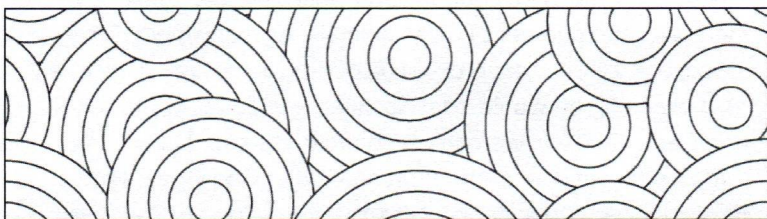


## LESSON 6

# THE FLOOD

GENESIS 7:1-24



### OPEN IT UP

**W**e understand the importance of preparation. High school (ideally) prepares you for college or technical school, and college or technical school prepares you for a career. Each of these stages seems long for those waiting to reach the next milestone. But consider that Noah and his family were in the process of preparing the ark for 100 years! He built the ark, pursued and collected the animals for the ark, and preached righteousness to the faithless generation in which he lived. Because of the preparations he made, he was ready when the storm came.

### BOARDING THE ARK • GENESIS 7:1-9

God invites Noah and his family to enter the ark explaining, "Because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation" (Genesis 7:1). There is a causal connection between righteousness and reward. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (6:8). Noah's behavior led to the Lord's favor. Many Christian traditions teach that humans are helpless creatures who are saved independent of any righteous works, but Scripture teaches otherwise. God gives

overwhelming grace, but He responds to those who are faithful. We *do* have a role to play in our faithfulness to God.

Some readers of Scripture find a contradiction between God's earlier instruction (two of each kind, Genesis 6:19) and the fuller description we have here (seven of clean and only two of unclean, 7:2–3). But there is no contradiction. There are two reasons why God increased the number of clean animals. As many have rightly understood, only clean animals could be offered in sacrifice (Leviticus 10:10; 14:4). Since Noah would offer sacrifice immediately after exiting the ark (Genesis 8:20), we can reasonably assume this was a practice that would continue. Another reason is that God would allow people for the first time to eat animal flesh after the flood (9:2–4). Since only clean animals could be eaten (Leviticus 11:47), a ready stock would be necessary after the flood. The goal of bringing animals into the ark was "to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth" (Genesis 7:3). With clean species dwindling quicker than unclean ones due to sacrifice and consumption, it is necessary for God to make provisions to preserve life.

After an enormity of tasks had been completed, God gave Noah a warning: "After seven more days ... I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made" (Genesis 7:4). Imagine what that week must have been like. Every face he saw, every place he went, everything familiar would be destroyed, washed away in the waters of the flood. Some people might have protested or sunk into a depression. Noah simply obeyed (verse 5). He and his family led the animals into the ark waiting for judgment to come.

### **RAINING BEGINS • GENESIS 7:10-17**

Skeptics sometimes protest that it is impossible for enough rain to fall to account for the biblical flood. But these skeptics apparently aren't reading the Bible. The Bible actually lists three different sources for the floodwaters. First, "the fountains of the great deep were broken up" (Genesis 7:11). These subterranean channels were suddenly exposed (by a series of earthquakes?), releasing their contents onto the surface of the ground. Second, "the windows of heaven were opened" (verse 11). This source is the collapse of the waters "above

the firmament" (1:7). Third, constant, pounding "rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights" (7:12). The Hebrew term indicates a "hard rain," the kind that would have occurred only for short spurts under normal circumstances. What Scripture describes here is a dissolution of creation. All destruction is, in a sense, a de-creation, that is, a reversal of what God declares good as punishment for human evil.

As the rains began to fall and the waters began to rise, we learn "those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in" (Genesis 7:16). The ark was effectively sealed. No one—man nor beast—could enter any longer. Once God's judgment falls, it is final. In the poetic line of Numbers 23:19, "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" God does what He says. Noah was saved for one reason—obedience. Throughout his life, the book of Genesis emphasizes that Noah did what God commanded (6:22; 7:5, 9, 16). God's Word is not just good advice; it is the bread of life (Deuteronomy 8:3). It offers us hope and salvation. Noah obeyed, and the world reaped the divine benefits.

### **RAIN CONTINUES • GENESIS 7:18-24**

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The ark was no ship designed to travel from one place to another. It was an enormous box designed to survive the rising tides. Although the world may have been very different in Noah's day, and thus we need not assume the waters were some 32,000 feet high (to cover Everest), Scripture nevertheless says, "And all the high hills under the whole heaven ... and the mountains were covered" (Genesis 7:19–20). In other words, all land was covered. This note effectively means the world looked once again like the primordial sea from which God created the world (1:2). Yet there was one exception: Noah's ark. The lone spot of dry land floated atop the waters as they covered everything God had made.

All land life met its end. "All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died" (Genesis 7:22). The victorious emergence of life in Genesis 1 is now reversed. Thousands of species were wiped out. "Only Noah and those who were with

him in the ark remained alive” (verse 23). The ark was the means of survival, which safely guided Noah’s family through the flood. The hard rain fell for “forty days and forty nights” (verse 12), but “the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days” (verse 24). After the deafening sound of the rain ceased, there was calm. In this moment, the sad reality must have sunk in. The former earth Noah and his family once knew was reduced to a space smaller than your average Home Depot!

**WRAP IT UP**

**N**oah’s ark was the means of salvation both for Noah and his family and for all land life. Peter draws an analogy to the Christian means of salvation—baptism. Peter refers to the ark, “in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:19–21). Like the ark, without which Noah’s family could not have been saved, baptism offers us the only possible means to escape the sinful world and be granted new life with Christ.

**THINK ON IT**

1. Explain the connection between grace and salvation as it relates to Noah. How does Noah's obedience factor into the flood story?
2. Why did God distinguish clean and unclean animals?
3. What three sources of water provided the means for the flood?
4. In what ways was the flood a "de-creation"?
5. Explain the connections between Noah's ark and baptism.