

The Flood

De-Creation, Re-Creation

Genesis 7:1-9:17

Learning to Read the Bible

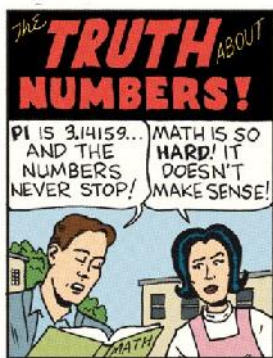
This week I ran across an absurd cartoon based in almost no truth that still actually managed to make a kind of fair point. It is a **secular humanist jab at the Bible**, us foolish Christians, and the lunacy of our faith, and our insistence that it be part of public life. It makes fun of the Bible based on a common **misunderstanding** that Christians often have of it, a misunderstanding that is now making its way into the secular world, as the cartoon itself demonstrates.

It begins with a man reading from a math book. He notices the number **PI: 3.14159...** A woman by him says that math is so hard she doesn't understand it. Suddenly, a Bible-thumping fundamentalist arrives saying, **"That's because secular math is not true. The only true math is Bible math."**

“The Bible,” he says, “clearly shows PI as 3, not 3.1415...” He cites **1 Kgs 7:23-26** and the dimensions of Solomon’s great Sea (which has nothing to do with anything). Well, that convinces the two gullible Christian sheeple who begin insisting that we throw out all our math books in schools and replace them with the Bible, because it obviously knows what it is talking about with math.

TOM THE DANCING BUG

by RUBEN BOLLING



The misunderstanding is that the Bible is a math book, given by God to tell us all things we need to know about math. This, of course, is nonsense, and a complete misreading of the Bible, even as it is when Christians make the Bible into a diet book, a cook book, a coaching book, or whatever. Our **Confession of Faith** teaches us in its very first sentence what the Bible is actually for: “The Holy Scripture is the only

sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience” (LBC 1.1). God gave us the Bible so that we might know how to be saved, what to believe, and how we can please God in our obedience. That is its purpose and its design. To that end, it contains all the information we could ever need to know. But it does not say everything about everything.

When Christians turn the Bible into something that it is not, there is a danger of telling the world that we are something that we are not. There is also a danger that a message that is at best secondary (if it even exists at all, which in the case of the math example it does not) replaces the primary message, thus diminishing or even altogether eclipsing the only message that can save us and change us to be obedient people. Most of the time this is done, people do not even know that they are doing it. Christians are almost always sincere when they do it too. Most of the time they believe that they are actually defending the Bible and upholding it, even though what they are doing much of the time is defending and upholding their personal interpretation of it, and a bad one at that. But this is not good, and can even become dangerous, both in what it conveys to the world about the Bible, and in what it teaches Christians about the Bible and its message.

The solution to all this is to start learning how to read our Bibles correctly. I can think of few stories in the Bible that provide a more interesting place to do this than the story of Noah's flood. Based on the cartoon, there may be no greater application that you could take home today, simply for the havoc that bad reading is bringing to Christians and the wider world. But, I hope that more than reading the story correctly, the story itself will go down into your inner-man, to your soul, and provide you with the spiritual food and drink that you require in days like these.

Biblical Theology

There is one particular discipline that we have at our disposal that is of great benefit for our task. It is the discipline known as **biblical theology**. Biblical theology **identifies distinctive themes in various sections of the Bible, traces them from one section to another, and discovers any overall unifying theme(s) that draw the whole Bible together.**¹ Notice that its purpose is **to draw the Bible together**, to help make sense of it **as a whole**. This is something that many people today would love to be able to do, but they just aren't being taught. In reality, it isn't all that difficult, once you know what you are looking for and how to do it.

¹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 339.

Biblical theology was discussed as its own discipline as early as the 17th century. It was intended to refer to a theology based *on the Bible*, as distinct from a theology which consisted largely of philosophical ideas and religious traditions.² I actually think that those kinds of theologies have their place; that place is just not biblical theology.

The Bible itself does biblical theology. For instance, in **Deuteronomy 1–11** Moses describes and interprets God’s past acts on Israel’s behalf recorded in Exodus-Numbers, even as he discloses more divine revelation. Moses is doing biblical theology. Samuel interprets Israel’s past theologically in **1 Samuel 8–12**, Stephen does the same in **Acts 7**, and the list of examples could be extended.³ In each case, the man is reflecting upon past redemptive history and prior Scripture, in order to bring out a theological point embedded in that history.

The story of the flood, I believe, is another example of the Bible doing its own biblical theology. When we discover what it is doing, then we can discover what theology it is primarily giving us. Best of all, we can discover how God has so perfectly and brilliantly woven this story into the Bible to

² Sinclair B. Ferguson and J.I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 96.

³ Paul House, “Theology, Biblical,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1581.

point us to **saving knowledge**, the content of our **faith**, and how we can better **obey** him.

The Flood as New Creation

When we read the story of Noah's flood, the actual flood part I mean, most people are rightly caught up in the horror. God takes **water**, a LOT of water, and uses it to **destroy** all but eight people on the earth. But what is not often considered is how the flood story is a biblical-theological reflection on history. You say, "**What history? There's only five chapters in the whole Bible before Noah comes along.**" Yes, but those chapters, especially the first two, are foundational to everything else in the Bible. The flood is actually an amazing reflection and biblical theology of those chapters in particular. This is what we will begin to think about now.

Let us remember that Genesis 1-2 tells us about **creation**. The first chapter tells us about the creation of the **heavens and the earth**. The second tells us about the creation of the **Garden of Eden**. We all know that much, but what does that have to do with the flood? The answer is, everything. You ask, "**how so?**" Let me get at this by simply listing things that are repeated in both stories. If you aren't familiar with this, it might actually shock you, in a good way:

Literary Parallels in Creation and the Flood

Theme	Flood (Gen 6-9)	Creation (Gen 1-3)
Face of the ground	6:1, 7, 7:3, 4, 23, 8:8, 9, 13	1:29, 2:6
“forms” (<i>ytsr</i>)	6:5 (Man forms evil)	2:7, 8 (God forms man)
Pain (<i>'tsb</i>)	6:6 (God's)	3:16 (Woman's)
Generations (<i>toledoth</i>)	6:9	2:4
Walking with God	6:9	3:8
Three sons	6:10	4:1-2, 25
God looks (<i>ra'ah</i>)	6:12 (“corrupt”)	1:31 (“very good”)
Sanctuary	6:14-16 (Ark)	1:1-24; Isa 66:1 (Heavens/Earth) 2:4-19; Ezek 28:13-18 (Garden)
Male and female	6:19, 7:3, 9, 16	1:27
Animals come	6:20 (To Noah)	2:19 (To Adam)
Kinds (<i>min</i>)	6:20-21, 7:2-3, 13, 8:17; 9, 9:15-16	1:11, 12, 21, 24, 25
Food (<i>'oklah</i>)	6:21; 9:3	1:29, 30; 2:9
Seven	7:2-3 (pairs of animals) 8:4 (seventh month)	2:2 (Days)
Seven days	7:4; 8:10, 12	2:2
The deep (<i>tehom</i>)	7:11; 8:2	1:2
All is water	7:19-20	1:2
Flesh	7:21-23 (Dies)	1:20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28 (Comes to life)
<i>Ruach</i> over water	8:1	1:2
Rest (<i>nuach</i>)	8:4 (ark); 5:29 (Noah/ <i>Noach</i>)	2:2-3 (God, <i>shabat</i>), Adam (2:15)
Land appears	8:4ff	1:10
Hillock/mountain	8:4	1:9; 2:8; Ezek 28:14, 16
Bird over water	8:7, 8, 10, 12 (raven, dove)	1:2 (“hover”; see Deut 32:11)
God said	8:15; 9:1, 8, 12, 17	1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29
Life	8:16-19 (Returns to land)	1:24-25 (Lives on land)
Sacrifice	8:20-21 (Noah's)	3:21 (God's)
Gracious Covenant	6:18; 8:21; 9:8-17 (Ratified)	3:21 (Made)
Be fruitful and multiply	8:17; 9:1, 7	1:22, 28
Plants as food	9:3	1:29-30
Image of God	9:6	1:26-27
Garden planted (<i>nt'</i>)	9:20	2:8
Fruit of a tree/vine	9:21	3:6
Naked	9:21-22	2:25; 3:7

Let the following facts wash over you. Both talk about the **face of the ground**. Both talk about **pain** (God's pain, the woman's pain). God “**forms**” man, man “forms” evil. Both stories have “**generations**.” In both stories man **walks** with God. Adam and Noah each have **three** sons. God **looks** at creation and sees that it is good, then he looks at the earth in

Noah's day and sees that it is corrupt. Both stories talk about **male and female**. Both have **animals coming** to a man. Both talk about **kinds** of animals. Both have **food** for the animals mentioned explicitly. Both are centered on the number **seven**. Seven **days** is a theme common to both. In one, all **flesh** comes to life, in the other all flesh dies. The formula "**God said**" is repeated in both. There are **sacrifices** in both, **covenants** in both. Both stories say be **fruitful and multiply**. Both have **plants for food**. Both talk about the **image of God**. Both have a **garden**. Both have a man **eating from the fruit** of a tree/vine, being **naked**, and **falling into sin** (see chart below). By my count, there are over thirty exact literary parallels between the creation story and the flood story. Many of these themes are rarely found again in the Bible. As you read it all together, it is wave coming at your that helps you see that the flood story is doing biblical theology on the creation story. It is reading the creation story and then a making of theological statements and a giving a theological implications through this reading.

Since there is no possible way to go into detail on all of these today, I thought I would focus in on a select few of them. In particular, we will look at a couple of things that will help us understand that if the flood is being compared to creation, then the flood itself is to be viewed as a **de-creation**,

or the returning of the earth back to its primordial form in **Genesis 1:2** and then, after the flood subsides, a **re-creation**, a starting over with a new Adam on a new earth. Like a tree whose roots grow deep by the water so that it does not topple, de-creation and re-creation theology is what the Bible itself brings us as it begs us to read the flood through the theological lens of Genesis 1-2.

Seven Days and Rest

The first points of contact I want to explore are the dates and timing of many things in the flood story. Let's begin with this one, “**For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground**” (**Gen 7:4**). Here you can see that the idea of “**seven days**” is important, and of course, this is a theme that we find rooted profoundly in Genesis 1-2. For time's sake, I'm going to accept what scholars say here, that this announcement took place on a **Sunday**, the **first day of the week**, though that should be easy enough to understand by the language of “in seven days.”⁴

The next bit of timing we have is **7:11**, “**In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of**

⁴ See for example Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 180 and the accompanying notes.

the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.” This corresponds to the “seven days from now,” and thus it likewise takes place on **Sunday**, the **first day of the week**.

The next verse tells us that the flood waters poured for **forty days (7:12)**. That would mean that the waters stopped falling on a Friday, the sixth day of the week. The next timing we have is found in **Gen 8:4**, “**And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.**” Counted out with their calendar, this is five months later, and it would likewise be on a **Friday**.

Skipping ahead to **8:6**, **8:10**, and **8:12** we find first that Noah sends out a **Raven** after **forty days**. This would be a **Sunday** again. **Seven days later**, he sends out a **dove**. Again, this is a **Sunday**. **Seven days later**, he sends out another **dove**. Yet again, this is a **Sunday**. All are the **first day of the week**. All of this would seem to be a very improbable coincidence, if a person didn't know that there was theology being communicated here. What is that theology?

The theology is that the flood is being viewed as a **de-creation** and a **re-creation**. Here is how **Wenham** puts it, “**Creation began on a Sunday according to Gen 1. Gen 7:11 makes the flood, the agent of creation's destruction, arrive on**

Sunday too. Creation was completed on Friday. If we regard the five months when the ark floated as the period of de-creation, then de-creation concluded on a Friday. Alternatively, one could say the ark ceased traveling on Friday in order not to violate another Sabbath!”⁵

Between them, there are a total of seven Sundays or Fridays, itself a theologically significant fact.⁶ Curiously, right in the middle of this pattern of seven, we find the ark “resting.” Resting is a very important theme in both creation and the flood stories, as Noah’s very name means “rest.” The ark’s rest comes on a Friday, which means that this is the last day it was floating. That would mean that the first full day that the ark was at rest would be Saturday, the seventh day of the week. Of course, this parallels God’s work in creation, for in six days he created the earth, but on the seven day he rested.

When we looked at God resting, we discovered that it was him being enthroned as king of the universe. Listen to how a couple of the Psalms put it. “The LORD sits

⁵ Wenham, , 180. In the chart below, which is also from Wenham (same page), he discusses how there are also significant days which occur on Wednesday. He explains, “In the calendar that may have been used (the Jubilees calendar with 364 days, a calendar that may date to pre-exile), New Year’s Day is always a Wednesday.” Perhaps other special Jewish days would have been as well.

⁶ As the chart below shows, there are actually 10 dates that we see. The number 10 is also significant.

enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever” (Ps 29:10). “Then King David rose to his feet and said: ‘Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of our God, and I made preparations for building’” (1Ch 28:2). “Arise, O LORD, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might” (Ps 132:8).⁷

Ten Special Days in the Flood Narrative

1)	Announcement of the flood	(7:4)	10.2.600 Sunday
2)	Flood begins	(7:11)	17.2.600 Sunday
3)	Flood lasts 40 days and ends	(7:12)	27.3.600 Friday
4)	Waters triumph and abate for 5 months till ark grounds	(8:4)	17.7.600 Friday
5)	Mountain tops appear	(8:5)	1.10.600 Wednesday
6)	Raven sent out (after 40 days)	(8:6)	10.11.600 Sunday
7)	Dove’s second flight	(8:10)	24.11.600 Sunday
8)	Dove’s third flight	(8:12)	1.12.600 Sunday
9)	Waters dry up	(8:13)	1.1.601 Wednesday
10)	Noah leaves ark	(8:14)	27.2.601 Wednesday ⁸

Sunday and Friday in the Flood Story

1)	Announcement of the flood	(7:4)	10.2.600 Sunday
2)	Flood begins	(7:11)	17.2.600 Sunday
3)	Flood lasts 40 days and ends	(7:12)	27.3.600 Friday
4)	Waters triumph and abate for 5 months till ark grounds	(8:4)	17.7.600 Friday ARK RESTS
5)	Raven sent out (after 40 days)	(8:6)	10.11.600 Sunday
6)	Dove’s second flight	(8:10)	24.11.600 Sunday
7)	Dove’s third flight	(8:12)	1.12.600 Sunday

⁷ We have seen in an earlier sermon several connections between Noah’s ark and the ark of the covenant.

⁸ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 180.

Genesis 1:2 and the Deep

We can see from the **dates** that the Flood is meant to be read as a de-creation and a recreation. But we can also see it from the many **themes** that I mentioned a while ago. Now I want to focus in on a couple more of these themes (we've looked at "rest" and "seven").

Let's start with **Genesis 1:2**. This amazing verse has two basic parts. First it tells us **the state in which we find the earth**, "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep." We learn a couple of verses later that the **waters covered everything**. There was not even separation of the waters above the dome from the waters below it. That had to be formed on the second day (**Gen 1:7**). So all is this lumpy mass of waters. This is described by the word "**deep**." *Tehom*. This is where Leviathan lives (**Job 41:24**). It is the entrance to Sheol. The point is, everything is in a state of chaos, there is no separation, all is water, all is waste, all is void and useless.

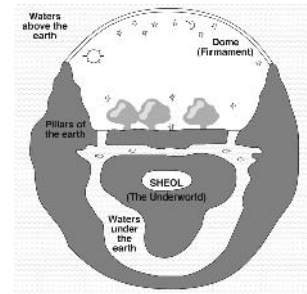
Through the imagery of the story of the flood, we get a vivid picture in our minds that this is exactly what the earth is returning to in Noah's day. Notice how in **Genesis 7:11** it says, "**On that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.**" Crack!

The rains from heaven come crashing down. Boom! The waters on the land sweep across it like a tsunami. They mix together and merge into one. The waters below and the waters above converge. The separation is gone. Where is the sky? All is gray. All is black and dark. Then, just a few verses later it tells us, “**And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep**” (**Gen 7:19-20**). In our day it is quite possible that most people are so busy trying to figure out how (or how not) the waters could cover Mt. Everest by over 20 ft. that they miss the much more basic theological fact. However it happened, whatever caused it, however high the flood actually god, the point is: **the land is gone. Genesis 1:2** has returned.

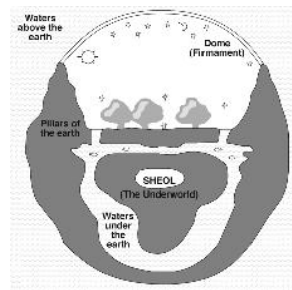
AT CREATION,



BECOMES



AT THE FLOOD,



BECOMES



Now, I want you to sit there and imagine for a moment the theological implications of this. God had spent six amazing days creating the most incredible things that no other being could create. He looked at what he had made and then stated that it was very good. He then takes his seat on his throne, enthroned above the creation as its king. What an amazing day that must have been. The stars were singing, the sons of God were shouting for joy. All is right, all is good.

But then, in just a handful of chapters, things have gotten so bad because of the sins of heaven and earth, that God felt the only thing left for him to do was destroy it all. Back we go to **Genesis 1:2** where all is void, all is waste, only the deep with its **darkness** and **terror** and **monsters** remains. **Genesis 8:21-24** is not merely historical record, it is profoundly theological. All flesh died. Everything on the land died. He blotted out every living thing on the face of the ground. And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

How damaging is sin? How ignorant and stupid is it, really, knowing all of what has happened here—that our sin makes God display the same parts of his unchanging nature to us today: justice and holiness through figures such as wrath, anger, grief, sorrow, and even repentance. Sin makes his holiness, his power, his judgments that much more acute and

ripe and active in our world? And do we honestly think that he no longer cares, simply because he promised never to judge us that way again? Do we dare trifle with such Absolute Power that can do this? It's like kicking at an ant hill only to find a dragon fly out of it. And yet, even in the judgment, it is not like God is dethroned, but rather that **he sits enthroned over the flood** too. God is absolutely sovereign and all powerful over his creation. Nothing can thwart his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" The Flood is what happens when they try. So take your sins to heart, beloved. Repent of them and learn by faith to obey the Lord, to humble yourself, and keep his law.

Genesis 1:2 and the Hovering

But after the waters abate, once the work of de-creation is completed by God alone on the sixth days (the fortieth and the 150th), the ark comes to rest. Now, something amazing happens. The second half of **Genesis 1:2** gives us **the creative movement of God**, "**And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.**" The imagery here is that of a bird flying over the waters. The only other time the word "hover" (*rachaph*) is used by Moses is in **Deut 32:11-12**.⁹ (It also happens to be the only other time he uses *tohu*; **32:10**). It

⁹ It also occurs in Jeremiah 23:9.

refers to the **Holy Spirit of God hovering** over Israel in the wilderness, during the Exodus and the Red Sea where, “**Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters/hovers (*rachaph*) over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions, the LORD alone guided him.**” You can hear the imagery of the bird very plainly. Let us remember again that this hovering bird is there on **day one** of creation.¹⁰

Now, let us return to something that takes place on three different **Sundays** during the flood (perhaps even four). The first is found in **Genesis 8:6-7**, “**At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.**” Next, **vs. 8**, “**Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground.**” Then we read in **vs. 10**, “**He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark.**” Finally, **vs. 12**, “**Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.**”

¹⁰ This is especially true if, as I argued, Genesis 1:1-3 are one long sentence rather than some kind of a heading (Gen 1:1-2) that summarizes the chapter with day one not beginning until vs. 3. It would read something like, “When God began to create heaven and earth – and the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water – and God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.” Thus, the Spirit is hovering on day one.

What do all of these have in common? You have a **bird flying over the waters** on the **first day** of the week. The echo of **Genesis 1:2** is unmistakable. That means the theme of this part of **Genesis 1:2** is also unmistakable, as it now returns in the flood story. That theme is **creation**. Thus, what is being depicted beginning with these birds over the waters in the flood is **re-creation**. This is why we read, for example, that after leaving the ark and offering a sacrifice, God says, “**be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth**” (**Gen 9:1**). It is language taken straight out of **Genesis 1:22, 28**. OR again, “**Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.**” This expands on **Genesis 1:29-30**. Or again, “**Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image**” (**9:6**). This puts limits and laws on **Genesis 1:26-27**. But all of it and more are the story telling us that God is beginning a new creation. You can't help but think about Genesis 1 again.

De-Creation and Re-Creation: Why Do They Matter?

So why does all of this matter? That's the question most people want to know in our day. What am I to do with this? Let's begin to answer by returning to where we started. We

don't want to make the Bible into just anything we feel like it should be. We want the Bible to speak on its own terms. If it is trying to tell us something, then you had better believe it is a lot more important than what you or I might wish it would say.

In seeking the most basic meaning of the passage, what you must ask yourself is how is this communicating something of importance to my own **salvation, faith, and obedience**? What is it saying about that? This is the question the Bible is always begging you to ask. Our own imaginations rarely care about such questions and often actually take us away from this, rather than bring us towards. Then there is our witness in the world, especially in regard to specific texts like the flood and what we tell them that it means. When we understand what it is actually saying, and then tell others what it actually says, then at least unbelievers can get angry over the right thing.

There is much arguing over the **extent of the flood**. You find all sorts of camps out there: worldwide flood, regional flood, local flood, even river floodings that all people somehow take with the exact same images and motifs (arks, few saved, animals, rainbows, etc). I find some more plausible than others. But the facts are that Christians sincerely argue all of them. Believe it or not, unbelievers arguing *all* of them

as well (though some are just as mocked for their beliefs as some Christians are for theirs). I have a stack of books by secular scientists arguing for a massive worldwide disaster in our ancient past. That's the view I hold, and I'm not sure how to avoid that view in light of statements like, “Never again will I flood the earth and destroy all life as I have done,” if the animals could have just walked over the next hill and survived on dry ground. Nevertheless, I know some Christians think they can.

The point is, I have my view and others have theirs. But is this all we care about communicating to the world? We must be at least as interested in communicating the theological message of this story that we have talked about today, so that people—Christians and non-Christians alike, can know what God's main point is. For it is about salvation, faith, and obedience.

Today we have seen the story teach us two distinct things. First, it has taught us about de-creation. God's looking down upon humanity on the face of the land (Gen 6:1-4), The evil man has “formed” in contrast to the beauty God has “formed” (6:5), God's “pain” that parallel's the woman's (6:6), our corruption as opposed to his “kinds” (6:12), and so many other things, all point us to the fact that people want to so quickly and deliberately forget.

Bill Cosby says, “I brought you into this world, I can take you out and make another one look just like you.” To put that into the theme of our story, if God can create, he can also de-create. It is his right as the Sovereign of the universe. The creation is not the creator. If he decides that it should cease to exist, it will cease to exist. De-creation teaches us about God’s wrath, his justice, his judgment against sin, and his holiness.

But **God does not stop with de-creation**. In his love, his grace, his loving-kindness, his patience, and his goodness, he creates anew. This is the theology of the **new creation**, and what a blessed theology it truly is. It comes from the **covenant**, from his **oath** and **word** that he swore, not just to Noah or even Adam, but to himself. God re-creates for himself. But how would I know this?

I know it, because I don’t stop reading in Genesis 9. This is not the end of the Bible, nor is it the end of de-creation and re-creation in its pages. You see, new creation is a theological point that the Bible makes time and time again. God had a master plan, and the flood and its new Adam were part of that plan. But they are not the end of it. Here, I want to point out a **couple** more stories in the Bible. These are stories that are directly, explicitly related to creation and the flood via some of the same themes we have looked at this morning.

Red Sea and the Hovering Spirit

The first is one we have already talked about. It is a story in the life of Moses. It is the story of the **Red Sea**. In that story, you have the image of **God the Holy Spirit hovering** over his people like a cloud. He fights for Israel alongside the Word of God—the Commander of the Armies of the LORD. He lures Egypt into the dry, parted waters of the mighty sea, only to drown them in its great flood. But all the while he protects his Son like a bird hovering over its tender new born chick.

The image is unmistakable. At the Exodus, God is doing a **new thing**. “Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying, ‘I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him’” (**Ex 15:1-2**). “Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him” (**Ps 98:1**). It is a **new creation**. He is starting over with his Spirit over the waters, and he gives birth to a new Adam—Israel his firstborn son (cf. **Ex 4:22; Luke 3:38**).

Why would he need to do this? It is because though he started over with Noah, the moment he gets off the ark, he

finds himself planting a garden, drinking the fruit of the vine, getting drunk, sinning greatly, and failing God in his covenant. All then quickly turns to darkness again. So God raises up a new son, Israel, to be a city on a hill, a light to the nations. But Israel fails too, utterly, miserably, completely. **Forty days** of testing becomes forty years of wandering without rest in a howling waste and desert.

The Baptism of Jesus and the Hovering Spirit

But then, at just the right time, God sent forth his Only Begotten Son, born of a virgin, born under law. The first thing we read about this Son as an adult is related intimately to our story today. For it tells us of his baptism into the waters. “Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold.” Do you remember what it says next? “The heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (Matt 3:16-17). Spirit. Waters. Hovering. Dove. Rest. It is **Genesis 1:2**, which the church father’s called a baptism. It is Noah’s flood, which **1 Peter 3:21** calls a baptism. It is the Red Sea which **1 Corinthians 10:2** calls a baptism. This is Christ’s baptism, the perfect Son who makes it through the waters alive, and goes

on to obey the father in all things, even to death on a cross, on a Friday. It was finished. Jesus gave up the ghost and rested with his fathers.

And then what happened? Do you remember? On **Sunday**, on **the first day of the week**, Jesus rose from the dead. He was given an immortal body, which he showed to the women, to the disciples, to those walking along the road, even to 500 people at one time. **New Creation**. Jesus is the fulfillment of that great covenant made in heaven with himself and the Father and the Spirit. Jesus is the first-fruits of the new creation. Behold! He makes all things new, doesn't he?

But not all at once. Rather, slowly. For just now, **the creation itself waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed (Rom 8:19)**. Who are these sons of God? **"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17)**. **"Neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (Gal 6:15)**.

But how is this possible? They asked Peter this question when he preached to them on that first great day when the Spirit of God descended upon the church like tongues of fire. **"Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall**

we do?’ And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:37-38). Water, the Spirit, new creation.

Or again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God ... The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:5, 8). Water, the Spirit, new birth. This theme goes from the beginning to the end of the Bible. “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price” (Rev 22:17).

Today we have seen that the Scriptures are given to show us salvation, to teach us about faith, and to bring about obedience. Baptism is the first obedient act of a Christian in the NT, an act that comes from faith and new birth in the Spirit. For all must go through the waters and come out safely on the other side. David sings of it in Psalm 69. Jonah sings it in Jonah 2. Jesus sang their songs in his second baptism, his baptism into death. It is the way of all things. Creation in Genesis 1. Noah. Israel. The priest. The people. The king. It

does not matter. It is how God sets his people apart, and begins sanctifying them for the new tasks that are ahead.

New tasks in a new city, a new Jerusalem, a new commandant to love one another, a new mediator with a new covenant has arrived and behold, he makes all things new. That is what the Flood teaches. This is its theology. That which is sinful must be de-created, destroyed, put to **death**. But when it dies, if it is found to be **in Christ, the new creation begins**. The Spirit begins to hover and move, and the work of God begins to be brought forth on this new day, the day of rest in Christ. Put your faith in Christ today and be created anew from the destruction your sins have created.