

## BRIDE OF THE APOCALYPSE

### A Devotional Meditation on Noah (Noah; Rest)

Genesis 6:9-11:32; Isaiah 54:1-55:5; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 22:29-30;  
Matthew 5:13, 24:37-39; Romans 1:18-31; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Hebrews 8:8-12

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If there is such a thing as a “fashion anointing,” our youngest daughter has it. She understands how clothes and accessories go together to help people look and feel their best. That’s why it was no surprise when she became a bridal consultant. Her fashion sense helped many brides – including her sister – find the perfect dress for their wedding day.

On hearing of our daughter’s work in the bridal industry, my first thought was that she would have job security until the end of the world. That was a joke, inspired by something Yeshua said:



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For just as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For in those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark.

Matthew 24:37-38 TLV

My apocalyptic joke isn’t very funny if we continue reading:

And they did not understand until the flood came and swept them all away. So shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Matthew 24:39 TLV

That’s a dismal assessment of human civilization before the first global judgment by a grieving Creator. It’s even more dismal when we read what Moses wrote about it:

Now the earth was ruined before God, and the earth was filled with violence. God saw the earth, and behold it was ruined because all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh is coming before Me, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Behold, I am about to bring ruin upon them along with the land.”

Genesis 6:11-13 TLV

Why? What was it about that antediluvian civilization that simultaneously rendered them violently corrupt, and clueless about their perilous position in the Creator’s eyes?

If, as Solomon reminds us, there is nothing new under the sun, then the human motivations, thought processes, activities, and interactions I have observed in my lifetime must be repetitions of patterns established since before the days of Noah. Isn’t that why

our Messiah referred us to Noah's story as an indicator of the signs of the times? If we understand something of how the entire population of the earth came under simultaneous cataclysmic judgment 5,000 years ago, then maybe we can discern ways to avoid the same fate in our generation – or at least stave off destruction just a little longer in hope that more hearts may find redemption.

Connecting hearts to redemption is the key. Yeshua had that in mind when He poured out His blood to seal the Creator's new covenant with humanity. I didn't understand that for a long time. Although I had become a disciple of Messiah Yeshua when I was a child, it wasn't until decades later that I became curious about the meaning of "New Covenant Christian."

The surprising answer appears in Jeremiah 31:31-34, and in Hebrews 8, which quotes Jeremiah. The first surprise comes in God's words that He makes this New Covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, the two parts of God's Covenant Nation of Israel. If the Messiah of Israel is the One Who initiates this covenant with His life's blood, and if I put my trust in Him to bring me into that covenant, then somehow my identity is thereafter tied to Israel. That, at least, is what I understand from the testimony of the prophets and apostles.

Yet that's not the end of the surprises in the New Covenant. It's not only about our identity; it's about the core of our personhood – the center of our understanding, will, and emotions. When the New Covenant has come in all its fullness, we will have experienced a complete transformation, as the Covenant Maker says:

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says *ADONAI*. I will put My *Torah* [Law] into their mind, and upon their hearts I will write it. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And no more will they teach, each one his fellow citizen and each one his brother, saying, 'Know *ADONAI*,' because all will know Me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and their sins I will remember no more."

Hebrews 8:10-12 TLV

The surprise is that part about the heart change, and what it entails. I knew about the need for salvation in Jesus, but I didn't realize that the salvation my Messiah brought me was the first step in a journey toward eternity. The proof of my progress along that journey is how my thoughts, will, and emotions, and the actions they generate, begin to coincide with our Creator's standards of rightness as explained in His Word. I cannot say when that journey ends, but it seems when I no longer need anyone to exhort me to know the LORD, and explain how to do that better, then the destination must be near. By that standard, I still have a long, long way to go.

I have no intention of giving up or going off on a different path, even if the different path seems easier. Every trial, difficulty, and hard choice along this journey chisels away a little more of my corrupt heart, and replaces it with more of the pliable, living heart my Creator is making new in me through Messiah's redeeming gift.

That's the path I have chosen, but there is an alternative. We all get new hearts, one way or another. Either it's the renewed heart that beats with the rhythm of the Creator's

heart and instinctively imparts intimate knowledge of Him, or it's the reprobate heart our Creator allows to grow inside those who walk away from Him.

It's easy to look at hardened criminals, prostitutes, atheistic tyrants, and lawless degenerates and judge them for rejecting our God and His ways. We know they are reprobate, or so we suppose. In truth, we can't see what's happening in their hearts, so it might be better to let intercessory prayer displace our automatic sense of judgment. That way we are better positioned to see where we, in our self-righteous piety, might be even more reprobate than those who have never heard anyone explain why they should know the LORD. It may be that no one has explained it to them because those who could have never bothered to enter their world and learn their language. We are so busy keeping up the appearance of our own purity, and hiding our own indiscretions, that we fail to see how far we are drifting from the Creator's heart.

I wonder if that's what happened in the centuries before Noah's ark set sail. Noah's ancestor Enoch carried the message of "Know the LORD!" to the people of his time, and it's reasonable to suppose that others followed Enoch's example. Perhaps a faithful remnant preached repentance and prayed for mercy while Noah was building the ark. Yet, like a medicine that loses its effectiveness with successive doses, the message of repentance and salvation eventually lost its flavor to the masses. Perhaps that's because the messengers had lost their way. Instead of helping others know the LORD as they knew Him, their pursuit of the necessities of this life eroded their own knowledge of the LORD. Each generation had less motivation to ask why it was important to know Him, and eventually no one seemed to care about taking the message to the reprobate masses. Eventually, the messengers lost their flavor and ceased being the salt that preserved the earth from cataclysmic judgment.

If that is what happened, then no wonder the earth became ruined. When the message of repentance finds no receptive hearts, and the Creator cannot find anyone to stand in the gap, then He has no choice but to bring a curse on the land. That's what happens when His people, like the unredeemed masses, take more interest in marrying and giving in marriage than in the Bridegroom Who will carry them through the Apocalypse.