

Restart

Genesis 6-9

Central Idea: Even in God's judgment, He seeks the righteous and preserves them!

Introduction

All Scripture tells us what we need to know about God, creation, and redemption. The main theme of God and His people permeates the whole of Scripture. In some places, we long for more information, for more of the story, or details that we would have included if we wrote it, but we didn't. In these times, we have at least two options. The first is to use our redeemed minds to learn what we can and leave the rest to God. The other is to try to fill in the blanks.

Our Western mindset demands that we fill in the blanks. We don't do well with mystery and tension. So we try to answer what Scripture has not answered. Today, as we study the Flood and the times of Noah, when people were living for centuries and weird, cosmic, mythological stuff seemed to be happening, we need to keep our heads. But that doesn't mean we can't allow our minds and imaginations to wonder what it was like back then.

The setting for the Flood and Noah is that the earth was getting worse. There seemed to be less and less to redeem in it, and it had essentially gone so far that it could not be brought back. I like to watch a couple of shows that deal with restorations on TV, and sometimes, no matter how much money a person has to sink into a project, it's just not going to be restored. This is what happened in the times of Noah. Rather than try to redeem a completely evil world, God opted to start over.

Text – Genesis 6:1-8

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." ¹⁶ To the woman he said, "I will surely

multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”¹⁷ And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Text – Genesis 4:8-14

⁸ Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?”¹⁰ And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground.¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.¹² When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.”¹³ Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.¹⁴ Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

I. God must deal with utter wickedness (6:1-8).

A. Sin teaches us to test the limits of God’s kindness.

- i. In Genesis 1, God created a good creation. And yet, by Genesis 4, the first murder had happened, and only in the second generation of humanity. By Genesis 6, as humans multiplied and time passed, the situation got much worse.
- ii. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil had given the moral decisions to humanity, and humanity had turned to choose evil over and over so much so that God could not see any redemptive purpose as a whole in His creation.
- iii. Sin had so ruined His creation that God would have to judge the earth and start over. In Genesis six, we see the beginning of the “last straw” that defies God’s grace and causes Him to act decisively.
- iv. Genesis six records an event that baffles the mind today. Of course, it is most likely that Moses’ original readers may have understood more of the situation, but today, there are a lot of questions for us!
- v. This event that occurs is considered one of the most depraved acts that can be committed against God. The language of the chapter is clear that this directly opposed God’s plan for His creation.
- vi. There are several theories of what happened, so I will present the three best theories to you quickly this morning. These theories center around

what scripture means by “sons of God,” “daughters of men” and “Nephilim” or “Giants” in some translations.

1. The “Sons of God” are angelic beings or demons that inhabit or take over human males and have multiple female partners (daughters of men) in sexual relations, which produce the Nephilim, giants that are somehow genetically different.
 2. The “Sons of God” are rulers who take their divinity seriously and at will choose to have sexual relations with any women they choose, whether they are married or not, sort of like a first right of the nobleman. Their offspring are the Nephilim, who have fallen from God’s grace, but are famous.
 3. The “Sons of God” are from the line of Seth and the “Daughters of men” are from the line of Cain. The Nephilim are either their offspring, representing fallenness and possibly giants, or the Nephilim are a separate group that also lived at the same time as this event.
- vii. There are, of course, opposition points to all three main views, which produce hybrids of each view or even other ideas that are not popularly held.
- viii. The Scriptures do not tell us which one is correct. The account simply states the infraction and those involved, not the details. So we are left to consider what might have happened. The sin committed would be slightly different in each instance:
1. Angels or demons, part of the spiritual realm, violated the human and physical realm through lust and seduction and animal-like sex, reducing God’s pinnacle creation to nothing more than animals with sexual drives and urges.
 2. The rulers would have been committing polygamy and adultery of all sorts, all kinds of sexual deviances for the way God originally set up sex only through marriage in Genesis 1-2. They would also be calling themselves gods, usurping God’s rightful title.
 3. The godly line of Seth would be mixing in the most perverted and profane way with the line of Cain, the line of sin. The people of God of that time were polluting their purity without sensitivity to God’s will, essentially running the possibility of righteousness to continue in any line of humans on the earth.
- ix. There is an awful lot of discussion about the Nephilim. What or who are they? Scholars differ widely on this, mainly because there simply is not a lot of information in the Bible about the Nephilim.

- x. Here is the information you find in Scripture: The Nephilim are only mentioned here in Genesis 6:4 and also in Numbers 13:33. The context of Numbers is that they are mentioned in a section related to people who are taller than the Israelites, so they have become known as giants.
 - xi. But the word, Nephilim, means in Hebrew, “those who have fallen.” This could be a title for anyone who has sinned or who even trips over their own feet. The idea is most likely a moral one.
 - xii. The problem is that there is not a lot of information to make a decision concerning who the sons of God, the daughters of men, and the Nephilim are. My personal opinion is the third option.
 - xiii. The point of this episode is to show that humanity has gone over the edge of God’s grace, taken His kindness and taken advantage of it. Now God must act in holiness toward humanity.
- B. Sin teaches us the ways of evil instead of God’s ways.
- i. Verses 5-8 bring into view God’s reaction to humanity in general, but especially after these heinous acts before Him, mentioned in 6:1-4. So God reacts with sorrow to humanity’s choices.
 - ii. He must not only be sorrowful, but must act in a holy and redemptive way. But there are times when there is no redemptive quality of a thing. This is one of those times.
 - iii. It is hard to face the truth that God saw in humanity and His once-good and beautiful creation. We are so used to hearing about God’s redemption that we pass over the dark night that came before the dawn.
 - iv. These verses share with us God’s perspective about this creation He has made. While He declared all good in Genesis one, by this time, the declaration was that there was no good left.
 - v. Many will point to God’s judgments and the times when He seems so mean and unrelenting, or they will point to passages like this to show how much God hated us, but that is not it at all.
 - vi. God did not react out of anger or resentment. He acted out of sorrow and pity. He had offered only the best to humanity, but humanity by-and-large chose a different path. He must now bring the consequences of that choice.
 - vii. So in sorrow, God must now, because He is holy and because He is sovereign, do the only redemptive thing that is left to do. He must blot out the sin-tainted creatures of His world, and start afresh and anew.
 - viii. One note of redemption is found in the last verse of the section though, as Noah, one man left, finds favor in God’s eyes, because he is a righteous man and seeks to be good in a world full of evil.
 - ix. **Application:** The world today is just as bad as it was in Noah’s day, and maybe even worse in some ways, and better in others. We are like Noah.

We stand as the righteous in a world that is going to hell at the speed of light. I like how Paul talks about the restrainer in 2 Thessalonians 2, for I believe that those who are righteous in the world are the only reason God has allowed in His grace this craziness to continue! We are all part of that restraining power because of our desire to serve God!

II. God always redeems whatever righteousness is left (6:9-8:19).

A. There always remains some good work of God.

- i. Verse 8 turns this story around. As we have seen throughout Genesis, God is a God of redemption. He is looking for ways to redeem what is lost, what is ruined, by sin.
- ii. And so God shows favor to a man named Noah. Noah is a righteous man. In a world full of people headed toward wickedness and thinking and acting on evil every time, Noah is different.
- iii. We live in a world that needs men especially, who realize that they are called as spiritual leaders in their homes and in their workplaces. These are men who are awakened to the power of righteousness and integrity.
- iv. We are celebrating Father's Day today, and we have many good men in our church. I thank God for them all, and hope that we find ways to utilize their righteousness for the cause of Christ.
- v. Noah receives a call from God and becomes the seed, if you will, of a new thing God is doing. Despite the ridicule of people around him, Noah listens to God rather than others.
- vi. He does whatever God has told him to do, no matter how insane or futile it seems. The people ridiculed him for his crazy idea that God would judge the world in the flood.
- vii. The men of our world today must feel that their job is sometimes futile as well, as society mocks them, calls them stupid, foolish, intolerant, demanding, judgmental, and a host of other explicatives. How can a man lead his family when his value is taught by society to be worthless?
- viii. The Church needs to stand behind its men and declare the truth that God has spoken about them. We need men of God to rise up in our time more than ever. We need Noah's around our world today, men who will listen to God and not society.
- ix. Noah does as God commands, and he reaps the benefits of it when the time comes for the flood. And God wipes out humanity and all breathing things from the earth, save Noah and his family. God starts over with Noah because Noah is a man who at least attempts righteousness.
- x. **Application:** The men of this church need to know that they make a priceless contribution to the lives of their families and the church family. They get plenty of flack from work and society. No one's perfect, but our

men need to know they're making a difference. The worst thing that can destroy a man's drive to be his best is to treat him as though he is worthless.

B. God fixes wickedness through different means.

- i. We have seen God react to wickedness in many different ways so far. Since the fall, where God cursed creation, and yet offered the first sacrifice for humans, to Cain and Abel where He protected Cain despite his sin, we have seen God reacting on an individual level.
- ii. But for the first time, God addresses social issues and groups of sinful people as a whole in Genesis six. He will also address groups in Genesis 11. Despite God's grace, sin continues to become more and more rooted in humanity.
- iii. God performs a restart, as it were, for creation, where He removes wickedness on a mass level, encompassing the whole of the planet in a re-creative flood.
- iv. This flood will change the landscape completely, will give a fresh start. It will provide a way for God to make all things new again. A fresh start was needed, because sin had become so ingrained that it could not be differentiated from God's good creation.
- v. Sin does that. It's a destructive force that ruins all that is good. It starts in a person's life and gets worse as more sinful people congregate into societies.
- vi. For the first time, God acts on a global scale since creation, and the results are that He repopulates the earth with Noah's children. God sometimes has to start in a new creation.
- vii. In fact, God does this at the moment of salvation. The old creation is so tainted and taken over by sin that God makes a new creation in which to place His Holy Spirit.
- viii. We know this because re-creating is one of the things God regularly does. He does it here with the Flood, and He does it at salvation on an individual basis, and He will make a new heavens and a new earth someday as well!
- ix. Noah's account gives the precedent for what god will do with tainted creation from now on. God could have chosen to just shut down operation creation, but He does not. He makes a restart instead!
- x. **Application:** God wants you to be a new creation as well, and to live and act within His good creative bounds. When He makes you new, you are still living in an old and tainted world, and that environment can destroy the new creation. We must constantly be open to the Holy Spirit so that we do not ruin God's creation with the way things used to be!

III. God sets new boundaries for righteousness (8:20-9:29)

- A. God promises and makes covenants that last.
- i. After the flood when the waters subside and Noah begins anew with his family, God promises Noah through a covenant that though He will recreate, He will not use floods to do it anymore.
 - ii. We call this the Noatic Covenant, and its physical sign is the rainbow in the sky during mists and storms. God has promised that though it may rain, and even a partial or local flooding may occur, He will not judge the earth this way again.
 - iii. All of God's promises and covenants are initiated by Him. There's not one time where a human being comes to Him and demands that He do this or that. God chooses to put Himself in covenant with humanity.
 - iv. This new beginning is going to be different from the beginning of Genesis 1-3. Though God rids the world of decadent sin and the rampages of wickedness by whole societies, Noah still has free will, and sin is still in the world.
 - v. God takes this all into account in a rather interesting section in Genesis 8:20-9:17. He says specifically that humans are prone to wickedness in their heart (8:21).
 - vi. Noah offers a sweet sacrifice to the Lord, starting of the new creation on the right foot. God is pleased by Noah's offering and then gives the covenant to Noah that He will not flood the earth for humanity's punishment again.
 - vii. Then in the beginnings of chapter nine, we see God once again blessing His creation and telling them to multiply and fill the earth, like in Genesis 1-2. They have dominion on the earth and all animals fear them as they fear the Lord.
 - viii. Reminiscent of God's one rule of not eating the fruit from one tree in the Garden of Eden, God does initiate certain commands that keep humans from certain displeasing practices beginning in verse four.
 - ix. The blood or life of an animal or human is cherished very highly by God. He is the Lord of life and death, and when others violate His place in these matters, there are grave consequences.
 - x. God has no qualms about humans being sinful. He knows the intentions of their hearts, but He also still expects a high standard to be observed and followed. So God sets in motion laws that must be followed.
 - xi. The re-creation is different from its original. God does not call it good or see it is sinless, as before. Now God initiates rules of action for all beings, and the consequences for those actions.
 - xii. **Application:** We are God's new creation. The Bible tells us that if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation. Old things have passed away

and new things have come. But even with a new creation that is oriented toward godliness and the ways of God, we still live in a fallen world and can stumble into sin from time to time. God's grace is not just for our initial salvation, but He provides grace in these times as well! He is always being redemptive!

B. God preserves His people in the midst of evil.

- i. The account of Noah shows us one of the greatest truths of God's Word, that He preserves His people in times of utter wickedness. God shows us with Noah as the example that no matter how bad things get around us, He will use us redemptively.
- ii. Not only does God use Noah as the beginning righteous seed in His re-creation, but God also uses him to preserve righteousness. However, Noah teaches us that he is only human in this last passage.
- iii. In Genesis 9:18-29, we learn of one of Noah's stumbling in righteousness. Noah becomes a man of the soil. Although this could simply mean he learns how to farm, it also seems to hint at something more.
- iv. Humans are made of dust, and Cain was also a worker of the soil. There might be an indication that this is a dark moment in Noah's life. Who knows? Maybe it was his mid-life crisis!
- v. But Noah plants a vineyard and gets drunk off of the wine that he makes. Some preachers would stop right here and springboard into a sermon against alcohol and vineyards. But that doesn't seem to be the issue.
- vi. Throughout the Bible, while drinking in itself is not condemned and vineyards are used in positive imagery as well as negative imagery, getting drunk is a different matter. The Scriptures abound with warnings against drinking for what it leads to when one loses control of their faculties.
- vii. And this is what Noah does. He gets drunk and then exposes himself. This sets up the rather peculiar incident with Ham. Ham, one of his sons, goes into his father's tent and "sees his nakedness."
- viii. Then Ham goes and tells his brothers about it, and they come in backwards and cover Noah with a sheet so that his nakedness is not exposed.
- ix. So what did Ham do to his father in that tent? Scholars have active imaginations, and they postulate everything from castration to homosexual acts to Ham sleeping with his own mother.
- x. But we neglect to see in our culture, which does not put as high a premium on being clothed, what this is about. For many scholars, the text is clear that all Ham did was see his father naked.
- xi. But this is a big deal in this culture! Think back to Genesis three and the Fall. What was the first sign that things had changed for Adam and Eve

after partaking of the fruit? They noticed they were naked and were then filled with shame.

- xii. The shame of nakedness is one of the paramount worst nightmares of the culture, and this story has enough charge in it just with Ham seeing Noah's nakedness. The fact that he didn't try to cover it up or deal with it in a righteous way becomes the subject of his curse.
- xiii. The sensitivity of biblical culture toward nudity is regularly attested and nakedness is always seen as a disgrace. This would have been enough for the raciness of this event.
- xiv. We see then that Ham, who fathers the Canaanites that we will see later in Genesis and biblical history, is cursed by his father for his indecent response to the situation, while the other sons are blessed.
- xv. Once again we see blessing and cursing in Genesis, and it will not stop for the rest of the book, for it is a central theme of Genesis. Think of how many times we see blessing and cursing in this book already, and how much more it will show up!
- xvi. This account seems to give the reasoning for why God has rejected the Canaanites later in history as well. God will not stand for sin in any generation.
- xvii. **Application:** The things that we do today will affect our children and the next couple of generations. We are like a stone thrown in a lake. The waves of our legacy will have an effect long after we are gone. How are we building and preserving our legacy? What will your legacy be? God can use you for great things, like Noah, and yet we can all fall short and cause a different type of legacy. We must remain diligent in our obedience to God!

Conclusion

The Flood essentially was a re-creation of creation, a do-over, a restart. God used Israel as His chosen people as another restart from the expanding evil, and then He sent Jesus to do a restart in the lives of individuals who would hear Him and obey Him. The Bible actually describes the work of salvation as the new birth or the new creation! God has been redemptively recreating for a long time, all in an effort to redeem some of the originally good creation He once had! He wants to make you a new creature if you don't already know Christ today. If you do, He wants you to live as His representative, His ambassador, of His coming Kingdom!

Action Points

- We are surrounded by sin in this world, but God still expects us to follow His high standards that bring the very best of an abundant and free life in Him. The challenge is to stand for holiness in these days like Noah did in his day.
- In what ways can you stand for God and His righteous desires today in your job, your school, your community and family? What types of wickedness in our day should be addressed by us?
- We all make mistakes as we are walking with God, but rather than make excuses, blame others or give up, we should get back up, repent and continue to walk with God. Jesus is our Advocate in these times!