

FAITH COMMENT ARTICLE

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FLOOD WARNING

Recent heavy rain has meant floods and disruption to travel in various parts of the country. Some locally, though not as severe as in some other places. Floods always make me think of Noah and the story of the flood and the ark. Famous for his boat building, zoo keeping and weather forecasting, Noah is also a figure who challenges us to think about our relationship with God and what we believe about natural disasters.

Noah, described as a man who “walked with God”, was picked out as the person God chose to save in order not completely to destroy a reportedly wicked humanity.

Noah was given warning of the flood, but even with modern weather forecasting there have been floods with little or no warning. It prompts questions about God allowing such disasters and about God initiating them in judgement. For floods and natural disasters to be God’s acts of judgement, they would need to be more specific. Having very general effect does not sit with a God of Justice. Neither are they general enough. The story of Noah is very clear that this was an act of judgement because it affected everyone who was not ‘walking with God’; something that applies to all of us at some stage.

Floods and other natural disasters can be seen as a warning. They are a warning about the power of the natural created order. They are also a warning about the fragility of creation – including human life. Floods and other extreme weather, such as we see with apparently increasing frequency, extend this warning to the ways in which human actions affect the fragile balance of creation.

David Muskett