

Chapter 9

Genesis 6-9

The Story so Far

God judged human beings and threw them out of His place and did not let them go back into the Garden of Eden. The punishment was a broken relationship with God and with each other. But God also acted in grace and promised a Rescuer-Ruler who would come and defeat Satan and rebuild God's Kingdom. The Rescuer-Ruler would come from the family line of Adam and Eve and rescue people back into the Kingdom of God. In the story of Cain and Abel we saw that human rebellion had been passed on to the whole human race. We all die because we have all chosen to be the rulers of our own lives.

Objectives

- To explain that God judges the world for its evil heart
- To show how God judges and then re-creates the world by the flood
- To show how God's grace changes people's lives

Connections

- Creation to judgement to new creation
- Grace and judgement continue to flow through the Bible story
- When God judges He also rescues

Summary

In the flood God re-creates the world. By saving Noah He is showing His commitment to restoring His Kingdom through the promised Rescuer-Ruler.

A New Creation

God's decision to judge the world (Genesis 6:1-7)

God is going to destroy life on earth because the spread of sin has become so great. Since God is holy and just, He must punish this rebellion. He therefore decides to destroy everything He has created by a flood.

Grace finds Noah (Genesis 6:8-9)

The same pattern of judgement and grace in the Garden of Eden is repeated again in Genesis chapter 6. God is going to destroy life on the earth but at the same time He also acts graciously to Noah. Noah does not find grace by trying to live a good life. Grace finds Noah while he is living a bad life. Noah is just like any other human being. Noah and his family deserve to die, but the LORD shows them His grace. Therefore verse 8 is best understood like this, "But the LORD showed His grace to Noah".

Grace changes lives (Genesis 6:8-9)

When God shows His grace to Noah it changes his life. This is very different to what we read in Genesis 6:5. Let us compare these two verses:

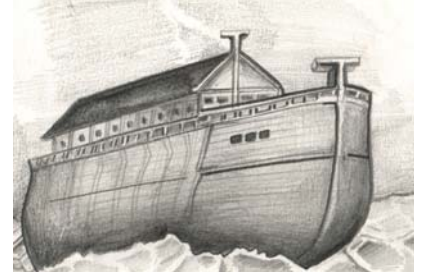
- 1) **Genesis 6:5** - "*every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time*". This is a general statement about **every** human being, including Noah and his family.
- 2) **Genesis 6:9** - "*Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God*".

The first verse shows us that every person, including Noah and his family, disobeys God. The second verse shows us that Noah obeys God. So how does the change come about? The answer is **God's grace**.

It is God's grace that changes people's lives from being disobedient to being obedient.

Noah's Ark (Genesis 6:11-22)

God tells Noah to build a big ark (boat) because He is going to destroy the earth with a worldwide flood, but rescue Noah and his family (eight people). God's plan is also to rescue every kind of animal that He has created and put them on the ark as well. Because God's grace has changed Noah's life he obeys everything God asks him to do.



The important lesson of the story of Noah

The lesson that is developing is that God is a merciful God who remains committed to His creation and His people. Therefore, in the big picture we can see that God is still committed to rebuilding His Kingdom by sending the promised Rescuer-Ruler. If God does not save Noah and his family then the family line of Eve will be destroyed, and the promised Rescuer-Ruler can never come (Genesis 3:15).

In the big picture God is still committed to restoring His Kingdom and sending the promised Rescuer-Ruler.

How does Noah find all the animals? (Genesis 7:8)

God brings all the animals to the ark for Noah. He is able to do this because He is their Creator.

Where do the floodwaters come from? (Genesis 7:11)

The floodwaters come up from inside the earth and most likely split the land. Water also comes from the skies. Remember on the second day of creation how God separated the waters and put the atmosphere between them? It is thought that these waters in the sky fall during the flood.

Creation reversed (Genesis 7:17-24)

On the first day of creation there is only water and darkness on the earth. The description of the flood is very similar. After the flood there is only water and darkness. The world of green vegetation,

land, animals and people has ended. God reverses His creation and takes the world back to the very beginning.

God remembers (Genesis 8:1)

When God remembers, He acts. God remembers Noah and sends a wind to drive away the floodwaters. After a period of time the ark comes to rest on the Mountains of Ararat.

Signs of a new creation (Genesis 8:1-5)

God rescues Noah and his family for the purpose of a new start, a new creation. There are various signs in this story that show there is a new creation:

1. The world is covered with water.
2. Then land starts to appear.
3. God wants the animals to multiply and increase in number upon the earth.
4. God re-establishes order in His creation.
5. God gives Noah a similar command to Adam. Compare Genesis 9:1 with Genesis 1:28a.
6. God gives Noah rule over the animals. Compare Genesis 9:2-3 with Genesis 1:28b–30.

God's covenants

After Noah comes out of the ark God makes a covenant with him. A covenant is simply a contract or agreement between two parties or two people. The Bible calls marriage a covenant. However, when God makes a covenant He makes it on His own terms. The covenant that God makes is not like ordinary human contracts, where there is consent of agreement by two equal parties. The contract that God makes is more like a contract between a king and his subjects. God the King graciously makes contracts that His people do not deserve.

The covenant (Genesis 9:8-11)

If human beings rebel against God He has the right to flood the world again. Yet God graciously decides to enter into a contract that means He will never punish the world in the same way again. It shows us God's commitment to His creation and His people. This is not a new contract but one that God had already made with Adam and Eve, when He allowed them to continue to live. The word "establish" means "to uphold that which already exists".

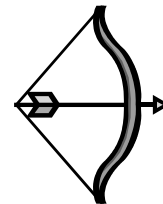
God's covenant with the human race is a contract of grace and highlights again His commitment to His creation and His people.

The sign of God's contract – the rainbow (Genesis 9:12-17)

In the business world there is usually a sign that a contract has been made. For example, the two parties sign a paper or they shake hands. It is the same with God's contracts in the Bible; He provides a sign to show us the contract has been made. God's contract sign is a rainbow. God puts His contract sign in the very place where the world might be threatened by another flood – in the clouds! So that every time the dark clouds will come and the rain will fall, then the rainbow will appear and remind people of God's promise never to flood the world again.

God hangs up His weapon

In the Hebrew language there is no word for 'rainbow'. The word that is used is 'bow,' which is a weapon, like a bow and arrow.



So God's contract sign is actually a bow in the clouds. It means that the rainbow in the clouds symbolises God hanging up His weapon of war. In those days, a king would hang up his weapon when the war was over as a sign that judgement was over, and that it was now time for peace. So God's contract sign of a rainbow in the clouds really means He is showing people that He has hung up His weapon of war. The judgement is over; never again will there be such war between God and His creation.

**The rainbow is God's contract sign that the war is over.
God has hung up His weapon of war.**

The promise of rest (Genesis 9:18-29)

We are near the end of the life and story of Noah. So far it is good news. God shows His grace to Noah, which changes his life. He rescues Noah from His judgement for the purpose of a new creation. Are the words of his father going to come true? Let us remind ourselves of those words in Genesis 5:29. Lamech called his son “Noah”, saying, *“he will comfort us in the labour and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed”*. So does Noah comfort the human race and bring rest from God’s curse? In one sense, yes he does. But in another sense Noah does not provide total rest and comfort for the human race.

Noah - the provider of rest? (Genesis 9:20-23)

The reason we know that Noah does not provide total rest for the human race is because Noah sins again. He builds a vineyard, becomes drunk on the wine and lies naked. All these things displease God. So Noah does not fulfil the role of the Rescuer-Ruler who will bring complete and permanent rest to the human race. Noah’s fall into sin again tells us that this new creation isn’t perfect, and it leaves us awaiting a better, perfect, new creation yet to come. This story leaves us waiting for the new Rescuer to come who will bring permanent and perfect rest from God’s curse.

Noah brings comfort and rest for a time to the world, but because he sins he cannot be the promised Rescuer-Ruler who will crush Satan and bring a permanent rest to the world.



Think it through & discuss

1. Why does God flood the world?
2. What signs are there that God reverses His creation and then makes a new creation?
3. Why does God rescue Noah and his family?
4. How is this story connected to God's Kingdom?

