



First Baptist Church Selmer

FIRM FOUNDATION • NOAH AND THE FLOOD • GENESIS 6:5-13, 17-22; 8:15-22 •
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MAIN POINT

Habitual sin brings inevitable judgment, but God offers mercy and hope to those who walk with Him.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Have you ever served on jury duty? What do you think the most difficult part of serving on jury duty is?

What are some kinds of cases that might be particularly difficult? In what ways does a jury's decision affect the lives of others?

Serving on a jury is no easy task. The decision that a jury makes will drastically affect the life of the accused, the victim, and the families of both parties. We do not want to send the innocent to jail, and we also want to see justice for the victim of the crime. Careful judgment also takes a great deal of time, sometimes months! It is no wonder that so many people try to avoid jury duty!

In the days of Noah, God pronounced judgment on the entire earth. The earth's inhabitants had turned away from God and had become so evil, that God decided to destroy the whole population. Noah and his family were the only exceptions. Today we will explore why God made such a seemingly harsh judgment upon the earth.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 6:5-7.

5 "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 7 So the Lord said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.'" (ESV)

Why might things have been worse in Noah's day than they are in our day?

What advantages in grace do we have that they did not have?

Why do you think the Bible says here that God was "grieved" over mankind's wickedness and not that He was "angry"?

People are no less evil than they were in the days of Noah. If we watch the news at all, we will see that people are capable of any wickedness one can imagine. The difference between Noah's day and ours isn't that people are better, but that grace has abounded. Since the days of Noah, God has gifted us with the Scripture. After Noah, God gave to Moses His law, and God gave to Israel the prophets. Eventually, God sent us Jesus, and through Jesus, we have the gospel. The church is now present in this world, and the Holy Spirit works through the church to bring hope to all mankind. Noah's generation did not have these gracious advantages, and so there was little to restrain the wickedness of mankind.

The heart of mankind is depraved, and apart from the grace of God, we are "by nature under wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). God is just to judge us for our sins, and so when He chose to judge the world, He did no wrong because that is what our wickedness deserves.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 6:8-13, 17-22.

8 "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on earth. 13 And God said to Noah, 'I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.'" (ESV)

17 "For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. 21 Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them. 22 Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him." (ESV)

Why did Noah find favor in the eyes of God?

Why do you think that God shared His plan to destroy the earth with Noah?

What kinds of things has God shared with the church regarding judgment and salvation?

Grace is a mystery. The word translated as "favor" in Gen. 6:8, is often translated as "grace." This favor, or grace, that Noah "found" in the eyes of God cannot be something that Noah merited himself. As the Apostle Paul writes, "Now if by grace, then it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace" (Romans 11:6). Noah was a sinner, just like Paul, and just like us. Noah needed salvation, and for reasons known only to God, God chose to extend His covenant, and steadfast love to Noah and His family and to rescue them from judgment. While Noah responded to God's grace, the extension of salvation came from the Lord.

God shared His plan with Noah because Noah had found God's favor. In Genesis 18:17, before the destruction of Sodom, the Lord asks, "Should I hide what I am about to do from Abraham?... For I have chosen him so that he will command his children and his house after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just." God warns His people of judgment to come, and He shares with them the beauty of grace to come as well.

| HAVE TWO VOLUNTEERS READ GENESIS 8:15-22.

15 "Then God said to Noah, 16 'Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh - birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth - that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.' 18 So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his

sons' wives with him. 19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

20 Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, 'I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. 22 While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.'" (ESV)

What was the nature of God's covenant with Noah? How valuable would the sacrifices of Noah have been after the flood?

What are the graces that we can see in this covenant with Noah and his descendants?

God promised to refrain from destroying the earth by flood again. The Lord said He would spare the world from a flood *"even though man's inclination is evil from his youth"* (8:21). This is an amazing grace from the Lord as He promises no matter how wicked people become He will not wipe them out as He did before. For thousands of years now, God has withheld such judgment upon the earth because of His covenant with Noah.

God's choice to be gracious to Noah meant many benefits for mankind. We would be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. We can count on the seasons being consistent. We can rest assured of God's patience toward us even when we are wicked. Ultimately, God's grace towards Noah meant that Jesus would be able to come and save us from our sins. Not only do we not have to worry about the world being destroyed by flood, but we also have the happy hope that someday the world will be remade without sin because of Christ!

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How important is it for us to understand the consequences of sin against God?

How does understanding judgment help us be bold in sharing the gospel with others?

How might understanding sin and judgment give us a better understanding of God's grace toward us?

PRAYER

In a time of group prayer, thank the Father for sparing us from judgment through Christ. Pray that we would live lives of gratitude for sending us Jesus instead of sending us destruction. Ask that we would be bold to share the gospel so that others might be spared from the judgment still to come.

COMMENTARY

| GENESIS 6:5-22

6:5-8. These verses are an exposé on the degeneracy of the human heart. Collectively, society has decayed beyond recovery in God's estimation. The progression in this small cluster of verses is arresting: "The Lord saw.... The Lord grieved.... The Lord said." He himself brings sanctions against all humanity, including the most vulnerable (animals). The threat of extinction is not only inclusive of all living things, but also is geographically all-encompassing.

6:9-10. In a world of increasing sin, God found a person named Noah whose commitment to Him stood out. Noah was righteous, a description given to no other person up to this point in the Bible. Noah and his wife had three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The list of Noah's sons provides a link between the end of the list of Seth's descendants (Gen. 5:32) and the Table of Nations (10:1). After the flood, humanity had another opportunity to begin again through Noah's sons. Before the flood ever arrived, God in His mercy had determined to provide this opportunity.

6:11-13. God's world had become the complete opposite of what He created and intended. God intended the earth to be filled with people and animals (Gen. 1:24,28). Instead, corruption and violence filled the earth. God told Noah of His plans to destroy the earth and its inhabitants. God also explained to Noah why the earth was about to face destruction. Sin had corrupted the world, perverting humanity and causing nature to suffer. The world no longer existed as God intended, so God would destroy the earth and its inhabitants and undo His creation. Since humanity insisted on corrupting itself through disobedience to Him, God would make the corruption complete by destroying the earth and its living creatures.

6:14-16. God had decided to destroy the world due to its sin. He instructed Noah to construct an ark, indicating He intended to deliver Noah and provide a new beginning for the world. Unlike most ships through the ages, the ark had no curved bow or rudder. God did not intend Noah to sail the vessel. He intended the boat only to be a container in which Noah, his family, and animals could survive the flood.

6:17-22. God stated His intention to use a flood to destroy the earth, which provided the rationale for Noah's building the ark. The flood constituted a unique event in world history. Waters would flood the earth, destroying all human and animal life, but only this one time (see Gen. 8:21). The flood in Noah's time constituted a horrible judgment that will never be repeated. God told Noah that he and his family would escape the destruction of the flood. God determined to preserve Noah and his family as a remnant through which He would repopulate the earth. Although Noah was a righteous individual, he had sinned and would continue to sin (see Gen. 9:20-21). God's salvation of Noah and his family demonstrated His grace.

God not only planned to save Noah and his family, He also promised to establish His covenant with Noah. The word (as well as the concept) "covenant" occurs here for the first time in the Bible. "Covenant" refers to a binding agreement linking two parties together. In God's covenant with Noah, God constituted the stronger party; but He imposed obligations only on Himself. Noah already lived in a close, personal relationship with God, and their relationship formed the basis of the covenant. Through establishing His covenant with Noah, God pledged to maintain the relationship.

To preserve each species and repopulate the earth after the flood, God instructed Noah to take on the ark a male and female of each bird and each land animal. God also commanded Noah to gather the necessary food to sustain himself, his family, and the animals while on the ark (Gen. 6:19-21).

| GENESIS 8:15-22

8:15-17 The third divine speech instructs Noah to disembark from the ark. It parallels the command to enter the ark (7:1), except the configuration of the family is cited specifically here. These eight are the new humanity, and the future of the blessing remains with them. Those who entered the ark successfully rode out the storms and were delivered intact by the mercies of God. For the long year of rising and receding waters, Noah received no word from the Lord. He had waited and waited yet did not anxiously exit until given the

heavenly word to disembark. As the second creation, God instructs Noah to bring out the animals so that they might “multiply,” “be fruitful,” and “increase” on the earth.

8:18–19 These may be taken by the Western reader as tedious repetition, but the report style of Hebrew narrative shows Noah’s obedience, a feature repeatedly ascribed to him throughout the flood account. In contrast to his generation, Noah as a “righteous man” believed God and obeyed his command both in entering the ark (7:1) and in departing.

8:20 Noah’s first act following his departure from the ark was to worship God by giving a burnt offering. Since every kind of clean animal and bird—that is, one of every mammal that chewed the cud and possessed split hoofs, as well as one representative of every kind of bird that did not eat carrion—was offered, it must have been an impressive sacrifice.

8:21 Using anthropomorphic language—words that describe God’s actions in human terms—the text notes that the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma. The phrase means that God accepted Noah’s sacrifice. Elsewhere in the Torah, God’s refusal to smell a sacrifice meant he rejected the offering (Lv 26:31). Acceptable offerings in other parts of the Bible are said to have a pleasing aroma (Ex 29:25; Lv 1:9; 2:2; 3:16; Nm 18:17). Following Noah’s sacrifice the Lord made a solemn promise never again to curse the ground as he had done following Adam’s sin (Gn 3:17; 5:29). Almost with a sense of resignation, God noted that the inclination of the human heart was evil from youth onward (Ps 14:1; Rm 3:9,23). The flood did not significantly change the human heart (cp. Gn 6:5). Yet in spite of humanity’s sinful nature, God’s grace and love would prevail: He would never again destroy all life as he had done in Noah’s day.

8:22 The terrifying chaos of the flood would give way to the predictable, comforting rhythms of life—the harvest, the seasons, day and night—for as long as the earth endures.