



Genesis 6:8-9:17 Small Group Questions and Answers

1. What two overarching biblical principles does the flood narrative emphasize? How does this fit in with the rest of the Scriptures emphasis on these two aspects of God's work in the world.

- A. Judgment
- B. Salvation

God always saves through judgment. Whether it was the flood, the rescue of Lot out of Sodom, the Exodus of Israel out of Egypt or the ultimate salvation of God's people through the judgment that fell on Jesus at the cross, God's work of redemption always occurs by way of salvation through judgment.

2. What are the men and women of Noah's day really rejecting when they rejected Noah's preaching and example of faith? How is this related to the judgment of God?

They were rejecting God. Sinclair Ferguson helpfully explains that God was already judging the men and women of Noah's day by giving them hardness of heart to reject him. He explains:

“It's the way in which we are free to scoff Him and live in this godless way that is the judgment. We live in a world where people say exactly the kind of thing about the Christian Gospel and the Christian church as they were in Noah's day, 'Look at the way we are living and we get off scot-free. There are no thunderbolts from heaven.' But the real sign of God's judgment is not the externals; the real sign of God's judgment is that He has said, 'If that's the way you wish to live, then live without Me you shall, and die without Me too!...'”

This is the teaching of Romans 1:18-25. The judgment begins with God giving people over to their sinful desires.

3. How is God's judgment worked out in the flood narrative? There are a number of steps that occur.

God warns the men of Noah's day of the imminent judgment. The men and women of Noah's day reject and scoff at the warnings. They are warned by word--through Noah, "a preacher of righteousness," and by sight--seeing Noah build the Ark by faith.

4. What is happening in the flood narrative regarding the way in which God destroyed the world?

..The judgment fits the crime—the sin—perfectly...and the sin here is the heart rejection of the word of God and the judgment, interestingly, perfectly matches it—and, the narrative underlines this. If we can be sensitive to it for a moment and remember these opening chapters of Genesis you'll notice that the description of what will happen to the heavens and the earth and to the created order uses the very language that is used in Genesis 1 and 2 to describe how the entire created order came into being. And so God is saying, 'My powerful word has brought this world into being and keeps this word in place but you are rejecting My powerful word of warning and therefore I will remove it from you and this world will begin, as it were, to cave in on itself and disintegrate. And the very same phrases, the same language, the same verbs are used here as are used in Genesis 1 and 2. The judgment of the flood is actually a picture of creation going into disintegration. As though God had said, 'If you will not listen to My word—and push it out of your life—then you will see what happens when you push my word out of your lives—and all of life collapses.'”



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5. How is God's salvation manifested in the flood narrative?

In saving Noah and his family by grace through faith in His word. God specifies to Noah the only way of salvation. Genesis 6:8 says that "Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord." He then exercised the faith of building an ark. This would include expended time and energy. Noah shows that he is a believer by giving himself entirely to the work of preparing for salvation.

6. What do we learn from the fact that so few are saved in Noah's day?

We see in the salvation of Noah and his family--eight in total--the remnant principle that is worked out in the rest of the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul said, in Romans 11:5, "even now, at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

7. What is the Ark?

The Ark was a temple in which God would dwell for a time with the typical new creation. It looked more like a house than a boat. It had a roof, window and door. It had three levels specified by God just like Solomon's Temple would later have.

8. How is redemptive history unfolded in the flood narrative? How do the pieces fit together in the rest of the unfolding of God's plan of redemption in Christ.

1) The Redemptive Role of Noah as a Type of Christ: Noah was a type of Christ. He was a typical second Adam, a typical redeemer, and a typical rest giver. Noah was given very similar instructions as Adam with regard to being fruitful and multiplying, filling the earth and subduing it. He was not the second Adam, but was a type of the second Adam. Jesus is the second and last (eschatological) Adam who redeems His people and fulfills the creation mandates. Noah was a typical redeemer. Everyone with Noah on the Ark was saved. Everyone in Christ is saved. Noah was not "the Redeemer." He was a typical redeemer, providing typical redemption for all those who descended from him. Jesus came to redeem all those He represented spiritually. Noah was a typical rest-giver. Noah's name meant 'Rest.' His father had named him 'Rest,' saying, "This one will give us rest from the ground which the Lord had cursed." Noah only gives typical rest, as the remainder of the Bible bears witness to the ongoing need for redemptive rest. Jesus is the One who finally and fully gives rest to the people of God and to the creation that was brought under the curse at the fall. He is the One who said, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest for your souls." He is the One who takes the curse on Himself when He wears the crown of thorns--the symbol of the curse on the ground.

2) The Redemptive Foreshadowing of the New Creation: The book of Revelation tells us that the "new heavens and the new earth" will be the new Temple where God dwells fully and permanently with the redeemed. Noah and all of creation were together in the Ark, as in a typical temple. This was foreshadowing the new creation-temple. Interestingly, the Ark and Solomon's Temple had three levels. It seems that the biblical data substantiates that the Ark was a Temple where God dwelt with His creation.



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Noah also led the way into a typical new creation when he and his family stepped off of the Ark and into a world that has been typically cleansed of pollution. Jesus brought about the new creation through His death and resurrection. Noah knew that the flood had not really made “all things new,” because he sacrificed when he stepped off of the Ark. The flood waters could never cleanse the evil out of the heart of man. God had destroyed the earth with a flood because “every intent of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). God promised never to destroy the earth with a flood again because “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Gen. 8:21). The reason for the latter declaration was that the flood was never meant to deal with man’s real problem—the sinful pollution of his heart. Noah’s sons would populate the earth with depraved sinners. Only the blood of Jesus could cleanse the hearts of sinners. The cleansed world onto which Noah and his family stepped when the waters receded was a type of the “new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness dwells.”

3) The Redemptive Purpose of Animals: Noah was commanded to take seven clean and two unclean of every animal into the Ark. The clean/unclean distinction was relevant in redemptive history for several reasons. First, it would be used in Israel’s sacrificial system. Because Jesus is likened to “a Lamb without blemish and without spot,” Israel would be commanded in the OT to offer spotless (clean) lambs to God. All of Israel’s sacrifices were to be clean. The cleanness was symbolic of the sinlessness of Jesus. When he stepped off of the Ark, the very first thing that Noah did was offer a sacrifice to God. The sacrificial system stretched back to Adam and Eve and was carried forward in redemptive history until Christ was sacrificed.

In addition to the preparation for the sacrificial system in Israel, the clean and unclean animals would, in time, become illustrative of the two groups of mankind—Jews and Gentiles. These two classifications represented spiritually clean and unclean groups of humanity in redemptive history until Christ came. The Scriptures expressly teach this in the account of Peter’s vision of the unclean animals brought down from heaven in the sheet for him to eat. (Acts 10:9-11:18). For a more thorough treatment see this post.

The final thing to note about the animals in the Ark is in regard to food. Before the flood it appears that man was only permitted to eat vegetation. After the flood, God told Noah that he and his descendants could eat meat (only without the blood). What was the reason for this shift? The eating of meat would not serve as a precursor to the eating of the sacramental and ceremonial redemptive meals, such as the Passover. There were no vegetarians in the Old Covenant church because God was foreshadowing the spiritual eating of the flesh and blood of His Son in the sacrifices. If man had not been allowed to eat meat, then the eating of the sacrificial meals—symbolizing the spiritual eating of the flesh of the Son of God by faith—would have been an unintelligible concept. God was preparing His people for what would come as the history of redemption unfolded.

In short, “No Noah, No Christ.” The Lord Jesus’ human nature was in the loins of Noah. If God had not saved Noah, the Redeemer would not have come to redeem a people from every tongue, tribe, nation and language.