

'NOAH. JUDGEMENT, MERCY AND NEW BEGINNINGS' # 5

Continuing our journey through the early chapters of Genesis discussing the cornerstones on which our faith is based, we now consider judgement, mercy and new beginnings. All rotate around judgement. As you work through these notes, it might be useful to keep in mind last week's notes and discussion around forgiveness.

Read Genesis 6:9-14 & 7:1-5

Have you given some thought to how exceptional a character Noah was? Of all that God had created, only he 'found favour in the eyes of the Lord' (v 6;8) when all around, 'every inclination of the thoughts of (their) heart was only evil all the time' (v 6:5). God's judgement; destruction of all living (but evil) things. God's mercy; given to Noah and family (found to be righteous) plus a representative couple from every living creature. God's new beginnings, following the flood, for those God had mercy on (8:15-17).

The Bible makes clear all will be judged (read Matthew 25: 31-46 & 2 Corinthians 5:10). Discuss why many find this uncomfortable.

We don't know for certain all the criteria God bases judgement upon, but for such an important subject, what have your investigations revealed?

The objective of divine judgement is not punitive, but of restoration and hope. Discuss.

The character of God is perfectly just and righteous, lovingly to all his creation, and he offers mercy through Jesus Christ. His judgements are fair and impartial (Psalm 9:7-8), reflecting his commitment to justice. His mercy is to show compassion (Psalm 103 :8-13), always hoping humanity will seek restoration of relationship with him, and the way is open through Jesus (Romans 8:1). God the Father has appointed Jesus as judge of all (John 5:21-23).

Of the many accounts of God's mercy found in the Bible, which do you find most helpful in reflecting this characteristic?

Read 1 Peter 3:13-22 (If you have time, it is helpful to read verses 3-22)

Peter is conveying to his readers that, once they have understood and believed in all that God has done to make it possible to restore the relationship, they need a new beginning. Jesus will continue to hold us accountable for our actions, but will give us his Spirit to power and guide our actions towards a holy life and salvation.

How many times can we 'make a new beginning?'

If you have been privileged to help someone make a new beginning, in what ways did you / can you help them to continue along the right path?

Years ago, as a young-in-faith Christian, I was attending a course 'how to share your faith'. In what became an important milestone on my faith journey, I was changed by being challenged to answer the following question. Let me similarly challenge you:-

Can you name anything, anything at all, more important or of more lasting value you could give to your loved ones than the good news of Jesus Christ?

So, what's holding you back?