



GENESIS

A Flood of Judgment and Rainbow of Grace – Genesis 6:9-9:28

12 Questions About Genesis 6-9

>> Read: Genesis 6:9-22 <<

Q1: In what way was Noah a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries? (Gen 6:9)

- Righteous (*tsaddiq*): Conformed to God’s moral standard; credited by faith (see Heb 11:5-7).
- Blameless (*tamim*): Wholehearted integrity, not sinless perfection; set apart in a violent generation.
- Among his contemporaries: Relative moral distinction, not absolute perfection.

Q2: What does it mean to “walk with God”? (Gen 6:9)

- Ongoing, intimate fellowship (cf. Enoch in Gen 5:24).
- Implies obedience, trust, and daily reliance on God’s presence (Mic 6:8).

Q3: Does “every creature under heaven...” (Gen 6:17) *require* a global flood reading?

- No. “Under heaven” can be phenomenological or idiomatic (Deut 2:25; Col 1:23).
- Ancient worldviews often employed universal language to describe local events.

Q4: Does “two of everything” (Gen 6:20) connote *everything*, or is it hyperbolic?

- Representative pairs.
- Gen 7:2-3 clarifies kinds, not exhaustive species.
- Hyperbole emphasizes totality within the affected region.

A Global or Regional Flood?

Aspect	Global Flood (Universal Extent)	Regional Flood (Local/Mesopotamian Extent)
Primary Texts	Gen 7:19–20 (“all the high mountains under the entire heaven were covered”); Gen 6:17 (“every creature under heaven”)	Gen 6:17; 7:22 interpreted as phenomenological language (from Noah’s perspective); parallels with Mesopotamian flood stories (e.g., <i>Gilgamesh</i>)
Scope of Destruction	All land-dwelling, air-breathing life on the whole earth	All life in the inhabited region (from Eden to Mesopotamia)
Geological Evidence	Catastrophic global sediment layers, fossil graveyards	Local river-basin flooding; matches ancient Near Eastern hydrogeology
Theological Emphasis	Total judgment on universal human sin; new creation motif	Judgment on the corrupt line of Cain/antediluvian world; preservation of remnant; new creation motif
Ark Logistics	Requires millions of species; miraculous preservation to fit the ark	Fewer species; feasible vessel size
“Under Heaven”	Literal: entire sky/earth	Idiomatic: visible horizon (cf. Deut 2:25; Acts 2:5)
Contemporary Advocates	Young-earth creationists, some evangelical scholars (Ken Ham, Answers in Genesis, ICR)	Old-earth creationists, some evangelical scholars (e.g., John Walton, Tremper Longman)

>> Read: Genesis 7:1-10 <<

Q5: What’s with the seven pairs of clean animals and two pairs of unclean animals (Gen 7:2–3)?

Is this for the coming sacrifices (Gen 8:20–21)?

- Yes. Extra clean animals provide:
 - a. Food (post-flood, Gen 9:3).
 - b. Sacrificial offerings (Gen 8:20).
- The distinction predates Mosaic law and reflects early ritual knowledge.

>> Read: Genesis 7:11-24 <<

Q6: Is there any significance to the phrase “breath of the spirit of life” (Gen 7:22, cf. 6:17)?

- Echoes Gen 2:7 (“breath of life”).
- Reversal of creation; death undoes God’s life-giving spirit (ruach).
- Highlights the flood as de-creation

>> Read: Genesis 8:1-14 <<

Q7: Where is Ararat?

- Urartu region (modern eastern Turkey/Armenia).
- “Mountains of Ararat” = rugged highlands, not a single peak.
- Cultural memory preserved in Armenian records.

Q8: Why the change from the raven to the dove (Gen 8:7–9)?

- Raven: Scavenger; can survive on carrion; no return possibly signals death persisted.
- Dove: Clean bird; needs vegetation/land; return with olive leaf signals renewal.

>> Read: Genesis 8:15-9:7 <<

Q9: Are Gen 8:17 and Gen 9:1–7 reiterations of the creation mandate?

- Yes.
 - a. “Be fruitful, multiply, fill...” echoes Gen 1:28.
 - b. Post-flood world = new creation; humanity re-commissioned.
 - c. Added provision: dominion now includes meat (Gen 9:3) with blood prohibition.

Q10: Why would God have promised never again to curse the ground (Gen 8:21–22)?

- Grace, despite persistent sin. The human heart is still “evil from youth.”
- Covenant of common grace: seasons continue for all humanity.
- Foreshadows redemptive plan, not removal of judgment.

>> Read: Genesis 9:8-17 <<

Q11: What sort of cultural symbolism is baked into the covenantal rainbow (Gen 9:13)?

- War bow hung up: Ancient symbol of God laying down the weapon of judgment.
- Self-ensured oath: God binds himself; the rainbow “reminds” him (v. 15–16).
- Universal sign: visible to all nations, not just Israel.
- This is considered an *unconditional* covenant.

>> Read: Genesis 9:18-29 <<

Q12: What’s with the strange interaction between Ham and Noah? Why did it result in the cursing of his son, Canaan?

- Ham’s sin: Disrespect/dishonor; possibly public shaming or sexual impropriety (Lev 18 implications).
- Noah’s response: Prophetic oracle, not personal vendetta.
- Canaan was cursed: The future subjugation of the Canaanites (Josh 9:23; 1 Kgs 9:20–21) foreshadows the conquest.
- Protects Shem’s line (Messianic promise) and Japheth’s enlarged territory/heritage.

Implications for Today

- **Common Grace in a Pluralistic World**
- Gen 8:21–22 – “*Never again will I curse the ground... seasons will continue.*”
- **Recognize:** God’s common grace/kindness (rain, harvests, order) benefits believers *and* unbelievers alike.
- **Today:** Society at large enjoys God’s provision without acknowledging him.
- **Respond:** Engage culture with humility, not condemnation—God’s patience is an evangelistic opportunity (2 Pet 3:8-9).

“The rainbow is for all flesh, not just the church.” – Karl Barth

Baptism as Flood-Typology

- 1 Pet 3:20–21 – *“Baptism... now saves you... through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*
- Recognize: The floodwaters = death of the old self; the ark = Christ/Church.
- Today: Baptism isn’t mere ritual but participation in Christ’s judgment and resurrection.
- Respond: Reclaim baptismal theology in an age of cheap grace (Bonhoeffer).

“The church is the ark afloat on the waters of death.” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Justice, Violence, and the Image of God

- Gen 6:11 – *“The earth was corrupt... filled with violence”*; Gen 9:6 – *“Whoever sheds human blood... for God made man in his image.”*
- Recognize: Violence against humans is violence against God’s image; capital punishment is a post-flood concession, not ideal.
- Today: Social violence/vitriol, abortion, racism, war—all assault the imago Dei.
- Respond: Advocate sanctity of life *from womb to tomb*; wrestle with Gen 9:6 in death penalty debates

“The flood exposes the cost of violence; the cross absorbs it.” – Miroslav Volf

Hope in Judgment: The Pattern of Redemptive History

- Gen 8:1 – *“God remembered Noah”*; Gen 9:16 – *“When I see the bow... I will remember.”*
- Recognize: God’s memory is active grace—he *never abandons* his creation, even in wrath.
- Today: Pandemics, cultural collapse, personal crises—judgment is not the final word.
- Respond: Preach the rainbow as eschatological hope: final judgment will be flood-like, but the church-ark will emerge into new creation (Rev 21:1).

“The flood teaches that God’s ‘No’ to sin is always followed by a greater ‘Yes’ to life.”

– Jürgen Moltmann

Noah Compared with Gilgamesh

Element	Genesis 6–9 (CSB)	Epic of Gilgamesh / Atra-Hasis
Cause of Flood	Human wickedness/violence (Gen 6:5, 11–13); God’s grief.	Human noise/overpopulation disturbs the gods’ sleep (Atra-Hasis); Enlil is annoyed.
Hero	Noah: “righteous... blameless... walked with God” (6:9).	Utnapishtim (Atra-Hasis: “exceeding wise”), favored by Ea.
Divine Warning	Direct from God (6:13–21).	Secret from Ea via reed hut wall (whispers to Utnapishtim).
Ark/Vessel	Rectangular barge; gopher wood, pitch, rooms, roof, door (6:14–16).	Cube-shaped; 7 decks, 9 compartments; reed/reed-mat construction, pitch.
Dimensions	450 × 75 × 45 ft (300 × 50 × 30 cubits).	~200 × 200 × 200 ft (1 <i>ikû</i> base; 120 cubits high).
Occupants	Noah, wife, 3 sons, daughters-in-law; animals by kinds (7 pairs clean, 1 pair unclean).	Utnapishtim, family, craftsmen, “seed of all living things”; animals.
Duration	370+ days total; rain 40 days (7:12); waters prevail 150 days (7:24).	6 days + 7 nights rain; waters subside quickly (7th day calm).
Bird Sequence	Raven → dove (×3: no return, wet feet, olive leaf, no return) (8:6–12).	Dove (returns) → swallow (returns) → raven (eats, no return).
Mountaintop	“Mountains of Ararat” (8:4).	Mount Nimush (Nisir) (modern Pir Omar Gudrun, Iraq).
Exit & Sacrifice	God commands exit (8:15–17); Noah builds altar; offers clean animals (8:20).	Utnapishtim exits, offers sacrifice; the gods “gather like flies” over the aroma.
Divine Response	“Pleasing aroma”; covenant promise never again to destroy (8:21–22; 9:8–17).	Enlil is angry (not invited), but Ishtar rebukes; Enki/Ea defends; gods grant immortality.
Covenant/Sign	Unilateral: rainbow as God’s war-bow reminder (9:13–17).	None; Utnapishtim & wife granted immortality (“like the gods”).
Theological Tone	Monotheistic; moral judgment; grace; new creation mandate.	Polytheistic; capricious gods; survival by cunning; no moral reformation.

Theological Contrasts (Noah v. Gilgamesh)

Theme	Genesis	Gilgamesh / Atra-Hasis
God(s)	One sovereign God, grieved by sin.	Multiple quarrelsome gods; flood = population control.
Humanity's Sin	Moral corruption & violence (6:11).	Overpopulation & noise.
Purpose of Survival	Preservation of the righteous remnant; restart creation.	Reward for piety to Ea; secret defiance of Enlil.
Sacrifice	Pleases God → covenant of common grace.	Attracts starving gods → regret for the flood.
Outcome	Universal covenant with all flesh; rainbow sign of God's mercy .	Individual immortality for the hero only.
Literary Style	Restrained, dignified prose; theological focus.	Poetic, exaggerated; heroic epic.

"We are with Noah kissing the ground after the Flood. We see the rainbow cast across the sky and we feel the colors reflecting off the pools of water around Noah's feet. We hear the promise from the Lord to never abandon creation again."

-Karl Barth

"Baptism is the flood moment: the old creation is judged, the new creation is born. The rainbow follows Easter morning."

-N. T. Wright

"The flood is the biblical archetype of apocalyptic judgment. Baptism plunges us into that judgment—in Christ—so we emerge on the other side."

-Fleming Rutledge