

The Book of Genesis

Lesson 6: Noah and the Flood -- Genesis 6:9–7:24

Picture one righteous man in a world gone mad. Everywhere Noah looks, the earth is filled with violence and corruption; every neighbor, every passerby, every conversation has turned away from God. And in the middle of that, God comes to one man and tells him to do the strangest thing imaginable: build a boat. A massive boat, longer than a football field, on dry land, far from any sea, because a flood is coming that no one has ever seen or can even imagine. The neighbors must have laughed. Noah builds anyway.

This is what faith looks like with its sleeves rolled up. The Bible says Noah was “a righteous man, blameless in his generation,” and that he “walked with God,” like Enoch before him. And then it says something even more striking, twice: “Noah did all that God commanded him.” Not most of it. Not the convenient parts. All of it. Year after year, plank after plank, while the world watched and scoffed, Noah obeyed a God whose word he trusted even when it made no earthly sense.

Then the day comes. The animals stream in, two by two and seven by seven, and Noah and his family go aboard, and we read a small sentence with enormous weight: “And the Lord shut him in.” God Himself closes the door. The fountains of the deep burst open, the windows of heaven are flung wide, and for forty days and nights the rain falls. The waters rise until the highest mountains are covered, and everything that lived on the dry land perishes. It is the most sweeping act of judgment in the Bible before the last day, and it is utterly real, treated by Jesus and the apostles as actual history.

But notice where the story keeps your eyes. Not mainly on the drowning world outside, but on the floating ark inside which life is preserved. The same waters that bring death to the rebellious bring salvation to the faithful. The flood is a terrifying display of God’s justice, and at the very same moment a beautiful display of His grace. There was a door, and it was open for a long time, and then God shut it. Read this passage soberly. It tells us that God really does judge sin, that He really does save His people, and that the only safe place, then and now, is inside the refuge He Himself provides.

Group Discussion: Twice the text says Noah “did all that God commanded him” (6:22; 7:5), obeying instructions that must have looked strange and that took many years to carry out. What makes that kind of long, costly, countercultural obedience so difficult, and what do you think enabled Noah to do it?

Personal Reflection: Noah lived faithfully as essentially the only godly man in a thoroughly corrupt world. Where in your life are you tempted to go along with the crowd rather than stand alone for God? What would it cost you to live differently, and what might help you do it?

Read Genesis 6:9–7:24

Study Questions

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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?
5. 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?
6. 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?
7. 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?
8. 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?
9. 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?
10. 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.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Hebrews 11:7, Noah’s faith that condemned the world and inherited righteousness; 1 Peter 3:20–21, the ark, the water, and the figure of baptism; 2 Peter 2:5, God

preserving Noah, a herald of righteousness; 2 Peter 3:3-7, scoffers, the flood, and the judgment to come; Matthew 24:37-39, the days of Noah and the coming of the Son of Man.