

STUDY GUIDE

CHURCH NAME
THE COMEBACK
NOAH, PART 2
GENESIS 8–9
01/21/2018



NEW VISION

MAIN POINT

The entire flood and Noah's Ark story foreshadowed Christ.

INTRODUCE

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Have you ever served on jury duty? What do you think the most difficult part of serving on jury duty is?

What are some kinds of cases that might be particularly difficult? In what ways does a jury's decision affect the lives of others?

Serving on a jury is no easy task. The decision that a jury makes will drastically affect the life of the accused, of the victim, and of the families of both parties. We do not want to send the innocent to jail, and we also want to see justice for the victim of the crime. Careful judgment also takes a great deal of time, sometimes months! It is no wonder that so many people try to avoid jury duty!

In the days of Noah, God pronounced judgment on the entire earth. The earth's inhabitants had turned away from God, and had become so evil, that God decided to destroy the whole population. Noah and his family were the only exception. Today we will explore why God made such a seemingly harsh judgement upon the earth.

READ AND REFLECT

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 8:1-22.

What is the first thing Noah's family did upon leaving the ark? How do his actions inspire us to begin with worship when we embark on new opportunities?

God's first promise to never again curse the ground or deluge the earth came after Noah's sacrificial offering. These sacrifices involved total destruction of the animals offered.

Verse 22 includes a promise about the endurance of seasons and cycles. How does our ability to depend on God's consistency strengthen us as we face new challenges?

Noah, his family, and the animals remained in the ark until God commanded them to leave. God told Noah the animals would migrate throughout the earth, reproduce, and give a new start to His creation. God had saved Noah, his family, and all animal life from the flood and had provided a new beginning. Noah responded by worshiping God. When God saw Noah's offering of clean animals and birds, He promised never to destroy all humans and animals again, even though human nature remained prone to sin.

What was the nature of God's covenant with Noah? How valuable would the sacrifices of Noah have been after the flood?

What are the graces that we can see in this covenant with Noah and his descendants?

God promised to refrain from destroying the earth by flood again. The Lord said He would spare the world from flood "even though man's inclination is evil from his youth" (8:21). This is an amazing grace from the Lord as He promises no matter how wicked people become He will not wipe them out as He did before. For thousands of years now, God has withheld such judgment upon the earth because of His covenant with Noah.

God's choice to be gracious to Noah meant many benefits for mankind. We would be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. We can count on the seasons being consistent. We can rest assured of God's patience toward us even when we are wicked. Ultimately, God's grace towards Noah meant that Jesus would be able to come and save us from our sins. Not only do we not have to worry about the world being destroyed by flood, we have the happy hope that someday the world will be remade without sin because of Christ!

When have you sought God in worship as you undertook new challenges?

Have you ever made the mistake of neglecting God in your pursuits? What was the outcome like?

How does worshipping God help you as you make new beginnings?

Is there anything you feel that God is calling you to totally sacrifice to Him in your life before He will reveal His promises to you?

Noah's worship reminded him and his family of God's guidance and deliverance in the past and indicated his commitment to trust God in the future. As we worship God, thanking Him for His guidance and care in the past and trusting Him to lead us in the future, we also can welcome new beginnings with excitement and joy.

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How important is it for us to understand the consequences for sin against God?

How does understanding judgment help us be bold in sharing the gospel with others?

How might understanding sin and judgment give us a better understanding of God's grace toward us?

PRAY

In a time of group prayer, thank the Father for sparing us from judgment through Christ. Pray that we

would live lives of gratitude for sending us Jesus instead of sending us destruction. Ask that we would be bold to share the gospel so that others might be spared from the judgment still to come.

COMMENTARY

GENESIS 8:1-22

8:1 Remembered does not suggest that God had ever forgotten about Noah; when used of God, "remember" suggests the initiation of a miraculous, saving act of God. Other instances of God "remembering" as the first step in providing divine help for His people include His intervention in the lives of Lot (19:29), Rachel (30:22), and the Israelites in Egypt (Ex 2:24). Using language that reflects God's initial act of creating the universe (Gen 1:2), God caused (Hb) ruach—"Spirit" or wind—to pass over the waters of the earth. Immediately the water began to subside.

8:2 Following the 150 days of ever-surgings waters, a turnabout occurred: all the sources of water (from above and below) stopped and the water began to subside. The initial downpour ended after 40 days and nights (7:12), so presumably the rains that are said to have ceased in the present verse were only sporadic showers.

8:3 Just as the flood had increased upon the earth for 150 days, so it steadily receded from the earth for 150 days, until the levels had decreased significantly.

8:4 Exactly five months after the flood had begun (7:11), the ark came to rest... on the mountains of Ararat—modern Turkey or Armenia.

8:6 This is the only mention of a window (Hb hallon) in the ark. Noah opened the window to determine the earth's readiness to receive the ark's cargo of people and animals.

8:7 Rabbis have suggested that Noah first sent out a raven, a ritually unclean bird, because it was expendable. The fact that it went back and forth from the ark means that it could find no suitable habitat.

8:8 Perhaps simultaneous with the release of the raven or soon thereafter, Noah sent out a dove. Since the dove ate seed and insects, it would provide a useful indication of whether the water on the earth's surface had gone down.

8:9 Though the ark was now resting on Ararat (v. 4) and mountaintops were visible (v. 5), the waters had not yet receded enough for the dove to find a resting place for her foot.

8:10-11 When the dove returned to Noah from its second foray with an olive leaf, this confirmed that the lower elevations (where olive trees grow) were now above water. Inspired by this passage, the image of a dove with an olive branch in its mouth has become a universal symbol of peace.

8:12 When Noah sent the dove out a third time and it did not return, it was clear that life-sustaining conditions now existed at the earth's more temperate, lower elevations.

8:13-14 On Noah's six hundred and first birthday he removed the ark's cover and confirmed what the dove had indicated—that the plains beneath the mountain range were drying. Some 57 days (one 29.5-day cycle of the moon plus 27 days) later, the earth was dry.

8:15-16 Perhaps this is the first time that God had spoken to Noah since before the flood; during the entire year of the catastrophic flood there is no record that God communicated directly with the patriarch or his family. What faith Noah demonstrated during that terrifying time in the ark's dark interior!

8:20 Noah's first act following his departure from the ark was to worship God by giving a burnt offering. Since every kind of clean animal and bird—that is, one of every mammal that chewed the cud and possessed split hoofs, as well as one representative of every kind of bird that did not eat carrion—was offered, it must have been an impressive sacrifice.

8:21 Using anthropomorphic language—words that describe God's actions in human terms—the text notes that the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma. The phrase means that God accepted Noah's sacrifice. Elsewhere in the Torah, God's refusal to smell a sacrifice meant His rejection of the offering (Lv 26:31). Acceptable offerings in other parts of the Bible are said to have a pleasing aroma (Ex 29:25; Lv 1:9; 2:2; 3:16; Num 18:17). Following Noah's sacrifice the Lord made a solemn promise never again to curse the ground as He had done following Adam's sin (Gen 3:17; 5:29). Almost with a sense of resignation, God noted that man's inclination was evil from his youth (Ps 14:1; Rm 3:9,23). Yet in spite of humanity's sinful nature, God's grace and love would prevail: He would never again destroy all life as He had done in Noah's day.

8:22 The terrifying chaos of the flood would give way to the predictable, comforting rhythms of life—the harvest, the seasons, day and night—for as long as the earth endures.