

## Genesis 6:9 – 9:29

6:9 These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God. 10 Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. 13 Then God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. 14 Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch. 15 This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 16 You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. 17 Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. 18 But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark – you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. 21 As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them.' 22 Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did. 7:1 Then the LORD said to Noah, 'Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time. 2 You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female; 3 also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth. 4 For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.' 5 Noah did according to all that the LORD had commanded him. 6 Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth. 7 Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood. 8 Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground, 9 there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. 10 It came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth. 11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. 12 The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. 13 On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark, 14 they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds. 15 So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life. 16 Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed it behind him. 17 Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth. 18 The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. 19 The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. 20 The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered. 21 All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; 22 of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. 23 Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark. 24 The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days. 8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind [*ruach*, 'Spirit'] to pass over the earth, and the water subsided. 2 Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained; 3 and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased. 4 In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat. 5 The water decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible. 6 Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made; 7 and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth. 8 Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land; 9 but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself. 10 So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark. 11 The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the

earth. <sup>12</sup> Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again. <sup>13</sup> Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up. <sup>14</sup> In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. <sup>15</sup> Then God spoke to Noah, saying, <sup>16</sup> ‘Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. <sup>17</sup> Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.’ <sup>18</sup> So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. <sup>19</sup> Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark. <sup>20</sup> Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. <sup>21</sup> The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, ‘I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. <sup>22</sup> While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.’ <sup>9:1</sup> And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. <sup>2</sup> The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. <sup>3</sup> Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. <sup>4</sup> Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. <sup>5</sup> Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man’s brother I will require the life of man. <sup>6</sup> Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man. <sup>7</sup> As for you, be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.’ <sup>8</sup> Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, <sup>9</sup> ‘Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; <sup>10</sup> and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. <sup>11</sup> I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.’ <sup>12</sup> God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; <sup>13</sup> I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. <sup>14</sup> It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, <sup>15</sup> and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup> When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.’ <sup>17</sup> And God said to Noah, ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.’ <sup>18</sup> Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan. <sup>19</sup> These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. <sup>20</sup> Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. <sup>21</sup> He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. <sup>22</sup> Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. <sup>23</sup> But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father’s nakedness. <sup>24</sup> When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. <sup>25</sup> So he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers.’ <sup>26</sup> He also said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. <sup>27</sup> May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.’ <sup>28</sup> Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. <sup>29</sup> So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.

## The Structure of the Flood Story: 5:1 – 9:29

- A. The genealogy of Adam to Noah, emphasizing corruption of humanity except Noah (5:1 – 6:8)
- B. Noah is righteous (6:9)
- C. Shem, Ham, and Japheth (6:10)
- D. God will bring an end to all flesh; God tells Noah to build ark for the flood (6:11 – 17)
- E. Covenant with Noah (6:18 – 20)
- F. Food in the ark (6:21)
- G. Command to enter the ark (7:1 – 3)
- H. 7 days waiting for flood (7:4 – 5)
- I. 7 days waiting for flood (7:6 – 10)
- J. Entry to ark (7:11 – 15)
- K. Yahweh shuts Noah in (7:16)
- L. 40 days flood (7:17a)
- M. Waters increase (7:17b – 18)
- N. Mountains covered (7:19 – 20)
- O. 150 days waters prevail (7:21 – 24)
- P. God remembers Noah (8:1)
- O'. 150 days waters abate (8:2 – 3)
- N'. Mountains tops visible (8:4 – 5)
- M'. Waters abate (8:5)
- L'. 40 days (end of) (8:6a)
- K'. Noah opens window of ark (8:6b)
- J'. Raven and dove leave ark (8:7 – 9)
- I'. 7 days waiting for waters to subside (8:10 – 11)
- H'. 7 days waiting for waters to subside (8:12 – 13)
- G'. Command to leave the ark, family leaves ark (8:14 – 22)
- F'. Food outside the ark (9:1 – 4)
- E'. Covenant with all flesh (9:5 – 10)
- D'. God will not flood all flesh again; God makes rainbow (9:11 – 17)
- C'. Shem, Ham, and Japheth (9:18)
- B'. Noah repopulates the whole earth (9:19)
- A'. The sons of Noah, emphasizing corruption of Noah and his family (9:20 – 29)

## Historical and Cultural Background

- *Literary Context:* In Genesis 5:1 – 6:8, we were just given a genealogy from Adam to Noah. Humans are contradictions because we are made in the image of God and yet we die and we sin, which does not represent God at all. Also, we have been given a diagnosis by God of the human heart: It is corrupt (Genesis 6:5 – 6; 8:21). So what was being shown to us through the narrative of the fall (Genesis 2:4 – 4:26) is told to us explicitly in the most recent section.
- *Comparison with Other Flood Stories:*
  - Babylonian: Three times (every 1200 years), the gods were distressed by the disturbance from human overpopulation. The gods dealt with the problem first by plague, then by famine. Both times, the god Enki advised men to bribe the god causing the problem. The third time, Enlil advised the gods to destroy all humans with a flood, but Enki had Atrahasis build an ark and so escape. Also on the boat were cattle, wild animals and birds, and Atrahasis' family. When the storm came, Atrahasis sealed the door with bitumen and cut the boat's rope. The storm god Adad raged, turning the day black. After the seven-day flood, the gods regretted their action. Atrahasis made an offering to them, at which the gods gathered like flies, and Enki established barren women and stillbirth to avoid the problem in the future.
  - Assyrian: The gods, led by Enlil, agreed to cleanse the earth of an overpopulated humanity, but Utnapishtim was warned by the god Ea in a dream. He and some craftsmen built a large boat (one acre in area, seven decks) in a week. He then loaded it with his family, the craftsmen, and 'the seed of all living creatures.' The waters of the abyss rose up, and it stormed for six days. Even the gods were frightened by the flood's fury. Upon seeing all the people killed, the gods repented and wept. The waters covered everything but the top of the mountain Nisur, where the boat landed. Seven days later, Utnapishtim released a dove, but it returned finding nowhere else to land. He next returned a sparrow, which also returned, and then a raven, which did not return. Thus he

- knew the waters had receded enough for the people to emerge. Utnapishtim made a sacrifice to the gods. He and his wife were given immortality and lived at the end of the earth.
- In the Greek story *Cypria*, by Stasinus, the problem is also overpopulation. The gods' solution is to trigger the Trojan War. *Cypria* is dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century and is thought to 'fill out' Homer's *Iliad*. Therefore, *Cypria* likely puts to poetic verse longstanding, familiar stories about the gods' role in the Trojan War.
  - *Global or Regional Flood?* The biblical writers employed idiomatic speech to refer to regions. For example, 'The people of *all the earth* came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in *all the earth*' (Gen.41:57). Much later, Luke uses the same expression (Lk.2:1).
  - *Noah's Ark:*
    - The ark was about the size of the Titanic. It displaced 15,000 – 20,000 tons of water. It was more like a barge, and was virtually impossible to capsize. In fact, a naval architect named George W. Dickie designed the U.S.S. Oregon – the flagship of the U.S. naval fleet – using the exact same ratio of length to width to depth as Noah's Ark.
    - Noah had years to build the ark. The statement, 'Their days will be 120 years' mentioned in 6:3 probably refers to the amount of time before the Flood, not the duration of individual human life.
  - *God Taking Life:*
    - People who died before Jesus came had a chance to choose Jesus. '18 For Christ... having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, 20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water... 4:6 For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.' (1 Peter 3:18 – 20; 4:6)
  - *Noah, Ham, and Canaan:*
    - There are a range of possibilities for how Ham dishonored his father. Perhaps scorn. Perhaps raping his mother, based on this later expression: 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, that is, the nakedness of your mother. She is your mother; you are not to uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.' (Leviticus 18:7 – 8) 'The man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness' (Leviticus 20:11)
    - Much later, when Joshua leads Israel into the garden land, the Gibeonites deceive them, make a peace treaty with them so as not to be killed, and then become servants of God's sanctuary (Josh.9:1 – 11:23). They effectively become part of Israel, serve the God of Israel, and are protected by God and Israel when attacked by other Canaanites.
  - *Hebrew Names* are often important clues:
    - Shem: 'name'
    - Ham: unknown<sup>1</sup>
    - Japheth: 'may he expand'

#### Questions We'll Discuss

- How does Genesis differ from other flood stories?
- How do you think Noah felt, surrounded by violent people, building the ark, etc.?
- What does it mean for God to 'remember' Noah?
- What reminders of Genesis 1 do you see here? What does that suggest?
- How does God connect humanity and the rest of creation in relationship?
- What does the episode of Ham and Canaan show?
- What did the Flood accomplish?
- How does God enclosing Noah and family in the ark parallel God clothing Adam and Eve in animal skins (Gen.3:21)?
- How does this affect our understanding of God's character?

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<sup>1</sup> See David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), ch.10 who describes how 'hot' or 'dark' are not etymologically related to the name 'Ham.' William F. Albright said, 'Plausible etymologies are wanting.' (p.144)

## Questions

1. (optional) Did the flood really happen? Is this historical?
  - a. The fact that almost every culture in the world has a flood story is significant to answering that question. Some event is preserved in our cultural memory.
  - b. Is this global or regional? I think it was regional, perhaps stretching from North Africa to Central Asia. The expression 'all flesh' really means 'all human flesh.' The phrase 'the face of the earth' refers to the area that was inhabited by human beings. Sometimes the biblical writers use idiomatic ways of speaking. For example, 'The people of *all the earth* came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in *all the earth*' (Gen.41:57) clearly does not refer to the entire globe, but the wide region around Egypt.
  - c. Was this the flooding of the Black Sea region around 6,500 years ago? I doubt it. That's always an interesting possibility, but I am more inclined to say that 'Y-Chromosomal Adam' is actually the biblical Noah. Every human male traces their Y-Chromosome back to one man who lived around 50,000 year ago.
    - i. Interestingly enough, every human female traces her mitochondrial DNA back to one woman who lived between 100,000 – 200,000 years ago. I think 'Mitochondrial Eve' is biblical Eve.
    - ii. The length of time between Adam and Eve and Noah and his family is indeterminate, because the numbers of years given in Genesis 5 is a literary device and the genealogy is not complete. See my notes on Genesis 5:1 – 6:8.
2. How does Genesis differ with the other flood stories?
  - a. The cause of the flood. Other flood stories say it was overpopulation. The biblical story says it was human violence – recall Cain's city and the injustice of Tubal-cain. We know from Genesis 4:1 – 16 that human bloodshed pollutes the land and makes it unfruitful.
  - b. Illus: This is like Hotel Rwanda. God was trying to make a place of peace inside a world of violence.
  - c. Implication: You can see how the rich ruling class of other civilizations used the flood stories to threaten the peasants and the poor workers. This is why we make food for the gods, and why you can't be too noisy in protest. You can't have too many children, and if you do, this is why we can kill some of them. If we get too noisy or become too many, the gods will kill us. But it's hard to see how the biblical flood story could be used that way. It can't. This again speaks to the uniqueness of the Bible. And it's an argument for a God who loves us.
  - d. But why would a God who loves us send a flood to take life? Let's think through all this...
3. What would this have been like for Noah?
  - a. How was Noah the only righteous person in his generation? Is that significant? In the sense that he and his family were hoping for God to send a deliverer, because that was what was passed down from Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:14 – 15. It's not that they were 'perfect people.' But they probably were at least a little different from their contemporaries. Noah, at least, was probably not as violent.
  - b. Noah had a long time to build this Ark. It would have been weird to have this thing in your backyard. Neighbors would have laughed. What might that have been like?
    - i. Illus: In the book *The Lord of the Flies*, a group of boys are stranded on an island after a shipwreck. Ralph and Piggy want to keep the fire going on the island. They hoped for salvation. But Jack and the other boys stopped caring, and only wanted to hunt. They mocked Ralph and Piggy and the others who held out in hope for salvation.
  - c. But also, Noah served as a warning and a witness to the rest of the world. He communicated to the world for at least a 100 years that God would judge sin. And there was extra room on the ark. Other people could have chosen to drop their violence, walk with God too, and sign up for a cabin.
    - i. We too are called to live as a warning and witness to the rest of the world. Jesus is returning again to cleanse the world a final time. He will judge sin as well.
4. What does it mean for God to 'remember' Noah?
  - a. Not that He 'forgot' Noah for a while!
  - b. Instead, God kept Noah in mind while He preserved the lives of Noah's family and began to restore the earth. God's reason for bringing forth a 'new creation' was Noah.

- c. Illus: When Ming and I bought the house we live in, we had to redo almost an entire floor because it was so damaged. What kept me going was ‘remembering’ Ming and the fact that Ming was pregnant with our first child, John. Remembering was ongoing.
  - d. Why the raven and the dove? The raven could land on dead things. The dove would only land on living things. So when the dove doesn’t return, Noah knows that plants have started to grow again.
5. What reminders of Genesis 1 do you see here? What does that suggest?
- a. The repetition of certain numbers: 7, 40, 150?
    - i. Seven seems to be a number that represents completion.
    - ii. Forty will become the number that is connected with trial: Israel’s time in the wilderness is forty years, Jonah preaches to Nineveh for forty days, Jesus in the wilderness for forty days
    - iii. One hundred fifty: No discernable pattern that I can see in the later biblical story.
  - b. How is Noah like Adam? Parallels to Genesis 1:
    - i. Noah walked with God, like Adam and Enoch
    - ii. Noah had three sons, like Adam
    - iii. Noah cared for animals, like Adam
    - iv. Noah did all God commanded
    - v. Noah was 600 years old like Adam and Eve were created on the 6<sup>th</sup> ‘day’ of creation, so humanity was being recreated through Noah
    - vi. Noah mediated God’s blessing of multiplying and fruitfulness to the rest of humanity
    - vii. Emergence of land through water, after water
    - viii. Spirit of God on the face of the waters (8:1)
    - ix. Order of restoration: birds, then animals, then humans
    - x. Noah planted a garden
  - c. What does this motif of Noah as a ‘new humanity’ mean in terms of what God is doing?
    - i. God wants a ‘new humanity’ in a sense
    - ii. God wants to renew the world to being like the world He created at first.
    - iii. Noah has three sons. Adam had three sons who were highlighted in the narrative, although he certainly had more sons and daughters. But Genesis is anticipating the connection between Adam and Noah. Noah is a new Adam.
6. How does God connect humanity and the rest of creation in relationship? And what does that suggest to us about our relationship with the creation?
- a. Noah and family were caring for the animals. This suggests that we are also caretakers of the animals and the whole creation. Even though God gave permission to Noah and all humanity to eat some animals.
  - b. But now, there is a kind of ‘fear’ that God inserts between humans and animals. There must have been a lot more harmony before the Flood. Now there is a limited kind of adversarial relationship.
7. What did the Flood accomplish?
- a. It did not change the human heart. God repeats the diagnosis in Gen.8:21.
  - b. It seems to have cleansed the earth. The soil of the earth has been washed of human bloodshed.
  - c. It protected Noah and his family from violence. If they had been killed, then the line of faith would have died out.
  - d. God took the lives of those who were violent. But that was not the end of their story. In 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6, Peter tells us that God gathered those people to Himself, and the next decision they had to make was whether to receive Jesus or not. So He did not just consign them to hell. Instead, he preserved their last possible choice.
  - e. It establishes the principle that God is the author, judge, and recreator of His creation. He has the absolute right to do this.
  - f. Was it God’s right to wipe out everything and just be done? Our answer is NO.
  - g. What changes happen between the first creation and the re-creation?
    - i. Clean animals? We don’t know exactly when this distinction between clean and unclean animals was introduced.
    - ii. We can eat meat; animals will fear us: Apparently, animals cooperated with humans before.

- iii. Law of retribution for human life: To cut down on the violence associated with Cain's line
- 8. How does God enclosing Noah and family in the ark parallel God clothing Adam and Eve in animal skins (Gen.3:21)?
  - a. Animals were part of the creation. God uses part of the creation to cover them.
  - b. The ark was made of wood and trees, which were also part of the creation. God essentially puts them into a tree. He uses part of creation to cover them.
  - c. The ark – tree? – comes to rest on a mountain. And that mountain becomes a new Eden. Life begins again from there.
  - d. God eventually will solve the human nature problem by wrapping human nature in himself, in Jesus. Then He'll wrap us with Himself, by bringing us into Jesus by the Spirit. The ark is the precursor to that.
- 9. How does this affect our understanding of God's character?
  - a. God is restorative. He protect humanity from killing itself. He protects the future Israel and the future Jesus, so that human nature could be redeemed and saved, and offered back to us. Jesus even offered himself to those who died in the flood. God didn't just consign people to hell.
  - b. God is patient. He waited for a long time to do this.
  - c. God is open to all. The ark was big enough that other people could come in and be there. That was the invitation.
- 10. What does the episode of Ham and Canaan show? Why is this ugly story of Ham and Canaan included at the end?
  - a. To show that the corruption of humanity continues. Noah was not perfect (drunkenness is a problem, because he can't protect his wife).
  - b. What did Ham do?
    - i. I think Ham rapes his own mother, Noah's wife. Ham jeopardizes and dishonors the 'seed of the woman' promise of God.
    - ii. Another possibility: Ham laughed at and scorned his father Noah.
    - iii. Another possibility: Ham raped Noah himself.
  - c. Also, when you have a father giving a garment and clothing the heir, it conveyed inheritance rights for the family. God clothed Adam and Eve with animal skins (Gen.3:20 – 22). Rebekah took the best garment of Esau and put it on Jacob (Gen.27:15). Jacob clothed Joseph as an heir (Gen.37:3). Jesus tells the story of the younger son who returns and the father clothes him with his own garment (Lk.15:22). Ham wanted to dispossess his father Noah for 'falling' in a way similar to Adam and Eve. But the brothers show that they are not going to usurp dad. Noah instead dispossesses Ham and his son Canaan.
  - d. Was Noah actively bringing about a curse on his grandson Canaan? Or was he just describing what was already true?
    - i. Noah was describing it. If Ham was a boundary breaker, he would step over other people's boundaries too. Especially his youngest son.
    - ii. In many families where boundaries are not properly respected, the youngest child takes the brunt of it and becomes the most violent. I think that is what's going on here. As the saying goes, 'The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.' Ham is a boundary breaker. Canaan will become a boundary breaker. The Canaanites are the people who break God's boundaries all the time (Gen.19; Lev.18 – 20).
  - e. Why does Noah say that Canaan will be a slave / servant to his uncles, Shem and Japheth?
    - i. Negatively, it could be a consequence of being alienated somewhat from the land. The descendants of Canaan will not be the primary owners of land. The descendants of Shem and Japheth will?
    - ii. Positively, it could be redemptive. As the notes say: 'Much later, when Joshua leads Israel into the garden land, the Gibeonites deceive them, make a peace treaty with them so as not to be killed, and then become servants of God's sanctuary (Josh.9:1 – 11:23). They effectively become part of Israel, serve the God of Israel, and are protected by God and Israel when attacked by other Canaanites.' The Gibeonites become the precursors to Gentile Christians. In Ephesians 2:11 – 22, the apostle Paul says that we have become part of the new, living Temple, the community of Jesus' people.

11. So when we ask what the flood accomplished, and look ahead, we have to wonder how God will be the judge and recreator of *human nature*.
- a. So we look ahead to Jesus as a new and different kind of Noah. Jesus will pass through the waters of judgment and death in baptism, and then really die and rise. God is committed to restoring a new creation on the other side of judgment. Jesus died, but he didn't die 'instead of us.' He died so that we could die with him. Through Jesus God would actually bring a new type of 'Flood,' to bring about a new type of 'new creation' on the other side. Jesus calls us to join ourselves to him.
  - b. In fact, the Noah story seems to anticipate Jesus Christ. The word 'ark' is also translated 'coffin' in Gen 50:26, 'So Joseph died...and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.' The ark suggests Noah's death. That's surprising, because even though Noah and his family and the animals survive in the ark, in a sense they symbolically die. In 6:14, the word 'pitch' which is put on the inside and outside of the ark, everywhere else in the Scripture is translated 'atonement.' That's weird! So in a sense, they die, participating in an atoning death, in order to be reborn on the other side. That is exactly what the New Testament says happens to us when we believe in Jesus, because of what Jesus has done. We die with Jesus – he is our 'ark' or 'coffin' in a sense. Then we rise into new life with Jesus. In this new and deeper act of new creation, God has actually found a way to kill and raise us on a fundamental level, and to do it so quickly that we sometimes don't notice what's happened! But sure enough, it happens. We enter the new creation through our death and resurrection with Jesus.
  - c. [What day does the new creation begin in Noah's story? In Gen.8:4, 'In the seventh month [Sivan], on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.' Interestingly enough, the resting of the ark happens on the same day – though not the same month – as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. How? In the Exodus from Egypt, God delivers Israel through the water of the Red Sea, which symbolizes a death to life experience in and of itself. This particular event was Friday the fifteenth [of Nisan/Abib]. It became the Jewish Passover. Jesus was crucified on Passover. So he rose from the dead on the seventeenth day of the month. Though it's a different month, it's the same day new life began after the flood.]
  - d. And to make this even more poignant, that is what the Christian ceremony of baptism represents. Being swallowed up by water represents your dying with Jesus. How did you die? By being swallowed up by the Holy Spirit. Rising up out of that water represents your spiritual rising. Water baptism symbolizes what happens on the spiritual level, within us, when we die and rise with Jesus. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, new creation! The old things passed away; behold, new things have come.'
  - e. Noah's story reinforces God's pattern. ALL human life now must pass through the judgment of God. Either we wait until the final judgment or we accept judgment now in Jesus. Either we die later, or we die now in Jesus. Either we will be in a dying state forever, and never experience new creation, OR we die now in Jesus and then share in his new creation, now and in the future.
  - f. I think this is a surprising but true way of looking at the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is actually the place where God shows us His justice – and not just his mercy and love, although it is also that. If serial murderers or rapists or whoever come to Jesus, they do not escape God's judgment. They accept God's judgment on themselves. If you are one of those who has asked, 'Why doesn't God do something about the evil in the world...Why doesn't He judge it now?' He has judged it, He is judging it now, and He is doing something to reverse the evil. Through Jesus, they are judged, killed, and resurrected new so that God transforms them into a new person. That has happened to all of us who have believed in Jesus. This is God's ruthless mercy.
  - g. Illus: Let me tell you a story about that. A number of years ago, a man named Charles W. Colson was Special Counsel to President Richard Nixon. Colson was known as the White House 'hatchet man,' because he was so ruthless. In fact, in the mid-1970's the media labeled Colson 'incapable of humanitarian thought.' (www.pfm.org) But it all caught up to him. Chuck Colson was involved in the Watergate scandal. When the news broke, Colson left the White House for his private law practice, knowing that his trial was impending. Everything was catching up to him, and all he could look forward to was hours of testimony in court. On Sunday, August 12, 1973, Colson visited his friend Tom Philips, then CEO of Raytheon in Massachusetts. Tom talked to him about his own experience with Jesus. He said, 'I have committed my whole life to Him and it has been the most marvelous experience of my life... I had gotten to the point where I didn't think my life was worth anything. Now everything is changed – attitudes, values the whole bit.' Colson

was surprised, but saw himself as a man of pride whose life had been ruined by his own ambition. Back in his car, Colson found he couldn't drive. Tears were pouring from his eyes. He started back for Tom's house, but the lights went out, and he didn't want to disturb his friend. Sobbing uncontrollably he turned on the car, drove a couple hundred feet, and just stopped. There he offered himself to God, admitting it wasn't much of an offer. Chuck Colson gave his life to Jesus there. And God killed him as he joined himself to Jesus. But God also raised him new up with Jesus. And look at what God has done with the new Chuck Colson. In 1974, Colson entered a plea of guilty to Watergate-related charges. He voluntarily pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice in the Daniel Ellsberg Case; he wasn't even on trial for that. He entered Alabama's Maxwell Prison. That's when God planted in his heart a deep concern for prisoners. When he got out, Chuck Colson founded Prison Fellowship. It's become the world's largest outreach to prisoners, ex-prisoners, crime victims, and their families in over 100 countries. He also founded Angel Tree, a program that every year provides Christmas presents to more than 500,000 children of inmates, many of whom are in poverty, on behalf of their incarcerated parents. Through Angel Tree, he launched a summer camping program to send the children of prisoners to a Christian summer camp. And he wrote a book called *Born Again*, where he talks about how Jesus made him a new creation. This is the curious justice of God. He kills us and raises us, so that now everything is changed – attitudes, values, the whole bit.