

# Noah & the Flood: The Disaster Hits (Genesis 6:10-8:22)

Expository Lessons from the Book of Genesis

---

## I. Recap from Previous Lesson (Background and Intro)

- a. Story of the Flood of Noah is not a child-friendly story. About sexual immorality, massive death and destruction, and judgment of God.
- b. Many ancient accounts of a great flood; the one by Moses is the accurate one, even confirmed by Jesus.
- c. **Genesis 6:2-4** talks about “sons of God came in to the daughters of men and bore children to them.” They gave birth to a race of giants (several translations refer to this race as “the Nephilim”).
  - i. Two alternate understandings of this:
    1. Understanding of almost all of the early Christians, contemporary Jewish writers and *Book of Enoch* (which is quoted in letter of Jude): ‘sons of God’ = angels, OR
    2. Alternate view that became more popular later on was that ‘sons of God’ = descendants of Seth, while ‘daughters of men’ = descendants of Cain.
- d. Wickedness of mankind on the earth was so bad that God decides to wipe out mankind and animals from the face of the earth.
- e. Noah is described as a ‘righteous’ man, who is pleasing to God; because of that he finds ‘favor/grace’ from the Lord. Two terms that become highly significant in the New Testament are introduced in this story.

## II. Noah Builds the Ark, Prepares for the Flood (Read Genesis 6:10-7:5)

- a. Summary of the story:
  - i. God upset about wickedness of mankind that was filling the earth
  - ii. God decides to wipe out mankind, as well as the animals, and then to ‘start over’ with Noah.
  - iii. Boat construction: LXX says it was to be made from 4-sided (finished) lumber; KJV says made of “gopher wood”. Coated with “pitch” (in LXX, word used = asphalt, also called bitumen; a naturally occurring petroleum product like black tar, used for waterproofing today for example in roofing shingles).

- iv. Ark prepared: 3 stories; 300 cubits x 50 cubits x 30 cubits in height. One cubit = about 1.5 feet; therefore about 450 feet long (= 150 yards, or roughly 140 m x 25 m x 15 m). The capacity of 450 standard semi (truck) trailers.
  - v. Animals brought on board: 7 of every kind of 'clean' animal (male + female), and 2 of 'unclean'. Plus food for all.
  - vi. Noah's family (himself, his 3 sons and all their wives) would be saved. God would establish his covenant with them.
- b. Noah's character (heart) revealed by his action.
- i. Notice that God gives very specific instructions. Noah does everything exactly as he is told.
    1. It says **Genesis 7:5** (also in **Genesis 6:22**) that Noah "did *all* the Lord commanded him".
    2. This section reminds me of something I do in my own work (engineering and construction): writing construction specifications, which a contractor then must follow. Noah here is the builder, with God giving him the specifications. The 'specs' here define for him the:
      - a. Dimensions of the boat (length, width and height);
      - b. Materials of construction (some type of wood);
      - c. Coating (inside and outside with pitch/asphalt, for waterproofing);
      - d. Internal features (3 floors, compartments/rooms); and
      - e. Directions regarding location of the door.
    3. Some of these requirements would have been very challenging to follow, adding months and years of additional effort. I imagine that Noah could not fully appreciate the reasons for some of these requirements (the world had never experienced anything like the flood). If I were in his position I might want to take some short-cuts! I might wonder, for example:
      - a. **Question #1:** Why so big? Couldn't we save years of added work by making it somewhat smaller? (**Answer #1:** Needed to carry all the animals, and the food.)
      - b. **Question #2:** Why those specific dimensions, making it 6x as long as it was wide? Wouldn't something more

circular or squared in shape provide the same volume but use a lot less lumber? (**Answer #2:** It had to be seaworthy, buoyant, stable in the water and not likely to capsize.)

- c. **Question #3:** Why three decks, and internal compartments? (**Possible Answer #3:** Provides structural stability; rooms prevent animals from shifting the load all to one side.)
  - d. Bottom line: God had his own reasons for giving every specific direction. These might pertain to the voyage ahead, or even to things in the distant future. Noah might not have understood the reason for all of God's commands at the time. Yet each specific command was with God's wisdom, for the good of Noah and the human race. Not the easy way, and may have made Noah subject to ridicule in his day. But Noah trusted God and did exactly what God told him. He followed all of God's specifications. Through that, he ended up saving himself, his family, the human race and the world!
- ii. Is God still looking for total obedience to all his commands, now that Jesus has come and we are 'saved by faith (not works) and we are 'under grace'?
1. Jesus uses another flood story to teach his disciples what he is looking for from them, at end of the Sermon on the Mount. After giving very specific instruction on swearing, oaths, lust, permanence of marriage, nonresistance, prayer, money, forgiveness, etc., he closes his lesson with another flood story.
    - a. In **Matthew 7:24-27** Jesus says, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken to a wise man who built his house on the rock; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.
    - b. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."
  2. Most people think of the Great Commission in **Matthew 28:18-20** as "Go... and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing

them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...". But that is just the first part. The second part is just as important: "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you".

3. In **John 15:14** Jesus said, "You are my friends if you do whatever I command you."
4. Jesus tells the religious hypocrites in **Matthew 23:23**, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."
  - a. Jesus realizes that all commandments of God are not of the same weight; some are more important than others. First, we must focus on the most important ones.
  - b. However, also need to follow what could be consider the lesser commands. Jesus calls his followers to obey all of God's commands, the greater *and the lesser ones*.
  - c. In broad terms, the Christian world in America generally can be divided into two groups:
    - i. First Group - Those who believe we must obey the teachings of Jesus in order to be saved; and
    - ii. Second Group - Those who hold that we only need to believe in Jesus; that obedience to Jesus' teachings is good but not required for salvation..
  - d. We need to help those in the second group realize that obeying Jesus is essential for salvation.
  - e. Unfortunately, most Christians within the first group (those who do understand we must obey Jesus) tend to focus on a few select commands. They can elevate certain commands while ignoring or trivializing other, less popular ones.
  - f. Very few groups teach that we need to obey all the kingdom teachings.
    - i. That includes New Testament teachings on: discipleship, conversion, evangelism, sexual purity, homosexuality, confessing our sins to one another, helping those in need and evangelism.

- ii. It *also* includes New Testament teachings on: divorce/remarriage, holiness, separation from the world, materialism, confessing sin, the role of women in church and family, modest dress, head covering, forgiveness, and Christian unity (that all Christians, not just those in our denomination, must be one as Jesus and the Father are one).
- 5. **1 John 2:3-4** says, “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him’ and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”
- 6. **1 John 5:3** says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.”
- 7. The New Testament letters also affirm that we must obey Jesus and his gospel (not just believe) if we are to be saved.
  - a. **Hebrews 5:8-9** tells us that Jesus himself, “learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been perfected He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him...”
  - b. In **2 Thessalonians 1: 8** Paul warns that on the day of judgment, God will take “vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
  - c. Belief in the gospel is not enough. **James 2:19** reminds us that, “*even the demons believe*”. We must obey the gospel and call others to obey it as well.
  - d. Noah was an incredible example of obedience for us. He did *everything* that God told him to do.
- 8. I am also reminded of the words of David Lipscomb, one of the greatest teachers from the Restoration Movement. He lived through the disaster of the American Civil War and saw the horrible impact this had on the church. Lipscomb wrote in his preface to *On Civil Government* (c. 1866):
  - a. “The writer of the following pages was early in life impressed with the idea that God as the Creator, and preserver of the world, was its only rightful law-maker and ruler...it occurred early in (*the writer’s*) mind, that the one sure and sovereign remedy for all these evils (*caused by man’s sin and rebellion*) was the absolute

submission to God on the part of man, and a restoration of his authority and rule in all the domains of the world. In the study of Bible, he saw the one purpose of God, as set forth in that book, was to bring man back under his own rule and government so to re-establish his authority and rule on earth, that God's will 'shall be done on earth as it is in Heaven.'

- b. "To this end, man's duty is to learn the will of God, and to trustingly do that will, leaving results and events with God. It became a fixed principle with him that in religion man must in faith do what God has ordained he should do, what he has declared would be well-pleasing to him; and then leave all in the hands of him who overrules the universe."
- c. Noah held up in the New Testament as an example of saving faith
  - i. (Read **Hebrews 11:7**) "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."
  - ii. **Question:** Was Noah saved by faith, or by works?
    1. **Hebrews 11:7** clearly says he "became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith". So according to the Hebrews writer, his righteousness was through faith. However, it also says "by faith Noah... prepared an ark".
    2. True saving faith, illustrated by Noah, starts with believing God but must be completed by obeying his commands. If Noah believed God was going to send a flood, but did not make the effort to build the ark (whether out of laziness or rebellion), would he have had a saving faith? Would Noah have saved himself and his household? Of course not! The ark was a massive construction project, taking perhaps 100 years for Noah to complete.
    3. James tells us in **James 2:18**, "I will show you my faith by my works". When talking to people from Reformation background, they begin by saying, "We are saved by faith, not by works" . Yes, but how is saving faith defined by Scripture?
    4. Noah is an example for us of what true saving faith is, as defined in **Hebrews 11**. "By faith Noah...warned of things not yet seen...prepared an ark". Saving faith involves BOTH:

- a. Believing what we do not yet see (for Noah - the impending flood; for us - Jesus, the resurrection and final judgment on the Last Day); and
  - b. Obeying God's command (for Noah – to build the ark; for us – to obey all the commands that Jesus has given to us!).
- iii. Noah's inner motivation and heart are also an example for us. **Hebrews 11:7** says Noah was “moved with godly fear”.
1. The writer of **Hebrews** reminds Christians in **chapter 12** that the God whose voice shook the earth at Mount Sinai will shake both heaven and earth in the time to come! Then he concludes,
  2. (Read **Hebrews 12:28-29**) “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.”
  3. The term rendered ‘godly fear’ is the same root word as used to describe Noah's attitude in **Hebrews 11:7** (Greek: **eulabeia/eulabeomai**, Strong's #2124 and 2125).
  4. So *Noah's attitude* toward God (the term conveys: awe, respect reverence, veneration and godly fear that motivates us to obey) is a wonderful model for us to imitate today. This is the heart that led him to obey.
    - a. This is the same attitude the Hebrews writer says *we* are to have.
    - b. Not modern casual attitudes I sometimes hear such as, ‘God just thinks I am awesome’, or ‘God is my co-pilot / good buddy / boyfriend’.

### III. The Flood Comes (Read **Genesis 7:6 – 8:14**)

- a. Summary of events of the flood
  - i. Noah, his three sons and their wives, and animals entered the ark.
  - ii. Suddenly, on one specific day, the great deluge began.
  - iii. The Lord shut Noah in the ark, closing it from the outside.
  - iv. “Fountains of the deep were broken up, and floodgates of heaven were opened”. It rained 40 days and 40 nights.

- v. Everything flooded; all air-breathing animals outside the ark were wiped out.
  - vi. Waters started to recede 5 months after the flood began, and ark came to rest on 'the mountains of Ararat' (Mount Ararat itself is in eastern Turkey, near border of Armenia).
  - vii. After 40 days' wait, Noah opened the window and sent out a raven. Then he sent out a dove (3 times, seven days apart). Second time, the dove returned with an olive leaf; third time it did not return.
  - viii. Earth dried, Noah uncovered the ark and all disembark just over a year after they first entered the ark.
  - ix. This is an interesting story, quite unusual. Why is this significant for Christians today?
- b. Lesson from the flood: foreshadowing of final day of judgment
- i. Jesus uses example of the flood to illustrate how it will be at the end.
    1. In **Luke 17:26-27** Jesus said, "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all."
      - a. Jesus' point: The day of destruction will come suddenly and unexpectedly, and will catch the world by surprise.
      - b. Jesus, the ultimate Teacher (**Matthew 23:10**), talks about the story of Noah and the flood as an unquestioned historic fact. *As noted before, he did not think it was just a fable!*
    2. In **Matthew 24** Jesus speaks about two events: the impending destruction of Jerusalem, as well as his return on the Last Day. He says that when he returns, he will be seen coming in the clouds of heaven with power and glory.
      - a. Jesus adds (read **Matthew 24:36-44**), "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came



and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

- b. "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."
    - i. Jesus' point: Be prepared at all times! His return will come suddenly and will catch people by surprise, just like the flood in Noah's days.
3. One of the hardest things for most Christians to accept is that only a righteous few will be saved on the day of judgment.
    - a. One could easily think, "If I were God, I wouldn't wipe everyone out. So certainly God won't do that either." (The danger of trying to make God in our image as opposed to taking Him at His word!)
    - ii. Peter makes the same point regarding the story of the flood: it is an example of the final judgment to come.
      1. **1 Peter 3:20** "(God waited to bring judgment) in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is eight souls were saved..."
        - a. God is patient, waiting for the right time to bring judgment (when all is prepared), just as in days of Noah.
        - b. Only a few will be saved.
      2. **2 Peter 2:4-9** "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell (*Greek = tartaros*) and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly... (*Peter then mentions the Sodom & Gomorrah example, where Lot was spared*)...then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment..."

- a. In the past, with “the angels who sinned” and in the days of Noah, God brought judgment on an unrighteous but delivered a righteous few.
  - b. He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and will do it again on the day of judgment.
  - c. Noah is described as “a preacher of righteousness”
3. **2 Peter 3:3-7** Peter warns us of what prophets and apostles *said* would happen in the last days (knowing that people were scoffing at the idea of Jesus’ return), and continues,
- a. “...knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”
  - b. Points that Peter makes here:
    - i. Over time, people will come to doubt what Jesus said about his Second Coming and the day of judgment.
    - ii. However, God’s withholding judgment caught the world by surprise in the days of the great flood. It will happen again.
    - iii. This time the judgment will come not by water, but *by fire!*
    - iv. After this, Peter explains that God’s delay is because He is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”. (**2 Peter 3:8-9**)
    - v. That day will catch many by surprise; will come “*as a thief in the night*” (**2 Peter 3:10**)
    - vi. THEREFORE we need to be diligent, to live holy and godly lives as we look forward to “new

heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells". (**2 Peter 3:11-13**)

- iii. The great flood is the first of several (5?) events early in the Old Testament that foreshadow the final day of judgment. Other stories where the vast majority face destruction while God spares a righteous few:
  - 1. Sodom and Gomorrah: only 3 make it out alive. (**Genesis 19, Jude v.7, 2 Peter 2:6-9**).
  - 2. Passover: only the Jews spared, while all Egyptian households face death of firstborn (**Exodus 11-12**).
  - 3. Wilderness journey of **Exodus** and **Numbers**: only Joshua and Caleb survive to enter the Promised Land, of the 600,000+ men (**Exodus 12:37, Numbers 1:1-46**) who began the journey. (**Numbers 14:26-38, 1 Corinthians 10, Hebrews 3-4, Jude v.5**)
  - 4. Jericho: only Rahab's household spared from destruction, when that entire city destroyed. (**Joshua 2 & 6, James 2:25**)
- c. *Only a few will be saved* on the Last Day? Just as in the story the flood and these other Old Testament examples? Is that *REALLY* true? Do we really believe this? What the Holy Spirit taught through examples in the Old Testament, Jesus proclaimed openly and plainly.
  - i. In the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said:
    - 1. (Read **Matthew 7:13-14**) "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."
  - ii. One of the most disturbing teachings ever given by Jesus was when he answered the question, "Is it true that only a few will be saved?"
    - 1. (Read **Luke 13:22-30**). "And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then one said to him, 'Lord, are there few who are saved?'"
    - 2. "And He said to them, 'Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and he will answer say to you,

'I do not know you, where you are from,' then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and You taught in our streets.'

3. "But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last."
4. Points from this teaching of Jesus:
  - a. Some who heard Jesus' strong messages may have wondered if only a few would be saved. One person was bold enough to ask the question directly.
  - b. The questioner may have wondered if *he personally* would be saved in the end. In any case, Jesus' response addresses that as well.
  - c. Jesus calls him (and us) to "*strive* to enter through the narrow gate". There will come a time when it is too late, when many will be no longer able to enter.
  - d. Since the Master of the house *will suddenly close the door* at some point, strive to enter now. The door of opportunity for salvation will not remain open forever. For each of us, that door will be closed suddenly, either at the hour of our death or at Jesus' Second Coming.
  - e. The sudden closing of the door makes me think of God shutting off entry into Noah's ark in **Genesis 7:16**, before the rain started to fall. After that door was shut, it was too late to repent and enter!

#### IV. Conclusions from This Lesson

- a. Noah followed all of God's very specific instructions, exactly as told. This is a great example. God is looking for the very same attitude from us, today.
- b. Noah was saved by faith, and his faith is held up as an example for Christians. Saving faith includes not only believing, but also doing what God tells us to do. It includes obeying God's commands.

- c. The Flood of Noah is a foreshadowing of the final day of judgment that will come upon the entire world suddenly, with most people totally unprepared.
- d. As in the days of Noah, only a righteous few will be saved in the end. We must strive to enter ourselves, and to help as many others to enter as well!