



Week one of Mountains of Ararat 'the blessing of the long wait'

- **Welcome** (5-10 minutes)

Birthdays ... Christmas ... are these times of delicious anticipation or would you rather 'get to the good bit' right now! Who are the impatient members of the group and who enjoys watching events gradually unfold?

- **Worship** (10-15 minutes)



pray

¹ I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all
generations.
² I will declare that your love stands firm forever,
that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself.
³ You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant,"⁴ "I will establish your line
forever and make your throne firm through all generations." "
⁵ The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD,
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.
⁶ For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD?
Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings?
⁷ In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared;
he is more awesome than all who surround him.
⁸ O LORD God Almighty, who is like you?
You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you.⁹
You rule over the surging sea;
when its waves mount up, you still them.
Psalm 89 (NIV)

- **Word** (50 minutes)
- **Watch the film clip from *Evan Almighty*.** (Scenes 16 – end of 18 / 1h08 – 1h 20)

When watching, did you feel anxious for Evan or did you agree with the crowd that he's a fool? Talk about situations when things haven't worked out in the way you expected even though you did everything 'right'.

Read the passage:

Genesis 8 (KJV)

¹And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged;

²The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;

³And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.

⁴And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.



⁵And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

Genesis 9

¹And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth...

²And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

³Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

The time on the Ark was a time of loss as well as a time of sanctuary. The known world was swept away by the power and intensity of the water. The whole earth was cleansing itself, with rain from cloud, deluge from above the cloud and the water even pouring out from within the earth. Such was the need of cleansing that the water had covered the mountains. Added together, the time spent on the Ark is over a year.



- Talk about times of cleansing or hiatus in your own lives. (Illness, sabbatical or 'fallow' times at work or in your personal life). What has God shown you through these times of being 'held back from initiating progress?'

As we look at the beginning of Chapter 8, we see 'God remembered'. He has been grieving over the depth of the fall of creation into sin and evil behaviour. The time of turning away to grieve is done and his thoughts are turned toward the people aboard the Ark and the beasts with them.

- God's action begins long before Noah can truly see the benefits of the action. Why do you suppose the period of waiting was so long for Noah?

1.

2.

3.

- How do you feel towards the phrase 'God remembered Noah'.

Hopeful relieved anxious delighted frustrated excited
annoyed confused surprised thankful ambivalent
focussed

How do you explain your response?

- God's sending of the wind reminds us of his awesome & creative power over creation. Look up 4 different passages where the coming of wind shows that God is at work. Note them down and then talk about them: their specific purposes and what they show us about God.

1

2

3

4

The Ark looks lost on the mighty and vast flood-ocean without landscape to offer hope or orientation.

- Talk about times when you have experienced that sense of being alone and lost. (either physically, emotionally or spiritually) When did the sense of 'being remembered catch up with you ... what difference did it make to being where you were?

In Chapter 9, we see a new phase of relationship between God and people. There is a new 'covenant' between us. We see bounty after a curtailment of bounty and blessing after a time of obedience and waiting.

- What is the significance for people that they were to spend around a year in such close confines with the rest of creation?

1.

2.

3.

God blesses Noah and Noah's sons. The blessing is for fruitfulness and abundance in a manner similar to that of Eden. Wilkinson points out a crucial difference:



The result of his remembering is that he gives a new start. God renews his blessings (9:1-7) but what is significant here is that it is a command given to sinful men and women. The blessing is given in the midst of the reality of a sinful world. He gives the gift of responsibility again to men and women, whom he knows are sinful, have let him down and will let him down again ... Here is recognition of the reality of fallen human beings and yet, at the same time, God gives responsibility and hope. God is about remembering, delivering and blessing his people in the midst of a sinful world. (p.176)

- How have the relationships people have with God changed since the 'flood'? Today, where are the signs of hope that God will save and deliver his people?

pray

That the use of power over each other and creation may be done with God's blessing and our personal deliverance at the forefront of our mind.

- **Witness** (20 – 25 minutes)

Where are the areas of society that you have long been praying for or waiting to see move towards God?

The film, *Evan Almighty* talks of Acts of Random Kindness. Devise a list of simple ways your group could effectively show God's love to an area of local society. (Something small, random, quick and with no need for explanation). Decide on and do it by next week!!

pray

Time for refreshments, you've earned them!



Bibliography

Wilkinson, David; *The Message of Creation*; BST; IVP; 2002
Walton, John H; *The NIV Bible Commentary -Genesis*; Zondervan; Grand Rapids; 2001