

Genesis 6-9

The Story of the Flood

translated by
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Background In Genesis 1-3, God creates the heavens, the earth, and Adam and Eve, who serve as the parents of humanity. Throughout the generations, God maintains a deep concern about humankind and their earthly doings. He establishes a covenant, or solemn agreement, with humans as a way to protect those who remain faithful and loyal to him. When he finds them threatening this sacred covenant, God appoints one man, Noah, to act as a mediator between God and his people. Will God exact a punishment on those who have violated his covenant? What purpose will Noah have in protecting not only the Hebrew people but also the viability of humanity? Find the answers to these questions in Genesis 6-9.

CHAPTER 6

- 1 When men began to increase on earth and daughters were born to them,
- 2 the divine beings saw how beautiful the daughters of men were and took wives from among those that pleased them.—
- 3 The Lord said, “My breath shall not abide in man forever, since he too is flesh; let the days allowed him be one hundred and twenty years.”—
- 4 It was then, and later too, that the Nephilim appeared on earth—when the divine beings cohabited with the daughters of men, who bore them offspring. They were the heroes of old, the men of renown.
- 5 The Lord saw how great was man’s wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but evil all the time.

Reading Strategy
Identifying Chronological Order Which words in verse 4 help clarify the order of events?

6 And the Lord regretted that He had made man on earth, and His heart was saddened.

7 The Lord said, “I will blot out from the earth the men whom I created—men together with beasts, creeping things, and birds of the sky; for I regret that I made them.”

8 But Noah found favor with the Lord.

9 This is the line of Noah.—Noah was a righteous man; he was blameless in his age; Noah walked with God.—

10 Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 The earth became corrupt before God; the earth was filled with lawlessness.

12 When God saw how corrupt the earth was, for all flesh had corrupted its ways on earth,

13 God said to Noah, “I have decided to put an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with lawlessness because of them: I am about to destroy them with the earth.

14 Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make it an ark with compartments, and cover it inside and out with pitch.

15 This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits,¹ its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.

16 Make an opening for daylight in the ark, and terminate it within a cubit of the top. Put the entrance to the ark in its side; make it with bottom, second, and third decks.

17 “For My part, I am about to bring the Flood—waters upon the earth—to destroy all flesh under the sky in which there is breath of life; everything on earth shall perish.

18 But I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall enter the ark, with your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives.

19 And of all that lives, of all flesh, you shall take two of each into the ark to keep alive with you; they shall be male and female.

20 From birds of every kind, cattle of every kind, every kind of creeping thing on earth, two of each shall come to you to stay alive.

21 For your part, take of everything that is eaten and store it away, to serve as food for you and for them.”

22 Noah did so; just as God commanded him, so he did.

CHAPTER 7

1 Then the Lord said to Noah, “Go into the ark, with all your household, for you alone have I found righteous before Me in this generation.

2 Of every clean animal you shall take seven pairs, males and their mates, and of every animal that is not clean, two, a male and its mate;

3 of the birds of the sky also, seven pairs, male and female, to keep seed alive upon all the earth.

1. **cubits** ancient units of linear measure, about 18–22 inches each.

Vocabulary Builder

corrupt (kə rʌpt) *adj.*
spoiled by sin or dishonesty; rotten

Literary Analysis

Archetypal Setting and Dialogue Which precise details in God’s instructions help readers picture the ark?

Vocabulary Builder

covenant (kuv’ ə nənt) *n.*
serious, binding agreement

Reading Check

What reason does God give for putting an end to all living things on earth?

4 For in seven days' time I will make it rain upon the earth, forty days and forty nights, and I will blot out from the earth all existence that I created."

5 And Noah did just as the Lord commanded him.

6 Noah was six hundred years old when the Flood came, waters upon the earth.

7 Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the Flood.

8 Of the clean animals, of the animals that are not clean, of the birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground,

9 two of each, male and female, came to Noah into the ark, as God had commanded Noah.

10 And on the seventh day the waters of the Flood came upon the earth.

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day.

All the fountains of the great deep burst apart,
And the floodgates of the sky broke open.

12 (The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.)

13 That same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, went into the ark, with Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons—

14 they and all beasts of every kind, all cattle of every kind, all creatures of every kind that creep on the earth, and all birds of every kind, every bird, every winged thing.

15 They came to Noah into the ark, two each of all flesh in which there was breath of life.

16 Thus they that entered comprised male and female of all flesh, and God had commanded him. And the Lord shut him in.

17 The Flood continued forty days on the earth, and the waters increased and raised the ark so that it rose above the earth.

18 The waters swelled and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark drifted upon the waters.

19 When the waters had swelled much more upon the earth, all the highest mountains everywhere under the sky were covered.

20 Fifteen cubits higher did the waters swell, as the mountains were covered.

21 And all flesh that stirred on earth perished—birds, cattle, beasts, and all the things that swarmed upon the earth, and all mankind.

22 All in whose nostrils was the merest breath of life, all that was on dry land, died.

23 All existence on earth was blotted out—man, cattle, creeping things, and birds of the sky; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

Reading Strategy
Identifying Chronological Order Which precise details help readers pinpoint when the Flood took place and when Noah entered the ark?

Vocabulary Builder
comprised (kəm prīzd') v. included; consisted of

CHAPTER 8

And when the waters had swelled on the earth one hundred and fifty days,

1 God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark, and God caused a wind to blow across the earth, and the waters subsided.

2 The fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were stopped up, and the rain from the sky was held back;

3 the waters then receded steadily from the earth. At the end of one hundred and fifty days the waters diminished,

4 so that in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.

5 The waters went on diminishing until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible.

6 At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made

7 and sent out the raven; it went to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth.

8 Then he sent out the dove to see whether the waters had decreased from the surface of the ground.

9 But the dove could not find a resting place for its foot, and returned to him to the ark, for there was water over all the earth. So putting out his hand, he took it into the ark with him.

10 He waited another seven days, and again sent out the dove from the ark.

11 The dove came back to him toward evening, and there in its bill was a plucked-off olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the waters had decreased on the earth.

12 He waited still another seven days and sent the dove forth; and it did not return to him any more.

13 In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the waters began to dry from the earth; and when Noah removed the covering of the ark, he saw that the surface of the ground was drying.



▲ Critical Viewing

Compare and contrast the details in this image to the events in Genesis, Chapter 8. [Compare and Contrast]

✓ Reading Check

What causes the flood waters to subside?

14 And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.

15 God spoke to Noah, saying,

16 “Come out of the ark, together with your wife, your sons, and your sons’ wives.

17 Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds, animals, and everything that creeps on earth; and let them swarm on the earth and be fertile and increase on earth.”

18 So Noah came out, together with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives.

19 Every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that stirs on earth came out of the ark by families.

20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking of every clean animal and of every clean bird, he offered burnt offerings on the altar.

21 The LORD smelled the pleasing odor, and the LORD said to Himself: “Never again will I doom the earth because of man, since the devisings of man’s mind are evil from his youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living being, as I have done.

22 So long as the earth endures,
Seedtime and harvest,
Cold and heat,
Summer and winter,
Day and night
Shall not cease.”



Noah's Ark, Aaron Douglas, Fisk University Fine Art Galleries, Nashville, Tennessee

Reading Strategy

Identifying Chronological Order In chronological order, list three significant events that occur at the end of the forty-day flood.

▼ Critical Viewing

Which details in the scene depicted here convey a sense of urgency?

[Interpret]

CHAPTER 9

1 God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, “Be fertile and increase, and fill the earth.

2 The fear and the dread of you shall be upon all the beasts of the earth and upon all the birds of the sky—everything with which the earth is astir—and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hand.

3 Every creature that lives shall be yours to eat; as with the green grasses, I give you all these.

4 You must not, however, eat flesh with its life-blood in it.

5 But for your own life-blood I will require a reckoning; I will require it of every beast; of man, too, will I require a reckoning for human life, of every man for that of his fellow man!

6 Whoever sheds the blood of man,
By man shall his blood be shed;
For in His image.
Did God make man.

7 Be fertile, then, and increase; abound on the earth and increase on it.”

8 And God said to Noah and to his sons with him,

9 “I now establish My covenant with you and your offspring to come,

10 and with every living thing that is with you—birds, cattle, and every wild beast as well—all that have come out of the ark, every living thing on earth.

11 I will maintain My covenant with you: never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

12 God further said, “This is the sign that I set for the covenant between Me and you, and every living creature with you, for all ages to come.

13 I have set My bow in the clouds, and it shall serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.

14 When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds,

15 I will remember My covenant between Me and you and every creature among all flesh, so that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

16 When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures, all flesh that is on earth.

17 “That,” God said to Noah, “shall be the sign of the covenant that I have established between Me and all flesh that is on earth.”

18 The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth—Ham being the father of Canaan.

19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole world branched out.

Literary Analysis

Archetypal Setting and Dialogue Where will God place a sign of His covenant?

✓ Reading Check

What covenant does God establish with Noah and all living creatures?

- 20 Noah, the tiller of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard.
 21 He drank of the wine and became drunk, and he uncovered himself within his tent.
 22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside.
 23 But Shem and Japheth took a cloth, placed it against both their backs and, walking backward, they covered their father's nakedness; their faces were turned the other way, so that they did not see their father's nakedness.
 24 When Noah woke up from his wine and learned what his youngest son had done to him,
 25 he said,
 "Cursed be Canaan;
 The lowest of slaves
 Shall he be to his brothers."
 26 And he said,
 "Blessed be the LORD,
 The God of Shem;
 Let Canaan be a slave to them.
 27 May God enlarge Japheth,
 And let him dwell in the tents of Shem;
 And let Canaan be a slave to them."
 28 Noah lived after the Flood 350 years.
 29 And all the days of Noah came to 950 years; then he died.

Critical Reading

- Respond:** Why do you think the story of Noah has such universal and timeless appeal?
- (a) **Recall:** What reason does God give for destroying humanity?
 (b) **Compare and Contrast:** How is his reaction here both similar to and different from his earlier reaction to Adam and Eve?
- (a) **Recall:** What covenant, or pact, does God make after the Flood?
 (b) **Analyze Cause and Effect:** How does Noah's behavior help prompt this covenant?
- (a) **Compare and Contrast:** In what ways is Noah different from the rest of humanity in his day? (b) **Speculate:** In addition to Noah's virtues, what reason might God have for sparing Noah and his family?
- (a) **Draw Conclusions:** What main moral lesson might readers draw from the story of the Flood? (b) **Support:** Cite details to support your conclusion.
- Synthesize:** What emotions do you think Noah and his family might have felt during the Flood? Why?



Apply the Skills

from the Bible: Genesis 1–3 (*The Creation and the Fall*) and Genesis 6–9 (*The Story of the Flood*)

Literary Analysis

Archetypal Setting

- (a) Which details in these sections of the Bible reveal the **archetypal setting** of a universe consisting of opposites? (b) What other important opposites appear in the first three chapters of Genesis?
- What evidence is there that the tree from which Eve eats an apple is an archetypal world-tree, or a link between the human and divine realms?
- (a) Which adjectives would you use to describe the archetypal event of the Flood? (b) What does the setting of the Flood have in common with the setting of the Creation?

Connecting Literary Elements

- (a) What is the first example of **dialogue** in Genesis 1? (b) How does this statement alter the archetypal setting? (c) What do you think this much-quoted statement has come to signify?
- In the exchange between Eve and the serpent, how does the serpent demonstrate that he is a master of psychology?
- (a) In a chart like the one shown, note the opposites that appear in the words God speaks in Genesis 8:22. (b) In general, what is God talking about in this section?

List of Opposites

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Reading Strategy

Identifying Chronological Order

- (a) Make a list that **identifies in chronological order** what God does on each of the seven days of the Creation. (b) What significance does the seventh day continue to have for many people?
- (a) During the Flood, how long does the rain last? (b) How long does the water swell? (c) In chronological order, explain how Noah uses birds to check on the flood waters.

Extend Understanding

- Science Connection:** What knowledge of the natural world is displayed in these chapters from Genesis?

QuickReview

An **archetypal setting** is a time, place, or landscape feature that has similar meaning for many different cultures.

Dialogue is a conversation between characters.

To **identify chronological order**, notice the order in which events happened in time.

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