

The Book of Genesis

Lesson 7: God's Covenant with Noah -- Genesis 8:1–9:29

The rain has stopped. The world is a gray ocean from horizon to horizon, and somewhere on that endless water floats a wooden box full of frightened animals and one faithful family. They have been shut inside for months. And then the chapter opens with four of the most tender words in the Bible: "But God remembered Noah." Not that God had forgotten him, but that now, at the appointed time, God turns His full attention to His people and acts to save them. A wind passes over the waters, just like in the beginning, and the world starts to come back to life.

Watch what Noah does the moment his feet touch dry ground. He does not throw a party or rush to rebuild his life. He builds an altar, and he worships. Out of a rescued world, the first thing that rises is praise. And God responds with a promise so generous it still shapes your daily life: as long as the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will not cease. Every sunrise you have ever seen is a quiet keeping of that promise.

Then God makes a covenant, a solemn, binding promise, not just with Noah but with every living creature and with all the generations to come. He will never again destroy the earth with a flood. And He hangs a sign in the sky to seal it: the rainbow. From now on, when the storm clouds gather and the rain falls, a bow of color arcs across the heavens, and it preaches a sermon without words. God remembers. God keeps His promises. The God of the flood is the God of the covenant.

But the chapter does not end in a rainbow. It ends with a sad and sobering scene: Noah, the hero, the new beginning, the most righteous man of his generation, planting a vineyard, getting drunk, and lying shamefully exposed in his tent. Even the best of men is still a sinner. The flood washed the world, but it did not wash the human heart. And so the story quietly tells us that Noah is not the savior we need; the new world still groans for someone greater. Read this passage and let it lift your eyes: to a God who remembers, who keeps covenant, who values every human life, and who is still, even now, working toward a better covenant and a greater Deliverer.

Group Discussion: When the floodwaters had gone down and Noah stepped onto dry land, the very first thing he did was build an altar and worship (8:20). What does it say about Noah's heart that worship was his first response to deliverance, and what is usually your first response when God brings you through something hard?

Personal Reflection: God set the rainbow in the sky as a sign that He remembers His promises. Where in your life right now do you most need to rest in the faithfulness of God, to believe that He remembers you and will keep His word, even when circumstances feel uncertain?

Read Genesis 8:1–9:29

Study Questions

1. Genesis 8:1 says, “But God remembered Noah.” In Scripture, for God to “remember” means to act on behalf of His people according to His promise. What does this reveal about God’s faithfulness and His care for those who trust Him?
2. Noah and his family waited in the ark for many long months before God brought them out. Where are you in a season of waiting on God right now? How do you keep trusting Him when His timing is slower than you would like?
3. As soon as he was delivered, Noah built an altar and worshiped, and God responded with the promise of 8:21–22, that seedtime and harvest and the seasons would not cease. What does this teach us about worship as our response to God, and about God’s patient preservation of the world?
4. When God blesses you or brings you through a trial, is gratitude and worship your first instinct, or an afterthought? What helps you respond to God’s deliverance with genuine thanksgiving rather than quickly moving on?
5. God makes a covenant with Noah and every living creature, promising never again to destroy the earth by flood, and gives the rainbow as its sign (9:8–17). What is a covenant, and what does this reveal about how God chooses to relate to His creation, by binding promise?
6. God’s promises do not depend on our circumstances or feelings, but on His character. What promise of God do you most need to lean your weight on this week, and how would resting in it change the way you face your situation?
7. In the covenant, God declares the sacredness of human life: “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image” (9:6). Why is human life so valuable in God’s eyes, and what responsibilities does this place on us and on human society?
8. How does the truth that every person is made in God’s image shape the way you actually treat people, including those who are different from you, weaker than you, or opposed to you? Where do you need to grow in honoring the dignity of human life?
9. The chapter ends with Noah, the most righteous man of his age, becoming drunk and shamefully exposed, followed by the curse on Canaan (9:18–27). What does Noah’s fall teach us about every human being’s need for a greater Savior? And how should we understand the curse on Canaan, especially against those who have wrongly twisted it to justify racism?
10. Look back over the whole passage, from God remembering Noah to the rainbow in the sky to Noah’s failure. Name one specific way God is calling you to trust His faithfulness, to worship Him, and to long for the greater Deliverer the passage points toward.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: 1 Peter 3:20–21, the waters of the flood and the baptism that now saves; Isaiah 54:9–10, the waters of Noah and God's steadfast, covenant love; Genesis 9:6 with Acts 17:26, the sacredness of life and one humanity made by God; Romans 1:20, the creation testifying to God; Hebrews 8:6–13, the better covenant established in Christ.