

**Rescued from Judgment**  
**#5 in a Series on The Story: From Creation to Christ**  
**Genesis 6-9**  
**Faith Community Church – February 3, 2008**

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**Introduction:**

We're going to be looking at what is possibly the most well-known story in the Bible. But we've domesticated it. We see cute children's books, wall-hangings with smiling animals looking out of the windows of the Ark – even Noah and animal play sets. But in truth the story of the Flood is a horrific tale of God's judgment. I mean, would you buy your child a Hurricane Katrina play set?

I'm not suggesting that we go downstairs and root out any Noah stuff in our nurseries. But I would suggest that we take a new look at this story this morning.

**The Background to the Story**

The actual flood story is sandwiched between two shorter passages:

- After giving an account of the generations between Adam and Noah, Genesis 6:1-8 tells us that sin had taken over the face of the earth, and of God's decision to bring judgment.

As an aside, there are two questions that are raised in this section that are outside of the scope of what we will look at this morning. The first relates to the identity of the term "sons of God" in 6:2, and the second to the concept of God being sorry and grieved that he had made mankind (6:6-7). The first question is more of a matter of curiosity, but the second relates to the very nature and character of God: how can an unchanging, sovereign God have regret? It would seem that we have a contradiction, but we really don't. If you want to look at this in greater detail, I can point you to some resources. But please email me or call the office, because I don't want to forget your request.

- Anyway, at the other end of the flood story is an account of God making a covenant with Noah – in fact with all creation – not to destroy the earth by means of a flood again. We read that beginning in Genesis 8:20.

**Noah and the Great Flood**

The flood story, then, spans Genesis 6:9 to 8:19. Let me review the passage with you and then we'll talk about what we should learn from this passage:

1. Genesis 6:9-10 introduces us to Noah. The focus is on Noah's character, and this sets him apart from and provides a contrast to the human race in 6:1-8.

2. Beginning in 6:11, God provides instruction to Noah about building the Ark. (Read 6:11-22). The section ends with the words, “*he did all that God commanded him.*” This is an important phrase – we find it four times in the passage, and it serves to underscore God’s assessment of Noah that he was a righteous man (7:1).
3. In chapter 7 we have the details of the flood – the collecting of the animals, the entry in to the ark, the storm that lasted for 40 days and 40 nights, and another period of 150 days during which the water remained on the earth before it began to dissipate. (7:24).
4. Genesis 8:1-19 tells about the water subsiding and the eventual exit of Noah’s family and the animals from the ark.

If you add up all of the time Noah and his family were in the ark, it comes out to a figure in excess of a year. When we consider the fact that it took decades to build the ark, time to collect the animals and the provisions that were needed, and that he spent a year living in close proximity to animals of all kinds and their varieties of smells, it is no wonder that Calvin writes that we should give careful attention to the difficulties that Noah had to endure so that “we may know how heroic was his courage, in prosecuting [or fulfilling] to the utmost, what God had commanded him.”<sup>1</sup>

5. The rest of Genesis 8 and the first half of Genesis 9 tell us about Noah’s post-flood sacrifice, God’s command to be fruitful and multiply, the provision of animals for food,<sup>2</sup> and the institution of capital punishment, recognizing the need for a social restraint on sin. It concludes with God’s promise to never destroy the earth through a flood again, and the establishment of the rainbow as a covenant sign.

### **Noah, the Flood, and the People of God**

Like everything else in these early chapters of Genesis, the flood story is not there just to fill in the gaps in our knowledge of early human history. There are theological and practical lessons to learn – both for Israel (the original audience) and for us. Let me suggest some things that we ought to take away with us this morning:

1. The extent of human depravity.

When it comes to counter-cultural ideas, this is one of them. We talked the other week about how our culture is quick to label psychological need, environment, upbringing, lack of education, genetic disposition, and so on – as the answer to the question of why people do wrong. But the Bible’s teaching is quite clear. We are all sinners – some worse than others – but sinners nevertheless.

In Genesis 8:21 we read: “. . . *the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth.*” Is there really any debate about that? How important it is that we know that about

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<sup>1</sup> Also from a comment on Genesis 6:22

<sup>2</sup> I am reminded of one of my favorite bumper stickers: “If God didn’t want us to eat animals, why did he make them out of meat?”

ourselves. Our tendency toward disobedience/wrong doing becomes more ingrown and – without social restraint – more perverse.

That is why we need Christ. He did what we cannot do, and God credits his righteousness to our account when we believe his promise to forgive us through the cross.

## 2. God delivers his people.

This would be an encouragement to the people of Israel – who themselves had been delivered through the Red Sea. But the New Testament uses Noah’s preservation in the ark as a symbol of the Gospel (1 Peter 3:18-22; 2 Peter 2:4-10).

Noah put his faith in God’s promise of deliverance and was saved from judgment. That is what we read in Hebrews 11:7.

Have you obeyed God’s command to believe in Christ to be saved from the judgment that your sin deserves?

## 3. Noah stands out in the middle of a corrupt culture.

What makes us stand out – or what ought to – is not our political views or the bumper stickers on our cars.

Did you notice that nothing is said about how people responded to Noah as he was building the ark? People have used their imaginations to suggest what it might have been like. John Calvin suggested that he probably had to put up with his work being tampered with. Maybe that was true. Peter calls Noah a “herald of righteousness.” Quite possibly this was a verbal thing – and that is necessary – but what is emphasized in Genesis is his character.

We become light to a dark world when we live our lives in obedience to what God has said.

Paul writes, in Philippians 2:12-15: *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.*

## **Conclusion**

And those are the messages for us. Recognize the reality of sin, trust in God’s deliverance. And be people of character. That’s our calling. That’s the way Noah lived. How do we stand up to that benchmark?