



The Story of Salvation

Chapter 3 - God Separates



Genesis 6-11

Opening Prayer:

Dear Father in heaven, we are sinners like our first parents, Adam and Eve. Thou knowest that the human heart is a stubborn and idolatrous thing, and that even in the hearts of Thy believers selfishness, envy, and hate struggle for dominion. Therefore, help us, we pray Thee, to fight against our old Adam. Abel's blood indeed cried to the skies for vengeance, but the blood of Thy beloved Son cried for pardon for all sinners. By His holy blood forgive whatever wrong we have done to anyone, strengthen our faith, and help us to live and act according to Thy will, with only holy thoughts and pure desires, and to dwell in true Christian peace with our fellow men, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

Amen.

Kramer, Wm. A. (1949). *Devotions for Lutheran Schools* (p.p 12-13). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

CAIN AND ABEL TO SETH

God called to Cain, "Cain, where is your brother?" But Cain was in an ugly, murderous mood. "I don't know," he said. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Then God cursed Cain, "from the ground" that had received his brother's blood. God said to Cain, "You have killed your brother, and I must punish you. Now the plants in your fields will not grow well any more. Now you will not have a home." Cain had to move away from the home country. Some of his family, whose names we do not know, went with him. They settled far away to the East. Their descendants were a gifted race, but proud and lustful with sin and wickedness in abundance.

In the home country another group of brothers and sisters, headed by Seth, built a different type of community. They worshipped God and feared and loved Him. In this way God made a separation between the ungodly Cain group and the God-fearing Seth group. (Read Genesis 4:24-5)

SEPARATION BREAKS DOWN

Centuries rolled by and the earth that God had made began to fill with people. Some of them loved God. They were called the Children of God. Others rejected God and sinned very much. They were called the Children of Men. The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful and they began to intermarry. The result was ruinous for God's people. The girls that married into the Cain group were lost from God's people. This was bad enough. It was worse that the Cain girls who married Seth boys brought all their ungodliness into their new homes and led their families into unbelief. The separation between God's people and the worldly people broke down.

What happened is vividly told in the Bible, "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of mankind's heart was only evil continually." There was no fear of God, there was no hesitation to satisfy evil desires and lusts, and no regrets. Death did not seriously scare the people. It was so far away. At the age of five hundred they were at their best. It seems that these long lives were the results of very favorable climate conditions and by God's mercy and grace.

NOAH BUILDS THE ARK

Down through the centuries there had, of course, been many God-fearing people. One of them was Enoch. He walked with God and did not die. God took him, the Bible says. But these God-fearing men and women were unable to stop the onrush of uncontrolled passions. The younger generations were drawn into the wild life and God's people became fewer and fewer. At last only Noah and his family were left as faithful to God.

Noah grieved over the wickedness all around him. He must have spoken to God, in prayer, many times about it and one day God told Noah that He Himself was so grieved that He was sorry He had ever made man. God commanded Noah to build an ark, saying, "I will bring the flood waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh." The ark was to be a large ship for it must have room for one pair of all the animals that could not live in the water. Of the clean animals Noah should take seven pairs of each kind (they evidently were for sacrifices in worship of God). Then he should bring into the ark enough food for his family and for the animals to last about a year.

Noah chose a place where there was much suitable timber and started to build. It was slow work and it tested Noah's trust in God. During one hundred and twenty years he labored and then the ship was ready and the supplies stored away. God's governing hand led the animals into the ark and, last of all, Noah and his family boarded the ship and God closed the door of the ark.

THE FLOOD

The Bible says that all the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened. Inner disturbances rocked the earth and the clouds poured down torrents of rain. It seems that in some places the ground was lifted up and in other places it sank down causing immense tidal waves to sweep over sea and land. Every day the water became deeper. At last it was so deep that it covered even the highest mountains by 23 feet. And the flood prevailed on the earth 150 days. All the people had to drown. All the animals that could not live in water had to drown. Only the people and the animals in the ship were safe.

GOD MAKES A COVENANT

God remembered Noah in the ark. He made a wind pass over the earth, and the waters went down. At last the tops of the mountains began to be dry and the ark rested on the mountain of Ararat. When Noah came out of the Ark he brought God a thank offering and dedicated himself and his family anew to God's service. God now made a covenant¹ with Noah and said, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." (Signifying seasons and changing climatic conditions following the flood.) God then made a rainbow appear for the first time and said it was a sign that He would not again curse the ground because of man, and God called Noah and his descendants to remember His covenant promise every time they see it. Then God told Noah and his family, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The animals of the earth will be in submission to you, and every living thing shall be meat for you; as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But do not eat meat that has blood in it. I will punish anyone who kills another person. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God I made man."

SHEM IS GIVEN THE PROMISE

In his latter days Noah foretold the future of his sons. He foretold that Canaan, Ham's son, would be everybody's servant. Japheth would be a builder of empires, but would dwell in the tents of Shem (that is, they would share in the spiritual blessings of Shem's family). And Shem received God's blessings and through his descendants (Semites) God would send salvation to man. Some of Shem's descendants were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the house of Judah (or the Jews). Later we will see that the Savior was to be a descendant of Judah. *Thus, Christ was to be born in Shem's line.*

AGAIN MAN REBELS

In the course of time a new rebellion raised its ugly head. The people settled in a plain in the land of Shinar. They found unity in their language and in their desire to defy the Lord's command to spread out and fill the whole earth. They wanted to stay together and have an easy life instead of going out to face the hardships of doing the work they were given to do by God, which was difficult under the curse of sin. Unified in their means of staying together, they began to build a waterproof city of fired

¹ A covenant is a contract that guarantees the fulfillment of what has been promised.

bricks and waterproof mortar so that any additional floods that God would send would not wipe them out. Besides these goals, the best one remained—they would make a name for themselves! They started to build a tower that was to be so high that it would reach up into heaven and could be seen for miles and miles in all directions. They were planning to meet God eye-to-eye and it was to serve as their rallying point to demonstrate their glorious accomplishment. The great evil of the tower builders was their sinful pride against the rule of God.

The Lord saw what they were doing and said, “Look the people are one, and they all have one language. And this is what they are doing. It seems nothing will restrain them from doing what they want. Let Us go down and confuse their language so that they may not understand one another.” That is why the city was called Babel (Babylon, present day Iraq)—because there the LORD stepped in and confused their language, separated them, and scattered them all over the face of the earth.

The result seems to have been three language groups. One for Shem’s people, which gradually settled along the Persian Gulf and throughout Asia Minor and the Arabian Peninsula. One for Japheth’s descendants who settled in what is now northern Asia and Europe. And one for Ham’s descendants who settled in Africa and Southern Asia. In this way the Semites, the bearers of God’s promise, were separated from the others.

CATECHETICAL CONNECTION:

As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

***First
What is Baptism?***

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God’s command and combined with God’s word.

Which is that word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).

***Second
What benefits does Baptism give?***

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

***Third
How can water do such great things?***

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God’s word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three:

“He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying” (Titus 3:5–8).

Fourth

What does such baptizing with water indicate?

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Rom. 6:4).

Luther. (2017). [Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation](#) (p. 23-24). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

Reading for the Next Bible Class 12 May 2021:

- ➔ Genesis Chapters 12-22
- ➔ The Close of the Commandments from the Small Catechism

²⁰because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ²¹Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. *1 Peter 3:20–21*

“Water, Blood, and Spirit Crying”

LSB 597



1 Wa - ter, blood, and Spir - it cry - ing, By their wit - ness
 2 In a wa - t'ry grave are bur - ied All our sins that
 3 Dark the way, yet Christ pre - cedes us, Past the scowl of
 4 Though a - round us death is seeth - ing, God, His two - edged
 5 Spir - it, wa - ter, blood en - treat - ing, Work - ing faith and



tes - ti - fy - ing To the One whose death - de - fy - ing
 Je - sus car - ried; Christ, the Ark of Life, has fer - ried
 death He leads us; Spreads a ta - ble where He feeds us
 sword un - sheath - ing, By His Spir - it life is breath - ing
 its com - plet - ing In the One whose death - de - feat - ing



Life has come, with life for all.
 Us a - cross death's rag - ing flood.
 With His bod - y and His blood.
 Through the liv - ing, ac - tive Word.
 Life has come, with life for all.

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Martin Luther’s “Flood Prayer” for the Rite of Holy Baptism:

Almighty and eternal God, according to Your strict judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all. You drowned hard-hearted Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, yet led Your people Israel through the water on dry ground, foreshadowing this washing of Your Holy Baptism. Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood and a lavish washing away of sin.

We pray that You would behold [*these, your baptized children,*] according to Your boundless mercy and bless [*them*] with true faith by the Holy Spirit, that through this saving flood all sin in [*them*], which has been inherited from Adam and which [*they themselves have*] committed since, would be drowned and die. Grant that [*they*] be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, being separated from the multitude of unbelievers and serving Your name at all times with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope, so that, with all believers in Your promise, [*they*] would be declared worthy of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Acknowledgments

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