



Genesis 6:9-7:24

PRAY

Noah's ark is one of the best loved stories in the Bible. It's a great bedtime story isn't it? But not only that it's a popular toy with many toys shops will selling wooden arks with various animals to go inside it. Then of course there are the songs which are great aren't they?

* The Lord told Noah there's going to be a floodie, floodie, get those children out of the muddie, muddie, Children of the Lord.

* Who built the ark? Noah, Noah! Who built the ark? Brother Noah built the ark. Old man Noah built the ark, he built it out of hickory bark. He built it long, both wide and tall, with plenty of room for the large and small.

* The animals went in two by two, hurrah! hurrah! The animals went in two by two, the elephant and the kangaroo, and they all went into the ark to get out of the rain.

But what all these things have in common is that they portray the flood as a happy event where like the pictures in colouring books an ark is floating on the water with Noah and various animals poking their heads out of the windows with big smiles on their faces.

The reality is that the story of Noah's ark that we read about in Genesis 6-9 is one of saddest and most horrific stories in the whole Bible.

Like Genesis 4:25-26 gave us a preview for the next section of Genesis that started in chapter 5, so Genesis 6:1-8, the end of the last section was a bit like a trailer for the next section that starts in Genesis 6:9 with the chapter heading 'This is the account of...this time its Noah'.

In this trailer we saw the people's rejection of God in the example of this bizarre marriage between angels and women which echoed the sinfulness of Eve's actions in the Garden of Eden. We also saw how God felt as He saw all this going on, how it grieved Him, how it broke His heart and how in response God promises to destroy everything as a punishment. But we also saw that in the midst of this promise of judgment, God is still gracious and shows this grace to a man called Noah.

In the first half of this next section of Genesis (chapters 6:9-7:24) we learn two key things about God which we need to know. Firstly, the first point on your handout which is that God saves.

1. God saves (6:9-22)

Look again at Genesis 6:11-14: *"Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood..."*

How do we know that God is gracious to Noah? That Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord? (6:8) Because God lets Noah in on what is about to happen. He tells Noah what people are like; they are corrupt, they have filled the earth with violence. He tells Noah what he's going to do as a result; he is going to destroy everything. He then tells Noah what he has to do in response; build an ark, a giant lifeboat.

How kind is God? He warns Noah that judgment is coming. Then He tells Noah what he needs to do to be saved from this judgment. This is because God is a God who saves.

God isn't just kind to Noah. He's kind to Noah's 3 sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. He's kind to Noah's wife. He's kind to Noah's son's wives. He's kind to the animals that he has made; there is room in the ark for them too.

In fact God, through Noah and the ark he built, is actually kind to the whole world. In the New Testament, Noah is called a preacher of righteousness which suggests that as he built the ark, he told people why he was doing so. The ark that Noah built was massive; it was like a big warning sign. Every

time people saw it and wondered what a big boat was doing miles from water, they should have remembered that God's judgment was coming.

There was also another way that God was kind to the world. Look back to Genesis 6:3 where God says: *"My Spirit will not contend with man for ever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years"*. God doesn't judge the world immediately, he waits 120 years, giving time for people to repent and turn to Him for salvation, because as the Bible tells us God is the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in love, the God who takes no pleasure in the death of anyone. God loves to save and gives time for people to repent and turn to Him.

But in Genesis 6-7 we learn that He saves only 8 people plus a zoo full of animals. Only 8 people, because only 8 people took up the offer of God's grace and kindness by responding to God's Word of warning and instructions about how to be saved.

In Hebrews 11:7: *"By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen [Noah believed God's warning of judgment, things not yet seen], in holy fear built an ark to save his family [Noah did what God told him to do by building an ark to save his family]."*

Also look at how Genesis 6 describes Noah, verse 9: *"Noah was a righteous man [he sought to keep God's law], blameless among the people of his time [whereas people rejected and ignored God, Noah sought to please God], and he walked with God [had an intimate relationship with God like Enoch, who also God saved from death]."*

The proof that Noah was righteous, blameless, walked with God, lived by faith is found in Genesis 6:22, 7:5, 7:9, 7:16. *"Noah did all that the Lord commanded him"*. Noah did everything God told him to right down to the tiniest details and there were lots of details. In Genesis 6:14-21 God tells Noah what to build the ark out of, what to coat it with, how many decks it was to have, whether there were to be rooms inside it, where the door was to be put, how long, wide and high it was, what food to take, the animals to put in the ark and so on. Noah made sure that the ark was 450 foot long, not 449 or 451 foot; he did everything God commanded him to. It must have been hard work, it must have taken years to build but Noah faithfully did it and by doing so showed that he was different from the world and that he was righteous, blameless and walked by faith with God, and his family followed his example, and were saved too.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 24:38 what the rest of the world were up to while Noah was getting ready for God's judgment to arrive. He says *"For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark"*. They just carried on doing what they always had been doing. The warning that God gave through Noah was ignored and not taken seriously. As a result Jesus goes on to say *"they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away"*.

That leads to the second point on your handout which is that God destroys.

2. God destroys (7:1-24)

When the time was right, God tells Noah to get in the ark. He brings the animals to Noah (like he brought the animals to be named in the Garden of Eden), including seven pairs of clean animals and birds. It took seven days to load everything into the Ark. The people around Noah had an extra seven days to repent and turn to God for salvation but they don't and then God destroys the earth with floodwaters.

This event really did happen. It took place seven days after Noah began loading up the ark. It took place when Noah was 600 years old. It took place on the seventeenth day of the second month. This isn't just a story to read children at bedtime, it is history.

It is almost three years since the Boxing Day Tsunami in Asia took place. More than 225,000 people died, whole villages were wiped out. It was an awful event to happen. But compared to the flood it was a just a light shower.

Look at verses 11-12: *"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights."*

Then look at verses 18-20: *"The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire*

heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet."

The water is like an army attacking and completely overwhelming its opponents. The earth is totally consumed by water; water is everywhere. It's a return to the watery chaos of Genesis 1:2 at the dawn of creation.

As the earth returns to the watery chaos it once was, everything is wiped out. Moses lingers on this point in verses 21-23. *"Every living thing that moved on the earth perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth."*

God does exactly what He said he would do and everything is destroyed. Now imagine if the colouring books were right and Noah and the animal's heads were poking out from the windows in the ark with smiles on their faces. What might they see outside? Thousands upon thousands of dead bodies floating on the surface; men and women, old and young, all different kinds of animals and birds, everything that was living. That's the picture we need to have in our mind when we think about the flood, because that picture shows us how serious sin is. But the ark doesn't have windows and Noah is protected from seeing those horrifying images.

God destroys, but remember God saves. Look at verse 18 again: *"The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water"*. While the rest of the earth was destroyed by God, Noah and his family are kept safe in a floating zoo, and that's where Genesis 7 ends. But the story continues in Genesis 8-9 when 'The sun came out and dried up the landy, landy; Everything was fine and dandy, dandy; Children of the Lord'.

God is the same God today: the God who saves and destroys. This flood we've read about in Genesis 6-7, which took place near the beginning of time points forward to an event that will happen at the end of time.

The apostle Peter makes the link in 2 Peter 3:5-10 where he says: *"But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare."*

The flood is a warning to us about final judgment. Like Noah and his generation, we are sinners who are only evil all the time, and one day God will punish us because of this when he destroys the world, this time with fire.

But God is still the same gracious God who loves to save, and like he did for Noah, he has shown his grace to us by warning us about this final judgment, and telling us how to be kept safe when this final judgment comes.

This time the lifeboat is not an ark but a person, Jesus who has already taken this final judgment for His people when he died on the cross, so that they will be safe when that judgment comes. We need to follow Noah's example and climb into the ark by trusting that Jesus' death and resurrection has and will save us from that judgment because one day, like the flood came, so will the fire.

I finish with two questions I want you to think about:

How have you responded to God's warning that you will be judged because of your sin?
Have you done what God says you need to do in order to be saved?