

GENESIS Chapters 6-9:
Noah and the Flood.

These chapters narrow the focus from vast creation and many creatures in the world (chapters 1-5) to one family, that of Noah. The creator's wrath nearly undoes all creation yet a covenant and salvation is promised. We begin to identify Noah's progeny with the several tribes of Israel (tune in next week).
What do we do when a flood encompasses our lives?

6. Humans multiply but not all is well on earth. The Lord grieves.

Background: Humans (and other beings) flourish on the earth but their wickedness grieves the Lord who regretted making humans and vows to wipe out humans and all animals and birds. Noah was instructed to build an ark of certain size and design (cubit=18 inches; thus 75'x450'x45') to hold him, his family, and animals. Noah accepts the covenant.

- What's wrong on earth?
- What are the other beings "Nephilim"?
- How do you react to learn that God grieves?
- Why does Noah gain God's favor?

7. Noah builds the ark.

Background: Noah, found righteous by the Lord, is given seven days to build the ark before a flood will cover the earth to eliminate all beings. He and family board the ark along with seven pairs of every clean animal (of unclean, only one pair; or was it a pair of each animal type?). Water, from rainfall and the abyss, covers the earth rising higher than all mountains. Life on earth has ended and Noah sails on.

Two flood stories entwined. Clean/unclean animals treated differently. Recall another early creation flood story in Gilgamesh. Recall hearing Atlantis, the antediluvian world.

- Flood: from rainfall and other sources?
- Does the occasional use of "breath" echo the breath of life into Adam?
- Why use a flood story for a desert people?

8. At sea.

Background: Winds sweep the earth, waters begin to subside and the ark rests upon Ararat. Noah sends a raven to seek land but the bird doesn't return; then a dove which couldn't find a place to perch; after another seven days another dove returns with an olive leaf in its beak. Another seven days he again released the dove which didn't return. Noah removed the ark covering, waited longer for the earth to more fully dry and let family and animals out. Noah built an altar to the Lord, offered sacrifice, and the

Lord said to himself never again would he curse the ground because of human beings nor strike all living things.

- God remembers Noah (thank God!) Is this a mere afterthought? Noah's tests several times for end of flood. (Symbol of Raven? Of Dove?)
- Noah obeys God to release all creatures. Noah quickly builds altar and offers sacrifice the sweet smell of which pleases God.
- What prompted Noah to build altar and offer sacrifice?

9. Covenant with Noah. A rainbow. Noah and his sons.

God blesses Noah (again, be fruitful and multiply) delivers to him power over creation with some limitation. Noah to till the land and subdue it but the Lord demands accounting for human life. The Lord covenants, no more floods, sealing the promise with a sign, a rainbow, a covenant with every living creature, forever.

Noah planted a vineyard became drunk on wine and slept naked in his tent. Son Ham entered, saw naked father told brothers who covered Noah's nakedness. Noah curses son Ham and died at 350 years after the flood at 950 years old.

- Why is Noah a tiller of soil? How might this differ from nomadic herdspeople?
 - Humans are images of God; what shall we do with this awesome power?
 - Is this the most elemental law: don't kill other humans.
 - A rainbow amid clouds to remind both God and humans of the covenant. Why should God need reminding?
 - Why do brothers cover father?
 - What is the effect as Noah curses Ham with slavery on Ham (Canaan)? Preview!: Israel later will enter Canaan.
-
- Other thoughts and questions you have about Noah and the flood?