Contemporary Comments on the Adult Sabbath School Lesson

[Title] Worship In Genesis: Two Classes of Worshipers
[Use] July 2, 2011

“Two Towns, Same Flooded River, Different Fates.” The NPR headline somberly shares the huge challenges faced in western North Dakota. The Souris River has hit Velva and Burlington especially hard. Residents have put up “herculean efforts to stop the floodwaters. One town has succeeded in that fight while the other has not.”

The town of Velva built a levee with a lot of blood, sweat, and tears. Many worked 20 hours a day for several days. At one point there was a possible break and people jumped in and dumped more rocks, plastic, and sandbags to stop the water. It worked. The mayor, Ken Fox, said when the crest came through and the levee held he knew his town would be all right. “And then it was just a great feeling. I can't describe it.”

Another mayor, about 75 miles upstream, also had some words to share as he surveyed his town from a boat. “I don't know, it's just hard to describe. Nobody would believe this if they couldn't come and see it.” What did he see? His town was devastated by flood waters. A boat sits on top of one house. Many manufactured homes floated off their foundations. The fire chief said water was 20 feet deep in some areas.

People in Burlington worked for five straight days. Each day they were told the crest would be higher, so they piled the levee higher. Finally, they had to call it quits. Six hours later the levee broke and the town flooded. Sewers are ruined. Drinking water systems are shot. The historic flood left its mark.

In this week’s Sabbath school lesson we read of two brothers who came to worship God, but they ended up in two very different places. Both brought offerings. They were blood brothers with the same parents. But something went wrong. God accepted one offering, but not the other.

Unlike the two towns in North Dakota who both sought valiantly to save their towns, Cain went about his work in a different way than Abel. Both were given the same instructions on worship. Abel obeyed. Cain did not. His offering was rejected and he became so furious he killed his brother. Worship can be an intense issue. Brothers can worship God beside each other, but their hearts can be miles apart.

It's like a tale of two towns in North Dakota. A flood of sin came into the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Nothing could stop the evil from destroying their home. No levee could be built to hold back the tide, unless there would be outside help. God stepped in and filled the gap. The Lord stopped sin and offered a way out. That's what worship is all about.

The Burlington mayor called for outside help from the Army Corps, but they didn't bring it in time. God did. Worship acknowledges that you can't do it alone.

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