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Catastrophe: The Flood

Key Themes

- God must judge sin.
- God provides salvation from sin through Jesus.

Key Passages

- Genesis 6:5–7:1; 2 Peter 2:4–5; Hebrews 11:7

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Recognize that sin grieves God and leads to judgment.
- Identify the source of Noah's righteousness.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Write on the board, "What made Noah righteous?" This will be a point of discussion in the lesson.



Studying God's Word

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Introducing the C of Catastrophe, God called Noah out from a world filled with violence and corruption. God intended to judge the sin of the world by wiping out mankind. But Noah found grace in God's eyes and was called to reestablish the population after the Flood.

Study the Prepare to Share section.

Go Before the Throne.



Activity 1: Corruption and Righteousness

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Students will mark the negative aspects of humanity with one color, the positive aspects of Noah with another color, and the gracious acts of God in another color.

Colored pencils for highlighting



Activity 2: Memory Verse Strips

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Students will practice the memory verse by placing the Memory Verse strips in order.

Cut Memory Verse strips apart before class and place each set in a sandwich bag or envelope.



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

As you prepare your heart to teach God's Word, study these background passages: Genesis 6–9; 2 Peter 2:4–5; Hebrews 11:7.

The account of Noah begins in Genesis 6. Genesis 6:5–6 says that God saw the wickedness of man and that He was grieved and sorry that He had made man. Scripture describes the situation at the time: "wickedness of man was great," "evil thoughts continually" (Genesis 6:5), "corrupt" (Genesis 6:11–12), "filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11, 6:13).

Hebrews 11:7 tells us that Noah was divinely warned of things not yet seen. He was warned by God of the coming destruction, and it was Noah's faith that led to his obedience of building the Ark, leading to the salvation of his family. Because Noah is described as a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5), we can imagine that he spent his time while building the Ark trying to persuade the people to repent and warning them of God's coming judgment. However, only Noah's family believed and joined him in the Ark. Noah was a "just man" (Genesis 6:9), he "walked with God" (Genesis 6:9), and it was by faith that he believed, obeyed, and was saved (Hebrews 11:7).

God shows in this account that He does judge all sin. The Flood wiped out the entire population and was a just judgment. But, as God saved Noah and his family in the Ark, He has also shown us His mercy and grace by providing salvation from our sins through His own Son, Jesus Christ.

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Looking at the full counsel of the Word of God, we see that several other biblical writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit to confirm the historical account of Noah and the Flood. It was more than 1,700 years after the Flood that the prophet Ezekiel mentioned Noah (Ezekiel 14:14, 14:20). And about 2,400 years after the Flood, Jesus Christ referred to Noah as He described His return and coming judgment (Matthew 24:37–39).

The writer of Hebrews also confirmed Noah's existence when he included him in the "Hall of Faith" chapter (Hebrews 11:7). Peter wrote of both Noah and the Flood, again confirming that this watery judgment occurred just as we read in Genesis. Noah was a real person called by God during this amazing time in history.

In addition, the sheer size, dimensions, and directions given by God to Noah for building the Ark show that this vessel was seaworthy and able to withstand a year-long global Flood. In other words, the Ark itself confirms the Flood.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A careful reading of Genesis confirms again God's precision in handing down the history of the universe. Noah was born 1,056 years after Creation (Genesis 5). He was 500 years old when he began to build the Ark. It could have taken up to 75 years for him to complete

the project. It is a good practice to take special note of details when God so specifically gives them.

In the years following the Fall, mankind became more and more self-willed. They were filled with violence and the thoughts of their hearts were only evil continually. Because God hates sin, He had to judge the world. This judgment came via the worldwide Flood.

Here is the timeline of Noah and the Flood as gleaned from the book of Genesis:

- Year 0 – Creation
- 1056 – Noah born (Genesis 5)
- 1536 – Proclamation of judgment by God (“[man’s] days shall be 120 years”—Genesis 6:3)
- ~1581–1601 – God instructs Noah to build Ark and Noah begins building and preaching
- 1656 – God instructs Noah to prepare to enter Ark; Noah enters and God shuts the door; the Flood begins
 - 40 days – Rains fall and fountains of deep break open
 - 110 days – Water covers earth, then begins to recede; Ark rests on mountain
 - 74 days – Waters continue to decrease; tops of mountains seen
 - 40 days – Noah sends out a raven, which does not return
 - 7 days – Noah sends out a dove, which returns

- 7 days – Noah sends out a dove, which returns with olive branch

- 7 days – Noah sends out a dove, which does not return

- 29 days – Noah removes the cover from Ark

- 56 days – Noah and his family leave Ark

- 1657 – The Flood is over; God instructs Noah to leave Ark

Noah and his family were on the Ark for 371 days. For more information on this topic, go to the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear Lord, thank you for your Word and the truths you have given us there. I pray this week that as I prepare this lesson, you will give me the understanding I need and the realization that my disobedience displeases you. Forgive me, Lord, for the ways I have disobeyed you. As I come before the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16) on behalf of the students in my class, I pray, Lord, that you will help them grasp a better understanding of their sinfulness and that they will realize that all sin grieves you, and you must punish sin. Lead them to an understanding that forgiveness is freely given through Jesus Christ alone.

Pace your lesson! You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Review

As we ended the last lesson, we continued our walk through the Bible and the Seven C's of History. We have covered the Creation of the universe and the Corruption that entered as a result of sin. Today, we start a discussion on the Catastrophe that is described in the book

of Genesis. We will spend five lessons examining this topic. Today, we start with the call of Noah. I hope you will walk out of here knowing why God considered Noah righteous compared to all of the others around him.



- Write on the board, "What made Noah righteous?"
- Have students mark Genesis 6:5–7:1; 2 Peter 2:4–5; and Hebrews 11:7 in their Bibles.

Genesis 6:5–7:1



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Let's read Genesis 6:5–7:1 together. Divide the passage for members of the class to read aloud.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Now that we have read the text, let's take some time to observe what it is saying to us. Remember that we are looking to understand the difference between Noah and the rest of the people on the earth. There are some repeated ideas in this passage that will help us understand the difference.

Observe the Text

- ? **What type of literature is this passage?** *The passage is a narrative describing historical events.*
- ? **How are the people of the earth described in verses 5 and 11–13?** *Their wickedness was great (v. 5), their thoughts were only evil continually (v. 5), and they were corrupt and filled with violence (vv. 11–13).*
- ? **What was God's attitude toward mankind in verses 6 and 7?** *God was sorry that He had made man and was grieved over their corruption.*
- ? **What did God plan to do about the corruption in verses 7, 13, and 17?** *God planned to destroy all of the land-dwelling, air-breathing creatures on the earth—including man and animals.*
- ? **How is Noah described in the passage?** *Just, perfect, walking with God (v. 9), and righteous (v. 7:1).*
- ? **How are verses 8 and 18 connected?** *Both indicate that God was in control of the situation and He alone was granting favor to Noah. God placed His grace on Noah (v. 8) and established a covenant with Noah and his family (v. 18).*

- ?
- How are Noah's sons described?** There is no description given of them. While the text does not say that God favored them or that they were just, righteous, or perfect, they certainly seem to have followed their father's commands in preparing the Ark and boarding it.
- ?
- What commands did God give to Noah?** God commanded him to make an Ark (vv. 14–16), to board the Ark (v. 18), to take pairs of animals on the Ark (vv. 19–20), and to gather food for the people and animals (v. 21).
- ?
- How did Noah respond to God's commands?** Noah did everything God commanded him (v. 22).
- ?
- What is the main point of the passage?** God was judging the world for its sinfulness and saving a remnant of man and animals to repopulate the earth.

Discover the Truth

Now that we have asked questions about the text, let's talk about the main idea and try to understand why Noah was called by God.

- ?
- How long after creation did these events take place?** The call of Noah came about 100 years before the Flood, so near the year 2454 BC or 1550 Anno Mundi (after creation). The Flood began in 2349 BC or 1656 AM. Use the Seven C's Timeline to help the students get the big picture of when these events occurred.
- ?
- Examining this passage, what do we learn about the character of mankind in general?** Mankind is repeatedly described as wicked, violent, and corrupt in this passage.
- ?
- Are there any other passages that speak of this condition?** Immediately after the Flood, God affirmed the continued corruption of mankind in Genesis 8:21. The rest of the Bible is sprinkled with the accounts of the corruption of mankind and the sin that needs to be atoned for in Christ.

Several New Testament writers mentioned the events of the Flood as a real, historical occurrence. Jesus referred to the days of Noah as real history (Matthew 24:37 and Luke 17:26) and the Apostle Peter referenced Noah in both of his epistles. In 2 Peter 2:4–5 we read:

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.

2 Peter 2:4–5

From this passage, we also learn that Noah was preaching righteousness to those who were on the earth at his time. Only Noah and his family were spared from the Flood.

We read in the text that Noah was a righteous man. We also read that all flesh was corrupt.

- ?
- Was Noah a sinful man?** Since he was a descendant of Adam, he must have been sinful. If the students answer "no" to the question, ask if Noah was a descendant of Adam to remind them that all have inherited sin through Adam.

Gracious

(Refer to Attributes poster.)

This seems to be a bit of a contradiction, but there is an explanation. That explanation is found as we look at another of the repeated elements in this text. We saw that the corruption of mankind was repeated, but the other idea needs to be kept in view as well.

God did not call Noah because Noah was righteous in his own strength. Notice in Genesis 6:8 that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. In verse 18, God established His covenant with Noah, God provided the plans for the Ark, and God brought the animals to Noah. In 2 Peter 2:5, which we read a moment ago, God saved Noah and his family. Noah's salvation was because of God's grace, not his own righteousness.

This idea is expanded upon in the book of Hebrews in what is often called the "Hall of Faith" chapter. We find out more about God's calling of Noah there.



READ THE WORD

Hebrews 11:7

Let's read Hebrews 11:7 together and uncover Noah's righteousness a bit further. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ?
- What ideas are shared with this passage and the Genesis passage we read earlier? *Noah was warned of the judgment, he built the Ark, Noah's family was saved, the rest of the world was condemned.*
- ?
- Why did Noah do what God told him to do? *It was by faith and through a fear of God that he acted.*
- ?
- How did Noah act on his faith? *He prepared the Ark as instructed.*
- ?
- What were the two results of Noah's obedience? *His household was saved and he became an heir of righteousness.*
- ?
- Where does righteousness come from according to this verse? *Righteousness is according to (from/by) faith.*
- ?
- What is the main point of the passage? *Noah acted by faith in God.*
- ?
- What does the passage tell us about God? *He is to be believed, feared, and obeyed.*

Discover the Truth

Now that we have asked questions about the text, let's draw out the source of Noah's righteousness and faith.

- ?
- How is Noah being a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5) connected to the condemnation of the world that the Ark signified (Hebrews 11:7)?

In order to proclaim righteousness, there must be a standard of goodness to be compared to. That standard is the absolute moral perfection of God (as manifest in Christ). Since all men have sinned, all are under condemnation. As Noah preached the standard of perfect righteousness, the people hearing were condemned for falling short of that standard. Preaching righteousness has the effect of condemning the hearers.

? If Noah had faith and acted on that faith, where did that faith come from?

According to Romans 10:17, faith comes by hearing God's Word. Noah heard from God and was given faith through that. To confirm this, we also read in many other passages that faith is a gift from God.

Have someone read the following passages: Ephesians 2:8–9; Philippians 3:9; 2 Timothy 1:9.

Ephesians 2:8–9;
Philippians 3:9;
2 Timothy 1:9

? What is the source of faith and righteousness according to these passages?

Righteousness comes from God through faith in Jesus Christ.

? Was the source of righteousness different for Noah? No. Because all of mankind is fallen, righteousness can only come from God and He gives faith to all believers. Righteousness is found only when we receive Christ's forgiveness for our sins and His perfect life is credited to our account. This is the doctrine of imputed righteousness.

Many people have the false notion that people who were alive before the time of Christ were saved from their sins by obeying God's laws. This is a misunderstanding that needs to be corrected. Everyone who enters heaven has been forgiven of their sins by what Christ did on the Cross—taking the wrath of God the Father for sin on Himself. Those who lived before Christ were looking forward to the coming Savior who would die for their sins. Those alive today look back to the completed work of Christ on the Cross.

If you remember our teaching on Corruption, when sin entered the world, God promised to send a Savior. This promise is found in Genesis 3:15 and Noah, who lived a relatively short time after the Fall, surely knew of this promise. His faith was in God to save him from the coming judgment of the Flood and from the coming judgment on sin.

All through biblical history we will see glimpses of the Seed referenced in Genesis 3:15. When we talk about Abraham, we will see that he was promised a Seed (Genesis 22:18) who would bless the nations. Paul identified this Seed as Christ in Galatians 3:16. This promise was passed from Abraham to Isaac and then to Jacob. It came again to David through Judah and ultimately to Joseph and Mary.

Noah's righteousness before God was not from his own merit but was a gift through faith from God who would provide atonement for Noah's sins through Christ's death and Resurrection. Noah responded in obedience to God through his faith, but his obedience was the result of God's grace toward him.





Corruption and Righteousness

MATERIALS

- Bibles and colored pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Have the students mark the negative aspects of humanity with one color, the positive aspects of Noah with another color, and the gracious acts of God in another color.

Some people prefer not to write in their Bibles. If this is the case, print copies from an online Bible (such as www.biblegateway.com) for the students to mark, or suggest they use a piece of paper and make three columns to enter the information in, noting the verses in which they find the descriptions.

I would like you to take a few minutes to mark the contrasts that we have been talking about in your Bibles. Turn to Genesis 6 and pick three colors to use. Use one color, maybe black, to mark all of the descriptions of the character of mankind. Use another color to mark the references to Noah's character, and use a third color to mark God's actions in the passage. Mark

from 6:5 through 7:1. If you would like, you can continue through Chapter 9 after class to get a peek at some of the other ideas we will be discussing in the next few lessons.

Also add the cross-references for 2 Peter 2:4–5 and Hebrews 11:7 if those aren't already in your Bible's notes.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

It is important that we keep the sinfulness of mankind in its proper perspective. The world will try to convince you that people are basically good. This flies in the face of the Bible's clear teaching on the condition of mankind. If people are already good, then there is no reason for a Savior. It is when we recognize that we are not good and that we need our sins removed that we bring our thinking into alignment with the Bible. Because of the sinfulness of man, a Savior was needed.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

After examining these texts, we can make some clear statements about the condition of mankind and the calling of Noah.

- ? What have we learned about the condition of mankind at the time of Noah? *All of mankind was corrupt.*
- ? How did God feel about seeing the sinfulness of mankind? *He was sorry that He had made man and was grieved in His heart.*

- ?
- What was God's response to the sinfulness of mankind?** *He determined to judge their sin with a Flood to destroy all flesh on the earth.*
- ?
- Why was Noah saved from the Flood?** *God was gracious to him.*
- ?
- How did Noah respond to God's grace in his life?** *Noah was obedient to God's commands.*
- ?
- Was Noah righteous because of the things he did?** *No, his obedience was a result of his faith in God. Noah's righteousness, just like every other human who is called righteous, could only come through what was credited to him from Christ's account.*

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ?
- Having talked about the source of Noah's righteousness, how can you apply that to yourself?** *Allow discussion. Just like Noah, we can only be called righteous because of God's grace toward us and the righteous life of Christ that has been credited to those who trust in Him.*
- ?
- What is the importance of faith as we consider the call of Noah and the call God has for each of our lives?** *Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6) or to be obedient to His commands. Just as Noah became an heir of righteousness through faith, so do we.*

People often claim that God is cruel to have wiped out every person on the face of the earth in the Flood.

- ?
- How would you use the texts we have discussed today to help them understand that God's actions were just?** *Many people fail to recognize the holiness of God and the sinfulness of sin. This leads them to think that God must have killed some good people in the Flood. The text makes it clear that there were no good people and that God was just to punish each person for sinning against Him.*

Noah is described as a preacher of righteousness to an ungodly world.

- ?
- Is our situation any different from his? How should we live in light of this truth?** *We are in the same basic position: we are surrounded by a world that is ungodly and we know the true source of righteousness. We should preach that righteousness comes through Christ alone and that all people are in need of that salvation, just as only those who boarded the Ark were saved from that judgment.*
- ?
- Why is it important to recognize that our righteousness does not come from us, but is found in Christ alone?** *Passages like Ephesians 2:1–10 make it clear that we must look to Christ alone for our righteousness. The things we do in service to God and out of gratitude for what He has done do not make us more righteous. If we think that our deeds are worthy of God's favor, we are deceived and not grasping the truth of the Bible's teaching. Christ's perfect life and work on the Cross is the only source of righteousness. If we try to add to His work with our own, we are denying the sufficiency of Christ.*

► If you will be doing the optional Ark Scale Model activity in Lesson 4, now would be a good time to order the Ark Model from www.answersbookstore.com. See Lesson 4 for more details.





Memory Verse Strips

MATERIALS

- Memory Verse strips (one set for every two students)

INSTRUCTIONS

We have a new memory verse for the next several weeks. Work together to put these strips in the correct order. *Pass out the Memory*

Verse strips and have the students work with a partner to arrange them in the correct order to write out 2 Peter 2:5.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

I trust that you will be able to commit this verse to memory in the next week or two.



MEMORY VERSE

2 Peter 2:5 And [God] did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for His gracious acts of saving Noah and his family.
- Praise God for His holiness and justice.
- Pray that God would help each student to rest in Christ's righteousness alone for salvation.
- Ask God that He would give each student boldness to proclaim the righteousness that is found in Christ alone to the ungodly world around them.