

Learn to Read Genesis Effectively

Distance Learning Programme

Session 6



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SESSION 6

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Genesis 6 to 9 – Noah and the flood

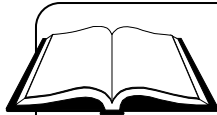


Read Genesis 6 to 9
before you start this session

6 v 1 to 13 – The descent of mankind into wickedness

In the last session we saw the development of two kinds of people – those like Cain who had no time for God and those like Abel who worshipped God in an acceptable way.

Chapter 6 continues the story of these two opposite types of people.



Read Genesis 6 v 1 to 13

We could, perhaps, summarise by saying that there was intermarriage between two groups – the “sons of God” and the “daughters of men”. Their children became “mighty men of renown”, but the world descended into utter wickedness.



Look at the definition of “renown”
in the *Strong's Concordance* entries
on page 9

Who were these sons of God? You may have marginal cross-references to some writings of the Apostles Paul and John:

**X-Refs -
Sons
of God**

Romans 8 v 14; 2 Corinthians 6 v 14; Ephesians 5 v 11;
Philippians 2 v 15; 1 John 3 v 1 and 2



- The “sons of God” are those who worship God
- The God-fearing descendants of Seth found the godless people around them attractive and intermarried with them
- The Godly principles were compromised by the intermarriage, resulting in a generation renowned principally for their godlessness

There is thus a strong implication in Genesis 6 that it would have been better for the sons of God if they had not been taken in by the beauty of the daughters of men. If that is so, there is an echo from here to Paul’s advice which the cross-references led us to in 2 Corinthians 6 v 14 and Ephesians 5 v 11.

6 v 5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 v 12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.



Look at the references to “imagination” (v 5) and “corrupt” (v 12) in the *Strong’s Concordance* entries on pages 9 and 10 (“imagination” is translated “intent” in NKJV)

Is there any similarity between Noah’s world and ours today? If so, is God’s reaction then of any relevance to us today?

Echo -
Noah’s
day

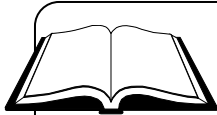
→ Luke 17 v 26 and 27

Noah’s world was characterized by evil. It pervaded the whole of society. Evil was all that people thought about. As a result the earth was full of violence. So God decided that the only solution would be to destroy it all and start again – with one man Noah and his family.

6 v 8 and 9 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. ... Noah walked with God.

Noah “walked with God”. This phrase “walking with God” indicates following in God’s ways. There are more thoughts on this subject on page 14 of the *Additional Notes* booklet.

6 v 14 to 22 – The ark prepared



Read Genesis 6 v 14 to 22

6 v 14 “Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.”

Most commentators agree that “gopherwood” is the cypress, a tall, upright evergreen tree, of great durability, which used to be much valued for shipbuilding.

“Room” literally means “nest” – these “rooms” were probably small cells or cabins.

“Pitch” is natural bitumen which would make the vessel watertight.

6 v 15 “And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.”

A cubit is approximately 45 cm or 18 inches.

How big, then, was the ark? Compare it with the vessels below:

The *Mayflower* which sailed from England to America in 1620 was 90 feet or 28 metres long.

Tea clippers like the *Cutty Sark*, built for the tea trade in 1869, were approximately 212 feet or 65 metres long.

Many scholars have tried to work out the shape of the ark. The details given in the Bible record, however, do not seem to give any hint of the overall shape.

6 v 16 *“You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.”*

Again we cannot be certain what the original word translated “window” really means. Some say “a light”, others say “a roof”. The *New International Version* shows this by having two alternative translations:

“Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top.”

or:

“Make an opening for light by finishing the ark to within 18 inches of the top.”

The details given in verses 14 to 16 are that:

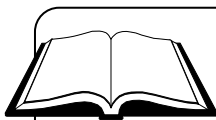
- The ark was made of “gopher” or cypress wood
- It had rooms or compartments
- It was covered inside and outside with pitch
- It had a door in the side
- It probably had a window near the top
- It had three storeys or decks

We are not given any more detail, but it is clear that it would have been an enormous task for Noah and his family to build such a vessel.

**Echo -
Noah**

2 Peter 2 v 5

This “echo” suggests that, in addition to building the ark, Noah was warning other people about God’s coming judgements on the earth. He was encouraging them to change their ways.



Read Genesis 6 v 17 to 22

In verse 18 we have the first use of the word “covenant” in the Bible. The first covenant was between God and Noah, because Noah did what God commanded him to do (v 22).

7 v 1 to 24 – The great flood



Read Genesis 7 v 1 to 3

7 v 1 Then the LORD said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.”



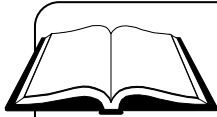
Look at the meaning of “righteous” in the *Strong’s Concordance* entries on page 10

X-Refs -
Genesis
7 v 2



Leviticus 11 v 1 to 47 or Deuteronomy 14 v 3 to 20

Animals came to Noah in pairs, in sevens and twos, clean and unclean, and Noah had room to take them all. He must therefore have understood the difference between clean and unclean – or at least he became aware of it when the animals came to him. The differences are explained in Leviticus 11, which is part of the Law given to Moses.



Read Genesis 7 v 4 to 16

It seems that the animals went into the ark *to* Noah – there is no mention of him driving them in. The animals obeyed God’s command. Then “the LORD shut him in”. He could not go out of the ark until God let him out, nor could anyone else get in!

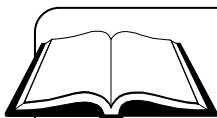


Read Genesis 7 v 17 to 24

To summarize this section, when the flood came:

- The ark was “lifted high above the earth” and floated around
- The highest mountain was covered to a depth of 15 cubits (22.5 ft)
- All life on the land died
- The water covered the earth for 150 days before starting to recede

8 v 1 to 22 – The earth dried out



Read Genesis 8 v 1 to 22

8 v 1 Then God remembered Noah ...

X-Refs -
Genesis
8 v 1

Genesis 19 v 29; Exodus 2 v 24; 1 Samuel 1 v 19

Noah and his family – and the animals with them – were in a difficult situation, floating in the ark at the mercy of currents and winds. But God does not forget His people who trust in Him. In remembering the eight people and the animals who depended on them He showed His care for mankind and the rest of His creation.

After 150 days the waters had gone down enough for the ark to “ground” on the mountains of Ararat (v 3 and 4). Ararat is a mountain range in northern Turkey between the Black Sea and Caspian Sea. Ten or eleven weeks later, on the first day of the tenth month, the water had abated enough for the tops of the mountains to be seen (v 5).

In verses 7 to 11 Noah sent out birds to see whether vegetation or dry land had yet appeared anywhere.

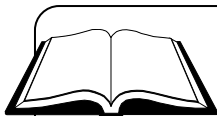
If we compare 8 v 14 with 7 v 11 it is easy to calculate that Noah and his family were in the ark for a year and ten days before God let them out (8 v 16).



Read Genesis 8 v 20 to 22

As an act of thanksgiving, Noah built an altar and made an offering of every clean animal. God was pleased with Noah's reaction and made a promise He has kept ever since – that He would never again flood the earth for man's sake, nor destroy every living thing as He had just done. In addition, the natural cycle of day and night, and summer and winter, would never cease.

9 v 1 to 17 – A new beginning and God's covenant



Read Genesis 9 v 1 to 17

X-Ref -
Genesis
9 v 1 & 2

Genesis 1 v 28

As we saw in the first session, at creation Adam and Eve were vegetarian, but according to the new arrangement, Noah and his family could now eat meat. The one condition that God applied was that flesh containing blood was forbidden because the blood was the life of the animal. The subsequent warning against spilling human blood suggests this commandment was to remind them that life – here symbolised by blood – belonged to God and must not be taken from other human beings. Whoever killed someone else destroyed the image of God (v 6).

God gave a sign as a mark of the covenant, which is recorded in verses 8 to 17, that He will never flood the earth again. That sign is, of course, the rainbow.

9 v 18 to 29 – Noah and his sons

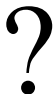


Read Genesis 9 v 18 to 29

X-Ref -
Genesis
9 v 21



Habakkuk 2 v 15



- Why was Ham (together with Canaan his son) punished in the way he was?
- What was different in the actions of Shem and Japheth?



Look at the meaning of “saw” in verse 22
in the *Strong’s Concordance* entries
on page 10

Several of the possible meanings of the word translated “saw” given in *Strong’s Concordance* are significant. The word implies an enjoyment in looking. It seems probable that he took great delight in his father’s condition and reported it to his brothers with gleeful disrespect.

His brothers, however, didn’t want to know. They took steps to cover their father without actually seeing his nakedness. When Noah sobered up and realised what had happened, he put a curse on Ham’s son and a blessing on his other two sons.

In the last two sessions we have seen several examples of behaviour which were later dealt with in the Law of Moses. It is as if the sons of God before the flood knew what was right, even though they did not have the Law written down for them to read. For example, the principles of an acceptable sacrifice were understood by Abel, but not by Cain.

Then there was the distinction between clean and unclean animals in Noah's day, and the law regarding the taking of human life and eating meat containing blood. Lastly, there was the principle of honouring parents, which became the fifth of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20 v 12).

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us that the new covenant for our time is also one which makes use of laws which should be written in people's hearts – not just on tablets of stone or pieces of paper. He wrote in Hebrews 10 v 16:

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them.”

Optional assignment 6

Noah's world and our world

Have a look at Genesis 6 v 1 to 13 and see how our world compares with that time. See what you can learn from Matthew 24 v 37 to 39 and Luke 17 v 26 and 27.

Strong's Concordance entries

RENOWN

8034 **shêm** (shame)
 a primitive word [perhaps rather from 7760 through the idea of definite and conspicuous *position*; comp. 8064];
 an *appellation*, as a mark or memorial of individuality;
 by implication *honour, authority, character*:
 + base, [in-] fame [-ous], name (-d), renown, report.

IMAGINATION

3336 **yêtser** (yay'-tser)
 from 3335; a *form*;
 fig. *conception* (ie purpose):
 frame, thing framed, imagination, mind, work.

CORRUPT

7843 **shâchath** (shaw-khath')

a primitive root; to *decay*, ie (caus.) *ruin* (lit. or fig.):

batter, cast off, corrupt (-er, thing), destroy (-er, -uction), lose, mar, perish, spill, spoiler, x utterly, waste (-r).

RIGHTEOUS

6662 **tsaddîyq** (tsad-deek')

from 6663;

just:

just, lawful, righteous (man).

SAW

7200 **râ'âh** (raw-aw')

a primitive root;

to *see*, lit. or fig. (in numerous applications, direct and implied, trans., intrans. and causat.):

advise self, appear, approve, behold, x certainly, consider, discern, (make to) enjoy, have experience, gaze, take heed, x indeed, x joyfully, lo, look (on, one another, one on another, one upon another, out, up, upon), mark, meet, x be near, perceive, present, provide, regard, (have) respect, (fore-, cause to, let) see (-r, -m, one another), shew (self), x sight of others, (e-) spy, stare, x surely, x think, view, visions.

Notes

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