

ReGroups 8/20/23

Origin Stories: Noah's Ark - Genesis 6

Amazing Grace

Genesis 6 paints a grim picture of the world, *but for the grace of God*. In spite of all the wickedness in every heart of every person, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. As we've discussed, God's favor is unmerited- It is the overflow of God's unconditional love for us all. For a quick refresh and reminder on God's grace check out **Ephesians 2:1-5** and **2 Corinthians 12:9**. What do these verses tell us about ourselves/human nature and God's gift to us?

Naturally, we read this and we imagine that Noah *must* have done something to get God's attention or earn His favor. However, as we've just read that's not how grace works at all.

Maybe you've heard this acronym before:

God's Riches At Christ's Expense

This helps us understand how God's grace is God's gift to us based on something that He has done, not what we do. *Why is it so important that we emphasize this truth?* Lest we undermine the gift of salvation and fail to truly appreciate and marvel at God's love for us.

It's tempting to read **Genesis 6:9** and forget the nature of grace, supposing that Noah rose above the unrighteousness of his world on his own. But *we know* that God's righteousness is a gift transferred to us because of His grace and our own reactionary faith. For more about how we become righteous read **Romans 4:3, 13-16** and then read **Colossians 1:21-22** for how this makes us blameless in God's sight. In light of what the Gospel teaches us, **discuss** why it's so important that we see Noah's salvation in the same light that we understand our own salvation.

The Eyes of God

A consistent theme in the Old Testament is that God is not clueless to what goes on in the world. He is keenly aware, and we're told over and over again that "*the eyes of the Lord*" are always scanning the earth, specifically to show kindness and mercy to people like us. **Exodus 2:24-25** encourages us with this sort of reminder.

Two verses that especially stand out on this subject are:

- **Proverbs 5:21)** This is either uplifting or frightening to us. If we are responding to God's grace and turning to Him in our every thought and action, then this is the best news. However, if we dismiss God's sovereign rule over our lives and don't like the idea that He knows all that we think or do, this should be unsettling to us.
- **Psalm 11:4)** God may be high and lifted up, but Heaven and Earth are not that far from each other. God sees our world as if it is right in front of Him - *as if we are right in front of Him*. Also, this verse tells us that the times and situations where it *seems* like God is not aware or appears absent are merely tests for us all. Even if God's eyes look "shut", He still sees all.

Talk about the comfort in knowing God is always watching, while also discussing the challenges/questions this knowledge may bring.

A Way of Escape

Read **Genesis 6:11-22** and discuss God's decision to flood the earth and His provision to save Noah's family. **Why do you think God chose *this way* to judge the earth?** According to **1 Peter 3:18-22**, the global flood was meant to be a preview and picture of Christian Baptism. **Read** this passage and **share** your thoughts on this idea.

As Peter tells us, Baptism is symbolic for two reasons. First, it buries the old beneath the waters, but then what comes back to the surface is saved and made new. Therefore, the old world was buried in the deep and Noah's Ark rested on the waves, pointing towards a new and better future.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 warn us that one day a similar judgment will come upon the world. While God will not flood the earth ever again, the Bible gives us many descriptions of the coming, time of great tribulation. **Matthew 24:3-8** tells us that there will be various signs of times, and then Matthew **24:29-31** says this time will culminate with the Return of Jesus. He will be *the ark* that carries us and all believers to the safety of the New Earth.

While there are many theories and much speculation about the timeline of all of these things, **1 Thessalonians 5:9-11** promises the Church that we will not suffer the wrath of the next "flood", but we will sheltered in the "ark" of Christ.

What are your thoughts about the story of Noah compares and connects to our own future salvation?

Great Preparation

Read **Genesis 7:6-16** and see how the story concludes after much anticipation and preparation. Noah built the boat in less than 100 years, but this wasn't his only occupation during this time. **2 Peter 2:5** tells us that Noah was a "preacher of righteousness", heralding the promise of salvation and the warning of judgment. In spite of his diligence and concern for this world, *no one* responded to Noah's message. **Can you imagine how he must have felt? Even worse though, can you imagine how everyone else felt the moment the doors were shut and the waters began to rise?**

Verse 11 tells us that the waters didn't all fall from the sky, but it actually came forth from beneath the earth. There's reason to believe that this would forever alter the terrain of the world. Later in Genesis 10, we're told the earth started to divide after the Flood. Perhaps the water that burst forth from the earth caused great earthquakes and led to the continents' current shape and placement.

Some scholars believe that *this image* is an accurate representation of how the earth was ultimately impacted by the Flood:



Kept By God's Hand

Genesis 7:16 says that after God commanded them to board the ship, *He shut the door Himself*. This is a beautiful picture of God's sovereign care over His own. **John 10:28-29** promises us that those that are saved find total security in the hand of God. Though the waters arose and the storm prevailed against the earth, Noah and his family were safe and secure, protected by God's hand. We should find the utmost comfort from these words.