



Parkway Fellowship

I Wish I was There • BUILDING THE ARK WITH NOAH • Genesis 6-9 • 04/15/2018

Main Point

Persistent sin brings inevitable judgment, but God offers mercy and hope to those who walk with Him.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Have you ever served on jury duty? What do you think the most difficult part of serving on jury duty is?

What are some kinds of cases that might be particularly difficult? In what ways does a jury's decision affect the lives of others?

Serving on a jury is no easy task. The decision that a jury makes will drastically affect the life of the accused, of the victim, and of the families of both parties. We do not want to send the innocent to jail, and we also want to see justice for the victim of the crime. Careful judgment also takes a great deal of time, sometimes months! It is no wonder that so many people try to avoid jury duty!

In the days of Noah, God pronounced judgment on the entire earth. The earth's inhabitants had turned away from God, and had become so evil, that God decided to destroy the whole population. Noah and his family were the only exception. Today we will explore why God made such a seemingly harsh judgement upon the earth.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Have a volunteer read genesis 6:5-7.

Why might things have been worse in Noah's day than they are in our day? What advantages in grace do we have that they did not have?

Why do you think the Bible says here that God was “grieved” over mankind’s wickedness and not that He was “angry”?

People are no less evil than they were in the days of Noah. If we watch the news at all, we will see that people are capable of any wickedness one can imagine. The difference between Noah’s day and ours isn’t that people are better, but that grace has abounded. Since the days of Noah, God has gifted us with the Scripture. After Noah, God gave to Moses His law, and God gave to Israel the prophets. Eventually, God sent us Jesus, and through Jesus, we have the gospel. The church is now present in this world, and the Holy Spirit works through the church to bring hope to all mankind. Noah’s generation did not have these gracious advantages, and so there was little to restrain the wickedness of mankind.

The heart of mankind is depraved, and apart from the grace of God, we are “by nature under wrath” (Ephesians 2:3). God is just to judge us for our sins, and so when He chose to judge the world, He did no wrong because that is what our wickedness deserves.

| Have a volunteer read Genesis 6:8-13, 17-22.

Do you have any idea why Noah found favor in the eyes of God?

Why do you think that God shared His plan to destroy the earth with Noah? What kinds of things has God shared with the church regarding judgment and salvation?

Grace is a mystery. The word translated as “favor” in Gen. 6:8, is often translated as “grace.” This favor, or grace, that Noah “found” in the eyes of God cannot be something that Noah merited himself. As the Apostle Paul writes, “Now if by grace, then it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace” (Romans 11:6). Noah was a sinner, just like Paul, and just like us. Noah needed salvation, and for reasons known only to God, God chose to extend His covenant, steadfast love to Noah and His family and to rescue them from judgement. While Noah responded to God’s grace, the initiative of salvation came from the Lord.

God shared His plan with Noah because Noah had God’s favor. In Genesis 18:17, before the destruction of Sodom, the Lord asks, “Should I hide what I am about to do from Abraham?...For I have chosen him so that he will command his children and his house after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just.” God warns His people of judgement to come, and He shares with them the beauty of grace to come as well.

| Have two volunteers read Genesis 8:15-22 and Genesis 9:8-17.

What was the nature of God’s covenant with Noah? How valuable would the sacrifices of Noah have been after the flood?

What are the graces that we can see in this covenant with Noah and his descendants?

God promised to refrain from destroying the earth by flood again. The Lord said He would spare the world from flood “even though man’s inclination is evil from his youth” (8:21). This is an amazing grace from the Lord as He promises no matter how wicked people become He will not wipe them out as He did before. For thousands of years now, God has withheld such judgment upon the earth because of His covenant with Noah.

God’s choice to be gracious to Noah meant many benefits for mankind. We would be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. We can count on the seasons being consistent. We can rest assured of God’s patience toward us even when we are wicked. Ultimately, God’s grace towards Noah meant that Jesus would be able to come and save us from our sins. Not only do we not have to worry about the world being destroyed by flood, we have the happy hope that someday the world will be remade without sin because of Christ!

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In what ways is your faith like Noah's? Do you trust God's plan even with you don't understand it or fathom it?

How important is it for us to understand the consequences for sin against God?

How does understanding judgment help us be bold in sharing the gospel with others?

How might understanding sin and judgment give us a better understanding of God’s grace toward us?

Pray

In a time of group prayer, thank the Father for sparing us from judgment through Christ. Pray that we would live lives of gratitude for sending us Jesus instead of sending us destruction. Ask that we would be bold to share the gospel so that others might be spared from the judgment still to come.

Commentary

| Genesis 6:1-22

6:1 Although the stated reason for God’s judgment against the earth is encroaching moral perversion (6:5), there is an implication in the passage that the marriage between the sons of God and the daughters of men (v. 2) contributed in some way to this moral decline. This is suggested (1) by the punishment oracle of v. 3, (2) by the parallel use of “saw” in vv. 2 and 5, which describe the behavior of the sons of God toward the daughters of men (v. 2), and (3) by God’s response to sin (v. 5). Essentially, v. 1 reports what was depicted in chaps. 4–5 concerning the expansion of human life and achievement, but it also puts to the fore the connection between population growth and the divine pattern for marriage.

6:2 The identity of the sons of God and the daughters of men is the major interpretive obstacle. Historically, three opinions have won a significant following for identifying the sons of God: (1) angels, (2) human judges or rulers, and (3) the descendants of Seth. Church Fathers, such as Augustine, as well as the Reformers (Luther, Calvin) interpreted the sons of God as a reference to “godly men,” that is, the righteous lineage of Seth. Although this view has its share of difficulties, we find that it is the most attractive.

6:3 The consequence of their actions is the divine restriction of human life. In withdrawing his spirit, the Lord no longer graciously preserves their life span.

6:4 The identity of the Nephilim and their relationship, if any, to the marriages (v. 2) is perplexing. The word occurs but once more, in Num 13:33, where it refers to an indigenous population inhabiting Canaan. It is most attractive to consider the Nephilim as normal human men. These are of the warrior class, men of ignoble reputation whose violent exploits are remembered (cf. 6:11–13) and whose names strike fear in the hearts of their hearers. They are identified as men of renown, not divine or semidivine figures. Despite their notorious achievements they are no more than men, subject to the same judgment as any (v. 3). As warriors of renown they seek reputation by their wicked deeds in the way the people of Babel will seek fame through their building enterprise (cf. 11:4).

6:5-8. These verses are an exposé on the degeneracy of the human heart. Collectively, society has decayed beyond recovery in God’s estimation. The progression in this small cluster of verses is arresting: “The Lord saw.... The Lord grieved.... The Lord said.” He himself brings sanctions against all humanity, including the most vulnerable (animals). The threat of extinction is not only inclusive of all living things, but also is geographically all-encompassing.

6:9-10. In a world of increasing sin, God found a person named Noah whose commitment to Him stood out. Noah was righteous, a description given to no other person up to this point in the Bible. Noah and his wife had three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The list of Noah’s sons provides a link between the end of the list of Seth’s descendants (Gen. 5:32) and the Table of Nations (10:1). After the flood, humanity had another opportunity to begin again through Noah’s sons. Before the flood ever arrived, God in His mercy had determined to provide this opportunity.

6:11-13. God’s world had become the complete opposite of what He created and intended. God intended the earth to be filled with people and animals (Gen. 1:24,28). Instead, corruption and violence filled the earth. God told Noah of His plans to destroy the earth and its inhabitants. God also explained to Noah why the earth was about to face destruction. Sin had corrupted the world, perverting humanity and causing nature to suffer. The world no longer existed as God intended, so God would destroy the earth and its inhabitants and undo His creation. Since humanity insisted on corrupting itself through disobedience to Him, God would make the corruption complete by destroying the earth and its living creatures.

6:14-16. God had decided to destroy the world due to its sin. He instructed Noah to construct an ark, indicating He intended to deliver Noah and provide a new beginning for the world. Unlike most ships through the ages, the ark had no curved bow or rudder. God did not intend Noah to sail the vessel. He intended the boat only to be a container in which Noah, his family, and animals could survive the flood.

6:17-22. God stated His intention to use a flood to destroy the earth, which provided the rationale for Noah's building the ark. The flood constituted a unique event in world history. Waters would flood the earth, destroying all human and animal life, but only this one time (see Gen. 8:21). The flood in Noah's time constituted a horrible judgment that will never be repeated. God told Noah that he and his family would escape the destruction of the flood. God determined to preserve Noah and his family as a remnant through which He would repopulate the earth. Although Noah was a righteous individual, he had sinned and would continue to sin (see Gen. 9:20-21). God's salvation of Noah and his family demonstrated His grace.

God not only planned to save Noah and his family, He also promised to establish His covenant with Noah. The word (as well as the concept) "covenant" occurs here for the first time in the Bible. "Covenant" refers to a binding agreement linking two parties together. In God's covenant with Noah, God constituted the stronger party; but He imposed obligations only on Himself. Noah already lived in a close, personal relationship with God, and their relationship formed the basis of the covenant. Through establishing His covenant with Noah, God pledged to maintain the relationship.

To preserve each species and repopulate the earth after the flood, God instructed Noah to take on the ark a male and female of each bird and each land animal. God also commanded Noah to gather the necessary food to sustain himself, his family, and the animals while on the ark (Gen. 6:19-21).