

Seeing Jesus in Every Story

**“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life;
and these are they which testify of Me.”**

John 5:39

Act 2 Noah and the Flood

Genesis 6–9

Prologue

What’s your favorite Bible story? Ask a young child and you are likely to hear about Noah and his cheerful ark full of animals. But sadly, the true episode of Noah and the flood is frequently left for children’s books or tossed out as a myth. Even in the church, Noah’s rightful place in the unfolding drama of redemption is often overlooked. We think of the flood as the episode in history where our Creator finally got fed up. But read it again. This story is about so much more than sin and judgment—it tells us about God’s redemptive heart and grace in a world gone terribly wrong. This is the episode in history where our Creator *refused* to give up!

The back story . . .

The fruit of Adam and Eve’s disobedience left the Garden with them and spread into the whole world. Cain’s sin, long before murdering his brother, was rooted in pride. He expected God to honor his offering but when it didn’t please the Lord, Cain got angry. Even though God reasoned with him and warned that “sin is crouching at the door” (Genesis 4:7) Cain rejected the Lord and murdered his brother. He refused to acknowledge his sin. As for Cain, there was no repentance—only complaint that the penalty of his sin was too severe. He remained a guilty man by choice and went out from the presence of the Lord. Cain built a successful life for himself and his descendents (Genesis 4) and passed his legacy of unrepentant defiance on to future generations. By Noah’s day, the world was in a state of full-blown rebellion against God.

~ Cast ~

Noah

Shem, Ham, Japheth

Read through Genesis 6–9. Briefly note what stands out to you at first reading. Be prepared to share one of your impressions with your discussion group.

1. What was the moral condition of the world in Noah’s day? What set Noah apart?
2. What took place in creation as a result of the flood? What remained unchanged in man’s heart, even after the flood?

Scene 1: The Ungodly Multiply – Genesis 6

As you read these ancient stories, keep in mind that we are following the crimson thread of Redemption through human history. Along the way, there will be scripture passages that raise fascinating questions. Feel free to probe those questions further, but don't let it distract you from getting to the main focus of this study.

1. Earth's population grew dramatically from the time of Adam to Noah's day. By Noah's time, what else was increasing with each generation?

Who were the "sons of God" and the Nephilim mentioned here? The identity of these groups isn't clear from the text but scholars offer some possible explanations:

- › Possibly the "sons of God" were fallen angels who cohabited with human women, producing offspring called Nephilim (meaning "fallen ones"; "giants"; "fierce warriors"). The New Testament refers to angels who left "their proper domain" (Jude 6) now kept eternally chained for judgment (2 Peter 2:4).
- › The "sons of God" may refer to male descendants in the godly line of Seth who married women from the ungodly line of Cain, producing offspring that resulted in generations of compromise, wickedness and apostasy.
- › Nephilim are described as "men of renown" which means they were known (or notorious) for being fierce warriors. The reference here may indicate wicked, possibly demon-possessed tyrants who ruled according to their own desires and escalated the violence that filled the earth (Genesis 6:11).

Whatever the case, the central point is that a grievous perversion of something good in God's creation was used for wickedness and led to the pervasive spread of sin.

2. What did the Lord see when He looked into man's heart?

- › God is so grieved by what He sees that He determines to eradicate earth's wicked population and cleanse His creation. Briefly scan Genesis 6:5–6, 11–13 for words that describe the appalling condition of humanity. List what you find.

3. In the midst of this wicked world gone wrong stands one man. What did God see in Noah's heart? To the best of your understanding, explain what it means that Noah:

- › Found grace (favor) in the eyes of the Lord:
- › Was a righteous man:
- › Blameless in his generation:
- › Walked with God:

Explore key words and phrases

- God instructed Noah to seal the ark inside and outside with “**pitch** . . .” This same word came to be used for *atonement* or *reconciliation* later in the Old Testament. Compare this with the covering believers are sealed with: “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, *you were sealed* with the Holy Spirit of promise . . .” (Ephesians 1:13 emphasis added).

How does this word picture comfort and encourage you today? Briefly share your thoughts.

Additional thoughts and observations

Long before Noah set out to build an ark, he was building a character that would honor the legacy passed on to him. Genesis 5:24 tells us that Noah’s great-grandfather Enoch was a man who “walked with God.” He modeled a way of life for his son Methuselah and his grandson Lamech, who passed a legacy of belief and hope on to his son Noah.

- According to Jude 14–16, what were the people of Enoch’s day like? What similarities do we see in our culture today?
- Can you think of someone who prayed for you and perhaps even modeled for you what faith looks like? Briefly share how they helped pave the way for you to walk in godliness.
- What legacy are you in the process of passing on? Name a few specific ways you show your family and those around you that you walk with God.

Scene 2: Water, Water Everywhere – Genesis 7

This scene opens with the Lord instructing Noah to go into the ark. After more than a century of painstaking detail, the hard and lonely work of building the ark is done. Noah’s blood, sweat and tears—and the mockery he endured—do not go unnoticed by the Lord. “I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation” (Genesis 7:1).

1. Was it easy for Noah to obey the Lord? What relationships and situations would have made it difficult? Give some thought to what motivated Noah and what, at times, may have discouraged him. Share what comes to mind.

After boarding the ark (what a project that would have been!) the rain comes. It's the beginning of a torrential downpour that lasts forty days and forty nights. Earth's reservoirs break open and rivers swell their banks dragging up everything in its path. Oceans rise, islands are swallowed, and the earth is turned back into a watery chaos. No epic disaster film you've ever seen even comes close.

2. After the rain, the water level continued to rise. According to Genesis 7:17–18 & 24, how long did the flooding continue?
3. The flood itself spared nothing—but those who were in the ark safely survived. Do your best to explain how this provides a picture of judgment, grace, and salvation. No need for a deep theological description here . . . just a simple explanation you could share with anyone.

Additional thoughts and observations

While Noah and his family were grateful to be safely inside the ark, they were painfully aware that those outside the ark were dying. To think of loved ones and friends who refuse to listen is heartbreaking. What can we do? Along with the legacy of faith we've already considered, we must pray! Knowing that . . .

“God doesn't want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.” (2 Peter 3:9)
and

“The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power.” (James 5:16)

Who will you begin (or continue) to consistently pray for specifically by name?

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Scene 3: Safe Landing – Genesis 8

After the floodwaters subside, Noah and his family disembark—along with all those animals! Can you imagine what a scene that would have been? An entire year is a long time to spend on a boat, even with family and (undoubtedly multiplying) family pets!

1. What is the first thing Noah did? What do you suppose was in his heart and thoughts at this point in time? What would be in yours?
2. How did the Lord respond? Briefly describe the scene.

Scene 4: The Promise – Genesis 9

Just as sure as God had declared to Noah that He would put an end to all people, God also remembered His promise in the Garden and preserved the seed that will bring Redemption. In this scene, God establishes a covenant with Noah and a covenant with the earth.

A covenant is a promise. Some promises are conditional, sort of like an “I will if you will” agreement. But a covenant promise is a solemn and binding oath, more like an “I will no matter what” vow.

1. The earth Noah saw when he emerged from the ark was clean and ready for life again. In a way, he was like Adam. God was giving man a second chance.
 - God re-commissions Noah and his sons with the same command given to Adam. What are they to do?

2. But there are differences that show life will not be going back to paradise before the fall.
 - The curse of sin is still a reality. Glancing back at Genesis 8:21 what did the Lord say about man’s heart?

 - In light of that, what made the aroma of sacrifice so pleasing to the Lord?

3. Here is where God’s covenant promise comes into view. Given the fact that man would continue in sin even after being given a second chance, this unconditional promise is completely undeserved. According to Genesis 9:11 what does God vow that He will never again do?

4. What does God repeatedly vow to remember in verses 9–17? Count the number of times He states His intention in these verses.

Imagine what God’s promise meant not only to Noah, but also his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. “From these the whole earth was populated” (9:19). They, along with every living creature for perpetual generations, became the inheritors of God’s covenant.

- Japheth’s name means, “expansion.” His sons became dispersed throughout the four corners of the earth. The descendants of Japheth and Shem enjoyed peaceful relationships with each other.
- Shem means “name”—the line through which Jehovah’s name was to be revealed. His descendants include Abram and Moses and the Israelites who became God’s chosen.
- Ham’s prophecy by Noah (9:25) concerning his descendants suggests an understanding that the iniquities of the father would be visited on the children (Exodus 34:7). His descendants include the Jebusites and Canaanites who were later conquered by Israel.

Intermission: Pause – Ponder – Pray

**By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen,
in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household.
By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness
that comes by faith.
Hebrews 11:7 (ESV)**

As you memorize this passage, let it work into your heart and mind. Scripture meditation is like a good cup of tea . . . satisfying as it is savored. So give yourself time to savor God's Word. Write the scripture in the space provided and meditate on what it says.

Ask the Lord to open your eyes and increase your understanding. Jot down what He points out to you; keep returning here and adding your thoughts throughout the week.

Ponder what this says about God. Consider His character, attributes, work, promises . . .

Consider what the ark provided . . . how that foreshadows salvation in Christ . . .

Write your response to Him in worship and praise . . .

Epilogue: Seeing Jesus in the Story

Search to See . . .

As we said in the prologue, Noah's place in the unfolding drama of redemption is often boiled down to sin and judgment. We see how corrupt the world has become and conclude that the only moral of the story is that God cannot, and will not, tolerate a wicked and sinful world. No one would fault our Creator for calling it quits and erasing His failed experiment from the face of the earth. But if that's all we see, we miss a vital glimpse of God's heart.

Noah's story picks up the promise God made in the Garden and shows us that God's judgment isn't arbitrary . . . it is woven seamlessly through with grace to show us that our Heavenly Father remains ever faithful to His promises even though man consistently proves unfaithful.

We find Jesus so many places in this story, but let's look for Him in the rainbow.

God said,
"I have set My bow in the cloud . . .
When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant
between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."
(Genesis 9:13 & 16)

We can enjoy the natural beauty of a rainbow without understanding why it's there. But if we gather its meaning, the symbol of God's covenant promise is life-changing.

The word "bow" is the usual word for an archer's bow, an offensive weapon of war. In Psalm 7, David describes it for us:

"God is an honest judge. He is angry with the wicked every day.
If a person does not repent, God will sharpen His sword; He will bend and string His bow.
He will prepare His deadly weapons and shoot His flaming arrows."

- In the flood, God rained down His righteous wrath and judgment on sin.
- In His covenant of mercy, God promised to preserve the human race in spite of their sin.
- Like a warrior putting away His weapon, God hung His bow in the sky as an everlasting reminder that He Himself would make a way for peace.

1. Why did God make a covenant with man by hanging His bow in the sky? Share how this points to Jesus.
2. How does this picture of God's grace and unconditional love comfort you today? Next time you see a rainbow, what will it remind you of? Share your thoughts.

Consider the Big Picture . . .

How does *Noah and the Flood* play into the glorious telling of God's grace? Ultimately it's about redemption and our Redeemer! A few thoughts to consider:

- Those inside the ark didn't perish; all who enter in by faith in Jesus will not perish (John 3:16)
- The ark was a refuge from judgment; Jesus saves us from the wrath of God. (Romans 5:9)
- God called Noah ("rest") into the ark; Jesus calls us to come find rest in Him. (Matthew 11:28)

Make it personal . . . Shut in to the Lord

The ark became for Noah, his family, and the other living creatures the vehicle for salvation. "So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him, and **the Lord shut him in**" (7:16). It is interesting to note the contrasting names of deity that are used here. It is **Elohim**—the name linking God to His creation—who commands Noah regarding the creatures entering the ark. It is **Jehovah**—the name linking God to His people—who guarantees His protection by safely closing the ark behind him. The Lord miraculously closed up the door of the ark, shutting in all those who were the inheritors of His grace.

With the devastating flood of the world outside, Noah's family was grateful to have God's peace and safety inside. God's loved ones were not only shut in to salvation, they were also shut in to obedience, as the deeper work of God was taking place in their hearts.

- When our natural impulse is to be a part of the world and its ruin, it is difficult to choose to be shut in to obedience. But God will use our choices and our difficult circumstances to get our attention and deepen our relationship with Him. In such times, what is the lesson we can take to heart found in 1 Peter 1:5–9? Please explain.

- For you personally, what is the most significant insight you've gained from the story of Noah and the Flood? How will you apply this insight in your life?

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