
Review: *From your experience at the Cornerstone meeting last week, share something that helped build your faith.*

NOTE: Because of the length of the Book of Genesis (fifty chapters), not all of the chapters will be included in this study. We begin today with chapter 6 of Genesis having skipped chapter 5 and part of chapter 6.

NOTE: The story of the great flood is commonly regarded as a composite narrative based on separate sources woven together (unlike the separate creation stories of Chapters 1-2). To the Yahwist sources are usually assigned 6:5-8; 7:1-5,10,12,16-17,22-23; 8:2-3,6-13,20-22. The other sections are usually attributed to the Priestly writer. *NABRE*

DAY ONE

Read Genesis 6:5-10

1. This week we begin our study of the life of Noah. Chapter 5 contains a detailed genealogy of ten generations from Adam to Noah and his sons and a few interesting facts about Noah. Read Genesis 5:28-32 and record a few facts you learned about the early life of Noah.

2a. Beginning with Adam and Eve and their descendants, we learned about the effects of sin on family dynamics and on early civilization in previous chapters. As we begin chapter 6 at the end of this period, the LORD looked at the earth. What did he see according to verse 5?

b. Considering what you read in this verse, compare what the world looks like today since the coming of Christ?

3. In verse 6 we read that when God looked upon his creation he was "grieved... to his heart." Grief is a human response to deep sorrow. What does it mean to you that God understands grief?

NOTE: The human sentiments in this verse should not be taken literally as though God could be moved or swayed by an emotional wave of regret. Scripture teaches that God does not change as man does (Mal 3:6) but describes his thoughts and actions in human terms in order to make the mystery of God more understandable to human minds. Similar word pictures of God as having hands (Ex 7:5) arms (Hos 11:3) and a face (Ps 27:8) help to show the personal nature of God. *Ignatius Study Bible*

4. As punishment for the wickedness of humankind, God said he would "blot out from the earth" all living creatures, "but Noah found favor in the sight of the LORD" (verses 7-8). Record why Noah was different from the rest of humanity and what you learn about him from verses 9-10.

5. Noah's was an example of the relationship the Creator desired to have with his creation. How can we live "blameless" or "righteous" today in relationship with God (see Philippians 1:9-11; 2:12-15)?

NOTE: In Genesis, the Hebrew word *toledoth* meaning "generations" or "descendants" serves as a marker for the end of one section of the narrative and the beginning of the next. This word occurs notably in: 2:4 (second creation story); 5:1 (between the first human family and Noah); 6:9 (Noah); 11:27 (Abraham); 25:12 (Hagar and Ishmael); 25:19 (Jacob); 36:1 (Jacob's children); 37:2 (Joseph). *NABRE*

6. CONNECTION: Today we learned that Noah was a righteous man who walked with God. Many of us learned how to walk with God in the footsteps of our parents and their ancestors. Some have learned from other good and holy people whom God has placed in our lives. Who has walked beside you to help form your faith? What have you learned that helps you on your walk? Who walks with you today?

Read and record Isaiah 38:19. Pray today that God will show you the way to teach those who come behind you to walk with him in righteousness.

DAY TWO

Read Genesis 6:11-16

7. Today we begin a version of the flood story attributed to the Priestly writer. Summarize how the earth appeared in God's sight according to verses 11-12.

NOTE: God does not punish arbitrarily but simply brings to its completion the corruption initiated by human beings. *NABRE*

8a. According to verse 13, God told Noah that he was going to destroy the earth. Because God revealed his plans to Noah, what might that indicate about their relationship?

b. In the New Testament, St. Paul describes the significance of this relationship. In what way did St. Paul describe Noah's faith in God from Hebrews 11:7?

9. Next, God told Noah to make an ark of cypress wood with rooms covered in pitch (verse 14). Would you have been surprised by such a strange request if you had been Noah? What was the most surprising or unusual thing you have ever done or seen done for God?

10. God directed his attention to saving Noah and his family and continued to give Noah precise instructions for building the ark. Describe a few of the characteristics of the ark from verses 15-16. What would you compare it to?

NOTE: The Hebrew word "cubit," is the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, about eighteen inches (a foot and a half). The dimensions of Noah's ark were approximately 440 x 73 x 44 feet. The ark probably had an open space on all sides near the top to admit light and air. The ark also had a window or hatch which could be opened and closed (8:6). NABRE

11. The Hebrew word for the ark of the flood and for the ark/basket that preserved baby Moses (Exodus 2:3,5) is the same word, *teba*. (*Agape Bible Study*) How would you compare these two stories?

12. CONNECTION: In this lesson God turned his focus from the destruction of the world to saving one faithful servant, Noah, and his family. He guided Noah to build the ark that would preserve their lives during the flood and protect them from the destructive forces that would occur in the world around them. The ark is symbolic of a place where God's faithful can find refuge and protection as they navigate through the flood of worldly influences and life's turmoil. Consider your ark. Where have you found refuge, protection, and security? Briefly describe and share your answer.

Write a prayer today to thank God for the "ark" in your life and for the ways he provides, cares and protects you and your loved ones.

DAY THREE

Read Genesis 6:17-18

13. God commanded Noah to build an ark as his role in the plan to save himself and his family. From verse 17, complete the phrases below that explain, in solemn detail, what God was planning.

For my part

to destroy from under heaven

everything that is on the earth

14. In the beginning of verse 18, we learn that God promised to establish a covenant with Noah. Our Commentary emphasizes the importance of this fundamental theme in both the Old and New Testaments. Read the Commentary, page 25, and record a few details of the covenant made between God and Noah.

15. Look up one of the following verses and summarize what you learn about God's covenants with humanity.

Genesis 17:1-2

Exodus 34:27-28

Matthew 26:26-28

16. As complete and final as the destruction first appeared, God did not plan to destroy everything. Who would be saved and how (end of verse 18)?

17. What effect do you think the covenant promise had on Noah and his ongoing relationship with the LORD?

18. CONNECTION: Today we learn that the LORD promised to enter into a covenant with Noah that began with the command for him and his family to enter the ark. The values of society were so corrupt that all of creation had become intolerable to God with the exception of one individual who was able to save his entire family.

This story reminds us that a single individual can make a difference in the lives of others and in the world. Share a story of a single individual that has influenced your life or the lives of others, on a large or small scale.

1 John 3:21 reminds us that, "if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God." Write a prayer today asking God to help you to be bold and step out to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

DAY FOUR

Read Genesis 6:19-22

19. After God gave Noah the blueprints to build the ark, he gave him further instructions. What command did he give Noah in verse 19?

20. List the three groups of animals specifically referred to by God in verse 20. What kind of creature was omitted and why do you think that was?

21. Once again man was given dominion over the animals created by God and the responsibility of caring for them. What was Noah instructed to do in verse 21?

22. It is interesting that God plans to miraculously save Noah, his family and all the creatures of the earth, but not without Noah's cooperation and labor. This was no small task. Note some things that Noah would be required to provide for all these people and animals.

23. In verse 22 we are told that Noah did all that the LORD commanded him. This phrase is repeated four times in this lesson (6:22; 7:5,9,16). What do you think the repetition of this phrase means?

24. CONNECTION: In our lesson this week God continued to instruct Noah who cooperated with God to complete his plan. God told Noah to save the creatures of the earth so life could begin again when the floodwaters subsided, but Noah had to work hard to fulfill this plan. God directed Noah to store food on the ark for all in his care, but again, Noah was in charge of the daily tasks to ensure that this need was met.

God provides for us when we need his help, but he asks for our cooperation, obedience and effort. Why is that often the best answer to our prayers? Can you think of an example?

Read and record Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 39:33. Let this thought lead you into prayer.

DAY FIVE

Read Genesis 7:1-10

NOTE: The lesson today resumes the telling of the flood story by the Yahwist author weaving in a different version of the story from the Priestly author.

25a. As we begin a new chapter today, the story of the Great Flood is retold with new details by a different author. Without mentioning how the ark was to be constructed, what did the LORD tell Noah in verse 1?

b. Noah's family members were also saved from the flood though he alone was favored by the LORD. What is one way we too can help our loved ones on their journey to salvation?

NOTE: In verses 2-3, Noah was instructed to take seven pairs of clean animals and a pair of unclean animals into the ark. It was presumed by the Yahwist writer that sacrifices were to be offered to the LORD so a greater number of animals would be needed for both food and sacrifice (see Genesis 8:20). In comparison, only two of every living thing were brought onto the ark in the more familiar Priestly account in Genesis 6:19.

26. After giving Noah very specific instructions regarding the creatures that will reside in the ark, the LORD revealed his plan for the unfaithful. Complete the following phrases from verse 4.

in seven days

for forty days

and every living thing

I will blot out

27. Noah had seven days to prepare the ark for the coming deluge and did all that the LORD commanded (verse 5). In addition to obedience, what other criteria do you think the LORD might have used in deciding that Noah and his family were worthy of being spared?

28. We learn that Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came on the earth (verse 6). Describe who and what went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood as God commanded according to verses 7-9.

NOTE: (Verse 6: Noah was six hundred years old.) There is as yet no positive solution to the mystery of these enormous life-spans. Modern anthropology holds that the human species is around 40,000 years old, that pre-historic man lived a fairly short life and that human longevity slowly increased over the millennia. The Bible, however, as well as ancient Near Eastern writings concur in giving the ancients an immensely long life. Perhaps the best hypothesis and one that would help explain both the biblical and Near Eastern data, is that giving these primeval figures extremely long lives was a way of conceptualizing the great antiquity of mankind. In other words, this may be simply a literary technique used to assert the remarkable age of the human race itself.
Ignatius Study Bible

29. In verse 10 after seven days, "the waters of the flood came on the earth." The numbering of days was among the many numerical details included in this story. The number seven has been used before in Genesis. What do you think is the meaning and significance of numbers in Scripture?

30. CONNECTION: Today as the Great Flood approaches, we are reminded that Noah and his household will be saved, but not because he was a powerful leader. With God's help and friendship, he remained faithful and simply did what the LORD directed him to do. He is an example to us when we feel that our lives are not particularly significant, but are trying, with God's help, to accomplish all that is given to us. God's work can be found in the daily work of life. Reflect on what you do and record some of the ways you strive to obey God in the small moments of your everyday life.

Today in your prayer time, reflect on this familiar quote of St. Teresa of Calcutta, "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love."

DAY SIX

Read Genesis 7:11-24

31. In verses 11-15, we learn the details about the Great Flood from the second ancient author. Complete one or two of the questions below.

When did the flood begin?

What caused the flood?

How long did it rain?

When was the ark loaded?

Who and what entered the ark?

NOTE: [Two authors overlap in this chapter.] The Yahwist strand does not include instructions for building the ark but gives instructions for entering it (7:1-3) including calling for seven pairs of clean and one pair of unclean animals, all of which enter two by two (7:1-5, 8-9). The Priestly writer reports that one pair of each enters the ark in 7:13-16. *Collegeville*

32a. According to verse 16, all those that entered "went in as God commanded" and "the LORD shut" them in. Why do you think it was important that the LORD shut the door of the ark?

b. Imagine you were in the ark when the door was shut by the LORD. What do you think was in the minds and hearts of Noah and his family when that door shut (see [Isaiah 26:20](#))?

33. Noah, his household, and all the animals were secure within the ark as the Great Flood began. As the flood continued for forty days on the earth, describe in your own words what happened according to verses 17-18.

34. In verses 19-20, the waters of the Great Flood were described as covering the mountains fifteen cubits deep so that the ark floated high above the face of the waters. What might the author want us to know by including this fact?

NOTE: We are given many details about the erasing of life and the reversal of creation in these chapters but there is no mention of the actual agony and chaos of those dying, nor of the mass of dead bodies. The finality of it all is spoken of in 7:21-23, but this is presented in a dry tone. The absence of detail enlists our own imagination. *Miller*

35. In all the verses we study about the flood, neither ancient author described the actual suffering of the people and animals remaining on land. Complete the phrases below that describe in an unemotional way how the earth was destroyed (verses 21-22).

And all flesh died that moved on the earth

all swarming creatures that swarm

everything on dry land

NOTE: The LORD completed his purpose to blot out every living thing on the face of the earth and in the air (verse 23). Once again, the two ancient authors differ in their stories. In comparison to forty days duration by the Yahwist (verse 17), the waters continue to swell upon the earth for 150 days according to the Priestly version in verse 24.

36. **CONNECTION:** Today, we read about the Great Flood sweeping across the face of the earth and wonder at the horror of this devastation. Yet at the same time, we learn how a merciful God protects Noah and his family holding them aloft in the ark, high above the earth, floating on the face of the waters. Terrible things happen in the world, but there are many stories of God's loving providence. Have you been blessed with his guidance and saving grace during a natural disaster or personal crisis? How have you seen this saving power at work in the world?

Read and record Jeremiah 29:11. Let this thought lead you into prayer.

Read pages 24-26 in *The Book of Genesis* by Lawrence DiPaolo, Jr., Ph.D. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, Catholic Edition. Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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