

# A Study of the Book of Genesis

## Preparing for Judgment

As we study the historical/narrative sections Genesis, one truth should start to emerge as a common thread in each of the accounts: God is sovereign over the affairs of mankind. In examining the story of the flood, yes we are learning about Noah, but it turns out that God is the leading character in this drama. He is in complete control as His plan for mankind unfolds.

## This Is God's Story

A careful reading Genesis 6:8-7:16 reveals that even though much is mentioned about Noah, this is really God's story. The Lord God Almighty is guiding Noah, using Noah, preparing Noah. God must do this because mere man is insufficient for these things!

### 1). God Granted Favor to Noah

Noah was a righteous man. But he got that way because of God's grace. Grace leads to righteousness, not the other way around. Righteousness is the proof of God's favor in a person's life. Noah was not sinless, however, he was said to be blameless... and he walked with God. All of this made possible through God's favor.

### 2). God Declared Comprehensive Destruction

Because the earth was corrupt and filled with violence, God said to Noah that He would destroy all flesh, including animals (v.11-13,17). Corruption (sahat) is spoilage, rottenness or destroyed. The image is that of fruit that has become rotten, fallen off the tree and then trampled over by men. The word is also used to describe the scenario of someone who has been punched in the eye so that he actually loses his eye (see Exodus 21:26). Violence is oppression, injustice, cruelty, abusiveness, harsh treatment and ruthlessness.

God declared full destruction upon the earth because of the way of mankind (6:13). It is interesting to note that the wording used for, "*I am about to destroy*", is the same word "sahat", meaning "corruption" in the prior verses. People who immersed themselves into evil and wickedness would soon be destroyed. It's as if God were saying, "You are into destruction? Then destruction it is".

### 3). God Gave Instructions to Noah

Noah was then instructed by God to build a vessel that would deliver him, his wife, his sons Shem, Ham and Japheth and their wives from the coming flood. God gave Noah precise measurements of the ark: 300 cubits in length, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high. Since a cubit is the length from your elbow to your fingertips (18 inches), that translates to 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high.

As big of a water craft that this is, many skeptics would say that there is not enough room to fit all the animals, food and supplies, plus a family of eight. A few words to the skeptics:

- a). As the builder of the boat, Noah understood what kind of space he had. Would it make sense to put full-grown elephants on the ark, or a baby elephants? Large heavy hippos or small young ones?

b). When all “kinds/species” are considered together as a whole, the average size of an animal is about the size of a sheep. An average sized two-tiered railroad boxcar can fit 240 sheep. The volume of the ark could fit 569 such cars. This would only consume 50% of the carrying capacity, leaving plenty of room for food, water and other provisions (and eight people!).

c). The animals came to Noah (6:20). In other words, God sent the animals to Noah in the right sizes and quantities. It is impossible for God to send all the animals to an ark that He designed that would be too small for them all to fit. (Note: Genesis 6:19-20 says two of every kind; Genesis 7:2-3 adds some more for a very special reason!)

#### 4). God Makes a Promise to Noah

The covenant that God establishes with Noah (briefly mentioned in Genesis 6:18 and expounded upon in 9:11-17) is a beautiful, multi-faceted promise. Not only did God promise that *“never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh”* (9:15), but embedded within the promise is His commitment to dispense grace! When Noah saw the first rain clouds after exiting the ark, would he have to worry? Or could he live in confidence, based on God’s promise?

#### 5). God was IN the Ark

Some translations of the Bible tell Noah to “enter the ark”. This doesn’t appear to be quite right. The KJV has the correct wording for the instructions to Noah: *“Come thou and all thy house into the ark”* (Genesis 7:1). Notice the command issued: “come into”. This is an imperative: God told Noah to come to where He was. God was in the ark! This had to be such a huge faith-builder for Noah and his family that God was right there with them as they were about to navigate the convulsing seas throughout the duration of the flood.

#### 6). God Closed the Door of the Ark

Many pastors preach about this verse by saying that “the opportunity for others to be saved is now closed”. Noah is described as a *‘preacher of righteousness’* in 2 Peter 2:5. This sounds like Noah was doing what we might call evangelism, heralding the message that God *“will not strive with man forever”* (Genesis 6:3). A well-meaning preacher may tell us that Noah is calling people to repentance... possibly, but unlikely.

But I believe this view is incorrect. Noah was indeed preaching, but his message was one of condemnation. We know this because of what Hebrews 11:7 says, *“By faith, Noah being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of righteousness which is according to faith”* (NASB).

God had determined that all flesh would be destroyed, and indeed told Noah directly (see Genesis 6:17). This would have been the content of Noah’s message. This is the doctrine of reprobation.

And not only did the wicked people have the witness of Noah against them, but also the witness of nature itself (of which they would soon experience in full force). We know from Romans 1:20 that, *“since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse”* (NASB).

## 7). God Sent the Rain

The great deep burst open and the floodgates of the sky were opened, with rain falling for 40 days and 40 nights. Nobody had ever seen rain before. Where did it come from? Some creationists say there was a vapor canopy around the earth that broke open. That may be true. One thing we do know for certain; however the rain descended, it originated from God:

- Matthew 5:45 - "He sends rain on the just and the unjust".
- Acts 14:17 - "He gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons".
- 2 Peter 2:5 - "He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly".
- Isaiah 55:10 - "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven".

The point is clear: God determines when it will rain, where, and how much. In His perfect timing, He sent the rain in the right quantities to destroy all flesh all over the earth.

Other than full obedience to God's instructions, Noah had little to do with any of this. He didn't earn God's favor. He didn't decide there would be comprehensive destruction. He didn't make up the dimensions of the ark. He didn't close the door and he had nothing to do with the rain! Noah was content in God's sovereignty. He walked with God. And part of walking with God is trusting and obeying, for which Noah was commended in Hebrews 11!

The parallels between Noah's day and ours are staggering. While corruption, decay and violence deafen some people to their need for deliverance, we know that God is gracious! Our job is to speak the truth in love by warning of impending judgment and proclaiming deliverance through Jesus Christ!

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## Jesus Saves

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1. We have heard the joy - ful sound: Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!  
2. Waft it on the roll - ing tide; Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!  
3. Sing a - bove the bat - tle strife, Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!  
4. Give the winds a might - y voice, Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!

Spread the ti - dings all a - round: Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!  
Tell to sin - ners far and wide: Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!  
By His death and end - less life, Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!  
Let the na - tions now re - joice, - Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!

Bear the news to ev - 'ry land, Climb the steeps and cross the waves;  
Sing, ye is - lands of the sea; Ech - o back, ye o - cean caves;  
Sing it soft - ly thro' the gloom, When the heart for mer - cy craves;  
Shout sal - va - tion full and free; High - est hills and deep - est caves;

On - ward! - 'tis our Lord's com - mand; Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!  
Earth shall keep her ju - bi - lee: Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!  
Sing in tri - umph o'er the tomb, - Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!  
This our song of vic - to - ry, - Je - sus saves! Je - sus saves!