

GENESIS

RockPointe Church Small Groups

Patriarchs of Scripture • Noah • Genesis 6:5-8 • Fall 2018

Main Point

Persistent sin brings inevitable judgment, but God offers mercy and hope to those who walk with Him.

Background

Video: <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/182886>

Video: <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/illustration/97910>

Note: Requires Access to Right Now Media; if you have issues with accessing the link, copy and paste directly in your browser

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Have you personally experienced a flood? If so, what are your memories of that flood?

What makes a flood particularly scary and destructive?

Flooding is nothing new to humanity, but any flood we've experienced or watched on the news is nothing compared to what Noah lived through. Anguished by continued disobedience, God determined to destroy the earth and all life. But He looked favorably on Noah, who enjoyed a close relationship with Him.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 6:1-8.

How is our culture similar to Noah's? How is it different? Do you think our culture is more corrupt than it used to be? Why or why not?

In your life, the lives of your children, or in today's culture, what consequences have you seen of choosing to disobey God?

What did it cost Noah to follow God? Does following Jesus always have a cost associated with it? Why or why not?

While all of mankind lived in wickedness and rebellion against God, Noah was found to be righteous and walking with God.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 6:9-10.

In a world that had turned its back on God, Noah's commitment to God stood out. From the very beginning of his story, we read about Noah's exceptional life as someone who exhibited righteousness, blamelessness, and who walked with God in sharp contrast to the people of his generation. Noah's desire to follow God did not mean he was perfect. Noah sinned like all people, but he refused to involve himself in the horrible sin of those around him.

Has God ever asked you to do something you didn't completely understand or that you knew people would mock? How did you respond to the amount of trust that had to be invested?

What excuses do people use to avoid doing what God has commanded them to do? Are any of these excuses valid before God? Why?

Surrounded by people willingly trapped in sin, Noah followed God's leadership and sought to live for Him. This choice requires a close, personal walk with God. Our relationship with Him involves spending time with Him, listening to Him, learning about His love and perspective, following His leadership, and depending on Him.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 6:11-13.

What do these verses teach us about the seriousness of sin? How would your life look different if you took your sin as seriously as God does?

How do you see evidence of both God's judgment and His mercy in these verses?

God exhibits His grace by providing many opportunities to repent before He punishes, but punishment does come. God does not tolerate rebellion and disobedience forever (see 2 Pet. 3:8-9). God's grace and call to repentance do not mean God will not punish sin.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 6:14-16.

Which of God's instructions to Noah were clearest and most detailed? Were some instructions less clear?

The ark needed a roof to prevent the torrential rain from filling and sinking it. A door in the side allowed people and animals to enter and provisions to be loaded. Three decks provided ample room for humans, animals, and supplies. The ark's dimensions indicate a vessel that would have been seaworthy and stable even in the rough waters of the raging flood.

Does God give us instructions as clearly stated as the ones He gave to Noah? Explain your thoughts.

Imagine you were in Noah's position. What questions might you have had for God?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 6:17-22.

What did God promise Noah?

How did Noah respond to God's instructions (v. 22)? What would your opinion of Noah have been if you were his neighbor? One of his children?

God not only planned to save Noah and his family; He promised to establish His covenant with Noah. Covenant refers to a binding agreement linking two parties together. Noah already lived in a close, personal relationship with God, and their relationship formed the basis of the covenant. Through establishing His covenant with Noah, God pledged to maintain the relationship. Since Noah would be the ancestor of all humanity, however, the covenant would bless people far beyond Noah's time.

Read Genesis 8:13-22. What was the outcome of the flood? What else is revealed about Noah's character through the flood story?

Read Genesis 9:11-16. What did God promise Noah and his descendants? What are the implications of this covenant for us today?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Read Romans 3:23-26. What similarities do you see between Noah and Jesus?

How has God's working in your life been similar to the account of the flood and the character of Noah?

Pray

Close by reminding your group that just as God worked through Noah in a fallen world, He can use us if we follow Him in obedience. Thank God for His grace and mercy and His desire to walk with His children.

Commentary

| Genesis 6:1-22.

6:1 Although the stated reason for God's judgment against the earth is encroaching moral perversion (6:5), there is an implication in the passage that the marriage between the sons of God and the daughters of men (v. 2) contributed in some way to this moral decline. This is suggested (1) by the punishment oracle of v. 3, (2) by the parallel use of "saw" in vv. 2 and 5, which describe the behavior of the sons of God toward the daughters of men (v. 2), and (3) by God's response to sin (v. 5). Essentially, v. 1 reports what was depicted in chaps. 4-5 concerning the expansion of human life and achievement, but it also puts to the fore the connection between population growth and the divine pattern for marriage.

6:2 The identity of the sons of God and the daughters of men is the major interpretive obstacle. Historically, three opinions have won a significant following for identifying the sons of God: (1) angels, (2) human judges or rulers, and (3) the descendants of Seth. Church Fathers, such as Augustine, as well as the Reformers (Luther, Calvin) interpreted the sons of God as a reference to “godly men,” that is, the righteous lineage of Seth. Although this view has its share of difficulties, we find that it is the most attractive.

6:3 The consequence of their actions is the divine restriction of human life. In withdrawing his spirit, the Lord no longer graciously preserves their life span.

6:4 The identity of the Nephilim and their relationship, if any, to the marriages (v. 2) is perplexing. The word occurs but once more, in Num 13:33, where it refers to an indigenous population inhabiting Canaan. It is most attractive to consider the Nephilim as normal human men. These are of the warrior class, men of ignoble reputation whose violent exploits are remembered (cf. 6:11–13) and whose names strike fear in the hearts of their hearers. They are identified as men of renown, not divine or semidivine figures. Despite their notorious achievements they are no more than men, subject to the same judgment as any (v. 3). As warriors of renown they seek reputation by their wicked deeds in the way the people of Babel will seek fame through their building enterprise (cf. 11:4).

6:5-8. These verses are an exposé on the degeneracy of the human heart. Collectively, society has decayed beyond recovery in God’s estimation. The progression in this small cluster of verses is arresting: “The Lord saw.... The Lord grieved.... The Lord said.” He himself brings sanctions against all humanity, including the most vulnerable (animals). The threat of extinction is not only inclusive of all living things, but also is geographically all-encompassing.

6:9-10. In a world of increasing sin, God found a person named Noah whose commitment to Him stood out. Noah was righteous, a description given to no other person up to this point in the Bible. Noah and his wife had three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The list of Noah’s sons provides a link between the end of the list of Seth’s descendants (Gen. 5:32) and the Table of Nations (10:1). After the flood, humanity had another opportunity to begin again through Noah’s sons. Before the flood ever arrived, God in His mercy had determined to provide this opportunity.

6:11-13. God’s world had become the complete opposite of what He created and intended. God intended the earth to be filled with people and animals (Gen. 1:24,28). Instead, corruption and violence filled the earth. God told Noah of His plans to destroy the earth and its inhabitants. God also explained to Noah why the earth was about to face destruction. Sin had corrupted the world, perverting humanity and causing nature to suffer. The world no longer existed as God intended, so God would destroy the earth and its inhabitants and undo His creation. Since humanity insisted on corrupting itself through disobedience to Him, God would make the corruption complete by destroying the earth and its living creatures.

6:14-16. God had decided to destroy the world due to its sin. He instructed Noah to construct an ark, indicating He intended to deliver Noah and provide a new beginning for the world. Unlike most ships through the ages, the ark had no curved bow or rudder. God did not intend Noah to sail the vessel. He intended the boat only to be a container in which Noah, his family, and animals could survive the flood.

6:17-22. God stated His intention to use a flood to destroy the earth, which provided the rationale for Noah's building the ark. The flood constituted a unique event in world history. Waters would flood the earth, destroying all human and animal life, but only this one time (see Gen. 8:21). The flood in Noah's time constituted a horrible judgment that will never be repeated. God told Noah that he and his family would escape the destruction of the flood. God determined to preserve Noah and his family as a remnant through which He would repopulate the earth. Although Noah was a righteous individual, he had sinned and would continue to sin (see Gen. 9:20-21). God's salvation of Noah and his family demonstrated His grace.

God not only planned to save Noah and his family, He also promised to establish His covenant with Noah. The word (as well as the concept) "covenant" occurs here for the first time in the Bible. "Covenant" refers to a binding agreement linking two parties together. In God's covenant with Noah, God constituted the stronger party; but He imposed obligations only on Himself. Noah already lived in a close, personal relationship with God, and their relationship formed the basis of the covenant. Through establishing His covenant with Noah, God pledged to maintain the relationship.

To preserve each species and repopulate the earth after the flood, God instructed Noah to take on the ark a male and female of each bird and each land animal. God also commanded Noah to gather the necessary food to sustain himself, his family, and the animals while on the ark (Gen. 6:19-21).