

Sunday, November 7, 2021 | Noah

Week 1 | Genesis 6 | "From Creation to Catastrophe."

Announcements:

- If you didn't get an opportunity to pack a shoebox for Operation Christmas Child this morning during our bible fellowship hour, please do so after the service.
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Today, we'll be starting a new series that revolves around the story of Noah. Surgeon general's warning, this story may hurt. But, if you stick with it, a little pain might do you some good. What's more, while the flood story has been a staple in children's church, this is NOT a kid's story. It's a cautionary tale *about* adults *in* adult situations *for* adults.

READ: Genesis 6 (ESV)

¹When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, ²the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. ³Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not abide in^[a] man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." ⁴The Nephilim^[b] were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

⁵The 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. ⁶And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷So 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."⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

⁹These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make

an end of all flesh,^[c] for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopher wood.^[d] Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits,^[e] its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶ Make a roof^[f] for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. 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.

There are **three** things I want you to notice about this passage:

i. Man multiplied sinfulness rather than goodness on the earth.

In Gen. 2, humanity was commanded to multiply and fill the earth. By Gen. 6, they had done that. However, as our population increased, so too did humanity's sinfulness.

READ: Genesis 6:5 (ESV)

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.

Interestingly, there are a couple other flood narratives outside of Scripture that has survived to this day. This shouldn't surprise us. The earth being covered by water was such a monumental event in our history that it would surprise us if there weren't other accounts. However, while there are similarities between the biblical and non-biblical flood stories, they also differ wildly.

Let me give you three such examples:

First, the Noah-like figures outside the Scriptures are heroic and courageous kings and princes. And, like all good rulers in mythology, after they've made some grand speech, they're deified for their actions. Whereas the real Noah is a commoner known for one thing: obedience. Interestingly, he only speaks after the flood is over. And even then,

what Noah says and why he says it reminds us of his fallen nature rather than preserving his moral impeccability (cf. Gen. 9:20-27).

Second, the non-biblical flood narratives are stories of capricious and clumsy deities as flawed as any mortal. Many times throughout those tales, these so-called “gods” are surprised by what’s occurred. In fact, according to one account, some demi-god meant only to flood a small region and ended up flooding the entire earth! The flood account we just read is a story about how an all-powerful God sought to uphold justice. His power is absolute. Though He is saddened, as we’ll talk about in a moment, God is never surprised. And while He would’ve had every right to wipe out humanity entirely, we find that God mercifully saved a man and his family, effectively preserving all life. From beginning to end, Yahweh is never not in control.

Lastly, and most importantly, in what is referred to as the Sumerian flood narrative, the gods and demi-gods are upset with humanity for two reasons: they're too loud, and they're too many. The flood was a means by which these moody gods could finally get some peace and curb population growth. The biblical account of the flood is a history about how we—human beings—had so thoroughly messed up creation that God had to unmake what He had made. While there is mention of population growth, that wasn't the cause of the flood. It was man's sinfulness being multiplied on the earth and not because humanity had multiplied such that they filled the world.

The first three stories in Genesis have a common thread interwoven throughout: we are flawed individuals who would've destroyed ourselves many times over if it wasn't for God. From the fall of humanity in Gen 3 to the flood in Gen. 6, to the tower of babel in Gen. 11, God would step in time and time again to limit our propensity toward evil.

READ: Romans 3:9-12, 23 (NKJV)

⁹ What then? Are we better *than they*? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. ¹⁰ As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. ¹² They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.”

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

The flood was the result of man’s sinfulness and nothing more. Sin has consequences. And, for better or worse, all of creation is tied to humanity's actions (cf. Rom. 8:21). There is no denying this fact. If not for God stepping in, humanity would’ve destroyed itself, along with the rest of

creation, long ago. So God unmade what he made while also saving a remnant of the old in order to preserve life.

ii. God's gladness was turned into sadness in His heart.

READ: Genesis 6:6-7 (ESV)

⁶And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷So 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."

In Gen. 1, after He had finished with creation, God looked at all He had made and said that it was "very good." By Gen. 6, God's feelings when he beheld his creation had turned from joy into grief.

In fact, strictly speaking, when God said that his creation was "good," it was more of a declaration that was complete rather than an expression of pride or joy. Thus, what we have here in Gen. 6:6 is the first explicit mention of God feeling something. And, significantly, the first recorded emotion is not anger, frustration, but "grief." Apparently, omniscience does not excuse one from feeling feelings. The God who created joyfulness and sadness experiences those same emotions.

Unlike some cold and detached deity from mythology, He—who knows all things from beginning to end—has always been emotionally invested in the day-to-day affairs of humanity. And, sad to say, we have grieved the heart of God far more than we've made it glad.

READ: Psalm 8:3-4 (ESV)

³When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

We often speak of God's "care" and "love" for us. Yet, with the same passion with which God loves us, he loathes the sin in our life. As one commentator put it when reflecting on God's grief and regret here in Gen. 6 put it, "[God] felt the bitter rage of someone whose closest friend has been terribly wronged. This is the anger of someone who loves deeply."¹

iii. It was Noah's righteousness that set him apart from others' unrighteousness.

¹ Wenham, Gordon J., *Genesis 1-15*, The Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 1, General Editors, David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Baker, (Grand Rapids; Thomas Nelson, 1987), p. 147.

We know only **three** things about Noah.

READ: Genesis 6:9 (ESV)

These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a **righteous** man, **blameless** in his generation. Noah **walked with God**.

a. He is a “righteous” man.

The Hebrew term for "righteousness" means that Noah not only had a right-standing before God—i.e., pious/devout—the word also designates someone who has a right-standing in the community—i.e., respected/esteemed.² Noah was a man who was right in the eyes of his God, in the eyes of his family, and in the eyes of his neighborhood.

b. He is a “blameless” man.

The Hebrew term for “blameless” is rarely used to describe an individual. It is most often used in the realm of temple sacrifices when references an animal that is “whole”—i.e., worthy of sacrifice.³ In fact, in all of the canon of Scripture, only two other people are described as "blameless": Job and Abraham. It seems with each passing adjective, Noah finds himself in the company of some of the most heroic figures in all the bible.

c. He “walked with God.”

This phrase is used of only one other person, and that person was Enoch. Interestingly, Enoch was also Noah's great-grandfather and, because of Enoch's character and because he walked so closely with God, the Lord spared Enoch from having to die. It is hard to express how truly unique this is. Other than Enoch, Elijah is the only living being to have avoided death because of his relationship with God. So, for us to be told that Noah "walked with God" is to be said that Noah was a man above reproach in almost every way.

Now, while Noah is unique in both his generation and in the Scriptures, we too, because of Jesus, can walk with God just as Noah walked.

READ: Romans 6:1-4 (ESV)

² Goldingay, John, *Genesis*, The Baker Commentary on the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids; Baker Academic, 2020), p. 139.

³ Wenham (1987), p. 170.

¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

So, what's the takeaway?

Though surrounded by the floodwaters of death, God's grace still saves.

As I said at the beginning, this is not a story for children. It is terrifying. It's the stuff of nightmares. Yet, even such a bleak story as this, the ark is proof of God's grace. Though Humanity deserved utter annihilation, God chose to save us from extinction by saving Noah.

READ: Romans 5:18-21 (ESV)

¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In Adam, all have sinned. In Christ, all have been saved. Just as God led Noah to build a wooden ark, God led his Son, Jesus, to a wooden cross. And just as Noah's family was saved by coming into the ark, we too can be saved by coming to the cross. Through one man's righteousness (Noah), the human race was rescued from being eradicated off the face of the earth. Likewise, through one man's righteousness (Jesus), the human race can be saved from eternal damnation in hell.

Today, the world stands just as condemned as the world in Noah's day. It is just as violent. It is just as sinful. And while, thankfully, God will never again flood the world, there is still a final judgment day coming. And the only way to avoid condemnation is to do as Noah did. But, instead of running into an ark for salvation, we ought to run to the cross.

Video Description

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TEXT: Genesis 6

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Pastor's manuscript can be found here: