

God's Deep Grace



Topic

God's grace and justice

Theme

God showed His graciousness and justice in the events of the Flood.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will take his sin seriously and will endeavor to witness to those who need to hear of God's grace and justice.

Materials

- Resources 1 and 5
- Video of tsunami
- Visual 1 from resource CD

Scripture Focus

Genesis 6–9

Summary

Because of the incredible expanse of sin in the centuries following the fall, God grew weary of the evil conditions upon the earth. He determined to judge the world in a manner that would bring cleansing and also relief from some of the effects of the curse. Thus He sent a worldwide Flood that destroyed all living things except those that were hid safely with Noah and his family inside the ark. The Flood event consumed more than a year and brought great changes to the world.

Outline

- I. The Days of Noah (6:1–12)
- II. Preparation for the Flood (6:13–7:9)
- III. Salvation and Destruction (7:10–24)
- IV. Promise Fulfillment (8)
- V. God's Covenant with Noah (9:1–17)
- VI. Noah's Foolish Sin (9:18–29)

Memory Verse

"The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever"
(Psalm 29:10).

GETTING STARTED

LESSON 3

Tsunami Warning

Search the Web for a short video of a tsunami. Play the video for your class.

ASK: Why are tsunamis and flash floods so dangerous? (Q1) *They come with little or no warning, they are very powerful, and they are hard to escape.*

ASK: If you knew a tsunami was going to hit a particular area, how would you respond? (Q2)

Tsunamis and flash floods of our day are a small picture of what it was like during the worldwide flood in Noah's day. Noah warned the world of the coming flood, but no one heeded his warning.

God has given us the opportunity to warn the world of coming judgment. This lesson will challenge us to do that.

Grand Canyon Beauty

Display the pictures of the Grand Canyon (visual 1). Or show any personal pictures you have taken of the Grand Canyon.

ASK: What do you see when you look at these pictures of the Grand Canyon?

Point out the rock layers evident in the pictures. The layers we can see are actually made up of smaller layers. Each layer was laid down by water that was carrying sediment. As the water slowed down, the sediments settled and formed uniform layers. Before the layers hardened, more water came through and cut away large sections of the newly laid layers.

The most plausible explanation for the formation of the Grand Canyon is the worldwide flood as recorded in Genesis. The Flood is the topic of our lesson for today. It helps us see both God's grace and justice. It also helps see our need to be warning people of God's coming judgment by fire.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

I. The Days of Noah (6:1–12)

Having previously revealed Himself through the glory of creation (general revelation) and the wonder of the first promise of the gospel (Gen. 3:15), God reveals Himself in judgment in Genesis 6–9. This judgment was first prophetically announced specifically to Noah (6:13–21).

The population of the earth was doubtless exploding before the Flood (6:1) with people still living extremely long lives (5:5, 27) under the cover of the vapor canopy (1:6–8). The most harmful genetic effects of the curse were surely yet to take full effect. But apart from obedience to God and His revealed truth, the longevity and

It is unclear exactly how the presence of *giants* (6:4) relates to the other details in this passage. Certainly, there were giants who lived at various times—especially perhaps during this era closer to the dawn of creation when mankind was more genetically pure (cf. 1 Sam. 17:4). Moses may have been stating that the offspring of the marriages described in verse 2 were giants, or he may have merely alluded to their existence during that same stressful time period. The giants likely posed other threats of their own.

physical strength of mankind only allowed him to multiply his transgressions and plumb the depths of depravity. The presence of sin was also exploding.

What exactly was involved in the spread of sin is not clear. Specifically, who the sons of God and the daughters of men were has been the subject of much debate (6:2–4). Some Bible scholars identify these *sons of God* as the godly descendants of Seth and believe the *daughters of men* were the ungodly descendants of Cain. Thus the intermarrying broke down the wall of separation between believers and unbelievers. Others have identified the sons of God as kings and nobles, despotic rulers who became polygamous in order to expand their dominion. Those who hold this view believe the children of these marriages were political giants.

Still others identify these sons of God as fallen angels whose union with beautiful women produced monstrous, infamously wicked giants. Some who hold this view teach that the fallen angels took possession of men's bodies in an action similar to demon possession. They point to Jude 6 and 7 in support of their view. Jude wrote that angels *kept not their first estate*. Like the Sodomites in Abraham's era, they went *after strange flesh*.

READ: Genesis 6:5. **ASK:** Describe the depth of depravity mankind had reached. (Q3) *They were abandoned to wickedness. Their thoughts were continually evil.*

In the Old Testament the *heart* (6:5) is viewed as the seat not only of emotion but also of the understanding and will. Mankind was corrupt in feelings, thoughts, and choice of actions. Human depravity knew no restraint. The Lord had been long-suffering with those corrupt people, but finally He said, *My spirit shall not always strive with man* because mankind *also is flesh* (6:3). In other words, since people are flesh, they are capable of every kind of evil imaginable. The exact meaning of the Spirit's striving is not clear. But we can surmise that God had had enough of man's wickedness and that He was leaving them to their ways. The apostle Paul referred to a similar action in the book of Romans.

READ: Romans 1:24–28. **ASK:** To what did God give the sinners up according to the apostle Paul? (Q4) *Uncleanness, vile affections, and a reprobate mind.*

The 120 years identified as mankind's *days* probably refers to the length of time God would give mankind before He judged them. This would be in line with the time it took Noah to build the ark.

ASK: Why would God give mankind 120 years before judging them? He was certainly capable of wiping them all out with just one breath. (Q5) *This was a measure of God's long-suffering with humanity. He would give them time to repent and turn to Him even though their wickedness had already become great in the earth.*

Seeing mankind's terrible, sinful condition, the Lord repented that He had made man (Gen. 6:6). That does not mean He wished He had not created people. Nor does it mean He considered His creation of humans a mistake. The Hebrew word for *repent* means *to breathe deeply*, as one does in great pain or sorrow. God *grieved Him into His heart* (literal translation) that human beings had become so depraved.

God is holy and just and, therefore, must judge sin. He judged the universal corruption described in Genesis 6:5 with universal judgment: *The LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth (6:7)*. This judgment included all land animals, birds, and creeping things.

Up to this point, no one knew God had decided to destroy the inhabitants of the earth. But that was about to change. For *Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD (6:8)*. God gave His message of destruction to Noah. Along with that message also came a message of grace and hope.

Like Enoch, Noah walked with God as a righteous believer (6:9). The term *perfect* means *blameless*. Noah was a man of integrity in a world of utter depravity.

READ: Hebrews 11:7. **ASK:** What motivated Noah to be faithful to God? (Q6)
He feared God.

Imagine what it must have been like living in a world in which you could count on no one else to be upright, honest, or humble.

ASK: What must Noah have thought about humanity's future, being an eye-witness to its depravity? (Q7) *He must have been overwhelmed with the hopelessness of humanity and the thought that they all would one day have to answer for their sin.*

This righteous father of three sons stood against the current of evil (Gen. 6:10–12). His stark contrast to the world around him must have made him the focus of ridicule and abuse. What a scary position to be in. There were no police to ensure his safety. He had no person to appeal to. Yet it was his fear of God that directed his life, not his fear of man. So giving into the world and joining them in their depravity *scared* Noah more than risking his life by standing against them.

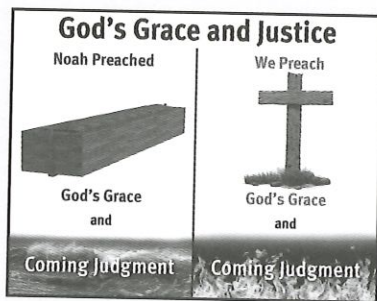
II. Preparation for the Flood (6:13–7:9)

The Lord gave Noah a prophetic warning that Noah was to make widely known through his preaching and his obedience to God (6:13). God already determined the timeline of 120 years for His judgment (6:3), although we have no record that that detail was revealed to Noah at this time. Perhaps God never revealed His intended timeline to Noah, leaving him to work and preach in light of an imminent judgment.

God gave Noah explicit instructions regarding the building of the ark: it was to be of gopher wood covered with pitch on both sides and at least 450 by 75 by 45 feet. It would have three decks with a window and a door. In addition to the animals who would board the ark, there was plenty of additional space for any people who would heed his preaching.

As Noah built the ark, it became a sign of God's coming judgment. Noah's building would have been intermingled with his preaching as both the curious and the ridiculers came by to see what he was up to.

Noah dared to preach to dissolute people who had no intention of listening to him. God's approval was infinitely more important to him than finding favor with his godless contemporaries.



RESOURCE: Display resource 5 with the right half covered.

Noah's message would have included both God's coming judgment and God's grace. The message of the ark was pointless without the message of the flood.

READ: 2 Peter 2:5. **ASK:** What did Peter say Noah preached? (Q8) *Righteousness.*

Noah's audience needed righteousness in order to escape God's judgment. That righteousness would come through faith in God.

RESOURCE: Reveal the right half of resource 5.

ASK: What point is there in preaching the cross if we don't also preach God's coming judgment on sin? (Q9) *The cross doesn't make sense without the message of judgment by fire.*

ASK: What would you say to those who prefer to focus on God's love and grace in their witnessing instead of God's coming judgment on sin? (Q10) *They are diluting the gospel message and failing to give the consequences of rejecting Christ.*

The Flood would bring the first rain upon the earth. God promised that *every thing that is in the earth shall die* (6:17). However, Noah and his sons and their wives would be saved through the flood by means of the ark he would build, on the basis of God's covenant with Noah. In that way, God would also preserve the animals by having at least a pair of each kind enter the ark with Noah. Noah was also to bring food on the ark for the animals.

Having listened intently to God's stern warning and covenantal promises, Noah obeyed God to the fullest extent of his ability to do so (6:22).

Chapter 7 jumps ahead to the conclusion of the 120-year period of preparation for the flood. When the time drew near at which God would send the flood, God clarified his instructions to Noah (7:2). The clean animals would enter by sevens and the unclean in pairs. The fowls would also come by sevens (7:3)

This final warning came one week before the flood. God revealed that the rain phase of the flood would last 40 days and 40 nights, during which *every living substance* would be destroyed (7:4). Noah and his family boarded the ark, with God also bringing the animals into the ark in accord with His plan (7:5-9).

III. Salvation and Destruction (7:10-24)

The Flood then came at God's appointed time (7:10). It involved the first rain, during which the water vapor canopy may have broken down. Previously God had designed for the earth to be watered by a mist (cf. 2:5, 6). The Flood would bring massive and lasting changes to many of the earth's natural systems. The rain lasted forty days. The fountains of the deep also broke open causing water to explode from the ground (7:11).

The next section retells the events but adds details (7:13-24). As the flood began, God shut the door to the ark. All of Noah's pleas for people to join his family

in the spacious vessel had gone unheeded, and now it was too late. One can only wonder if some of those people remembered Noah's warnings and repented as the judgment of the flood began to consume them.

The flood covered the highest pre-flood hills and mountains by at least fifteen cubits (7:19, 20). The ark was 30 cubits high (6:15), so it could pass over any part of the earth's surface. Without any question, these chapters teach that this was a worldwide catastrophe.

READ: Genesis 7:21–23. **ASK:** How does reading about the complete destruction of man and beast make God's justice real to you? (Q11)

ASK: How should it affect your view of sin? (Q12) *It should cause us to understand the seriousness of sin and its offensiveness to God.*

ASK: How does God's justice in the Flood affect your appreciation for salvation? (Q13)

The Flood consumed all people and animals that were outside the safety of the ark (7:21–23). God's revelation of Himself in judgment was thorough to the point of complete fulfillment of His Word. The chapter closes by stating that the waters continued to exert their destructive force for 150 days—well beyond the initial forty days of rain.

IV. Promise Fulfillment (8)

God had promised that He would preserve Noah, his family, and all the occupants of the ark. In fulfillment of that promise, God remembered Noah and the animals and made a wind blow over the earth until the waters were subsided. The ark providentially landed on Mount Ararat (8:1–4).

Noah used birds to test whether the earth was ready for them to depart. Noah opened the ark's window and sent out a raven and a dove; the dove returned. A week later he sent the dove out again, and this time it returned with an olive leaf. Another week later, he let out a dove again and this time it did not return. A year and 10 days after the flood first began, the earth dried. God called Noah and his family out of the ark, along with all of the animals, who were to go and reproduce abundantly (8:5–19).

Noah's first act on emerging from the ark was to worship. He built an altar and sacrificed an offering to the Lord (8:20). God was both his Friend and his Lord, Who had saved him and his family from a devastating flood. He rightly expressed his thanksgiving by offering sacrifices.

ASK: Imagine you came off the ark with Noah. How frequently do you think you would tell God thank you for saving you from the Flood? (Q14)

ASK: How often should we thank God for saving us from our sins? (Q15)

Mt. Ararat—and all other post-flood mountains—were created by the catastrophic forces of the flood, which completely altered the earth's terrain and probably the shapes of the earth's continents.

Peter clarifies in 2 Pet.
3:5-7 that, although the
world will never again be
consumed by water, it will
be destroyed by fire.

We can be sure that during the year Noah spent on the ark, his knowledge of God had vastly grown. The display of God's power must have overwhelmed him. He had seen more fully the holiness of God and His fierce anger against iniquity. He had seen the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promise to destroy the wicked. And he had experienced the grace of God and His tender loving care in the strangest year of his life. No wonder Noah worshiped. He was learning what we need to learn: that God's sovereignty, justice, and mercy extend vastly beyond all we have thought or imagined. Yet He allows us the privilege of worshiping Him in an intimate, personal way.

Noah's sacrifice arose to God as a sweet fragrance (8:21), and God made the covenant with Noah that He had promised before the Flood (6:18). He would never again judge mankind with a universal flood. The shining rainbow in the sky would always remind always people everywhere of that pledge (9:11-14).

The chapter ends with a promise: the post-flood world will be marked by stability, continuity and predictability (8:22). Thus, believers need not fear that any type of natural phenomenon is outside of the Lord's control. He who created the world still upholds and sustains it (Col. 1:17).

V. God's Covenant with Noah (9:1-17)

The Flood now past, chapter 9 opens with God giving Noah's family the command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Everyone who has lived on the earth since the time of the Flood has come from the lineage of Noah and his sons and their wives.

God used the occasion of the Flood to bring relief from some of the effects of the curse. Fierce animals—which had presumably held men in the bondage of fear since the Fall—would now fear man (9:2). Also, people were now authorized to eat the meat from animals (9:3). The only requirement was that they not eat animal blood (9:4).

God instituted the first human government to rule over men (9:5). Anyone who commits murder must forfeit his own life in payment for the life he has taken (9:6). Only such a remedy for this heinous sin can convey the immeasurable worth of human life created in the image of God.

God made a covenant with Noah and humanity at large that He will never again send a flood to destroy the earth (Gen. 9:11). The sign of God's covenant is the rainbow. It reminds us of God's promise to Noah but also of the fact that a sinful world does deserve God's judgment.

VI. Noah's Foolish Sin (9:18-29)

Though God destroyed the wicked from the earth, sin still remained. For Noah and his sons were still sinners. In the conclusion of this passage (9:18-29), we get a glimpse of Noah's only public failure, recorded to remind us that he, like us, was a sinful man in spite of his great acts of faith, obedience, and heroism.

Noah drank wine from one of his vineyards one day and became drunk and was discovered by Ham. While we may not understand exactly what happened in this situation, it led to a curse being placed on Ham's descendants. At the same time, Noah used this opportunity to pronounce a blessing on the descendants of Japheth and Shem—the latter including the Jewish people, who would begin under Abram in Genesis 12.

ASK: How does Noah's failure help you understand the grace God showed in saving Noah and his family from the Flood? (Q16) *Noah didn't deserve to be on the ark. He was there because of God's grace.*

Noah went on to live an additional 350 years—presumably spent serving the Lord faithfully. He had quite a story to share with the expanding number of inhabitants of the newly repopulated earth.

MAKING IT PERSONAL

Sin Is Serious

ASK: Why do we sometimes forget about God's justice? (Q17) *We know our sins are forgiven; we are guaranteed eternal life; we don't see God's justice in action immediately after we sin; we figure that to sin is human nature.*

ASK: How has the account of the Flood affected your view of sin? (Q18)

Encourage your learners to take sin seriously. They should regularly confess their sins, seeking to put off self and live in Christlikeness.

Message of Grace and Judgment

Perhaps the best lesson to come from the account of the Flood is the amazingness of God's grace. No one on earth deserved to get on the ark. God was gracious in saving Noah and his family. God was also gracious in giving the world 120 years to repent, though none did.

ASK: How diligent have you been in telling the lost about God's grace available through the cross of Christ? (Q19)

ASK: How should the reality of the Flood help you see the desperateness of the lost today? (Q20)

It is easy to get caught up in the temporary aspects of life and lose sight of the eternal. Challenge your learners to keep the eternal state of those they know always before them, looking for opportunities to share Christ.

Summary and Memory Verse

RESOURCE: Display resource 1. Add a summary statement for lesson 3 or use the following: Take sin seriously and share God's grace.

Encourage learners to memorize Psalm 29:10. Give them an opportunity to say the verse in class next week.

Responding to God & His Plan	8.
1. Understand and enjoy God's revelation of Himself through creation.	9.
2. Recognize Christ as the only solution to sin.	10.
3. Take sin seriously and share God's grace.	11.
4.	12.
5.	13.
6.	
7.	

Genesis
GOD'S PLAN BEGINS



Two Plans, Two Results

Topic

God's sovereignty

Theme

God is sovereign over rebellious humanity.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will evaluate his life in light of God's sovereignty, making sure he is not trying to live according to his own plan.

Materials

- Resources 1 and 6
- Building blocks or Legos
- Permanent markers

Scripture Focus

Genesis 10:1–11:30

Summary

Genesis 10 gives the table of nations and provides clues as to where the nations settled. Genesis 11 gives the account of the tower of Babel. God demonstrated His sovereignty in thwarting the plans of those rebelling against His command to fill the earth. God's sovereignty is then seen in the record of the line of Shem, the line through which the Savior would eventually be born.

Outline

I. Formation of the Nations (10)

- A. Descendants of Japheth (10:1–5)
- B. Descendants of Ham (10:6–20)
- C. Descendants of Shem (10:21–32)

II. Spreading of the Nations (11:1–9)

- A. The people's pride (11:1–4)
- B. God's judgment (11:5–9)

III. Continuation of the Line of Shem (11:10–30)

Memory Verse

*"I know that thou canst do every thing,
and that no thought can be withholden from thee"
(Job 42:2).*