

# Finer Grounds

## Genesis

### Lesson 4: Noah and the Flow

Noah is probably one of the most well-known characters of the Bible with every Sunday school child knowing he is the man who built the “arky arky”. Although those songs are wonderful teaching tools for little ones, we have to be careful to truly study Noah for the real man he was and search for the truth about what transpired in the greatest catastrophe in the history of mankind. In this lesson, we will be introduced to this righteous man, peek in on the state of the world during his time, and get the facts about this highly debated event. This is the historical account of an incredible plan made by an incredible God that was put into action in order to save the one man left on earth who was submissive to Him. Let’s get started!

#### Read Genesis 6:9-22

Hopefully by now you remember the divisions in Genesis that are marked by the “records (or accounts) of the generations”. These divisions are called toledoths, which is just a term derived from the Hebrew word TOWLEDAH, which means “generations”. We are now embarking upon the third of ten toledoths which is “the records of the generations of Noah” (Gen. 6:9). The Bible describes Noah as “righteous”, “blameless”, and as a man who “walked with God”. The Hebrew word for “blameless” in verse 9 is TAMIYM and has the idea of “complete, full, perfect, or without blemish”. Although we know he was not “perfect” in the sense of sinless, he was obviously an excellent man and, as we mentioned last time, he was unique because of these attributes. Noah truly was one of a kind during his time.

Although we are introduced to Noah’s three sons in verse 10 of chapter 6, we will talk more about Shem, Ham, and Japheth later in our study of Genesis. Our focus for now will be the state of mankind found in verse eleven. God says the “earth was corrupt” and “filled with violence”. The Hebrew word for “corrupt” is SHACHATH and literally means “decay, ruin, perish, spoil, waste”. The Hebrew word for violence is CHAMAC and means “unjust, cruel, false, wrong”. That is the image that God says He sees (“in the sight of God”) when He looks at His creation at this point in history. The same Hebrew word SHACHATH for “corrupt” in verse 11 is used in verse 12, but translated “destroy”. It seems like a bit of a play on words. Perhaps God is essentially saying they are destroying, but I will destroy them. His solution is found in verse 13, which He shares with Noah.

#### Think About It

**Look back at God’s description of Noah in 6:9: How many people could you put on a list with those attributes today?**

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**How did Noah become an “heir of the righteousness” according to Hebrews 11:7?**

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**What does God say He will destroy the people with in 6:13?**

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Plans for the ark are given to Noah. The word ark just means “box”, which is a little better description of its appearance than artists often provide. As you may be aware, the cubit was a standard of measurement at the time from the tip of the finger to the elbow, usually around 18 inches in length, but could vary based on the arm being utilized. Therefore, the estimated dimensions of the ark are 450 feet in length, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet tall, with a window, a door, and three levels.

The Hebrew word for “window” in verse 16, TSOHAR, actually means “noon” or “midday” and is only found in that verse. Because of its lack of use, its exact meaning is unclear. However, the idea seems to be where light would come through, which would also provide ventilation. In fact, some translations just translate it “light”. In the past, we have been taught or seen pictures that lead us to believe that this was one, little window, but that is not necessarily what we find in the text. It could involve a lengthy area, located a cubit from the top, possibly spanning the entire length of the ark with a series of hatches. This would make a lot of sense as there would be a considerable need for some sizeable ventilation in the ark once it was loaded with its cargo. Also, there is a Hebrew word for an actual window which is CHALLOWN and we find it used in 8:6 when Noah “opened the window”. Maybe the use of the two different words suggests that the window in 8:6 was just one of many windows that were

built a cubit from the top to fulfill the command in 6:16 to let the “light” in. Knowing these details are irrelevant to what we need to learn from this account, but these bits of information just remind us that we do not have all the answers, and we should always compare what we see and hear from others with the true word of God.

**Think About It**

**Try to find an area of something similar in dimensions to the ark to get an actual feel for how large it really was.**

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**If you have access, go online and research more accurate depictions of the ark.**

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**How does God say Noah will collect the animals in 6:20?**

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**What did Noah do according to 6:22?**

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**How important do you think it is for us to obey all that God has commanded?**

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**Can you think of some scriptures to help support your belief?**

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## Read Genesis 7

Chapter 7 starts with God telling Noah to “enter the ark”. The unclean animals come to him by twos and the clean animals come to him by sevens. The extra clean animals will be necessary when they exit the ark and Noah sacrifices an offering to the Lord. In verse 4, the term “blot out” is the Hebrew word MACHAH which means “to stroke or rub, to erase, abolish, blot out, wipe out”. God is abundantly clear in this verse that He is going to end “every living thing” He has made. Some have tried to diminish the flood to something local, but God repeatedly states in the text that everything is going to be destroyed. In addition, verses 19 and 20 make it clear that the water was at least 15 cubits higher than “all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens”. This was undoubtedly a global flood. Stories of a great flood have been documented all over the world in almost every continent, independent of one another, and have even been discovered in remote tribes. The exact number is hard to find as different resources site different numbers. Some claim more than 500 accounts, but most claim over 200 accounts. They all bear various similarities and some differences to the Genesis account. Even though they have some differences, there is obviously an ample amount gathered from enough areas that the evidence seems to strongly support that a great flood really did occur in history.

It rains for forty days and forty nights and verse 18 says, “the water prevailed and increased

greatly upon the earth”. The word for “increased”, RABAH, is the same Hebrew word that is translated “multiply” in chapter 1 and the word “greatly” from this verse carries with it the idea of “vehemently, exceedingly, mighty, louder and louder”. Verse 24 tells us that “the water prevailed” for approximately five months (150 days) before it even began to dry up. This was the greatest storm creation has ever endured.

## Think About It

**In verse 4, we see that Noah and his family are actually in the ark for 7 days before it rains. What do you think everyone thought and said about them during those 7 days?**

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**I would encourage you to again go online and read up on the numerous flood accounts from various places around the world. Remember that history was often passed down verbally in ancient times and notice what is most consistent and what things differ.**

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**Put yourself in Noah’s shoes and contemplate what it must have been like to be in such a mighty storm for forty days. What emotions or thoughts might have occurred?**

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**What if you were someone outside the ark?**

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What does 1 Peter 3:20 say was “waiting in the days of Noah”?

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Read 2 Peter 3:1-15a

- What do we not want to escape our notice (vs.5-6)?

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- What is waiting in our days and why (vs.9 and 15)?

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- Like Noah, how should we strive to “be found by Him” (vs.14)?

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The great flood account is not over yet, but we will finish it up in our next lesson with chapters 8 and 9. I pray you will grow mightily in grace and truth as we continue to study and that you will gain an even greater appetite for His word.