

the  Venues
Go Deep
Adult Bible Stories: Noah's Ark
1.27.19

What do you remember learning about Noah's Ark? Which parts of the story stuck out to you as a child?

Read Genesis 6:5-8, 6:11-13 & 7:23

How have you been taught to understand this story? If you have kids, how have you told this story to them? Did you censor it?

Some people think you if you don't believe this story is historically accurate, then you can't believe the rest of the Bible is true and our faith falls apart. *Do you agree or disagree? Why?*

Whenever we read a story in the Bible, perhaps the question should not be, "Why did God do this?" but rather, "Why did ancient people find this important to write down? What did this mean to them?"

Biblical Scholar Pete Enns suggests 3 Ways to Understand the Flood Story:

1. The story is rooted in history.

There is evidence of flooding in Mesopotamia around 3000 BC.

Does it have to be a global flood for the story to be true? How would you understand the world if the only part of the world you know of is the Ozarks? What would you think if that world flooded?

2. The story is rooted in older stories of surrounding ancient cultures in Mesopotamia.

They follow similarities. Gods destroy all life, save a few people and animals with a boat, ark stops on a mountain, sacrifices are made, and birds are released.

In these stories, the gods get annoyed at humans for making too much noise, so they kill all living things. Have you ever been angry at noise that kept you awake? Snoring? Neighbors?

There's no promise, relationship, or covenant claiming the goodness of the world.

How is the Biblical flood story different than the others? What were the Israelites saying about their God?

Read Genesis 9:12-17 (There is no word for rainbow in Hebrew, the word is 'bow')

Read Isaiah 2:4 *What does God do with his weapon in the Flood story?*

3. The story tells us how the Israelites understood God and that event.

Did they see God as angry and annoyed, or something different?

How do you see God? How did you grow up seeing God? Has your understanding of God changed?

Read Read Genesis 9:21-22, Hosea 6:6, Matthew 5:43-44, Isaiah 54:9-10

In what ways did writers of the Bible change their understanding of God?

Read Galatians 5:14

Is Paul saying that the purpose of these stories is to point us to loving God and neighbor? Is it possible that if we read these stories and they do NOT point us to love, then we've missed something?

At the end of the story, God declares all plants, trees, animals, and people are good and he promises to never destroy them again.

How should this inform the way we treat we treat creation, the environment, and one another?

Prayer: God, may the focus of my heart be to love You and love others. Help me see every single plant, animal, person, and myself the way you see them - as being GOOD. Amen.