

The Book of Genesis, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 6: Noah and the Flood

Genesis 6:9–7:24

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This passage presents one of the central acts of God in the Old Testament, and the New Testament treats it as both history and pattern. Doctrinally, the flood teaches the reality and severity of God's judgment on persistent sin, the genuineness of saving faith that expresses itself in obedience (Hebrews 11:7), and the grace of God in providing a means of salvation in the midst of judgment. Peter draws a direct line from the ark to salvation and to baptism (1 Peter 3:20–21), and both Peter and Jesus point to the flood as a warning of judgment still to come (2 Peter 3; Matthew 24:37–39).

Affirm the historicity of the flood plainly and confidently. The New Testament writers, and Jesus Himself, treat Noah and the flood as real events, not myth, and they build serious doctrine on that foundation. Peter even warns that scoffers will deliberately overlook the flood (2 Peter 3:5–6). Without being drawn into every scientific debate, teach the flood as the real judgment of God that Scripture says it was, displaying both His justice and His grace.

Formationally, Noah is a model of faith that obeys, faith that stands alone when necessary, faith that keeps going through long and costly obedience, and faith that takes refuge in God's provision. Aim to stir students to that kind of faith, to take God's judgment seriously, to live differently from a corrupt culture, and to find their safety inside the refuge God provides, which the New Testament shows us is ultimately Christ.

Question 1

Student Question:

Genesis 6:9 calls Noah "a righteous man, blameless in his generation," who "walked with God," and Hebrews 11:7 says he acted "by faith." What does this teach us about the relationship between genuine faith and a righteous, obedient life?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Genesis 6:9 gives a threefold description of Noah: he was righteous, he was blameless in his generation, and he walked with God. These are not three unrelated traits but one integrated life. Noah's righteousness was not sinless perfection but a life rightly oriented toward God and consistently lived before Him.

Hebrews 11:7 supplies the engine underneath: "By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark." His righteousness flowed from faith.

He believed God's word about a coming judgment he could not yet see, and that belief moved him to act. Faith and obedience are not opposites here; the faith is real precisely because it obeys.

This is an important pattern for the whole Bible. Genuine, saving faith is never mere intellectual agreement; it is trust that acts. James says faith without works is dead (James 2:17), and Noah is a living illustration: a man whose trust in God showed up in years of obedient labor.

Help students avoid two errors. One separates faith from obedience, as though believing rightly were enough while life goes unchanged. The other reduces righteousness to rule-keeping with no living trust underneath. Noah holds them together: a faith that trusts God's word and therefore does what God says.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Genuine faith expressing itself in righteous, obedient living (Hebrews 11:7; James 2:17).
- Righteousness as a life rightly oriented toward God, not sinless perfection.
- Faith as trust that acts, not mere intellectual agreement.
- Walking with God as the daily context of a faithful life.

Discussion Prompts

- How does Hebrews 11:7 show the connection between Noah's faith and his obedience?
- Why is a faith that never acts not really biblical faith?
- What does it look like for your faith to 'build an ark' in some area of obedience?

Question 2

Student Question:

Noah remained faithful when virtually everyone around him had abandoned God. Where are you being called to be different from the culture around you, and how do you handle the pressure to simply blend in?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Noah's faithfulness is all the more striking because of his isolation. He was, as far as the text indicates, the lone godly man in a thoroughly corrupt world. There was no supportive community, no cultural reinforcement, only his family and his God against the tide.

Help students feel the pressure Noah faced and the pressure they face. Few of us will be the only believer in the world, but many believers feel like the only one in their workplace, their school, their family, or their friend group. The pull to blend in, to soften our convictions, to avoid standing out, is powerful.

Encourage students to name the specific arenas where they feel that pull, and the specific compromises it invites. The temptation is rarely to renounce God outright; it is to quietly go along, to laugh at what we should not, to stay silent when we should speak, to live indistinguishably from those around us.

Point them to resources for standing firm: the company of other believers (which Noah largely lacked but we are given in the church), the conviction that God sees and rewards faithfulness, and the long view that the scoffing crowd is not the final judge. Noah's neighbors laughed, until it rained.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Faithfulness under the pressure to conform to a godless culture.
- Standing apart without supportive cultural reinforcement.
- The subtle compromises of blending in, not just outright denial.
- The encouragement of Christian community and the long view of God's reward.

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you feel the strongest pull to simply blend in?
- What small compromises does that pressure tempt you toward?
- What helps you stand firm when standing out is costly?

Question 3

Student Question:

The flood is presented as a real, historical act of God's judgment on a world filled with violence and corruption (6:11–13). What does this account teach us about God's justice and His response to persistent, unrepented sin?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The flood is, at its heart, an act of judgment. The text is clear about why: "the earth was filled with violence," and "all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth" (6:11–12). God's judgment is not arbitrary or capricious; it is His holy response to persistent, pervasive, unrepented evil.

Help students take the severity seriously. This is the most sweeping judgment in the Bible before the final day. It tells us that God is not endlessly indifferent to evil. There comes a point at which His patience, real and long (He waited while the ark was built, 1 Peter 3:20), gives way to judgment.

Guard against two distortions. One imagines a God too 'nice' ever to judge, which is not the God of the Bible. The other imagines a God eager to destroy, which is also false; His judgment here comes only after long corruption and is paired with the offer of refuge. The God of the flood is both perfectly just and genuinely patient.

This judgment also points forward. Peter uses the flood to warn that a final judgment is coming, by fire rather than water (2 Peter 3:6–7). The flood is history, and it is also a sober preview: God will one day judge the world in righteousness.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The flood as God's just response to pervasive, unrepented sin (Genesis 6:11–13).
- The reality and severity of divine judgment.
- God's patience preceding judgment (1 Peter 3:20).
- The flood as a preview of the final judgment to come (2 Peter 3:6–7).

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the text emphasize violence and corruption before the flood?
- How does the flood correct a view of God as too 'nice' to judge?
- How does Peter use the flood to warn about a coming judgment?

Question 4

Student Question:

Do you take the reality of God's judgment of sin seriously, or has it become a distant abstraction for you? How would truly believing that God judges sin change the way you live and the way you view the lost?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses whether God's judgment is real to us or merely a doctrine on a page. In a comfortable age, the judgment of God can feel abstract, something we affirm but do not feel. The flood is meant to make it concrete.

Help students see how believing in judgment changes life. If God truly judges sin, then sin is serious, holiness matters, and the eternal destiny of the people around us is not a small thing. A vivid sense of judgment fuels both personal holiness and compassion for the lost.

Be careful to keep this balanced and Christ-centered. The point is not to live in fear, for those in Christ have a refuge, but to take reality seriously. Noah's reverent fear (Hebrews 11:7) was not panic; it was a sober reckoning with God's word that moved him to act and, in saving his household, to care for others.

Invite a concrete response: Does belief in judgment shape how a student speaks to a lost friend, how seriously they treat their own sin, how urgently they share the hope they have? Doctrine that never touches life is not yet truly believed.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Taking the reality of God's judgment seriously rather than abstractly.
- Judgment as motivation for personal holiness and compassion for the lost.
- Reverent fear that moves to action, not paralyzing fear.
- The security of those who have taken refuge in God's provision.

Discussion Prompts

- Is God's judgment a living reality to you, or a distant idea?
- How would truly believing in judgment change how you treat your own sin?
- How might it change your concern for those who do not know Christ?

Question 5

Student Question:

God did not only announce judgment; He provided the ark as the means of salvation, with a single door, for all who would enter (6:14–16; 7:1). What does God's provision of the ark reveal about His grace in the very midst of judgment?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Alongside the judgment stands the grace: God provides an ark. He does not merely announce doom; He makes a way of escape, designed in detail, with room for Noah's family and the animals, and with a single door. The same chapter that pronounces judgment provides salvation.

This is the consistent pattern of God's dealings. Even in wrath He remembers mercy (Habakkuk 3:2). The flood account is not only about a world destroyed but about a people saved, and the text keeps our eyes on the ark riding above the waters.

Draw attention to the single door. There was one way into safety, and it was open to all who would enter. This becomes a picture of salvation: God provides the refuge, and entering it is the way of life. Jesus would later call Himself the door (John 10:9) and the only way to the Father (John 14:6).

Help students marvel that the same waters meant death for those outside and were the very means of lifting the ark to safety for those inside. God's salvation does not deny His judgment; it carries His people safely through it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's grace in providing a means of salvation in the midst of judgment.
- The single door of the ark as a picture of God's appointed way of salvation.
- Christ as the door and the only way (John 10:9; 14:6).
- Salvation as being carried safely through judgment, not around it.

Discussion Prompts

- What does the ark reveal about God's heart even in judgment?
- Why is the single door significant as a picture of salvation?
- How does God's salvation carry His people through judgment rather than around it?

Question 6

Student Question:

Building the ark required years of costly, public, seemingly foolish obedience before any rain fell. Where is God calling you to obey Him in a way that is slow, costly, or looks foolish to others, and how can you keep going?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question applies Noah's obedience to the student's life. Noah's obedience was long (likely many years), costly (enormous labor and resources), public (visible to scoffing neighbors), and counterintuitive (a giant boat with no flood in sight). It is one of Scripture's clearest pictures of obedience that does not yet make sense.

Help students see that much real obedience looks like this. God often calls us to do right long before we see the result: to keep a marriage vow, to raise children faithfully, to give generously, to persevere in a hard ministry, to maintain integrity that costs us. The 'rain' may not come for years.

Address the temptation to quit. When obedience is slow and unrewarded and others mock it, the pull to abandon it is strong. Encourage students to fix their eyes, as Noah did, on the trustworthiness of the One who gave the command, not on the visible results or the opinions of the crowd.

Invite one specific commitment: a place where God has clearly called them to obey, where the obedience is hard or slow or looks foolish, and where they will keep building the ark anyway.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Obedience that is long, costly, public, and counterintuitive.
- Doing right before we see the results.
- Persevering when obedience is mocked or unrewarded.
- Fixing our eyes on the trustworthiness of God rather than visible outcomes.

Discussion Prompts

- Where is God calling you to obey before you can see the result?
- What makes that obedience feel slow, costly, or foolish?
- What will help you keep building when others scoff?

Question 7

Student Question:

After Noah and his family entered, “the Lord shut him in” (7:16). What does it mean that God Himself shut the door, both for the safety of those inside and for the urgency of those still outside?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

“And the Lord shut him in” (7:16) is a small sentence with great depth. On one side, it speaks of security: Noah did not have to hold the door against the rising flood; God Himself sealed them in safety. Salvation, once given, was held secure by God’s own hand.

On the other side, it speaks of finality. When God shut the door, the time of opportunity for those outside came to an end. The door that had stood open through the long years of building was now closed. Grace had been extended and extended; now the moment had passed.

Hold both truths together for the class. For those inside, God’s shutting of the door is comfort: their safety rests on Him, not on their own grip. For those outside, it is a sober warning: the day of opportunity does not last forever.

This guards against presumption. God is patient, but His patience is not infinite indifference. The open door is an invitation to enter now, while it is still open, and not to assume it will always be so.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God’s sovereign protection of those He saves (‘the Lord shut him in’).
- The security of salvation resting in God’s hand.
- The finality of the closed door and the limit of the day of opportunity.
- Guarding against presumption on God’s patience.

Discussion Prompts

- What comfort is there for the saved in God shutting the door?
- What warning is there for those still outside?
- How does this guard us against presuming on God’s patience?

Question 8**Student Question:**

The door of the ark was open for a long time, and then it was shut. Where might you be presuming on time, assuming there will always be a later opportunity to get right with God or to obey Him? What does this passage say to that assumption?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question confronts the quiet assumption that there will always be more time. The door of the ark stood open for a long time, and then it shut. Many of those outside surely assumed they could decide later; later never came.

Help students name where they are presuming on time: a sin they intend to deal with 'eventually,' an obedience they keep postponing, a reconciliation they assume can wait, a relationship with God they plan to get serious about someday. The flood account says: do not presume.

Scripture is consistent here. "Now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Hebrews 3:15). The open door is an invitation to respond now.

Be pastoral. The aim is not to manufacture panic but to puncture the dangerous illusion that obedience and repentance can always be deferred. The kindest thing we can tell someone standing outside an open door is that it will not stand open forever.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The danger of presuming on future time and opportunity.
- The urgency of responding to God now (2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:15).
- The illusion that repentance and obedience can always be deferred.
- Today as the day to respond to God's voice.

Discussion Prompts

- Where are you assuming there will always be a 'later' to get right with God?
- What does the closed door say to the habit of postponing obedience?
- What is one thing you should not put off any longer?

Question 9

Student Question:

The New Testament treats the flood as real history and as a pattern: a display of God's justice on the ungodly and of His salvation of the faithful, even connecting it to baptism (1 Peter 3:20–21; 2 Peter 3:5–7). How does the flood help us understand both God's judgment and His way of salvation?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the doctrinal center, and it requires holding judgment and salvation together as the New Testament does. The flood is, at once, the great display of God's justice on a corrupt world and the great display of His grace in saving a faithful household. Both are essential; lose either and you misread the account.

Establish the historicity first, because everything else rests on it. Peter writes that scoffers will 'deliberately overlook' the fact that the world was once deluged and destroyed (2 Peter 3:5–6), and he treats this as real history with real implications for the coming judgment. Jesus likewise refers to 'the days of Noah' and the flood that 'came and swept them all away' as actual events (Matthew 24:37–39). We stand with Jesus and the apostles: the flood happened.

Then draw out the pattern Peter highlights in 1 Peter 3:20–21. Eight persons were 'brought safely through water,' and Peter says, 'Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you.' The flood is a type, a divinely intended picture, of salvation. As the waters of the flood separated the old corrupt world from the new beginning, so the waters of baptism mark the passage from the old life to new life in Christ. Peter is careful to say baptism saves 'not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' Its power is not in the water but in the risen Christ to whom it joins us.

Teach baptism accurately and from the New Testament, without reading it back anachronistically into Noah's own experience. Noah was not baptized in the Christian sense; the flood is the picture, and the New Testament itself draws the connection. In the gospel, baptism is the immersion of a penitent believer into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3–4; Galatians 3:27), the appointed point at which, by faith, we are united with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and pass into newness of life. The flood account helps us see why God would mark salvation with a passage through water: water that means death to the old world and deliverance into the new.

Finally, let the pattern preach hope. The ark did not keep the storm from coming; it carried Noah's family safely through it. So Christ does not promise His people a life without judgment in the world, but He is the refuge who carries us safely through, into a new creation. The flood ends with a world washed and a family saved, and that is the direction of God's whole story.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The flood as both God's judgment on sin and His salvation of the faithful.
- The historicity of the flood, affirmed by Jesus and the apostles (Matthew 24:37–39; 2 Peter 3:5–6).
- The flood as a divinely intended type of salvation and baptism (1 Peter 3:20–21).
- Baptism rightly understood: immersion of a penitent believer into Christ for forgiveness (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3–4; Galatians 3:27).
- The power of baptism residing in the risen Christ, not in the water itself.
- Not reading New Testament baptism anachronistically into Noah's own experience; the connection is drawn by the New Testament.
- Christ as the ark who carries His people safely through judgment into new creation.

Discussion Prompts

- How does the New Testament treat the flood, as myth or as history, and why does it matter?
- In what sense does Peter say the flood 'corresponds to' baptism?
- How does the ark carrying Noah through the flood picture salvation in Christ?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back over the whole account. Name one specific way God is calling you to a faith like Noah's, a faith that trusts His word, obeys when it is hard, and takes refuge in the salvation He provides.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Use this capstone to call students to a Noah-like faith. The account has shown faith that trusts God's word about things unseen, faith that obeys when obedience is hard and slow, faith that stands alone against a corrupt culture, and faith that takes refuge in the salvation God provides. The question is which of these God is pressing on a particular student now.

Press for the specific. For one it may be trusting God's word at a point of doubt; for another, a long obedience to keep going in; for another, the courage to live differently from the crowd; for another, the urgency of taking refuge in Christ while the door is open.

Close at the ark, which is Christ. The God who provided one door of safety in the flood has provided one Savior, and in Him His people are carried safely through every judgment, including the last. To be formed by this passage is to enter that refuge by faith, to obey the God whose word proves true, and to live as those who have been 'brought safely through' into new life.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- A faith that trusts, obeys, stands apart, and takes refuge.
- Discerning which aspect of Noah's faith God is pressing on us now.
- Christ as the one refuge who carries His people safely through judgment.
- Living as those brought through death into new life.

Discussion Prompts

- Which part of Noah's faith does God seem to be pressing on you?
- What concrete step of trust or obedience is He calling you to?
- How does taking refuge in Christ shape how you face the future?