

Genesis 6-9

Pray for your time together in God's Word!

Study Summary: In this study, we will focus on several important themes of the flood narrative: God's character, God's relationship with Noah, and God's relationship with humankind.

The Flood narrative in Genesis is interesting and challenging for a number of reasons. There are many theological questions that could be raised through a study of these chapters, such as the interpretation of 6:1-4, the historical evidence for the flood, and the ages of the patriarchs. Although this material will not cover these issues in depth, please encourage your group members to study these questions on their own, or wait to discuss until after the bulk of the study is completed.

Possible Transition: Many of us may be very familiar with the flood account. Taking the opportunity to put ourselves in the story and in the place of the people involved can help revive the realness and the humanity of the story for us.

Ask the Group: Imagine yourself in the place of Noah. What would you do if you received a command to build an ark to protect you and your family from a flood that would destroy every living thing on the Earth?

Possible Answers: Freak Out, Believe it or not Believe it. Follow God's Command or Deny it.

Section 1: God and Humanity

Read the passage out loud as a group.

Genesis 6: 5-7 (NIV)

5 The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. 7 So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.

Ask the Group: God creates man and calls it good. Later we see God looking at humanity differently. What do we see that accounts for this change?

Possible Answers: Sin has entered the world. Everyone on Earth is sinful, focused on Earthly desires (see Matthew 24:37-40) rather than a relationship with God. A lack of righteousness. We also see a progression of sin (Adam and Eve ate the fruit, Cain and Lamech murdered, every thought being wicked all the time).

Ask the Group: How does this view of humanity compare to our modern society?

Section 2: God and Noah

Read the following verses about Noah's relationship with God:

Genesis 6: 8- 14, 17-22

8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. 9 This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. 10 Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. 11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. 12 God saw how corrupt the

earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³ So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴ So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.

¹⁷ I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹ You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. ²⁰ Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹ You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.” ²² Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Gen 7: 5-16

⁵ And Noah did all that the Lord commanded him. ⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. ⁷ And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸ Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, ⁹ male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰ And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth. ¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. ¹² And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³ On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. ¹⁴ They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. ¹⁵ Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. ¹⁶ The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the Lord shut him in.

Gen 8: 1, 20

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.

Gen 9: 1

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.

- **Ask the Group:** How would you describe Noah’s relationship with God?
Possible Answers: Noah was blameless, he walked with God, did as the Lord commanded him, and presented a burnt offering to God. God remembered Noah, established a covenant with him, and blessed him and his sons.
- **Ask the Group:** How is it the same or different from your relationship with God?
- **Ask the Group:** Are there ways that you’d like your relationship with God to be more like Noah’s?

Read passage out loud as a group.

Genesis 9: 8-11

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: **9** “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you **10** and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. **11** I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

Ask the Group: What is the covenant that God makes with Noah? Why is it significant?

Possible Answers: It's God making a promise to us—and even when we don't hold up our end of the deal—God always does. It is God recognizing that we are all sinners, and wiping us out and starting over will not solve the problem of our sinful nature. It's a sign that God knows that we need a different way to salvation.

- **Ask the Group:** How does this covenant help us understand God's character?

Possible Answers: We see both His wrath/justice and His mercy; God is binding Himself to be faithful to us even though we sinned; We see the immense love God has for us

- **Ask the Group:** Are any of these aspects of God's character that are more easy or more difficult for you to believe?

Section 3: Blessing and Curse

Tell the Group: One theme that occurs in the flood story is curse (8:21) and blessing (9:1). This theme is one of the central themes of Scripture and we can better understand the significance of the flood story by examining some of the other passages about blessing and curse.

Ask the Group: For each of the following passages, how is the blessing / curse described?

Romans 8:18-27	<i>Creation groans waiting for the blessing</i>
Genesis 12:1-3	<i>Abraham was promised a blessing</i>
Galatians 3:8-9	<i>Believers in Christ share in Abraham's blessing</i>
Hebrews 11:7, 39-40	<i>Noah has not yet received the promised blessing</i>
Revelation 21:4, 22:3	<i>There will no longer be any curse</i>

- **Ask the Group:** How does seeing blessing and curse throughout Scripture help us understand the flood story more fully?

Possible Answers: It helps us see the flood account as one part of the larger story the Bible is telling

Ask the Group: How do the above blessings / curses affect you today?

Possible Answers: As believers, we inherit the blessing that was given to Abraham through faith (more on this in a couple of weeks!). However, the full blessing from God doesn't come until the curse is removed in Revelation 21. Thus, the curse still affects creation and us today, though we continue to live with the assurances of the promises of God.

Ask the Group: How can you more fully experience God's blessings in your life?

Possible Answers: Trusting more fully in Christ, being obedient to his commands, patience. Read Romans 8:28-39 for some ideas about how to experience God's blessings more fully.

Ask the Group: What is our community application of this passage?

Leaders' Note: You may choose to create your own application question as a group based on your discussion, or highlight a question from this study.