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His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.

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In last month's "His Word is Truth" article I began a 6 part series entitled: "Connections: Christ and the Old Testament!" In that article I wrote about the connection between Creation and the Cross (see 2nd Corinthians 4:6 and 5:17-21). Today's article is about "The flood of death and Life".

Genesis chapters 4 and 5 show us that hundreds of years after Adam and Eve rejected God in the Garden there existed a human civilization localized in one place on earth. Genesis 6:1-8 tells us that the "Sons of God" (men who believed in the Lord) married "daughters of men" (women who were unbelievers) and the result was that their children became "Nephilim" (which means "those who fall") -- men who were great in the eyes of the world but were proud unbelievers before God.

By the time of Noah the only believers on earth were Noah and his wife, their 3 sons and their 3 wives – 8 believers in all. The world was so filled with evil that God planned to destroy all life on earth with a flood. However, God gave the people 120 years to repent (the time it took Noah and his family to build the ark – see Genesis 6:3, 9-22). But they did not repent, and so God sent the flood of death. Only Noah and his family – and the animals on the ark with them – were saved (see Genesis 7:1-8:22).

However, God knew that after the flood the world would continue to be filled with sin because ever since Adam rejected God in the garden the human heart is filled with evil from the time of conception (see Genesis 8:21 and Psalm 51:5). Therefore, after the "flood of death" God kept His promise to save sinners through the "Flood of Life" – that is, the salvation of Jesus that is given to us in the waters of Holy Baptism (see Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:38-39, Galatians 3:26-29, Ephesians 5:25-27, Colossians 2:9-12)!

Jesus accomplished our salvation by living a perfect life for us, by suffering on the cross in our place of damnation, and by conquering death for us when He rose from the grave. The salvation Jesus accomplished for us is given to us in various ways. God gives us this salvation when His Word of repentance and forgiveness is proclaimed in Jesus' name. God also gives us this salvation when people are baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In I Peter 3:18-22 we are told that God used the waters of the flood to kill unbelievers but save Noah's family in the ark. Peter then explains that God now uses the waters of Holy Baptism to save us and give us new life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ! In Romans 6:1-4 Paul teaches that God uses the water of Baptism to put to death our sinful nature and give us new life in Christ.

In Baptism we are "born again" through water and the Spirit (see John 3:3-5 and Titus 3:5). Holy Baptism is both a "flood of death" (death to our sinful nature!) and a blessed "Flood of Life" as we receive Christ and all that He has done to give us new life as God's children – now and for eternity! We still have a sinful nature after Baptism (see Romans 7:14-25, Galatians 5:16-18, I John 1:8-10), but the Holy Spirit we received in Baptism moves us to say "No!" to the desires of our sinful nature and trust in Christ for mercy and the strength to live according to His will (see Galatians 2:20-21 & 5:22-24, Titus 2:11-14). As we struggle with sin God points us to our Baptism where He washed away our guilt and clothed us with the righteousness of Christ (see Acts 22:16, Galatians 3:26-29, Ephesians 5:25-27, Titus 3:5).

The devil wants us to reject Christ and His gifts of salvation that we receive in Holy Baptism. But God wants us to rejoice in the miracle of Baptism and remember what Baptism means for our lives as Christians. In his Small Catechism Martin Luther teaches that God's gift of Holy Baptism is to be an ongoing reality in the life of the Christian. Based on Romans 6:1-4, Martin Luther writes the following about the meaning of Holy Baptism in the life of the believer: "What does such baptizing with water mean for us? It means that the Old Adam (sinful nature) in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new person should daily come forth and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever!"

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Please read the next "His Word is Truth" on Monday, October 17th! Pastor Eckstein will continue the Connections: Christ and the Old Testament series with the topic: "The Seed of Abraham!" For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's web page: www.concordiajt.org If you have questions or comments, email Pastor Eckstein at: mailto:jesusisyahweh@csicable.net

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