

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

“But God Remembered ...”

Genesis 8:1-22

Introduction

Some time ago researchers at Johns Hopkins discovered what most of us already knew – we have a tendency to forget things! These are the things people most often forget:

1. Names: 83%
2. Where something is (like keys): 60%
3. Telephone numbers: 57%
4. Words: 53%
5. What was said: 49%
6. Faces: 42%

And if you can't remember whether you've just done something or not, you join 38 percent of the population.

Illustration:

I remember as a young boy being forgotten by my parents on a fairly frequently basis – at church, at the babysitters, at bus stops, at the beach, on vacations, etc. At a fairly early age I began to wonder if my parents might be actually trying to ditch me!

Now it's one thing to be forgotten by a parent or friend, but it is an entirely different thing to wonder if you have been forgotten by God.

King David expressed this: Ps 13:1 “How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?”

We have all had times when we felt abandoned – forgotten by God.

It may have been because of a broken marriage, an unbelieving husband who we've been praying for for years, a wayward son or daughter, a chronic illness, mounting financial pressure, a deep sense of loneliness in life, etc.

But in all these things, no matter what it looks like, we have God's Word on it that He never stops thinking about us.

Isa 49:14-16 “[They] said, “The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.”
“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.”

I The Remembrance Of God

- A. God remembered Noah and the animals [Verse 1a]

Wherever Scripture uses the phrase “*God remembered*”, it doesn’t mean that God forgot something. Rather, it is a Hebrew expression indicating God’s renewed activity in the life of an individual or community.

We have a number of examples of God remembering his people:

1. God remembered Abraham when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah
Gen 19:29 “So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.”
2. God remembered Hannah when she was barren
1 Sam 1:9-11 “In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”
1 Sam 1:19-20 “Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him.”
3. God remembered the people of Israel enslaved in Egypt
Ex 2:24-25 “God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.”

Things we don’t want God to remember:

Ps 25:7 “Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O LORD.”

B. God sent a **wind** over the earth [Verse 1b]

Wind = Ruwach = “Breath or Holy Spirit”

1. The waters receded
Ex 14:21 “Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land.”
2. He had already closed: [Verse 2]
 - a. The springs of the deep
 - b. The floodgates of heaven
The forces which produced the Flood were reversed - Gen 7:11

Illustration: The power of God to reverse what seems irreparable

In the case of Job Satan obtained permission to attack Job and test his devotion to God. In one day, Job lost all of his flocks, all of his servants and his 7 sons and 3 daughters, and then he was afflicted with painful boils all over his body.

Job 14:13 “If only you would set me a time and then remember me!”

Job 42:12-13 “The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. And he also had seven sons and three daughters.”

C. God brought the ark to **rest** on Ararat [Verse 3-5]

1. On the 17th day of the 7th month
2. The water continued to **recede**
3. The mount tops became visible

Especially interesting is the date when the ark grounded on the hills of Ararat. It happens to be the exact day of the year, based on the Old Testament calendar, when Jesus rose from the dead.

“On the fourteenth day of the first month (which was formerly the seventh month – Exodus 12) the Passover was to be eaten. We know from the Gospels that on the day the Passover was eaten our Lord died in Jerusalem. Three days from the fourteenth would bring us to the seventeenth, and on the seventeenth day of the first month Jesus rose from the dead. That would be the same as the seventeenth day of the seventh month in the old reckoning of this passage in Genesis.”
Stedman, R. “The New Beginning”. <https://www.raystedman.org/old-testament/genesis/the-new-beginning>

So the Ark grounded on the mountains of Ararat on the same calendar day on which Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It was a foreshadowing of the new beginning offered in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

II The Investigation Of The Earth

A. Noah opened the **window** he had made in the ark

Illustration: Are we there yet? How much longer?

They have already spent 150 days on the Ark. Little did they know that God would have them waiting an additional 221 days before they left the Ark.

The reason we may feel forgotten by God:

1. Because we have forgotten about Him

Deut 32:18-20 “You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth. The LORD saw this and rejected them because he was

angered by his sons and daughters. "I will hide my face from them," he said, "and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful."

2. Because He is strengthening and maturing us

James 1:2-4 "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

Illustration: From Jon Courson's book, A Future and a Hope

"A \$5 iron bar can be pounded into a couple of \$10 horse shoes. Or, that same iron bar can be pounded further into \$350 worth of needles. Or, that same iron bar can be pounded even further to produce \$250,000 worth of fine watch springs. It all depends on how much pounding is done.

Maybe you feel like you've been forgotten by God and pounded to boot. Rejoice! God is making you into something fine, something useful, something valuable for His glory.

Lamentations 3:24-26 "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD."

B. Noah sent out a **raven** [Verse 7]

Question: Did God direct Noah to send out the birds?

Illustration:

Elijah's cloud: 1 Kings 18:41-44

Elijah had promised the wicked king Ahab that there would be neither dew nor rain for a period of years. After Elijah's great victory over the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel, he prophesied a heavy rain and sent his servant out 7 times to look for it.

1. It kept flying back and forth until the earth was dry

The raven is listed in Leviticus 11:15 as one of the unclean birds, forbidden to the Jewish people to eat. They're not known for being very particular about what they eat. They will eat virtually anything – no matter how foul and corrupt it might be. This raven flew back and forth, never returning to the ark, evidently feeding on the dead carcasses that were floating on the surface of the water after the Flood.

It has been suggested that the Raven may be a symbol of man's heart – not very discerning and willing to feed on whatever dead flesh is at hand, and as we discover in verse 7, of little help to man.

Ephesians 2:1-4 “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live ... gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.”

C. Noah sent out a **dove** to see if the waters had receded [Verse 8-12]

Unlike ravens, doves were considered clean animals according to Leviticus 1:14. They are also quite a bit more particular and they don't generally eat dead things.

The dove is possibly symbolic of our new nature. Where once we would feed on any filthy thing, we now have a new nature marked by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Rom 6:19 “Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.”

1. 1st time: The dove could find no place to land

Deut 28:65-66 “Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart.”

2. 2nd time: The dove returned with an **olive** leaf

On its last return it brought an olive leaf in its beak as a symbol of life and peace.

3. 3rd time: The dove did not return

a. The water had dried up from the earth [Verse 13a, 14]

D. Noah removed the **covering** of the ark [Verse 13b]

1. He saw that the earth was completely dry after 371 days - 53 weeks!

a. Noah entered the Ark on the 17th day of the 2nd month of his 600th year (7:11)

b. The Ark came to rest on Ararat on the 17th day of the 7th month: 150 days

c. The earth was completely dry on the 27th day of the 2nd month of Noah's 601st year - 221 days later for a total of 371 days.

1 Peter 3:18-22 “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand-with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.”

III The Recommissioning Of Animal Life

A. God commanded Noah to **come out** of the ark [Verse 15-16]

1. Along with his wife and family

It is important to note that throughout this whole story God is directing the activity of Noah. He is the one who says, "Make yourself an ark." He is also the one who says, "Come into the ark." Now he is the one who says, "Come out of the ark." The initiative is God's, and the timing is God's.

For Noah there is nothing but simple acts of obedience. As Noah simply trusts and obeys, God leads him to do the right thing at the right time.

B. God commanded Noah to **bring out** every living creature [Verse 17]

1. So that they could multiply on the earth

2. So that they could be **fruitful** and increase

Gen 1:21-22 "God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth."

C. Noah once again **obeyed** the commands of the Lord [Verse 18-19]

1 John 2:3-4 "We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

IV The Priorities Of Noah's Heart

A. Noah built an **altar** to the Lord [Verse 20]

We have numerous references to the patriarchs building altars of worship to God:

1. Abraham: Gen 12:7-8
2. Isaac: Gen 26:25
3. Jacob: Gen 33:20

There were three fundamental reasons for building an altar of sacrifice:

1. As an act of worship and thanksgiving to God
2. As a sacrifice of atonement for sin
3. As a foreshadowing of the "once and for all" atonement of Jesus Christ.

1. He sacrificed burnt offerings on it

You would think, after over a year on the Ark, that Noah would first want to get out, stretch his legs and do some exploring. But that's not what he does. His mind wasn't on meeting his own needs, but on giving thanks to God for His incredible deliverance! Noah was a man who put God first in his life.

Illustration:

The healing of the ten lepers: Luke 17:11-19 "As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said,

"Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him-and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

Application:

1. One of the evidences of true godliness is a thankful heart.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:18 "... give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
 - Heb 13:15 "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise -- the fruit of lips that confess his name."
2. On the other hand, ingratitude is the evidence of a carnal and ungodly life.
 - Romans 1:21 "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened."

- B. The Lord smelled the **pleasing** offering and said: [Verse 21]
 What made the sacrifice pleasing wasn't the actual smell (although there is nothing like the smell of a good local style barbecue!). What made it pleasing was Noah's heart – a heart of thanks, praise and worship. A heart that pleased the Lord.

Being pleased with Noah's sacrifice, God made a wonderful promise to mankind ...

1. Never again will I **curse** the ground because of man
 - This is a reversal of the curse found in Genesis 3:17
 - a. Even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood
 - Jer 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"
2. Never again will I **destroy** all living creatures

- C. The Lord assures Noah of the predictability of life: [Verse 22]
 God promises Noah that the regular order of nature, with a fixed sequence of seasons and a fixed cycle of day and night, would prevail as long as the earth existed.

1. **Seedtime** and harvest
2. Cold and heat
 - Presumably, cold and heat in extremes were the result of the drastic changes in the earth's atmosphere and topography resulting from the flood.

3. Summer and winter

There were profound climatic and ecological changes in the earth once the "blanket" of water vapors covering the earth had been "emptied." Now there will be seasonal and temperature variations

Ps 74:16-17 "The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and moon. It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter."

4. Day and night

Conclusion

Do you imagine that God has forgotten you? He hasn't!

1. "He has engraved you on the palms of His hands." Isa 49:14-16
2. His thoughts of you "outnumber the grains of sand of the sea." Psalms 139:17-18
3. "God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his." 2 Tim 2:19

Are you experiencing "cosmic loneliness?"

1. Repent of your sins and turn to God
Acts 3:19 "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."
2. Believe that Christ died for your sins
Romans 10:9 "That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."
3. Receive Jesus as the Lord and Savior of your life
John 1:12 "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

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