

THE FLOOD

Genesis 6:11 - 9:29

STRUCTURE

Key-person: Noah

Key-locations: The ancient world, the ark.

Key-repetitions:

- Destroy (6:3, 7, 13, 17; 7:21; 8:21-22; 9:11, 15).
- Ark (6:13-16; 7:1, 9, 23; 8:1, 4, 6-10, 16-19; 9:10).
- Take into the ark: Noah's family (6:18; 7:1, 7, 13); animals, birds (6:19-20; 7:2-3, 8, 14-16); food (6:21).
- Animals (6:7, 19-21; 7:8, 14-15, 21, 23; 8:1, 17-20; 9:2-3, 10, 11, 12, 15).
- God commands (6:14, 19; 7:1, 2; 8:15, 17; 9:1, 4, 7).
- Covenant (6:18; 9:9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17).
- Waters: rose (7:17, 18, 19, 20); receded (8:1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13).
- Time mentioned: God gave the people 120 years (6:3); age of Noah (7:6; 9:28-29); 7 days after Noah entered the ark (7:10); flood lasted 40 days (7:17); flood waters lasted 150 days (7:24; 8:1-3); on the 17th day of the 7th month, the ark stopped on a mountain (8:4); at the end of 40 days, Noah sent out a raven and a dove (8:6-8); the dove returned; after 7 days, Noah sent the dove out a second time (8:10); 7 days later, he sent it out a third time (8:12); after 29 days, the flood waters had dried up (8:13); after another 57 days, the earth was dry (8:14-18); Noah lived 350 years after the flood. He was 950 years old when he died (9:28-29).

Key-attitudes:

- God's displeasure with the human race.
- Noah's faith.
- God's concern to save a remnant of both people and animals.
- Noah's gratitude when he left the ark.
- The disgrace of the drunken and naked Noah.
- Ham's disrespect for his father.
- Shem and Japheth's respect for their father.
- Noah's anger at his son, Ham, and his grandson, Canaan.

Initial-situation:

Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were banished from the Garden of Eden. They had two children, Cain and Abel. Cain killed his brother Abel. Cain left God's presence. Cain's descendants were violent and did evil things. Adam and Eve had another son, Seth. Some of Seth's descendants walked with God. After many generations, evil thinking, corruption and violence increased until all the people were evil, except for Noah. God regretted having made people and informed Noah of his plan to destroy the world.

Initial-problem:

With the exception of Noah and his family, all the people on the earth were wicked.

Final-situation:

Noah became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. His son Ham disrespected him, and Noah cursed Ham's son Canaan.

BIBLE STORY

The Flood

After the earth became heavily populated, it was corrupt and full of violence. The Lord said, "My Spirit will not put up with people forever. They will live a hundred and twenty years" (6:1-3).

Noah was a man of integrity, who walked with God. God told Noah, "I have decided to destroy all people because they have filled the earth with violence. Build yourself an ark of cypress wood. Make rooms in it and coat it with tar pitch inside and out. Make the ark 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Make a roof for it. Finish the ark to within 18 inches of the roof in order to have an opening at the top. Make three decks, a lower, a middle and an upper deck. Put a door in the side of the ark.

"I will bring flood-waters that will destroy everything alive under the sky.

"But I will establish my covenant with you: you will board the ark with your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives. Bring into the ark two of each living creature, male and female, to keep them alive

with you. Two of every kind of bird, two of every kind of animal and two of every kind of reptile will come to you to be kept alive. Store in the ark every kind of food that you and the animals will need to eat." Noah did everything God commanded him to do (6:11-22).

Noah announced God's message while he built the ark (2 Peter 2:5).

The day came when the Lord told Noah, "Board the ark, you and your whole family, because out of everyone alive today, you are the righteous one. Take on board with you seven pairs, a male and female of each, of every kind of clean animal that I have chosen for eating and for sacrifice. Take seven pairs of every kind of bird. Take a pair, male and female, of every kind of unclean animal. This will allow every kind of life to reproduce again after the flood. Seven days from now I will send rain. It will rain for forty days and forty nights. I will eliminate from the earth every living creature that I have made, except those in the ark" (Gen 7:1-4).

Noah did everything the Lord ordered. Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came. Noah, his wife, his sons, and their wives boarded the ark to escape the flood. Male and female pairs of all animals, birds, and reptiles came to Noah. They boarded the ark in pairs, male and female. Then the Lord shut the door behind Noah. After being in the ark seven days, flood waters came. Heavy rain came from the sky, and underground springs erupted for forty days and forty nights (7:5-16).

For forty days the flood waters kept coming. The waters rose, and the ark floated. The waters rose and submerged the highest mountain peaks. The high water mark was twenty feet above the mountains. Every living thing that lived on dry land and breathed with its nose died: birds, livestock, wild animals, reptiles, and humans: all dead. Only Noah and those with him in the ark remained alive.

The flood waters covered the earth for a hundred and fifty days (7:17-24).

God remembered Noah, the wild animals and the livestock that were in the ark. God sent a wind over the earth, underground springs stopped flowing, and the flood waters subsided. A hundred and fifty days after the flood began, the ark came to rest on the Ararat Mountain Range. Seventy-three days later, other mountain peaks appeared (8:1-5).

Forty days later, Noah opened the window in the ark and released a raven. The raven flew back and forth waiting for the earth to dry. Then Noah sent out a dove; it could not find a dry place to perch and returned to the ark. Seven days later, Noah sent the dove out a second time. The dove returned in the evening with a freshly-plucked olive leaf in its beak! So Noah knew that the flood-water had almost receded. A week later he sent the dove out a third time. This time it did not return (8:6-12).

Twenty-nine days after that, Noah removed the roof from the ark and saw that the water was gone. Fifty-seven days later, the earth was completely dry. Then God said to Noah, "Leave the ark; you, your wife, your sons and their wives. Bring out all the living creatures that are with you; the birds, the animals, and all the reptiles; so they can breed, reproduce and increase in number." So Noah, his family and all the animals departed from the ark (8:13-19). (*They had been in the ark for a total of 337 days.*)

After the Flood

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord. He made a burnt offering of every kind of clean animal and clean bird. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of people, even though, from the time they are children, they are set on doing

evil. I will never again destroy all living creatures as I have just done. As long as earth exists, planting and harvest, cold and hot, summer and winter, day and night will never cease" (8:20-22).

God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Have many children, multiply, and fill the earth. All wild animals and birds and fish will be afraid of you, for I have placed them under your control. You are responsible for them. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Earlier, I gave you green plants. Now I give you everything for food; with one exception: you must not eat meat that still has blood in it, because blood gives life. I will demand an accounting from every animal. I will demand the life of any animal that kills a person. I will demand the life of any person who kills another person; for to kill a person is to kill one made like God.

Noah, you and your family are to have many children. Grow in number, multiply, scatter and populate the whole earth" (9:1-7).

Then God said to Noah and to his sons, "I now establish my everlasting covenant with you, your descendants and with every living creature. Flood-waters will never again destroy all life; flood-waters will never again destroy the earth. The rainbow in the clouds is a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will recall my everlasting covenant with you and all living creatures, that never again will flood-waters destroy all life" (9:8-17).

Noah's sons who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. All the people who were scattered over the earth came from these three sons (9:18-19).

Noah Became Drunk

Noah became a farmer and planted a vineyard. He made wine, drank it, got drunk, and passed out naked inside his tent. Ham, father of Canaan, saw his father naked inside the tent. He went outside and told his two brothers. Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it over their shoulders. Then they walked backward into the tent and covered their father's naked body. They avoided looking at their father's naked body. When Noah awoke from his drunken stupor and found out what Ham, his youngest son had done to him, he put a curse on Ham's son Canaan (9:20-27).

After the flood, Noah lived 350 years. He was 950 years old when he died (9:28-29).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did God decide to destroy the ancient world?
2. How did the flood both punish one group of people and save another group?
3. What covenant promise did God make to Noah and his descendants after the flood?
4. How did the people who had been saved from the flood reveal that they still had the tendency to do wrong?
5. The next time God destroys the world, how can you be in the group that is being saved instead of the group that is punished?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. God is omniscient. He knows everything. He knew what the people were doing and thinking (6:5).
2. God condemns and destroys sinners. The flood proves that God will punish the sinners. (See 2 Pet 2:4-10).
3. There is salvation only by the means established by God. There was only one entrance door to the ark (6:16). There was only one ark in which people could escape God's punishment in the flood.
4. There is a separation: people with faith who obey God are separated from those who do not believe and obey (2 Pet 2:5). Noah was separated from those outside the ark who didn't have faith in God (Gen 7:11-16; 2 Pet 2:4-5). (See Mt 24:37-41.)
5. God's servants face temptations and risk assuming a lifestyle like those who live without considering God. After Noah was saved from the flood, he drank wine, became drunk and lay naked inside his tent (9:20-21).