

Finding Favor

Noah #1 • November 15, 2026

Series Introduction

It's been a while since we worked our way through a section of Scripture!

The Bible is always our foundation, but this fall we've spent more time in **"topical" discussions** *(where you share an issue and THEN bring in Scriptures from various places to illustrate and explain that issue)* versus **"expository" discussions** *(where we move through a text, trying to understand it and THEN draw out an application to different issues from what is discussed in that passage)*. Both are good ways to understand Scripture, but I prefer the latter over the former.

Today, we return to that "expository" model by heading to a well-known…but less-than-traditional for the holidays… section of the Bible. We're going back to the beginning, to the "Book of Beginnings." We're looking at **Genesis**. Specifically, we're going to **Genesis 6-10**, which tells the story of…**Noah**.

Noah has been more on my mind this year than ever before.

The Ark Encounter



It all started back in April when I went to visit a couple of friends back in Kentucky. As part of our adventure together, we headed up to Williamstown, KY – just south of Cincinnati – and toured the **Ark Encounter.**

➔ **Has anyone ever been there?**

The Ark Encounter features a full-size Noah's Ark, built according to the dimensions given in the Bible. Genesis 6 states that the biblical ark was 300 cubits[1] long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. This converts to approximately 510 feet long, 85 feet wide, and 51 feet

[1] Cubit = length from elbow to fingertip

high. That's huge in the Bible, and it's huge in real life! **This modern engineering marvel in Kentucky is the largest freestanding timber structure in the world.**



Inside are three decks of world-class exhibits, illustrating what life aboard the ark may have been like, discussing flood geology and the subsequent ice age, and so much more! [2]

Jay, Nathan, and I toured the exhibit. It was extremely well-done. Impressive. The attention to detail was top-notch, and it certainly provided a lot of food for thought.

On its own, that encounter was enough to put Noah on the brain…

The Noah's Ark Research Project

…but then later this summer, news reports started surfacing, putting Noah on the news home page instead of the pages of Scripture!



Archaeologists in Turkey have been exploring a boat-shaped formation in the mountains of Ararat south of Turkey's capital city. The site had garnered some attention since at least 1959 based on its size and shape, which just so happen to match the Biblical dimensions for the ark.

Now, this year, a university-backed project is using deep-core drilling, ground-penetrating radar and laboratory analysis to examine the

[2] About the Life-Size Noah's Ark | Ark Encounter

formation, including newly recovered wood fragments. What previous geologists assumed was just a rock formation is proving to be more than that! Rather than rock, they are finding material that is more consistent with organic material (like lumber!), and they are finding evidence of organized patterns buried in the layout (like chambers and corridors).[3]



While not yet conclusive, news from this exploration continues to be released and examined and pondered and discussed. Whether or not it is the *actual* site, as a Christian I am excited that it could be!

Having something from the pages of Scripture tangibly in front of us? That has always been an exciting idea! Finding an as-yet-undiscovered relic would provide yet *more* evidence that history corresponds with our sacred text. *The real world* would be shown (again!) to match what is written in the Bible!

For those two reasons (Kentucky and Turkey), I was drawn to this section of Genesis as our sermon series text.



Sermon Series Introduction

But there is more to the story of Noah than just a boat…more than just a fun idea of a floating zoo.

The story of Noah is a story more importantly about "**the coming salvation**. It is a story that that reveals God's character and heart,

[3] Noah's Ark site yields first look at charred wood fragments recovered deep below soil

showing how He approached to a desperate situation. While Noah's boat *might* still exist on a hill in Turkey, Noah's God *definitely* still exists today…and He has that same character and heart at work in our world, with us. We would be wise to understand more about Him and the salvation He brings!

Noah isn't a traditional Christmas story, but the idea of a "coming salvation" resonates with the upcoming Advent season. The ark provides extra insight for the manger and our celebration of Jesus' arrival in this world. It might not sound "Christmas-y," but Noah's ark is a great starting point to tell the story of Jesus!

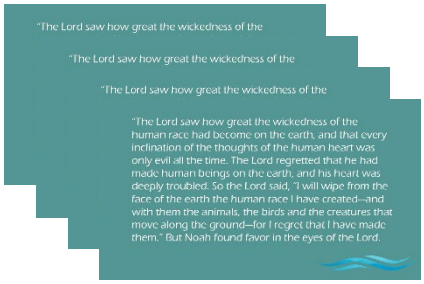
Will you pray with me as we begin?

[PRAYER]

Genesis 6:5-22

The Bible is….? (God's Word!)
And God's Word is…? (The truth!)

So, let's begin by reading today's passage from God's Word. If you have your Bible in hand (in print or on your phone), please turn to Genesis 6, starting in verse 5. I'll be reading from the New International Version today.



"The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the Lord said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." ***But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.***

This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

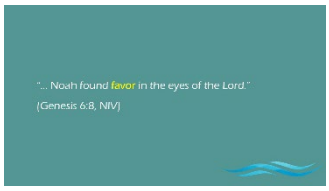
Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.

So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks.

I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

Noah did everything just as God commanded him."
(Genesis 6:5–22, NIV)

That passage tells the central story of Noah, and it is full of important details that we could explore. But maybe the most important line is found in verse 8.



> *"... Noah found **favor** in the eyes of the Lord."*
> (Genesis 6:8, NIV)

Such a simple statement, but in its simplicity, it carries so much weight!

"Favor." The underlying Hebrew word describes "*an action from a superior to an inferior who has no real claim for gracious treatment.*"[4]

In a perilous situation of impending destruction, Noah was powerless. He had no expectation of gracious treatment or "favor" from God…but boy did he ever need it!

Church, we are no different.

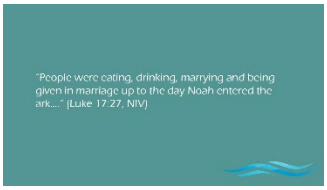
We desperately need God's favor!



Favor Despite Wickedness

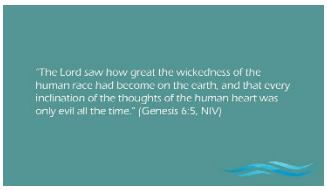
We need God to show us favor despite our wickedness!

What was the world like in Noah's day? In many ways, it wasn't that different than ours. From some perspectives, everything seemed just fine…quite normal. Jesus tells us that…



> *"People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark…."* (Luke 17:27, NIV)

It was life as normal. Yet behind that veneer of normalcy and joy? We find evil.



> *"The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time."* (Genesis 6:5, NIV)

It sounds like hyperbole – like exaggeration. *"Every inclination." "All the time."* Yet God sees what we cannot. He sees in the dark corners of the world. He sees the private spaces. He sees the thoughts and the cravings that pass through our minds. The people of Noah's world had embraced ***evil***! Verses earlier in chapter 6 speak of **relational** sin. Verses 11 and 13 speak of **violence** and **corruption**. Sin was rampant. It was pervasive. It was offensive…to others, but especially to a holy God!

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[4] Yamauchi, E. (1999). 694 חָמָס. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 302). Moody Press.

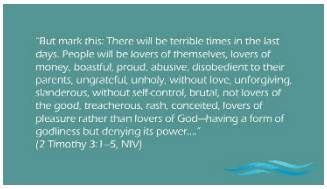


That was the situation then, more than 6000 years ago. But surely we're much better now, right?

- We don't have many **wars** or **military conflicts** in 2026… right?
- We don't have many **murders**, **rapes**, **assaults** in 2026… right?
- We don't celebrate violence in our **movies**, our **video games**, or our **television** shows in 2026…right?
- The world in 2026 is full of **kinder** words and more **loving** encounters and **decency** and **respect** and **modesty**…right?

Wrong. We are drowning in wickedness and evil just like the days of Noah. We join in! We revel in it! If Noah's time was *worse* than this, I can't imagine how bad it must have been. Aren't you confident we've caught up or surpassed it at this point?!

OUR wickedness today is bad. And it is expected, not shocking. The New Testament clearly states that evil has always been projected to increase. And it wasn't just talked about militant Islam, or neo-Nazis, or drug cartels, or the opposing political party. Listen to this. (Are you included?)



> *"But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power…."*
> (2 Timothy 3:1–5, NIV)

Our world can't pretend it is innocent. YOU AND I can't pretend either. All of us must confess participating in such sins.

In His holiness, God sees this rampant wickedness like we would see an infestation of rats, black mold, and cockroaches in the kitchen of our favorite restaurant: unacceptable, and repulsive. There can be zero argument for anything other than a complete teardown; nothing **deserves** to be spared!

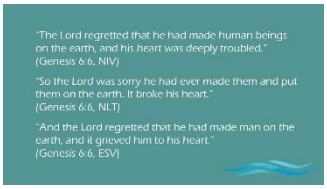
In the midst of condemned evil, you and I recognize that **we desperately need God's favor… *despite* our wickedness!** We deserve punishment, but we hope for grace. We don't deserve it, but we need it.



Favor Despite Grief

We need favor despite our wickedness.
We also need favor despite God's grief.

As God observes this evil, it creates some complicated emotions within Him. Look at Genesis 6:6 (sampling a few different translations):



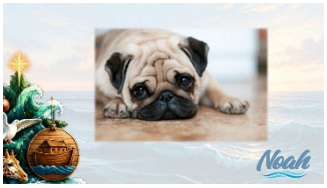
> *"The Lord **regretted** that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was **deeply troubled**."* (Genesis 6:6, NIV)
>
> *"So the Lord **was sorry** he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It **broke his heart**."* (Genesis 6:6, NLT)
>
> *"And the Lord **regretted** that he had made man on the earth, and it **grieved him** to his heart."* (Genesis 6:6, ESV)

Have you ever *really* considered God's emotions? He is not an emotionless, dispassionate God! No, Scripture shows Him bursting with joy and pleasure; it describes Him delving into sadness and grief. His emotions are far-ranging… but the emotions of grief and sadness are on full display in Genesis 6.

➔ **Does the way it is described make you feel weird?** Does it seem odd to talk about God having "regret"?

I hope so. You and I know God as perfect and all-knowing. How could he do something wrong?! How could He feel bad about what He did?

It's an important question! But when we ask that question, we often make one big mistake. We impose *our* emotional experience on *His*.



But…His emotions are not the same as ours!

> *What do I mean? Well, a dog experiences joy and sadness, right? You can see those in its demeanor…and its tail.*

*But a dog obviously doesn't have the depth of understanding to know how **similar** human emotions are demonstrated by humans…in a Shakespearean play, or in a family argument, or in a broken friendship. It doesn't process the subtleties of relational dynamics, or nuanced speech, or broken promises.*

The dog just sits there and hopes we serve it dinner!

*A dog could never understand us. Surely the difference **between God and us** is even more vast than the difference **between us and a dog**!!!*

We are not the same. Since our emotions aren't quite like His, we must be careful when we read passages like Genesis 6:6 and hear words like…

God "regrets." God "is sorry."

You and I have personal experience with "regret" and "sorrow." We make choices and decisions that are wrong, and then we feel bad about them. We have "*regerts*."[5] We are "sorry."



Think about when you eat too much at Thanksgiving. You add all your favorite items to your plate, eat them until you are stuffed… and then maybe get seconds.

But when you turn on the TV to watch the Detroit Lions lose, you feel miserable!!! You "regret" the sin of gluttony and are "sorry" for your life choices!

We regret our *mistakes*. But God, in His "regret," isn't looking at the world of Noah's day and saying, "*I made a mistake*." His emotion is more a matter of **heartache at *our* choices, not His**. He feels deep empathy and anguish as He see the full extent of our errors.



I would compare it to giving your car keys to your 16-year-old child. You know as you hand the keys over that bad things are about to happen. Your car will come back scratched, dinged, or damaged. There may be a ticket. There will definitely be tears. You "regret" when your predictions become reality.

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[5] Reference to a bad tattoo – "No Regerts" (sp)

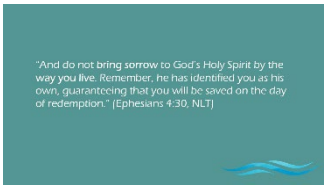
But you **choose it anyway**, because the value of having a child who can drive is worth the present pain! They must learn to be a better, experienced driver… learning to navigate (literally) through challenges and mistakes… even if those mistakes are hard to watch and cause future pain.

(Fun fact: God probably regrets allowing *us* to drive, too!)

But His "regret" is not based on mistake. It is based on His will.

God chose a path for humans that involved **free will** – the possibility that WE would choose freely to follow Him, rather than being programmed like a robot to blindly obey instructions. Free will is a prerequisite to real relationship and real love…and God deemed it worth the pain of watching us rebel.

God "regrets" that **we are choosing** to live in opposition to Him, like what we see described in Ephesians 4:30.



> *"And do not **bring sorrow** to God's Holy Spirit by the way **you** live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption."* (Ephesians 4:30, NLT)

God "grieves" when **we go the wrong way** – when we run away from the only source of "favor" we have.

We can grieve God; we can break His heart. And when that happens…

We need God to show us favor despite his grief!



Favor Despite Determination

And that's why it's so encouraging to see **God's favor being given not only despite His grief but also despite His *determination***!

Based on the sins of the world, God chose the "reset" button. He made a plan to "blot out" the wicked humans, plus all animals.

A global flood would wash away the evildoers forever. God **determines** (with no wavering) that they **will be** swept away. The plan is set. It is firm.

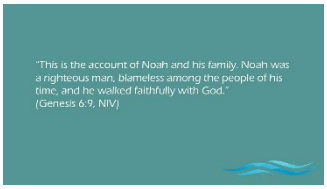
God decides…yet He shows favor.

Wicked mankind is doomed; all birds, animals, and creepy crawlies are finished…

…EXCEPT…

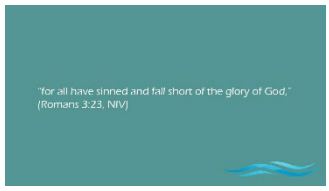
…the man we find in Genesis 6. Noah is offered God's favor!

He is a good guy, relative to his peers.



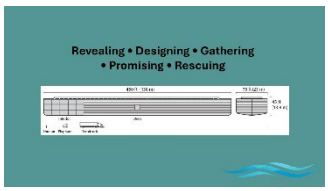
> *"This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God."* (Genesis 6:9, NIV)

He is righteous, but not perfect. Following, but still flawed. How do we know?

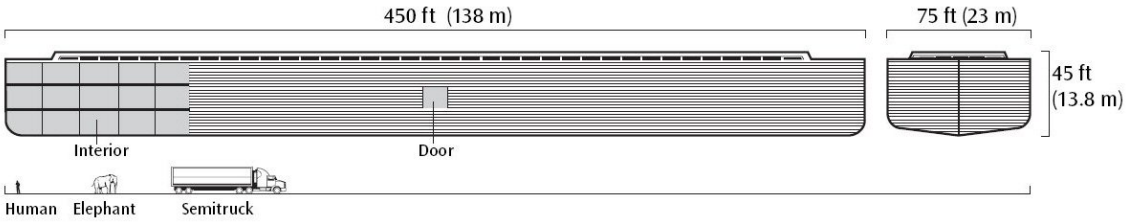


> *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"* (Romans 3:23, NIV)

Yet to this man, God shows His favor. He shows His favor by:



- **Revealing** an otherwise unknowable plan (Rain!)
- **Designing** an otherwise unfathomable blueprint (Ark!)
- **Gathering** an otherwise impossible collection of critters (2x2!)
- **Promising** an otherwise unimaginable relationship (covenant)
- **Rescuing** an otherwise un-alived family (Wife, sons, daughters-in-law)



God rightly determines to judge the evil of the world…but He is willing to bestow His favor and prepare Noah and the animals for a coming salvation! He decides, yet he shows favor!

From the Ark to Advent

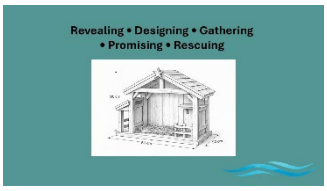
God's competing interests (the tension between deserved judgment and undeserved mercy) find a creative solution in Noah's story with the building of the Ark.

Those same competing interests that are shown in Noah's story are later shown in greater clarity when it comes to Jesus!

We too need favor despite God's determination.

- A sinful Steve opposes God and earns His righteous judgment!
- A sinful Steve find no hope…UNLESS God shows his favor.

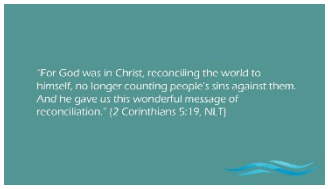
This time, though, God's solution isn't a boat; it's a baby.



The boat held cargo and animals; the baby bore the sins of the world.

And to us, God showed favor. God shows His favor by:

- **Revealing** an otherwise unknowable plan (the incarnation!)
- **Designing** an otherwise unfathomable blueprint (the cross!)
- **Gathering** an otherwise impossible collection of critters (people from all nations!)
- **Promising** an otherwise unimaginable relationship (new covenant!)
- **Rescuing** an otherwise un-alived family (resurrection!)



"For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19, NLT)



We desperately need God's favor!

Noah's story is the perfect one to remind us how amazing God's favor is.

Despite our wickedness that offends Him… despite His grief at our choices… despite His determination to judge our failings…

He still shows us grace. Mercy. Favor.

Take time this holiday season to fully understand God's favor! Stop and recognize that God has extended something amazing.

We desperately need God's favor!

And He offers it!

Prayer

Let's pray together!



Invitation

Do you have God's favor?

If so, celebrate it! (Praise Him for it)

If not, claim it! (Not of your own accord…but because it is offered through Jesus)

Sermon Notes

Favor Despite Wickedness

(Luke 17:27; Genesis 6:5; 2 Timothy 3:1-5)

Favor Despite Grief

(Genesis 6:6; Ephesians 4:30)

Favor Despite Determination

(Genesis 6:9; Romans 3:23; 2 Corinthians 5:19)

Sermon Discussion Questions

- What do you remember about the story of Noah? Tell it on your own without reading it, then compare with the Biblical text in Genesis 6-10.
- What was the world like in Noah's day? (See Luke 17:27; Genesis 6:5)
- How does it compare to our world? Give specific examples.
- Why does such violence and corruption go against God's character?
- How does God feel about such evil? (See Genesis 6:6)
- What is the difference between "regret" over your own choices versus the choices of someone else?
- Despite God's plans for mankind, he offers favor to Noah. In what ways does God show favor to him?
- Compare the favor extended to Noah with the favor extended to you and I through Jesus Christ? How are they similar? How are they different?
- In what ways do you celebrate God's favor that He has given to you?