

Does God Punish People For Their Sin?

- We are continuing a great study in the book of Genesis, first book of the Bible. And we're just going through it, verse by verse. We're looking at exactly what the Bible has to say. And so find your place in Genesis chapter 7. The question this week is, Does God punish people for their sin? And as you're finding your place, let me catch you up to speed on the storyline of Genesis. It starts, "In the beginning, God" So God's the theme, the subject, the hero, not only of Genesis, but all of scripture and history. And then God makes everything and everyone, and God is perfect, and when God concludes his work, everything and everyone is perfect. And then God gives our first parents, Adam and Eve, an opportunity to start making decisions. And they choose to side with Satan against God. They choose death instead of life, they choose lies instead of truth, and they choose cursing over blessing. And the result is that human history is forever changed by this decision to sin against our God. That being said, God now has a decision to make. He can either just allow us all to die and humanity to come to an end, or He can wait patiently, and He can give us an opportunity to see if we can fix the problem that we have made. So God waits 1,656 years. How many of you, that's very patient. How many of you are not patient? Right, how many of you are like me? I yell at the microwave and I have a horn ministry, and I'm just not very patient. God waits 1,656 years from Adam to Noah. People live long lives. We look at the genealogy in chapter 5 and they lived five, six, seven, eight, 900 years. And he gives them opportunity to create technology, to build cities, to advance. And what happens is all of the progress is external, it's not internal. They're able to make technology, civilizations, but not morality and good decisions. The result is in Genesis 6 we looked at the fact that everyone's actions were only evil, all the time. And they came out of a heart that was only inclined toward evil continuously. And so God saw that everyone everywhere was only evil and it grieved and broke God's heart that he made us. What we see up until this point in 1,656 years, there was only one person who walked with God. We looked at him, his name was Enoch. So God took him to heaven. And then God looked and he found one guy that he chose to give grace to and to love and to save. That guy's name is Noah. You're gonna get to know him and his family a lot better in just a minute. Now what happens is a flood is coming. God saves Enoch from it. God saves Noah through it. These are the two ways that God delivers his people. Some of you, you're gonna get delivered from it. Some of you, you're gonna get delivered through it. What we're gonna see this week is Noah and his family, they received grace from God. And then they're going to have to endure some very difficult times, as a result of human sin. Well, that being the case, for 120 years, God has been patiently pleading with people through Noah. So God came to Noah, chose him, gave him grace or favor, first appearance of that word in the Old Testament, saved Noah by grace, and then told him in 120 years, I'm gonna send a flood, and it's going to judge all of the sinners and it's going to bring an end to all of the sin. So for 120 years, Peter tells us, that Noah, he prepared and he preached, he prepared the ark and he preached about this judgment of God. During that time, zero people converted. He's trying to be the Billy Graham. He ends up being the Billy Nobody. He's faithful to talk and preach about God for 120 years. And nobody cares, nobody listens, nobody gets saved. Only eight people in the end belong to God and live for God. It's Noah, his wife, his sons, and their wives. So that's where we pick up the story. Human history is in a deteriorating state.

Everyone is just doing evil all the time. Imagine if criminals got to live eight or 900 years. Imagine if murderers, if traffickers, if cartel leaders could live eight or 900 years. If they had the opportunity to perfect their evil, that's what was happening in that day. And so God is going to put an end to it. I was thinking about it. I was preaching this week in Houston and I was sitting in the hotel, working on this sermon and I had the TV on as sort of background noise. And I thought, what would it be like if everyone was only evil all the time. And then a movie came on called "The Purge" So God, I don't know if it was the Lord or the the devil, you pick, but either, and I'm not saying, oh, Pastor Mark said, watch "The Purge", don't. And don't let your kids watch "The Purge" but I'm not an advocate of "The Purge" I didn't watch the whole movie, but the storyline was interesting. It was that human history was devolving, that everyone was evil and wicked, only and always, and it was echoing what God says in Genesis 6. So before humanity ended itself, literally self destruction, the new founding fathers that rose to prominence politically, the storyline goes, decided to have strict enforcement of law. But one day a year, everyone would get to do what was in their heart, that they would get to work out all of their evil. And the psychologists were brought forward saying, "We are evil in our heart and we can't just contain it all the time. So one day a year, we need to just be able to purge ourselves of all of the evil in our heart." And so it's murder and it's mayhem with no justice and no consequence. An issue is this: it was 1,656 years of the purge. And some people would look at God when he's gonna flood the earth and say, "That was very unloving." It would be very unloving if God didn't stop it. And instead, God is very patient. So what we're gonna see today is a hard reset on human history. God's going to flood the earth. He is going to end human life. He's gonna start over, what we have with knowing his wife, they're the new Adam and Eve. It's a new creation. It's a hard reset. And so we're gonna begin the story. Noah's family finally enters the ark. Genesis 7, and I'm gonna read a lot of verses, we're gonna cover a lot of text and we need to cover the story line, so hang in there with me. Then the Lord said to Noah, "Go into the ark," He's been building it for 120 years. "You and all your household" your family. What's pretty amazing. His wife stuck with him, 120 years. Dude's building a boat in the desert before it's ever rained, right. Either she's just a very loyal wife or she trusts the Lord, or both. It's never rained. "Honey, water's gonna come out of the sky, so we're gonna need a boat here in the desert." She sticks with him for 120 years and his kids, "For I've seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of all the clean animals." This is the first time we get this category of clean and unclean animals. Clean animals are those that the Jewish people are allowed to eat and offer as a sacrifice to God. "the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also male and female to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth." So they can reproduce. "For in seven days," God says it's coming in seven days. "I will send rain" likely the first rain in the history of the world, "on the earth, 40 days" tells them exactly, "and 40 nights, and every living thing that I have made, I will blot out from the face of the ground" or the land or the earth. And here's the key, "Noah did, all that the Lord commanded him. Noah was 600 years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives, went with him into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Of the clean animals and of animals that are not clean and of birds and of everything that creeps on the ground, two and two, male and female went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. And after seven days,

the waters of the flood came upon the earth. Now that being said, let me tell you a little bit about the ark. It's this massive boat, and it was designed by God. Previously, God gave Noah the architecting blueprint design plan for this boat. It is created in a way that was different than the other boats in that day. Its shape and its size were very, very unusual, but they were decreed by God. In addition, it was shaped like an ancient battle, like a modern day, rather, battleship. And it was three stories tall. And so it was taller than the leaning tower of Pisa than Big Ben, the Twin Towers and the Statue of Liberty. This is a big boat. In addition, it has 1.4 million cubic feet. You could get about 520 modern day railroad box cars in it. It was the equivalent of about two football or soccer stadiums or 21 basketball courts, very, very, very large boat. So then the question becomes, well, how in the world did he build that? And critics of the story will come in and try and undermine its credibility. Well, first he had how many years? 120 years. So that's a bit of time to get the work done. In addition, there were tools, we learned in Genesis chapter 5:22, that one of the descendants of Adam was Tubal Cain. It says that he is the forger of bronze and also of iron. And so this is what is known as the bronze age. So at this point there is metalsmith, they're creating tools. They're creating straps, they're creating nails, so we're dealing with technology. In addition, there were cities. We learned that Cain, Noah's first son, previously, he created the first city. See, when we tend to think of people in the ancient world we're brainwashed into thinking that they were somehow inferior and they were more like cavemen and women, and C.S Lewis calls this, "chronological snobbery" What he says is that basically, we're smart, they're dumb, we're evolved, they were devolved. The point is this, before the flood came and wiped out civilization, you had 1,656 years of human progress. You had people that were innovating, cultivating, and creating. These are people who are made in the image and likeness of God. They have full intellect as you and I do. Imagine, whatever field you're in, let's say you're a doctor, or let's say, you're an engineer, maybe you're a carpenter or construction worker. Imagine that you had 5, 6, 7, 800, 900 years to continue to perfect your craft. You would see tremendous progress and that's what happened. And so they did have cities and civilization. In addition, he could have had employees. And sometimes people are like, how could one guy with his sons? It doesn't say that. There were lots of people, and if you know anything about people, if you pay them, sometimes they show up to work or at least they used to, this was pre-COVID. Okay, so, they used to in the olden days, so he could have hired someone. Now, that being said, here's what we see in the story. God does all the speaking, Noah does all the obeying. In Genesis 7 and 8 that we're looking at today, Noah never speaks. How many of you wives, you're like, that's my new life verse right there A man that doesn't speak, that's why he's a righteous man. Okay, Noah never speaks, God does all the speaking. And so the key is this, to have a healthy relationship with God, He needs to do the speaking and we need to do the obeying. And ultimately Noah does obey what the Lord says. And the Lord tells Noah exactly what to do and exactly how long to wait. He says, "Okay, in a week, it's gonna start raining. It's gonna rain for 40 days." God tells him specifically. And this is really an act of grace on God's behalf, because otherwise this is traumatic and overwhelming and catastrophic. And if you don't know how long it's gonna go, it's hard to know how long to hang in there, but God tells him. And this is part of God being a prophet showing and revealing the future that he rules and reigns over. In addition, what we see here is the beginning of the worship of God. So the ark prefigures what would later be built is the tabernacle. Noah prefigures the priest and the

priest could only enter the tabernacle with a clean offering to sacrifice. And so Noah, like a priest, goes into the ark, a type of the temple. He brings the clean animals and you'll see when he exits that he does offer a sacrifice. And so ultimately what we're seeing here is Noah is being saved to worship. The reason that anyone is saved by God is to worship God. That includes obedience and sacrifice. We're gonna see that as the story unfolds. Here's the key though, Noah and his family build a boat, go into the boat just in time to be spared from the judgment. And here's the key line, Noah did all that the Lord commanded him. Let me stress this. Sometimes people will do some of what the Lord commands them. And then they'll get angry or frustrated or disappointed with God because it didn't work or they didn't feel that he delivered them, either from it or through it like Enoch or Elijah. The point is this, you need to do all that the Lord commands you, all that the Lord commands you. How many of you, if you had a dire medical condition, the doctor said, "Here's exactly what you need to do." You would do all that the doctor commanded. The key for you and I is to continually get a word from God, from the word of God and to do all that the Lord has commanded us. Noah knew exactly what he was to do. And he did exactly what God decreed for him to do. This shows us, the obedience to God's word is the only way to live. And if you're new, one of the things I like to say is, God doesn't bless people, He blesses people who place themselves under his word.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Okay, a lot of people, they live disobedient to God or disregarding of God, and they're like, "Why am I not blessed?" God doesn't bless people, He blesses a place. He blesses people who place themselves under his word in obedient authority. And so here, what we see is God speaks, Noah doesn't argue. He does hear and he does obey. And then the flood comes. God brings the flood. Genesis 7: 11-24, "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life" God, after the flood is going to shorten our days because we will use them to do evil, "in the second month on the 17th day of the month." Some will say that the story of Noah is mythical and not historical, we'll deal with that in a moment. But if I might just point out the obvious, it has very specific details. "In a week, it's gonna rain. It's gonna rain for 40 days, Noah's 600 years old. It's the second month, 17th day, it's very detailed and specific, "all the fountains of the great deep burst forth," so all the water comes up from underneath, and then it falls from above, "and the windows of the heavens were opened." So the sky's open. "And rain fell upon the earth for 40 days and 40 nights." Just like God had prophesied, "And rain fell 40 days, 40 nights. On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham, Japheth. Noah's wife," we don't know her name. When I get to heaven, I'm looking forward to meeting her. I have so many questions for her. When your husband went to work every day to build a boat in the desert before the rain, like what were you thinking? "and the three wives of his sons" you'll notice that when God floods the earth and starts over, there's no possibility of polygamy. We looked previously that polygamy started in Genesis with a guy named Lamech so we know it's a bad idea, 'cause his name is literally lame. And so Lamech starts polygamy. Polygamy is gonna be a problem through the rest of Genesis. But when God does a hard reset on human history, it's Noah and his wife and it's the three sons and their wives, there's no possibility of polygamy. "with them entered the ark, they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock, according to their kinds, every creeping thing

that creeps on the earth, according to its kind and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. They went into the Ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life." so they're living, breathing animals. "And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him." And here's the key, who shut the door?

- The Lord.

- The Lord did. Now it starts to rain. Now you start to hear the raindrops They're just beginning to come Now for most of the people who had not seen rain, this was probably interesting. But for Noah, it was likely haunting. This is the beginning of the end. "The flood continued 40 days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark and it rose above the earth." Now the ark is floating and you're on board and you can feel it. You're like, "Oh my gosh, it's happening." "The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth and the ark floated on the face of the waters." Now we're at sea. "And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them 15 cubits deep." Cubit was an ancient measurement for most civilizations. It literally is from the elbow of a man to the end of his fingers, that's a cubit, about 18-ish inches. "All the flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth and all mankind." Man is the head. "Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heaven. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left and those who were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed on the earth for 150 days." This number 40 here is interesting, it rains for 40 days, the Israelites who received this word from God through Moses, they had been in Egypt, slaves for more than 400 years, they had been released. And they're receiving this as they're spending 40 years in the wilderness, trying to get back to the promised land. And in addition, the 40 days is exactly what the Lord Jesus had in His post-resurrection appearances. In First Corinthians 15, it says that after Jesus died for our sin and rose as our savior that he appeared over the course of 40 days before he ascended back to heaven. This number 40 is a curious one. And what we see here is that in the beginning, we learned in Genesis 1 and 2, that God separated the water above from the water below. And here they are coming back together to judge mankind. It's literally like the water is serving as a vice to judge humanity for our transgression. The animals, what's interesting here, the animals are brought to Noah. Some of the critics of the story of Genesis would say, "Well, how did Noah find all the animals?" He didn't, they found him. This echoes similarly, when God told Adam to name all of the animals. Adam didn't go on a hide and seek adventure, looking for all the animals. God brought all the animals to him. Here, it is similar where God brings all the animals to Noah. Here's what's interesting. How many of the animals that were called came? All. How many of the people who were called came? None. The people are more ungodly and disobedient than the animals. At least the animals do what the Lord tells them to do. For 120 years, Noah preached and no one cared, no one converted. This tells you that unless God saves us, no one will be saved.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- And what happens is we tend to think, well, I'm a good person with a good heart. And God said, "No, actually, you're a bad person with a bad heart. That's why I need to make you a new person with a new heart."

- [Congregation] Amen.

- And unless God saves us, we are not saved.

- [Congregation] Amen, that's right.

- And so ultimately at the end of the day, you are saved by God and you are saved from God and you are saved for God, that's the story. Now that being said, Noah's family, what's amazing here, Noah, true or false, men, led his family, he's not perfect, but he is the leader. Now, do you think he had some difficult doubtful days over the course of 120 years? How many of you guys have woken up, you love the Lord, you're leading your family. You wake up one day, you're like, "I hope we're doing the right thing. It's been a while though and it's not coming together." Noah led his family and what's amazing is his wife and his children, they followed his leadership. And here's the big idea, here's what Noah did. He talked to other people about the Lord. He went to work and he led his family. If you wanna be a great man, there's a great list.

- [Congregation] Amen. Ultimately just talk to people about the Lord, do your job and lead your family and leave the rest in God's hands. What I find really curious about the story as well is that we learn a lot about God from the story. Number one, God is loving. We'll look at the story and many people will judge God. What's interesting is we're not to judge God, God judges us. And if we are only sinning all the time and he told us previously in Genesis 6, that there was violence, that people were just damaging and attacking and harming one another continually. We now live in a world that is much like that. We now use violence as our entertainment. It's something that we find interesting. God finds it devastating. The reason that God brought an end to human life is that if he didn't end human life, human life would end. If God doesn't bring an end to the evil, then evil brings an end to mankind. And what happens is we look at God and we say, "God, I want you to deal with all the evil." God's like, "Well, you're evil too, well, except for me." But everybody feels that way. So either God deals with everyone or no one. And if he is loving, he has to deal with everyone. In addition though, God is patient, He's waited 1,656 years. And then he tells Noah, "I'm gonna save you, and I'm gonna send you as a preacher. And you're gonna build a boat, and anybody who wants to get on the boat can get on the boat."

- [Congregation] Wow.

- And Noah preaches and prepares for 120 years. How many of you, God's patience is incredible.

- [Congregation] Yes.

- How many of you God's patience is incredible with you? That's me, like, let me just tell you that, I'm sick of me. Right, I can't imagine how sick God is of me. And ever since the resurrection of Jesus, God's just proven incredible patience. He waited 1,656 years, and since the resurrection of Jesus, he's been waiting a few thousand. And what we see is not only God's love and God's patience, but God's justice. God shuts the door. Now God could have assigned this to Noah and his family. He could have said, put a pulley up there, put a rope on it, get in the ark and pull it. Or they could have played rock, paper, scissors, somebody go out and shut the door. Bad day for you. Instead, God shuts the door. Let me tell you this, it says in Hebrews 9:27, the Holy Spirit brings this first to mind. "It's appointed once for a man to die, then judgment." There's a day that God is appointed for your last day. And there is a day that God is appointed for everyone's last day. And what happens is we tell people about the Lord and we want them to convert and we want them to be saved. And they don't. Noah did this with extended family and friends and relatives and neighbors and people that he grew up with and his kids played little league with. And he's pleading with them for 120 years. And then there's a day when there is no more opportunity for salvation. And some of you wonder, once someone dies, well, what could I have said, what could I have done? God shut the door. God shut the door. Your job is to tell them about the Lord. Their job is to make a decision. His job is to determine their last day.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Everybody do their part. Can you imagine this for Noah and his family? I just sort of see them on the precipice of the opening to the boat. Just preaching, they see the rain falling. "Last chance, the Lord loves you. My God forgives, my God is a God of grace. My God will save you, my God has provided a way for you. It's not too late."

- [Congregation member] Yes.

- No one comes. And it's not Noah's fault and it's not God's fault. And then God shuts the door. This had to be pretty incredible because I'm presuming that once the rains came and then the water started to rise, that there would be people beating on the door, but it will not be opened. Friends, there is appointed once for a man to die, then judgment. You're gonna die, and you're gonna stand before God. And the opportunity for salvation ends with your last breath. There is no second chance. There is no after death opportunity. There is life and there is judgment. And what we see here is that destruction is much faster and easier than building and rebuilding. Humanity, at this point has been building for 1,656 years. They have built families, civilizations, societies, cities, technology and progress, and it's all gone in 40 days. It took 40 days to eliminate what took 1,656 years to create. And the moral of the story for you and I is this, you can spend years building your marriage and seconds destroying it. You could spend years building your family and moments destroying it. You could spend years building your business and days destroying it. We spent five years building this church and it only takes a few weeks to destroy it. That ultimately building something is very hard and rebuilding something is very hard and destroying something is much easier and quicker. Humanity is literally going to need to start

over. No cities, no materials, all of that collective wisdom and experience over time is gone in the flood. So then it raises a few questions. And what I want to do is I want to answer some of the most common questions that come regarding the flood story. So if you're new to Trinity Church, we're honored to have you. If you're joining us online at RealFaith, we're honored to have you. I tend to go a little longer and we tend to go a little deeper because I believe in a world filled with lies, we need more truth. And in a day that is filled with things that are not going to help you, God's word is going to be most helpful to you.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- And I don't wanna just tell you what to think. I wanna teach you how to think. Okay and so the question that I wanna answer now is, is the flood historical or mythical? And some would say it's mythical, it's like a parable. There are parables in the Bible. These are stories that teach a point without an actual historical occurrence. And so the question is, would that fall in this category? My position is that it is historical. Here are my three reasons. Number one, "Biblically, Noah and the flood are mentioned by Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jesus, Luke, Hebrews, and Peter." Okay and again, it's in the study guide. Study guide's free, realfaith.com, go to the store, grab a copy on your way out. My sermon notes are up there, it's all available. This is interesting too. "Historically, numerous ancient civilizations, including Babylon, Mesopotamia, Sumeria, Assyria and the ancient Epic of Gilgamesh have Flood stories with similar details." The Epic of Gilgamesh is an interesting one. He was an actual king. He's known historically, we actually know of his father. He ruled and reigned in ancient Uruk, which is basically near modern-day Iraq, so he's from the same region as the flood and the Epic of Gilgamesh talks about a flood. And the story says that there are "evil people and a God or gods bring a flood. A boat is built, a man with his wife and his kids and animals get on the boat, that after the water subsides, they send birds out. Eventually the people exit and worship God or the gods, and a rainbow appears in the sky." Now some will say that the Epic of Gilgamesh was the precursor to the story of Genesis, it wasn't. That Noah survived the flood, he told the story, it was passed on orally until it was written down by Moses. But it would've been known by people prior to it being written down because it was carried forth orally. Number three, "Geologically, there are anomalies that could be explained by a Flood." For example, if you climb to the top of certain mountains, you're gonna find seashells. The question is, why did that happen? So what I would submit to you is, the flood is historical, not mythical. And there are, I looked at one scholar and he's traced all of the flood narratives throughout the ancient world. He actually found 73 different flood narratives in the ancient world. Now they may have different details, but they're all explaining the same geological phenomenon. Well, not only did the flood come and again, God saved some people from disaster and he saved some through it. And if you're going through a hard time, I'm sorry, but God can save you through it. That's the hope of the story of Noah.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- God might heal your cancer or he might deliver you through the cancer. God might save your marriage or deliver you through the divorce. The story of Noah is they're not gonna get around

the flood, they gotta go through it. Some years ago, our family went through the most difficult season of our whole life. God saved us through it. And the good news is he saved our whole family. And that's what he's gonna do for Noah's family. Chapter 8, "But God," this is the good news, here's the hope. "But God remembered Noah," And it doesn't mean that God had forgotten, but that God had made a promise, and now he's gonna act on that promise. Let me tell you this friends, there are two things, there is God's promise and God's timing.

- [Congregation member] Yes.

- God makes a promise. You're like, "God, I thought you promised." He's like, "Well, it's not my time." So God remembering is him acting on his promise. "God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained and the waters receded from the earth continually." So it rained for 40 days and 40 nights. "At the end of 150 days" that's for the water to recede. So we're looking at almost a year in total, "the waters had abated and in the seventh month," again, specific detail and timing, "on the 17th day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat." That is modern day between Turkey and Russia. The highest point is 17,000 feet high. "The waters continued to abate until the 10th month, in the 10th month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen." The water is beginning to recede. "At the end of the 40 days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and he sent forth a raven." I'll explain that in a moment. "It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and he took her" the dove "and brought her back into the ark with him. He waited another seven days, and again, he sent forth a dove out of the ark. And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided on the earth." The worst is over. "Then he waited another seven days and sent forth a dove, and she did not return to him anymore." Must be sufficient for life "In the 601st year, in the first month, the first day of the month," again, great specificity and historicity, "the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry." What happens here is that the flood comes and then it takes time to recede. And when he sends out these two birds, a raven is a tough bird and a dove is a tender bird. And a raven is a carnivore and a dove is an herbivore. And sending out the raven first, he's looking for signs of animal life. Is anything out there? And sending forth a dove, he's looking for the presence of any plant life. And what's interesting to this day, that symbol of a dove with an olive branch in its mouth is still a global universal symbol of peace. In addition, the reason that the ground was dry, it says that God sent a great wind to dry the ground. Now, again, the original recipients of this story, they were in the wilderness. They had just escaped Egypt and they had just survived the equivalent of a mini flood. The mini flood was, as God's people were being delivered, like Noah to worship him. The reason that God saves and delivers us is to worship him. That ultimately they were saved and delivered, they were escaping captivity,

slavery in Egypt, and they arrived, God's people did, a nation of a few million. They arrived at the edge of the Red Sea, and God parted it. And then God sent a wind to dry the ground so that they could walk through it. And God's people were delivered through the flood, the mini flood, and then their enemies who sought to pursue them were trapped in the flood and drowned. They had just experienced a mini flood of sorts and God drying the ground. And here, they are hearing the story of God flooding the earth and drying the ground. So they would've had this keenly aware in their mind's eye, 'cause that was their recent experience. Now what's interesting is the specificity of the report. The boat came to rest on Mt. Ararat. Again, it's a mountain range that extends between Turkey and Russia, the highest point of which is 17,000 feet high. Now, ever since this was written, people have wondered, Is there any archeological evidence that this actually transpired? In 1951, I'll show it to you in a moment, there was a geological find to where, in the mountains of Ararat, there appears to be this formation that is the size and scope of an ancient ark. And it is covered with top soil, as you would expect through erosion and time. More recently, because of technological advancement, we've been able to do thermal imaging and x-rays. And let me show you what they found in the mountains of Ararat. There's the mountains of Ararat. That's the impression that is the same shape as the ark. And it is 300 cubits, 515 feet, exactly what Genesis says. In addition, the thermal imaging shows that it is three stories high on the inside, just as Genesis says That is petrified timber deck and ancient, petrified rivet. And so what's happened now is geologists and archeologists, they have petitioned the Turkish government for the right to dig and excavate and to see exactly what lies beneath the surface of Mount Ararat. Be interesting to see. Here's what I do know. Historically, archeology has been a good friend of Christianity, that when God says that people and places exist, people doubt it until they dig it up. Okay. And so, as Christians, people will be like, you're anti-science no, actually we are pro-science and we really like archeology. And if you're a bit of a nerd as I am, there is something called the Biblical Archeological Review and it just traces all of the most recent archeological digs and finds that corroborate and confirm biblical teaching. Well, this leads to another question and it's the big debated question on the flood. And the question is, was the flood local or global? Was it in a region or did it cover all of planet Earth? How many of you have heard this debate? Okay, how many of you have had this debate? How many of you didn't know about it, but now you're gonna have this debate? This will be fun to talk about in your life group this week. And what we like to say is that, there are closed-handed issues and there are open-handed issues. Closed-handed issues are things that God's people need to agree on. Open-handed, we can disagree agreeably. So God judges sinners and the wage for sin is death. We believe that. How big was the flood, was big enough. I'll explain that in a moment, and some will say, "It was a global flood that covered the whole planet." Others will say that it was a localized flood that just covered the sinners who all lived in one place and weren't distributed across the totality of planet Earth in that day. I'll give you, first of all, the case for a global flood, I'll give you both. Here's the case for a global flood. In Genesis 1:1 God says, it says that "God created the earth," And then we just read in 7:6, "the flood of the waters came upon the earth." If God made it all, he flooded at all, can say that's how we read it. Number two, "A plain reading of the Genesis account seems to report a global Flood." If you just read it, at first glance, it sounds global. Number three, "Most Christians throughout history have believed in a global Flood." That's been the predominant

perspective of God's people. Number four, "God can and does do miracles." We looked in Genesis, in the beginning, God made everything from nothing by the sheer power and force of his word. And then he created a man from the dust of the earth. If He can do that, he could do whatever He wants. "Geological oddities" number five, "point to a global flood, for example, seashells on mountaintops." so like, well, how did that get here? Number six, "Human sin cursed all of creation, so the Flood covered all that was cursed." And number seven, "Cultures across the world have Flood stories, including the Babylonians, the Chinese, the Indians, the Greeks, the Mayans, and the Islanders of the south Pacific." So this would be the cumulative case for a global flood. Conversely, here's the case for a local flood. And it obviously wasn't just contained in one area. Even if it was a local flood, it spilled over. We're not talking about a jello flood. You know, it's a water flood. And again, this is all in your notes. Number one, "Noah reported what he saw and he did not see the entire planet." It's one guy looking out a boat. He's like, here's what I see. Number two, "The Hebrew word for earth or land is *eretz*, it can mean anything from the promised land to the whole planet." So it might be referring just to the promised land being flooded, that place to belong to God's people. Number three, "Genesis was first read by Hebrews in the wilderness." And they were trying to get back to the promised land. They weren't thinking about what was happening in Dubuque, Iowa or Taipei, Taiwan. There was nobody there. They didn't have that photo of the planet that we have since astronauts were sent into space. All they know is what they saw. Number four "No one lived globally until God scattered them" That's coming up in Genesis 11, following the tower of Babel, "so a local Flood would've brought judgment on every sinner" Everybody lived and what we would now call basically the Middle East. Nobody lived anywhere else. So if you want to kill all the sinners, all you gotta do is just get that piece of dirt, that's where everyone is. Number five, "Geological oddities for example, seashells atop mountains occurred when God made the mountains and the seas" Genesis 1:9 said that there was water and then God pushed the mountains up out of the water. And so Genesis could account for those geological oddities. Number six, "Despite the earth being 70% covered in water, the amount of water needed to cover Mount Everest" if it was covering all of the earth in a global flood, "is roughly eight times the amount of water on the earth." And number seven, "The housing and caring for every type of animal on the earth, including their global redistribution, seems implausible." The question is, well, how do we get koalas in Australia and other species that don't exactly seem to fit the record? And the answer is there may have been a local flood and these animals were for Noah and his family, once they exit the ark, to begin ranching and farming, and to also offer sacrifices to God, but then the other animals on the earth could still be alive and they eventually could repopulate the promised land. How many of you believe in a global flood? How many of you believe in a local flood? How many of you are totally confused? Okay. It's something interesting to consider, but here's what's I think more curious, how many people do you think died in this flood? See, we get worried about the land and the animals, don't overlook the people. The point was to judge the sinners. Now it's impossible to estimate the total human population at that time, but it is perhaps even as high as our current planet. That today there's about 8 billion people alive on planet Earth. And so we don't know, we know that they lived a long time and we saw from the genealogy of Genesis, they had big families, but there was also a lot of violence and murder. So it's hard to denote what the entire population was, but it could be anywhere from hundreds of millions to

billions. Just imagine this, in one day or a series of days, everyone in America dies. That's what happened. And perhaps everyone in India or China died. Except for one family. And so the key for us is not to get too distracted by the animals, the mountains, the big boat or the flood, but to determine, how do you get saved? 'Cause if everybody died, but one family lived, I wanna know about that one family. And I want that same thing for my family. And here's what we read, that Noah worships God. Genesis 8: 14-22, "In the second month on the 27th day of the month," again, great specificity and historicity, "the earth had dried out. Then God said to Noah, "Go out of the ark" Isn't it interesting Noah didn't leave the ark until God told him. See, the key is you've gotta wait for God's word and God's timing. I see this all the time. I've done this many times in my life. I know God's will, but I get ahead of God's timing. "God said to him, "Go out from the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you." He was spared and his family was spared. At the end of the day, friends, I don't know what's gonna happen to everybody, but I want you and I to pay special attention to our spouse and our kids. "Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh, birds and animals, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may swarm on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." "So Noah went out," he obeyed. Again, he never speaks, God speaks, he obeys, "and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark." This is incredible. This is one of the most significant moments in human history. "Then Noah built an altar to the Lord," What's he gonna do? He's gonna worship, he's gonna have church, "and he took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar." I'll explain that in a moment. "When the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma," it's using something called anthropomorphism. It's speaking of God in human language, John Calvin calls this, baby talk. It's how a parent talks to a little kid, trying to use language that they can comprehend. "When the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth." We still are sinners, but God is going to continue to be patient. "Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature I've done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat summer and winter, day and night shall not cease." God's not going to interrupt or disrupt the seasons of life until the second coming of Jesus. So here's what's very interesting. The door opens. There's only eight people on planet Earth. And Noah is the leader of his family. It said previously that Enoch walked with God. It told us in addition that Noah walked with God and here Noah is what? Taking his first step, in this new season of his walk with God. And his wife and his sons and their wives are going to follow his leadership. He's like the new Adam. She's like the new Eve. Here's the new creation. The first step that Noah takes is crucial. Let me tell you this, your walk with God is the most important thing you have, more important than anything.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- And if you are a man, your wife and your kids for generations are probably gonna walk in your footsteps. So the steps that you take are significant for generations. Noah needs to get this first step right. He takes a step off the boat. And the first thing he does, he builds an altar and he

worships God. Question, did God tell him to do this? No. No. This was out of Noah's heart. Previously, it said that the inclination of everyone's heart was only evil continually and all the time. So what God did, he gave grace or favor to Noah. He was saved by grace, as we are saved by grace. And then God does the incredible, he gives him a new heart. His old heart didn't want to worship and obey God. How many of you, that's your old heart? But I didn't wanna worship God, and I sure wasn't gonna obey God. And then God gave you grace and he saved you. He saved you from yourself. We are saved from Satan, sin, death, hell and the wrath of God. But we're also saved from ourselves. So God gives him a new heart. You know what his new heart wants to do, wants to obey God and worship God. This is where the non-Christian doesn't understand the Christian. The non-Christian is like, why would you wanna listen to God? Why would you wanna obey God? Why would you wanna worship God? The answer is, he gave me a new heart. That's what my new heart wants to do. And the reason that you don't understand that is you still got the old heart. And so until God takes out the old heart, what Ezekiel calls the heart of stone and puts in the new heart that's also called the heart of flesh, tender toward the Lord, you don't have new desires. You've only got old desires. This is why you are here. God's given you a new heart. I didn't wanna obey God, but I do now. And I didn't believe God's word, but I do now. And I didn't worship God, but I want to now. That just tells you that God has saved you and given you grace, as he did Noah. And this is the first human sacrifice of any animal in the history of the world. Now previously, when God clothed our first parents, Adam and Eve, he may have sacrificed an animal, we don't know. But here is the first time that a person is sacrificing an animal and it's given before the law. So it's not till sometime later that Moses writes the law and in places like Leviticus, it gives us the conditions for sinners to offer sacrifices. But here he has the law written on his heart. He has the Holy Spirit, so he knows what to do. The point is this: even if you don't know everything that the Bible says, if you have the Holy Spirit, he'll tell you what to do.

- [Congregation] Yes.

- And what happens here is a burnt offering later in the law, in the provision of Leviticus, it's the offering that was given by a sinner, who acknowledges that they are a sinner, and that the wage for sin is death, and that they should die. And Noah gets off the boat and hear me gentlemen with this, the most important thing your family can see is you worship God.

- [Congregation member] Yes, Amen.

- They need to see you worshipping God. And they need to see you and I, confessing our sin.

- [Congregation member] That's right.

- In offering a sacrifice, Noah is saying, "I'm a sinner. I'm sacrificing this animal as a symbol that I should have died with everyone else." Noah doesn't get off the boat and say, "I'm a great guy, you kids are lucky I'm your dad. Honey, you got, I'm just telling you right now. Your husband's pretty awesome." "You're welcome for the boat." He gets off the boat, there's no arrogance,

there's no hubris. There's no claiming of any participation in this saving. He's stunned, he's shocked. This is a traumatic moment. "Everyone and everything is gone, except for me and my family. And we should have died, 'cause I'm no better than anyone else." But God gave me grace. And he saved me so I can worship him. And the only reason that I was spared is God saved me and spoke to me." And what happens then, let me say this too. There is a stupid teaching within Christianity and it's incredibly more popular among progressive Christianity, something called universalism. Everybody gets saved, everybody goes to heaven, everything's gonna be fine. This is a precursor to the end. Jesus says, "Narrow is the way and few find it." You pass through a narrow door and few choose it. Broad is the way to destruction and narrow is the way to salvation. This here is a warning to you and I. Everything's not going to be fine and everyone's not going to be okay. You need to receive grace from God. You need to hear from God, you need to obey God and walk with God and worship God. Otherwise there is no salvation. In addition, God here responds to Noah. It's pretty shocking. Noah offers a sacrifice and it says that it arises into the presence of the Lord and it is sweet, and he responds and speaks a blessing. Similarly, when you and I get together, we offer not just a sacrifice, but a sacrifice of praise and revelation. The book of conclusions, that sort of concludes Genesis, the book of beginnings. It says that when we pray and worship, that our offering, our sacrifice of praise, it goes into the presence of God. And it says that it is sweet in his presence. That in a moment when we sing together, the experience in the presence of God will be the same as it was in the days of Noah. That you and I get to send our praise into his presence, and he finds it pleasing. There are two things here that point to Jesus, an ark and a sacrifice. The ark is the means by which people are delivered and saved. For us, we are saved in Christ. Paul uses this language repeatedly in the New Testament. You're saved "in" Christ. They went "in" the ark. If you are "in" Christ, he's your ark. He's the one who saves you from judgment and death. In addition, there is a sacrifice and that is pointing to the fact that there needs to be substitution for the sinner. The wage for sin, consequence for sin is death. And ultimately Jesus comes as the sacrifice. When John the baptizer sees him, he says, "Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. When Jesus Christ dies on the cross, in our place, for our sins, as our substitute, He is the sacrifice for sinners. So when you see the ark, think of Jesus. When you see the sacrifice, think of Jesus. And they were ultimately saved to worship, and you and I are saved to worship. Now let me conclude with two prophecies because Genesis doesn't tell us just what happened, but what always happens. The Bible is not an old book, it's an eternal book. Because it is timeless, it is always timely. There are two prophecies in the New Testament that tell us how Noah relates to you and I, and the future of the human race. The first is from Peter, Jesus lead disciple. Second Peter 3: 3-7, and let me tell you this, this is the day in which we live. God waited patiently in the days of Noah for 1,656 years. And since the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, he's been waiting even longer than that, more patience. "...scoffers will come in the last days." The last days are the period of time between the ascension of Jesus and the second coming of Jesus. You and I are living in the last days. "...following their own sinful desires." Just like the days of Noah. "And they will say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" They're going to mock the patience of God. You're gonna see next week, God says, "I'm so patient, I'll put a rainbow in the sky to just show you how much I love you." And then we repurpose that to mock him. "They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" We've been

waiting a very long time. This old myth is not coming true. "...all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." Nothing's changed. "For they deliberately overlooked this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water" Genesis 1 and 2, "and through water by the word of God," we looked at the fact that God said, "And it was so." "and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished." Noah "By the same word, the heavens and the earth that now exist are stored up for fire." The first judgment was water. The second judgment is fire. God waited patiently to bring the judgment of water. He's been even more patient to bring the judgment of fire. Everyone just mocked God until they realized that God was telling the truth. Let God be true and every man a liar. And to this day, the scoffers and mockers continue, "being kept until the day of judgment" There is a day. There is a day coming, my friend, when God will close the door on human history.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- It's a day of judgment, "and the destruction of the ungodly." My job like Noah's is to tell you the truth. Your job, like theirs, is to make the most important decision you will ever make. Are you going to believe God's word, repent of your sin, receive the Lord Jesus as your Savior and walk with God? Are you going to be a worshiper or a mocker? Are you gonna be a worshiper or a scoffer? Are you going to be one who laughs until God gets the last laugh? And then Jesus, we'll let Jesus have the closing word. Here's Jesus prophecy about Noah's flood. Matthew 24:37-39, "As it was in the days of

- [Congregation] Noah

- Noah What's a mythical ancient story to scare people? That's not what Jesus says. "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man." Jesus is coming. He's coming to judge the living and the dead. He's coming to lift the curse. He's coming to bring the kingdom of God. "For in the days before the flood, people were what? Eating and drinking. Just doing whatever they wanted, Marrying, sleeping with their boyfriend or girlfriend, racking up debt, going to events, just like us. "...up to the day that Noah entered the ark, and they knew, nothing." You would've think, after a few years of pandemic, that we would believe that the earth is cursed. And after every day, waking up to see a body count that we would deal with our own mortality. And we don't. We know "nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man." What Jesus is talking about here is what the apostle Paul differentiates between the active and the passive wrath of God. When people think of the wrath of God, they only think of the active wrath of God. What precedes the active wrath of God is the passive wrath of God. God let everybody do whatever they wanted until he flooded the earth. He allowed passive wrath until he had active wrath. Today, God is allowing passive wrath until Jesus comes back, and then there is active wrath. If you're living independent of God, you're living in the wrath of God. If you're living ignorant of God, you're living in the wrath of God. If you're living disobedient to God, you're living in the wrath of God. And all you're doing every day is just storing up wrath for the day of judgment,

when the passive wrath culminates into the active wrath, My words are strong because this decision is crucial, It says that in the days of Noah, they were making plans. What are we gonna eat tonight? Where do you want to go for drinks? Let's send out our invitations. When are we gonna get married? It's great to plan the days of your life. But the most important day to plan is the last day of your life.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- If you're not ready to stand before your creator and give an account for your life and sin, then all of your planning is in vain, 'cause the most important day of your life is the last day. And I love you. So here's what I'm telling you. You need Jesus Christ. We all need Jesus Christ. And I don't know when, but the day is coming, when you and I will see Jesus Christ, the Creator, set his feet on his creation. He will destroy Satan and demons. He will sentence sinners to their eternal judgment. He will raise the dead. He will lift the curse. He will bring a kingdom that never ends. And Jesus Christ is the greater and better Noah.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Father God, we come now just with sober humbled hearts, God, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. God, you are not to be mocked, you're to be worshiped. You're not to be scoffed, you're to be worshiped. You're not to be ignored, you're to be worshiped. And so God, I ask that if anyone doesn't know you, that they would soberly deal with their sin and that they would have this holy reverential right fear that they are dealing with a living God. Jesus, thank you that you have come into this fallen, cursed, crooked world. Thank you that you have been the sacrifice for sin, that you are the ark in which we find salvation. And Lord Jesus, we look forward to your second coming. We thank you that you have shortened human life because we couldn't bear to live eight or 900 years in this world of increasing wickedness. And Lord, thank you that if we belong to you, this is as close to hell as we will ever be, and Heaven is coming. And so help us to be saved through it until we're with you on the other side of it, we pray in Jesus' good name. Amen.