



Lesson 6

Noah and the Ark

Introduction

In our last lesson we saw that Enoch was a prophet, sent from God to warn people of God's judgements to come. His son, Methuselah, whose name means '*when he is dead it shall come*', died in the year of the Flood – after he died the Flood came and his death should have served as a great warning to the ungodly people of the time. If they had listened and turned to God then He would not have destroyed them.

The Days of Noah (6:1-2)

In Genesis 6 we read:

“When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.”
Genesis 6:1-2

We know from Matthew 22:30 that angels do not marry, so the sons of God in this verse cannot be angels and must be men. We have already seen that the descendants of Seth were people who '*called upon the name of the Lord*' and followed God's ways in their lives. These are the same people who are now called the sons of God just as in the New Testament, the phrase '*sons of God*' or '*children of God*' is used a number of times to describe true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ (read for example Philippians 2:15).

We are not told directly who the daughters of men were but it is probable that some of them were descendants of Cain; women who did not believe in God.

Look again at verses 1 and 2.

They tell us that the men **saw** that the women were attractive; they **chose** them and then **took** them. They reacted exactly as Eve did when she took the forbidden fruit. Chapter 3 tells us that she **saw**, she **desired** and she **took** the fruit.

So these men were deceived as was Eve and the result was disastrous for them. They married wives who were unbelievers but they did not convert them to the true faith. Rather they were led astray by them and turned away from God. This is not just a condemnation of the women of that time, men were involved as well for as Jesus said; they were '*marrying and giving in marriage*'.

God's response to this was to give a warning:

“Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.”
Genesis 6:3

It is God's spirit that gives life to every living thing. God was telling a wicked world that in 120 years' time He would withdraw His spirit and all people would perish.

An Evil World (6:3-7)

Genesis 6 gives a remarkable picture of what this world was like.

There were giants on the earth (some versions call them 'Nephilim' which means the same thing). They were famous throughout the earth as mighty men, but their reliance on their own physical strength and ability took them away from God. They thought they could do anything they wanted for themselves and did not need to rely on God.

Everything that men thought about every day was wicked. There was no room for true worship of God in their lives.

The earth was filled, not with Godly people, but with violent people. They were corrupt in God's sight.





This is better translated as *'they were corrupt before God'* and this phrase describes people who had come to worship God, they were *'before Him'*. So these people pretended to be believers, they worshipped before God but their worship did not affect their lives. They lived to do their own desires and not the commandments of God.

God regretted that He had made the earth, the human race had destroyed His way upon it (one modern version says that *'it broke his heart'*).

The world we live in today is like this. Many people say that they believe in the God of the Bible and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ but this is not really in their hearts. It does not change their lives and help them become Godly people like the Lord Jesus; instead they live to do what pleases them and their own desires. God has told us in His word that He will destroy this world because of this, just as He did in Noah's day.

A Godly Family (6:8-10)

What a contrast we see when we read about Noah and his family.

"Noah found favour in the eyes of the LORD... Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God." Genesis 6:8-9

Notice that we are told four distinct things about him.

1. He found favour (or grace) in God's sight.

The word 'favour' or 'grace' is a lovely Bible word that means 'a favour that is undeserved'. Grace was something Noah did not deserve but God gave it to him. Like everybody else Noah had sinned and therefore, according to God's laws, he deserved to die. He 'found' grace; it was something he looked for. We see Noah's name in Hebrews 11 in the long list of men and women who were faithful to God. In that chapter we are told that:

"Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." Hebrews 11:6

Noah understood that God was going to punish the world for its wickedness and that he too was sinful. But he also believed that, if he asked God honestly from his heart, God would provide a way for the forgiveness of his sins.

2. He was a righteous man.

He was 'right with God' (which is what righteous means) not because of what he had done but because he believed and trusted in God who accepted his faith and declared that Noah was righteous.

3. He was blameless.

Through his faith God had accepted him as being righteous, his sins were forgiven, and so he is described as blameless.

4. He walked with God.

Noah is the second man who did this. Enoch also walked with God. Obviously they did not physically walk alongside God; that would be impossible. It is a phrase that describes a unity of purpose between Noah or Enoch and God. The prophet Amos says that two people cannot walk together unless they are in agreement.

Building the Ark (6:13-22)

We see in the verses that follow in Genesis 6 how close Noah was to God. The Lord shared with him His plans for the destruction of the earth and told him how Noah could escape it. Noah was told to build a ship, an ark. It was a great vessel, 133 metres long and 22 metres wide. He was told to build it for himself, his wife and sons yet it would be another 20 years before his first son was born! What faith he had!

The ark was built to hold animals, birds and food for them also; it was a huge job and took Noah many years to accomplish, yet we read of him:





“Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.”

Genesis 6:22

Four times in chapters 6&7 we read this of Noah, he was a man who believed God and his faith strengthened him to do great works for God. Notice that he did **everything** that God asked of him. He did not choose to do the easy parts and to ignore those commands he did not find easy.

When all was ready God spoke to him.

"Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation."

Genesis 7:1

And Noah's response was:

"On the *very same day* Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark,"

Genesis 7:13

What a wonderful response! He had waited for this day for 120 years. What a long time that must have been for him. Yet as soon as God called him into the ark he was ready so that he went immediately, the very same day. Also, his preaching and witness to his wife, sons and daughters-in-law had been so strong that they went in with him, eight people in total.

What great faith he had. He believed that God's judgements were coming on the world. He believed that God would save him and his family from them. He believed that God would preserve him, his family and all the animals in the Ark during the Flood – and he did not know how long it would last. We do not know how they were all kept alive during this long period, we can only accept in faith that God's miraculous power was at work to preserve them all.

This was a day for which the Lord God had been waiting. He had been very patient while the ark had been built. He did not want anyone to perish but wanted them all to listen to Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and to be saved. Apart from Noah's family no-one would listen and a terrible fate now awaited them as we shall see in the next chapter.

Seven days of preparation (7:4) followed until finally God shut the door to the ark (7:17) and the rain started.

The Return of the Lord Jesus Christ

It is important that we learn about these events and what happened before the Flood because the Lord Jesus Christ said:

“As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man”. Matthew 24:37-39

The Apostle Peter also teaches us that there is a link between these two events, the Flood in Noah's time and the judgement at the return of Christ.

“Knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.” 2 Peter 3:3-6

These two passages give us a lot of information and once again it is useful to try and write it down for ourselves.

- Jesus tells us that just before his return to the earth, everyday life will be like it was in Noah's days.
- People will be so concerned with their own lives that they will not think about Jesus' coming. Some will mock any message about the coming kingdom. They will say that nothing has ever changed,





that people just live out their lives and then die so why should they believe that Jesus will indeed come back. They will put their own desires first in their lives.

- Jesus said that in Noah's day people were unaware of the threat of judgement until the ark was completed and Noah and his family went into it. This is remarkable; the ark was a great ship and it took Noah many years to build it. Of course people knew what was happening; Noah must have been mocked and thought to be very foolish, building a great ship in the middle of dry land. They knew **what** he was doing but refused to accept **why** he was doing it. Today we see many signs in the world that the return of Jesus must be very near. People see them but refuse to accept that they tell us of the return of Christ.
- Those who rejected Noah's warnings were destroyed in the Flood. Those who reject Jesus' teaching will be punished at the return of the Lord.
- Noah and his family had to respond to God's call to go into the Ark immediately, the very same day. Jesus says that when he returns, the call to meet him and go into the Kingdom of God will be like this. There will be just one opportunity to respond. It will be those who have been faithful disciples in their lives who will be ready and will be saved, just like Noah and his family were saved from the Flood.

SUMMARY

In this lesson we have learned:

- The people of Noah's time were warned to repent or be destroyed in the Flood.
- Noah was saved through God's grace. He did not deserve God's favour as, like all men, he was a sinner.
- Because Noah believed God he obeyed God's commands – he put his faith into action.
- God sent a Flood upon the earth to destroy wicked men, Noah and his family were saved in the Ark because they were ready.
- It will be like this at the return of Jesus, those who are ready will listen to the call to go and be with him and so will have a place in his Kingdom.