Ice Age. Certainly, the flood was a catastrophic event like the world had never seen before, and has never seen since — and therefore it would not be so surprising to find such significant impacts to the earth's geography and environmental conditions.

And worthy of note, is that there is at least one occasion elsewhere in the Bible where it seems God used wind to not only push back, but perhaps, solidify the sea — and that's in Exodus 14 where Israel are stood before the Red Sea, with the Egyptians ready to take them captive again. We read:

**Exodus 14:21**

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided.

So, *perhaps*, we're seeing something of magnitude here in Genesis, that we still see the aftermath of today. However, there's also other theories how the impacts of the flood could have led to an ice age, beyond and even without this potential cooling effect. And so we should ask ourselves, *what do we hold fast to?*

And the answer is simple. It's the Bible. We need to make a distinction between the information we find in it, and any speculation we build on it. Paul F Taylor from Answers In Genesis puts it very well:

*It is the Bible that gives us the big picture. Within this big picture, we can build scientific models that help us explain how past events may have come about. Such models should be held to lightly, but the Scripture to which they refer is inerrant. That is to say future research may cast doubt on an actual model, without casting doubt on Scripture.*

**Paul F Taylor (Answers In Genesis)**

So there may be more significance to this verse than meets the eye, but any speculation is not doctrine, and should not be treated as such — as fascinating as it might be.

We read on in chapter 1:

**Genesis 8:2-3**

The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased.

That is, both the rain and the fountains of the deep stopped after 40 days — the fountains of the deep being the underwater springs or eruptions we looked at last time. And we read that at the end of these 150 days, the waters decreased — though later verses clarify that the waters hadn't *finished* decreasing at that point.

**Genesis 8:4**

Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.

And we could easily move on. But we should keep in mind what we read in Proverbs 25:2, that *"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter."* — and indeed this is one such example where God has left a treasure for us to uncover. For later on, at the institution of the passover in Exodus 12, we see that God resets the months (so to speak), saying that the month they were in was to now be considered the first month of the year. And what this helps us discover is that the day on which the ark landed or rested, was actually the same day of the year that Jesus was resurrected. And there is a parallel: just as the landing of the ark signalled a new era, with Noah having been saved from God's judgement, so Jesus' resurrection some 2400 years later signalled the same for us too.

As for the location that the ark landed, we are told that it was on the *mountains* (plural) of Ararat — that is, a range of mountains, not necessarily the specific mountain called Ararat. And so if the ark were to ever be found (which of course isn't an implausible possibility, since it was covered inside and out with pitch) then it could be in Turkey OR Iraq (or even possibly Armenia) — through which this mountain range extends.

#### **Genesis 8:5**

And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

How Noah and his family must have wanted to get out of the ark right then! But God's timing was best, for the earth wasn't yet ready to support them with food etc. And so we are to trust the Lord's timing for all things in *our* lives. That doesn't mean we sit around and do nothing, but we're not to try and take matters into our own hands, or try to force God's hand — doing so will inevitably cause us difficulty, hurt, and anguish.

We read on in verse 6:

#### **Genesis 8:6-7**

So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth.

So then, the raven kept on going out and returning until the point the waters had dried up.

#### **Genesis 8:8-11**

He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth.

Whether as seeds or in their grown form, enough vegetation survived the flood to result in all we see today (indeed Noah didn't need to take each tree or plant onto the ark). But the waters were still receding...

### Genesis 8:12

So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.

At this point the dove, it would seem, had found not only a suitable place to land, but to live. And it didn't return - giving Noah and his family confidence that they soon too would be able to step out onto dry land.

### Genesis 8:13

And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry.

So then, after more than 300 days of what was *very* clearly a *global* flood, the surface of the ground was dry. We read on:

### Genesis 8:14

And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried.

That is, 56 days later we read that the earth itself was dry — it wasn't a quagmire, but solid ground upon which they could walk. And we read:

### Genesis 8:15

Then God spoke to Noah, saying,

And I'm going to pause there for a moment. Because I think we should consider Noah's experience here — he had literally seen the world as he knew it, destroyed. Along with people he would have known, no doubt. It must have been a terrifying ordeal. Yet not only do we see God speak to Noah, but Noah listen to God. So let us ask ourselves; when we go through trials or difficulties, do we ignore God, or listen to Him? Here, we read God said to Noah...

### Genesis 8:16-17

"Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth."

What we read then is that every last creature on the ark was to now come off it, and also were to multiply so that the earth would be repopulated from them (**something that we'll look at a little more next week**).

### Genesis 8:18

So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.

Again, Noah continued to obey the Lord. And while we know Noah was not sinless, every time we read that the Lord commanded him to do something, we see that he did it. So let us ask ourselves; *are we that obedient?* Are we willing to do *whatever* God may tell us to do? Are we willing to do that which God has *already* told us to do in His Word?



Noah and his family then, after 377 days onboard the ark, now exit it and begin their new lives in a post-flood world. One that certainly would have looked quite different to what they were used to. Even this week we've seen the devastating power of flood water in Libya — imagine the utter destruction and even reshaping of the landscape that would have occurred with a *worldwide* flood.

Keep in mind how we also *read* in chapter 7 that the fountains of the deep were broken up — indicating there was seismic or volcanic activity too. New mountains would have formed, old would have gone. There would have been new hills and valleys. Indeed features of our world's landscape such as the White Cliffs of Dover or the Grand Canyon are far easier to understand in the context of a global flood, with the rapid erosion and even the rapid formation of strata that would have taken place, such as was seen in the hours following the notable eruption of Mt St Helens in Washington State, USA, in may 1980.

And we read on:

**Genesis 8:19**

Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.

Just as God led the animals into the ark, He was able to lead them out.

**Genesis 8:20-21a**

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma...

And so in verse 20 we see why more than one pair of such animals was required to enter the ark — for if there was only one pair, then this would have meant the extinction of all of those animals, and there would be no clean animals left for Noah or his descendants to either sacrifice *or* eat, as we know they did.

As we begin verse 21, we read that the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. That is, Noah's sacrifice was pleasing to Him. Why? Well certainly, sin is offensive to God, and so the temporary atonement provided by such a sacrifice was necessary until Christ came and paid once for all through His sacrifice in our place. But this was a *soothing* aroma. There was something in particular that *pleased* God, and that was Noah's attitude.

We know he was a just man, but more than that he brought this sacrifice *voluntarily*. God had not commanded him to do so, but rather he willingly gave it in response to God's salvation. Noah was a sinner too, but had found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and had been saved through the flood.

And God's grace should produce both worship and sacrifice in us too. Worship, in that we cannot help but praise Him, and live in a way that pleases Him. But also sacrifice, that we might now give ourselves to Him. Not that we may earn our salvation, but in response to it — just as Noah wasn't offering this sacrifice in order to get a ticket for the ark, but rather because of God's saving grace.

So let me ask you... what are you willing to sacrifice?

Are you willing, voluntarily, and not because I or anyone else says so, to bring a sacrifice of praise. To sing songs about God and to Him (even that are not your favourite) with all your heart (and strength), not because you like the tune, but because of the truth that the words proclaim about your Saviour? Are you willing to be present here to sing God's praises above watching sports, washing your car, or having a lie in?



But furthermore, are you willing to offer your whole self to God? To yield to Him in all your likes, dislikes, hopes, dreams, relationships, finances, time and career? Note what we read in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians:

### **2 Corinthians 9:6-7**

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Will you willingly sacrifice as Noah did? When David went to purchase the land on which the temple would be build, he refused to accept it for free - saying "I will not give to God that which costs me nothing". So may it be with us! May we be willing to give until it hurts.

We have examples of that in our fellowship — just last Sunday I smiled as I saw Pete & Shirley serving, on their wedding anniversary, with Shirley teaching Sunday school, Pete teaching at our evening service, as well as serving on PA and in the band. And I've seen our founding pastor, Bob, here many times gone midnight working on the building while still faithfully teaching week in and week out. And I've seen others in this church and others serve with all their might. It is these examples that we ought to follow. Look at what Paul writes in Philippians about a man called Epaphroditus:

### **Philippians 2:25-30**

Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

*This* is the kind of character that should be applauded. Not that we should want people to be close to death through serving God, but that their hearts be willing to do anything. Not say "it's not my job". Or "I can't be bothered". Or "I don't know what there is to do". I was jolted by something a pastor once said at a conference, which was "If you're a Christian and you're bored, there's something wrong with you". And I came to realise that he's not wrong. When we look at what Christ did for us, there is all the motivation we need. When we look at how many people need to hear the gospel, and how many ways we can serve within even our own church, there's limitless ways that we ourselves can offer a sweet smelling sacrifice to God, following Jesus as our ultimate example of a servant, who went *willingly* to the cross to pay for our sin, and of whom we read in Ephesians:

### **Ephesians 5:1-2**

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

We are to imitate Christ. Serving Him, and serving others. When we do so, we'll please God as Noah did, and as the Philippian church also did, for Paul writes later on his letter to them:

**Philippians 4:18**

Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

In the end it is *willingness* that is key, as it was with Noah's sacrifice. That is, your sacrifice has to come from a willing heart. If I were to ask any one of you to do this or that, and you did it begrudgingly then that would not be a sacrifice that smells sweet to our Lord. Our sacrifice has to be in response to what He has done in saving us, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus — just as I am certain, Noah and his family looked back up at the ark frequently, and remembered God's salvation.

We read in the remainder of verse 21...

**Genesis 8:21b**

...Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

So then, we read that the Lord said this in His heart — but evidently this was made known to Noah, and what a comfort this must have been to him. For without this promise you can imagine the worry or panic that might set in the first 100 times it rained after the flood. Indeed living through a worldwide flood with only 8 people surviving is something you'd never forget.

We also understand from this verse that God was not saying everything was perfect now — far from it, for sin was still in full effect. Therefore this promise was not made because of man's goodness, but because of God's mercy. And indeed it wouldn't be long at all before the terrible continued consequences of mankind's sin was seen.

And with this promise of God made, which Satan knew God would not break, Satan saw an opportunity to destroy the line through to Christ, for if God would not judge the world by water again, then He couldn't bring a worldwide flood as He did before, thwarting Satan's attempt. And so as we read back in Genesis 6:4, there were giants after the flood also, as once again fallen angels slept with women on the earth, producing giant offspring that would try to destroy any possibility of mankind being saved through Jesus. Such as the giant tribes of Canaan that Moses and Joshua prevailed against, and Goliath and his brothers that David would later defeat.

As this chapter closes, we read one more declaration from God:

**Genesis 8:22**

"While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease."

That is, contrary to what the folks protesting outside the fuel station today think, we need not fear that climate change will be the thing that destroys the earth. That's not to say we shouldn't be good stewards of the planet God created and placed us on, but rather what we need to fear, is actually the One who has power to destroy it in an instant if He so wishes.

For indeed, we know that this earth will not last forever. We read in 2 Peter chapter 3:

### **2 Peter 3:10**

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

And what mankind will be judged for will not be how well we've done in our environmental goals, but rather how we have lived before a just and holy God who, by His very nature, cannot tolerate sin. That, beyond anything else, is what should motivate us to share the gospel — for without a Saviour, people will perish. That is, they will spend eternity in hell. Oh, may we be mindful of that!

## **Application questions**

As we go into the week ahead, even into this afternoon, I urge you to ask yourself 2 things:

- Are you as obedient to God's commands as Noah was?
- Do you give until it hurts? Until it costs you something?

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