



RELATE

**ADULT CONNECT
CLASS CURRICULUM**

DONALD J. WILLS
SENIOR PASTOR



MAY
2020

The purpose of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is to **introduce** people into a loving relationship with Jesus, **instruct** them in spiritual growth through God's Word, **inspire** them to serve for God's kingdom, and **incorporate** them in authentic worship to glorify God.

A Note From Our Pastor

Dear FBC family and friends,

Life is made up of various relationships. These relationships have many different labels such as family, friend, co-worker, extended family, and church family. As we move into the study of Genesis, we look at what makes up healthy and unhealthy relationships—in particular certain attitudes and actions that help or hinder these relationships. More importantly, these attitudes are specifically applied to the most important relationship anyone can have and that is with God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ.

As a reminder, the layout of this Curriculum begins with a 7-day approach for both the teacher and the members to get the most from each study. We also acknowledge that teachers may have their own methods for preparing the lessons and we encourage them to prepare in the way that makes them most effective in presenting God's Word and the weekly lesson. We also encourage each teacher and member to use the suggested 7-day approach for their own personal study and encouragement.

As we look at these lessons, ask yourself two questions. First, how is my relationship with God in Christ? Second, how is my relationship with others? Take an honest look to see what in your life makes these relationships healthy or unhealthy. Through the study of God's Word, learn to "Relate" these truths to your walk and your relationships.

-Blessings
Pastor Don



Suggested Plan for Using this Bible Study Guide Effectively

Introduce

Day 1: Read and meditate on the Scripture, asking God to guide you throughout the week as you study His Word and allowing Him to speak to you through the Spirit. Read the **INTRODUCE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Instruct

Day 2: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and read the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary. Concentrate on memorizing the focal verse for that particular week.

Day 3: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and answer the focal questions in the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary.

Inspire

Day 4: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and begin thinking about tangible ways you can incorporate the principles you learned in your daily life. Read the **INSPIRE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Incorporate

Day 5: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and apply the theological principle that you learned from this week in a tangible way. Use the **INCORPORATE** portion of the lesson commentary to guide you.

Day 6: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and in the journal section describe how God allowed you to apply this passage in a real and tangible way this week.

Day 7: Review the Scripture and share with others in your Connect Class on Sunday morning at 9:30am. Be ready to share your experience about how God allowed you to apply the lesson for that week.

Contents
May Lesson Plan

3



May 3, 2020

Relationships
Severed by Sin

[Genesis 3:1-19](#)

19



May 10, 2020

Relationships
Strained by Envy

[Genesis 4:1-15](#)

35

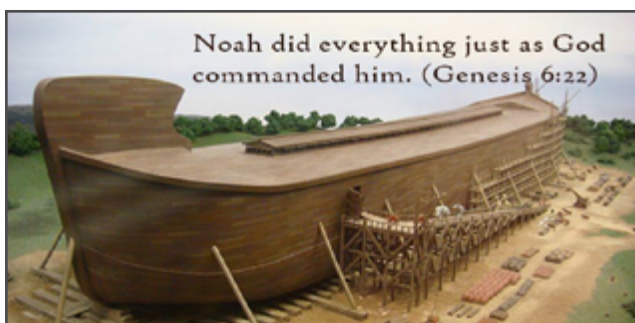


May 17, 2020

Relationships
Saved by Grace

[Genesis 6:1-22](#)

51

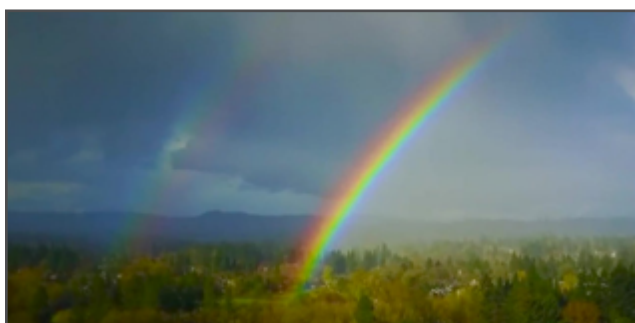


May 24, 2020

Relationships
Sustained in Obedience

[Genesis 7:1-24](#)

65



May 31, 2020

Relationships
Sealed with a Promise

[Genesis 9:1-29](#)

May 3, 2020



Relationships Severed by Sin

Genesis 3:1-19

Focal Verse:

“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”

Genesis 3:8

back to
Table of
Contents

Introduce

Standing next to a vibrantly colored, life-size display as people paused to listen to the presentation, Howard A. Swindell held a small package with a sharp, attention-grabbing logo above his head for the audience to see. Projecting his voice without the aid of electronic enhancement, Howard boldly exclaimed, “The tiny pill in this package will revolutionize the pharmaceutical industry and single-handedly reduce the cost of prescription medicine.” Without pausing, he continued, “Sold over-the-counter, this pill will eliminate the need for multiple prescriptions and provide affordable access around the globe to a treatment guaranteed to work and readily available to consumers. Through a series of experiments and live trials with patients, this drug has proven reliable, safe, and effective in its cures.”

Opening the package, Howard removed a thick booklet with tiny print for which one almost needed a magnifying glass to read. After placing the box on the table next

to the display, he began to read, “This pill will cure the following common ailments and chronic diseases: the common cold, headaches, strep throat, any strain of the flu, bronchitis, pneumonia, emphysema, diabetes, arthritis, and cancer. It will also reduce and even eliminate the effects of most allergens upon our bodies.” Briefly pausing to look directly at the



audience, Howard explained that this wonder-drug had many other benefits which he wouldn't take the time to read that day.

With a smile, however, he glibly announced, “You may be wondering about the long list of side effects common to most other advertised medicines—the ones tacked onto the end of commercials. With this one pill, remarkably there are none—no side effects whatsoever!” Those in the ever-growing crowd audibly gasped and began to murmur amongst themselves. At which point, Howard declared, “This miraculous, cure-all pill can be yours today for the one-time, low price of \$99.99. It's certainly worth much more, but we're generously making it available to you for this special price today only.” People began pressing closer to the display as they hurriedly bought this pill. In

Introduce

a matter of minutes, Howard A. Swindell had sold his entire stock and began taking backorders.

As people went home and began to experience various ailments, they took the pill they had purchased rather than going to the doctor. In every case, their symptoms and illnesses became worse rather than better—some to the point of death. One eventually took the pill to his doctor who had it chemically analyzed in a lab. When the results came back, it turned out to be only an ordinary sugar pill with no medicinal qualities at all. The promises which seemed so advantageous and desirable had now become a liability and a detriment to people's health and safety. After taking the pill, they realized they had been tricked and swindled because the promises didn't reflect reality!

Years ago, the first couple experienced such a lucrative sales pitch from a wily serpent who misstated God's directives and mischaracterized His intentions. Instead, he promised a better life in which they could become "like God." Sin makes all kinds of decadent promises, but in the end delivers on none of them. At the time, sin may seem fulfilling, fun, and even fruitful, but in the end it will only lead to death and destruction. Sin, as we will learn this week, will always sever and destroy our relationships. It separates us from God and causes dysfunction in our relationships here on earth as well. Fortunately, however, we can overcome sin in Christ and have a renewed relationship with God the Father which in turn allows us to have functional and successful relationships here on earth.

Key
Question

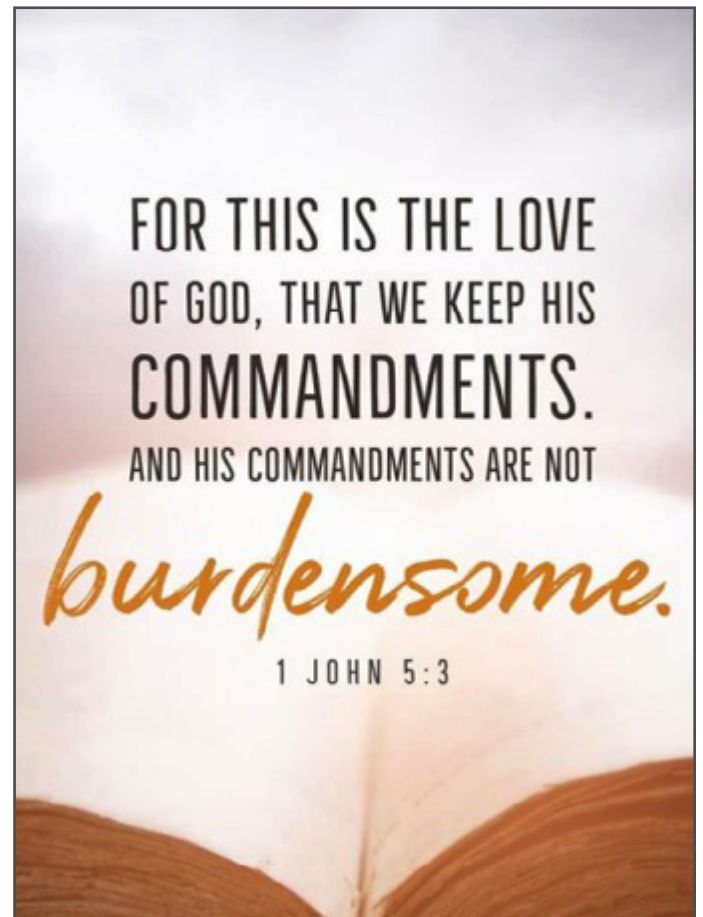
How does sin destroy relationships?

Genesis 3:1-5

THE DELUSION OF SIN:

The third chapter of Genesis opens by showing how sin can distort God's perfect Word and deceive people by presenting a disillusioned picture of the world. The adversary, under the guise of a **serpent**, approaches the couple to test their faithfulness to God's command and tempt them to rebel against His authority (v. 1). **The serpent**, identified as the most **cunning of the beasts of the field which the Lord God had made**, speaks to the couple collectively since he uses the plural form of "you" in the questions, but he focuses his interaction upon **the woman** and converses with her directly even though Adam was right there ([Gen 3:6](#)). Through this interaction, it shows us that both the man and **the woman** had free will and that both ultimately chose by their own volition to sin against the Lord.

The serpent begins the conversation by subtly distorting God's Word in the form of a loaded question. He asks if God has really **said**, "**You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?**" In reality, God had said, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" ([Gen 2:16-17](#)). God had given the couple freedom to eat anything they wanted with only one restriction! However, the way **the serpent** distorts the command makes God seem miserly and unfair. The question makes it seem that God wants to restrict their freedom and limit their enjoyment when He truly does give them the freedom to enjoy the bounty from every tree with the exception of only one! Consequently, we see that God's boundaries don't limit in the ways that humans may perceive them; rather, He has designed them to bring abundant life while at the same time affording us protection



and granting us contentment when we follow His plan.

How does sin deceive us? Why are we still responsible for our own choices even if we are deceived and caught up in sin?

Question
1

Next, **the woman** answers **the serpent** by giving an account of what God had stated. She relates that they could **eat the fruit of the trees of the garden** with one caveat



(v. 2); from **the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden**, she revealed that God **had said** they should **not eat it nor touch it** because they would **die** (v. 3). Because we likely don't have all God's conversations with the couple recorded here in Genesis, we shouldn't speculate whether she added the prohibition against touching **the fruit** to

the command. We only have God's conversation with the man when He issues this command prior to the creation of **the woman** ([Gen 2:17](#)). Since we don't have any other discussion about it, this shouldn't become the focus because we miss a key point: the addition of the phrase **nor shall you touch it** is good advice to which we should adhere! The moment that we "**touch**" something or put ourselves into a tempting situation greatly increases the chances that we will engage in sin just as this first couple would indeed discover!

When we place ourselves in tempting situations, most of us lack the necessary self-control it takes to resist. Although temptation itself is not a sin, it will often lead to sin because we will succumb to our desires when left on our own ([James 1:13-18](#)). In Proverbs, Solomon warns against carelessly treating the lustful desires of youth; to illustrate, he poses the question, "Can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be seared" (Prov 6:28)? In other words, we can't place ourselves in such positions and not expect disastrous and destructive results. Think of it this way. A thief, like the disciple Judas, who oversees money has a greater tendency to pilfer it ([John 12:4-6](#)). An alcoholic who

walks into a bar or picks up a drink has a much greater chance of relapse. Likewise, any of us who don't have proper safeguards on the Internet or have placed ourselves in compromising one-on-one situations have a greater chance of committing sexual immorality. This list could continue. Consequently, we must know our weaknesses, turn to the Lord for strength, and avoid placing ourselves in tempting situations when we can!

How does placing ourselves in tempting situations greatly increase our chances of sinning?

Question
2

At this point, **the serpent** blatantly contradicts God and challenges His Word by emphatically declaring that the couple would **not surely die** if they ate from the **fruit** (v. 4). **The serpent** claims to know God's thoughts when he states the supposed reason why He doesn't want them to **eat of the fruit**. The crafty creature surmises that God has forbidden it because on **the day they eat of it** their **eyes will be opened** and they will become **like Him, knowing good and evil** (v. 5). In this nefarious statement, we see the nature of the temptation and the root of the problem. Having been created in the image of God wasn't now sufficient for the couple; they wanted more ([Gen 1:27](#))! They wanted to be God-like in every way. Through this, we can observe that the crux of sin boils down to three areas: choosing our own path, controlling our own destiny, and coveting power. As Americans, we value our freedom to choose how to live; as consumers, we crave control in getting what we want and tailoring it to our desires; as humans, we covet the power to make our own decisions without interference from outside entities, such as our parents or the government. Because of these desires, we have unfortunately rebelled against and rejected the One who loves us the most, wants the best for us, and has provided everything we need to have a content and successful life!

How does the Holy Spirit help us practice self-control as a believer (see Gal 5:16-26)?

Question
3

Because we already know the end of this story and the effects of eating the **fruit**, we can clearly see how deceptive sin can be. It promises a life of self-sufficiency, but in reality it enslaves us to our desires and addictions. It guarantees us a life filled with fun, contentment, and all the perks that we could ever want, but in the end it leaves us lacking and craving more. It causes us to focus on pleasure and offers instant

Instruct

gratification that we can receive here and now, but it causes us to miss the bigger picture which leads to death and destruction in eternity apart from Christ. Let us not be deceived by the adversary and allow temptation to give birth to sin, but let us turn to the Lord, know His Word which delineates His perfect plan, and submit to Him so that we may have life in the fullest sense!

Genesis 3:6-7

THE DESIRABILITY OF SIN:

Next, we see the result of this conversation between **the serpent** and **the woman**. The couple allowed their desire to influence their decision to disobey based purely upon



physical attraction through sight rather than spiritual insight and wisdom found in the Lord. While looking at **the tree, the woman** found the fruit appealing to her in three ways: **she saw that it was good for food, it was pleasant to the eyes, and it was desirable to make one wise** (v. 6). From these stated desires, we can learn three things about the nature of sin.

First, sin confuses our needs with our desires. Although the **fruit was indeed good for food**, God had given them all the other trees from which they could have freely eaten. Therefore, they didn't need the **fruit** from this tree as a source of food to ensure their physical survival; on the contrary, they only wanted it or desired it for pleasure!

The root of sin, therefore, is covetousness in which we view the world selfishly in terms of what we want, but don't have, rather than that with which God has blessed us so abundantly and graciously. Through this worldly perspective, we focus on how things make us feel, rather than whether they are right or wrong in relation to the boundaries which God has established for us. We can observe this principle applied in many areas of our lives. On a purely physical level, many people eat things based on how they taste rather than how they affect their health which is why the Lord instituted guidelines for Israel's diet in the Old Testament. Financially, many lack self-control and incur massive

debt because they want things for pleasure rather than need them for productivity which is why the Bible warns us against borrowing without the ability to repay ([Psalm 37:21](#)). Certainly, we shouldn't be legalistic in our approach, but instead we should assess the value of the choices that we make according to godly wisdom which He has revealed to us through Scripture.

In what other ways does sin cause us to confuse our needs with our desires?

Question
4

Second, sin has an overwhelming physical appeal and positive attraction as indicated by the fact that the fruit **was pleasant to the eyes**. Yet, this physical attractiveness which appeals to our sense of fun hides the true consequences and outcome of sin in the long run. The world has a skewed view of reality because they tend to look at things from a physical and temporal perspective only. In other words, most want instant gratification and don't care what effects their choices may have on the rest of their lives; they want something that will give them pleasure immediately. They may lament their choices later, but now they just want to live for the moment because they fail to see the eternal consequences their choices will ultimately have.

For example, many today ignore the boundaries for sexual relationships which the Bible clearly specifies should occur only in marriage between one man and one

woman for life. The world doesn't want to wait; they want to fulfill their desires whenever the urge may strike. Yet, God knows a committed relationship is more fulfilling and has more lasting benefits than constantly seeking fulfillment in multiple partners over time. Ironically, a recent secular study which has combined data over the last twenty-seven



years has also concluded that individuals who wait to have intimacy until marriage have more fulfilling and lasting relationships.* Unrestrained desire based on physical appeal can lead to a whole host of broken relationships and life-long problems when we don't follow God's plan for life. Therefore, let us not look to the physical

Instruct

attractiveness of something, but let us seek godly wisdom in participating in righteous activities which benefits last a lifetime.

In Reference



Christian Gollayan, "[Why Virgins May have Happier Marriages,](#)" [New York Post](#) (October 23, 2018). Please note that we do not necessarily agree with some of the reasons they propose or other logic of the article, but it serves to show that even the secular world affirms God's plan is the best—even if they don't admit their findings come from Him!

What are some other ways that sin can seem physically appealing to us?

Question
5

Finally, we see that wisdom which doesn't originate with the Lord is fruitless since the woman believed **the tree** was **desirable to make one wise**. Although the fruit seemed **desirable to make one wise** at the time, it brought death instead of life—a foolish choice because it omitted God from the equation! The world may seem to offer valuable advice on many subjects, but their wisdom is based upon limited human resources and often upon faulty understanding. God's wisdom, however, comes from His infinite understanding and omniscience since He knows the course of human history! Therefore, only one source of wisdom will never fail and always brings life—wisdom which comes from seeking the Lord and following His plan!

How does sin often disguise itself as wisdom, but ultimately leads to death in the end?

Question
6

In the end, both **the woman** and **her husband** who was right there **with her took of the fruit and ate** (v. 6). In a way, they did gain some "wisdom" because their **eyes were opened** and they realized **they were naked** (v. 7). But, in the long run, this wisdom leads to a whole host of problems! Attempting to resolve their newly discovered problem on their own and to try to hide their disobedience to the Lord's command, they found foliage from the **fig** tree which would have had some of the largest **leaves** available to them and **sewed** them **together** to make **coverings**. Soon, however, they would discover a much larger problem than their nakedness when God's presence became manifest to them in the garden.

THE DIVISION CAUSED BY SIN:

Instead of providing the couple with indispensable wisdom and making them wise like God as **the serpent** had promised, eating the fruit destroyed their relationships and caused division—first and foremost it severed their relationship with the Lord. We can see this separation caused by disobedience and shame because **they hid among the trees from the presence of the Lord** when **they heard** Him approaching **in the garden** (v. 8). A relationship once predicated upon love and faithfulness had come to be characterized by fear and shame. Rather than run to the Lord to greet Him and show their devotion as they once did, they now hide in shame.

Like a parent who already knows what a child has done and wants to bring him or her to a realization of the consequences of an action, God calls **to Adam** and asks,

“Where are you” (v. 9)? Rather than answering God’s question directly, Adam tries to explain and reveals the reason why he hid which further incriminates him. He responds by telling the Lord that he **hid** when he **heard** His **voice** because he **was naked** and became **afraid** (v. 10). This prompts God to ask two other questions, **“Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I**



commanded you that you should not eat” (v. 11)? God already knew the answers to these questions, but He wanted Adam to acknowledge His mistake so He could lead Him to repentance.

Instead of acknowledging his sin and taking responsibility for his actions, Adam starts to point fingers. On one level, he casts blame upon **the woman** because he describes how **she gave** him **of the tree** and he **ate** (v. 12). Ultimately, however, he blames the Lord when he specifies **the woman whom You gave me!** It’s almost as if Adam had said, “If you hadn’t given me this woman, I wouldn’t have been in this mess.” Quickly, the discussion turns to **the woman** who then promptly blames **the serpent** for

Instruct

deceiving her in response to God's question about **what** she had **done** (v. 13). Whereas Adam blamed God, **the woman** pleaded ignorance. In neither case, however, did the person accept responsibility for his or her actions and acknowledge his or her sin. We can see that same practice in our society today; people will blame everyone, but themselves for their sinful choices: the environment, their peers, their parents, their circumstances, etcetera. In the end, however, we truly have no one to blame except ourselves because we are the ones who made the choice!

How do people try to shift the blame for their sin and make themselves seem innocent or not responsible?

Question
7

The most catastrophic result of sin we find in these verses is the destruction of relationships. Still created in God's image, man not only caused dysfunction in his other relationships upon earth in marriage and with the animals as we will see in the next section, but he severed his relationship with the Lord who must punish sin. Before sin, man had intimate fellowship with the Lord which occurred daily. In Hebrew, the phrase that God walked **in the garden** indicates an action that is done repetitively and consistently; in some sense, we could say that He walked daily or routinely **in the garden** to have fellowship with this couple. Sin and disobedience, however, have now driven a wedge into that relationship and they have hidden from their Creator! Fortunately, as we will see, we serve a gracious and forgiving God who is willing to restore us into right relationship with Him even though we have sinned.

How does sin cause dysfunction in all our relationships?

Question
8

Genesis 3:14-19

THE DISCIPLINE INSTITUTED FOR SIN:

In these last few verses, we find the discipline that God institutes for sin. Starting with the instigator, God administers punishment to **the serpent** for his role in circumventing His command. The Lord begins by cursing him above any other animal—particularly the **cattle** and **the beasts of the field** (v. 14). In a move to humble the defiant instigator and exercise His sovereign authority, God sentences **the serpent** to crawl

on his belly and **eat dust** the rest of his **life**. Although God will put **enmity** or hostility **between the woman and the serpent**, as well as **her seed** and his **seed**, the **Seed** of the woman will strike the final death blow to his deadly reign! Even though **the serpent** may **strike at the heel**, **her Seed** will strike a death blow to his **head**!

In the midst of this despair, we discover a beautiful picture of the coming Messiah who will (has in our case) permanently defeated sin and death through His own death upon the cross



and His resurrection three days later. Throughout the ages, God has called a people to Himself who would faithfully serve Him. Despite their imperfections, God redeemed them when they turned to follow Him. In their obedience, He used them to fulfill His ultimate promise in Christ who would save the world by dying in our place so that we could have life! Even though we cannot escape the consequences of sin during our time on earth, we can look forward to a day when we can stand before Him in renewed glory because He has paid our debt and given us life in His Son—the Christ!

In the meantime, the consequences for sin still remain even though we can have life in Christ who can restore us into perfect fellowship with the Father. Thus, even though we can receive forgiveness and have redemption in Christ, the consequences for our choices remain just as the first couple would learn. For example, sin still affects our God-given roles in the family and relationships here on earth. Proceeding in the order of the participants in this dastardly deed, God describes the results of sin for the woman next. Two areas will be affected for her: childbirth and her relationship with her husband. In childbirth, her **pain** in delivery will **greatly** increase; the word translated “**sorrow**” by the NKJV is better translated as hard work or toil and, in this case, it reflects the struggle with **pain** that she will have as a result (v. 16). Subsequently, strife will occur in marriage because her **desire will be for her husband** and **he will rule over** her. In other words, a power struggle will tend to occur in marriage because their God-given roles will become mired in selfishness; instead of functioning as helpmates who work together in tandem, the partners will selfishly seek their own interests at times!

How does sin destroy our relationships with other people?

Question
9

Instruct

Now, God deals with Adam's defiance because he listened to **the voice of his wife** and **ate from the tree** which He had expressly forbidden (v. 17). First, as the keeper and caretaker of the garden, his job would now become laborious! **The ground** will be **cursed** and it will produce **both thorns and thistles**, making his **toil** or labor much



more difficult (v. 18)! As an added consequence, his sin will make it harder for him to provide food for himself and his family: he must now **toil all the days of his life** and **sweat** to provide food (literally **bread**). Second, physical death enters the picture. On the sixth day, God used dirt to sculpt the man and breathed life into his nostrils, but

now as a result of sin he will once again return to **dust** in death (v. 19). In this, God has upheld His promise of punishment that eating from the tree would lead to death. As we will see in the relationships that we will study in Genesis in the coming months, sin and disobedience lead to a myriad of problems. Sin creates dysfunction in marriage, family relationships, and friendships; it can cause bitterness, jealousy, envy, and strife which in turn can lead to revenge and violence. Sin can cause impatience and distrust in which people try to take matters in their own hands rather than relying upon the Lord and waiting for Him to fulfill His promises. Fortunately, we have a Savior to whom we can turn to overcome the effects of sin; in Him, we can have life when we repent and surrender to Him! Yet, we don't automatically become "sinless" when we have a relationship with Christ; we must still make a conscious effort to overcome temptation and resist failure by submitting to the Holy Spirit and allowing Him to guide our lives. Therefore, let us seek redemption in Christ who can restore us into a right relationship with the Father and submit to Him as we seek to live a renewed life here on the earth under the leadership of the Holy Spirit who helps us relate to others as God intended.

In the introduction, we met the slick salesman Howard A. Swindell who deceived people into purchasing a fake cure-all pill with grandiose promises. Like this pill, sin deceives people into thinking that it will cure all their woes. It promises to satisfy our desires and give us fulfillment and joy; it promises to reduce our loneliness and provide healthy relationships which satisfy; it promises to restore us to fun and vitality if only we would only live for the moment and seize what's right in front of us. In the end, however, it cures nothing and causes untold problems which lead to death!

In Christ, we have the true cure for sin and death if only we would turn to Him. His cure is even free! Through His generous grant, He Himself paid the penalty for our sin and offers us life as a free gift if only we would accept it. We don't have to resign ourselves to living defeated lives in which we continually surrender to a lifestyle of sin. On the contrary, we can have restored relationships and find contentment even in trying times when we surrender to Christ. Therefore, let us not go through life with dysfunctional and broken relationships caused by sin, but let us repair them and live by grace in Christ!

Incorporate

How can we as a church encourage people to see the delusion of sin and encourage them to make wise choices?

How do we sometimes see the division and destruction sin can cause in relationships manifested in the church? How can we overcome this?

Even though we can have forgiveness in Christ, why do the consequences and punishments remain for our sinful choices?

Journal: Document God's Work

May 10, 2020



*Relationships
Strained by Envy*
Genesis 4:1-15

Focal Verse:

"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Genesis 4:7

back to
Table of
Contents

Introduce

For several months, Mark had labored over what to get for his father's birthday because it was a milestone to celebrate at fifty. He spent hours online searching for the perfect gift and even more time traveling to various stores to scour the products on the shelves. Mark even dropped hints to find out what his father desired most! Whatever gift he would choose, Mark knew that it would require a significant investment on his part—even to the point of making sacrifices. As a teenager, Mark had a job after school and on the weekends as a delivery specialist for a local pizza establishment. However, he usually didn't make much beyond minimum wage because few people in his town tipped generously—even if at all. So, before he went to the movies, out to eat with friends, or participated in anything that required money, he set some aside to purchase his father's gift.

Mark's brother, Jonathan, also wanted to get his father a gift for his birthday, but he didn't spend the time preparing or saving like his brother had. As the elder of the two, Jonathan had a slightly better job which paid more money and didn't rely as heavily upon tips. With his income, Jonathan lived an indulgent life; he bought whatever he wanted and went wherever he desired to satisfy his whims. He enjoyed the fruits of his labor almost every weekend as he hung out with his friends and spent his hard-earned money! So, when it came time to purchase a gift for his father, he scrounged together the money he had on hand and bought the first thing he could find that seemed half-way decent at his price point.



The day of the big celebration had finally arrived, so the two brothers proudly brought their gifts for their father to open. Jonathan presented his gift first, but his father was less than impressed with it. The disappointment and lack of approval shown clearly upon his father's face. Then, Mark presented his gift much to the delight of the father whose face beamed with joy and approval. Seeing Jonathan's consternation and anger, the father decided to use this as a teachable moment. Taking him aside, he explained

Introduce

to his son that he has the ability to do what is right rather than to be influenced by peer pressure, temptation, and sin. When we do what is right, the father continued, we'll be accepted and rewarded. However, this infuriated Jonathan and made him even more envious of his brother. Later that day, he and Mark were alone upstairs in the house when Jonathan suddenly began pummeling him in a physical altercation. The fight left Mark so bruised and battered that he died in the hospital later that week—never regaining consciousness from the coma after the brawl. Jonathan's envy and anger had turned into a much greater problem because he lacked self-control!

Perhaps, we haven't heard of Jonathan and Mark, but most likely we have heard of two other brothers named Cain and Abel who faced a similar problem. Sin in our lives always strains our relationships and, in many cases, actually destroys them just as we can observe here in Genesis 4. When we don't do what is right and allow sin to dominate our thoughts and actions, covetousness, jealousy, envy, and strife will always characterize our relationships—especially when we stand next to someone who does what is right! Like Cain and Jonathan, sin makes us look bad when those around us are doing that which the Lord has called us. Therefore, let us relate to the Lord in righteousness, so that we can relate to others here on earth with the proper perspective and attitude.

Key
Question

What can we do to overcome envy and covetousness in our lives?

Genesis 4:1-5a

THE OFFERING:

After having received the punishment for their sin and having been driven from the garden of Eden ([Gen 3:16-24](#)), Adam and Eve consummated their relationship and **she conceived** and gave birth to a son whom she named **Cain** (v. 1). Although the meaning of **Cain** is somewhat uncertain, it most likely means something similar to “acquired” or “gotten” since Eve explains that she has **acquired a man from the Lord**. Yet, the most important aspect is not the meaning of the name, but her acknowledgment of the Lord’s role in the creative process. The couple certainly initiated the process physically and she indeed gave birth, but the life ultimately came **from the Lord**. Therefore, not only did God create life in the beginning, but He continues to give and sustain life through the miracle of birth! Consequently, every life is a gift from God (Psalm 127:3)! In fulfillment of the command to “be fruitful and multiply” ([Gen 1:28](#)), she again bears another son whom she names **Abel** (v. 2).

As they grew, Cain and Abel became involved in different occupations. Following in the footsteps of his father, Cain **was a tiller of the ground**. After He created Adam,

God put him in charge of keeping and working the garden—the first farmer. However, Adam’s task didn’t change after they sinned; it just became harder. Nonetheless, the eldest followed his father into farming. Abel, on the other hand, became a shepherd—a **keeper of sheep**—which in some sense also fulfilled the responsibility that



God had given to Adam to exercise dominion over the animals ([Gen 1:28](#)). At the time, neither job was more advantageous or glorious than the other; they simply fulfilled God’s instruction to the couple and purpose for mankind, but soon sin would enter the picture and destroy another relationship—this time between two brothers.

How are you fulfilling God’s call in your life?

Question
1

Instruct

Over the course **of time**, both Cain and Abel **brought** offerings to the Lord. Although we don't have much background about why or how they **brought** the offerings, they seem to be a gift to honor the Lord in the same way that we bring our tithes to Him since they were from the things they produced in their occupations. Cain, for example, **brought an offering of the fruit of the ground** whereas Abel **brought of the firstborn of his flock and their fat** (vv. 3-4). In other words, they **brought** from that which the Lord had graciously and abundantly blessed them! Moreover, the Hebrew word translated "**offering**" in this context simply means just that—a gift or offering; it does not specifically refer to an **offering** for sin. Therefore, it doesn't appear that they were offering sacrifices for sin, but that they were showing gratitude to the Lord for His provision! This doesn't mean that they were sinless or didn't need to bring sin offerings to the Lord, but that here they focused on praising His generosity in their lives!

In-Depth Information



Even though the term translated **offering** in these verses in Genesis can be used of an animal sacrifice ([1 Sam 2:17; 26:19](#)), it more often refers to the grain or cereal offerings brought to honor the Lord from the firstfruits of the land and the fruitful bounty He has provided ([Lev 2:1-3; 14-16](#)).

Why should we bring offerings to honor the Lord and show gratitude for the way He has prospered and blessed us?

Question
2

Very abruptly, however, we find that **the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but**



He did not respect Cain's (vv. 4b-5). The text never explicitly states the reason why God accepted one offering and rejected the other. As a result, speculation has abounded as to why which often causes us to overlook some crucial evidence in the way the text describes the two offerings. For instance, the text specifically notes that Abel **brought the firstborn** from his

flock along with their **fatty** portions. In other words, he gave from the best portions that he had; he didn't merely give an **offering** from the leftovers to satisfy some legalistic obligation, but he gave his best. Later, Scripture reveals the importance of dedicating the **firstborn** ([Lev 27:26](#)) and the firstfruits ([Exod 23:26, 19; Deut 26:2, 10-11](#)) as an **offering** to the Lord. Moreover, we also see that the **fatty** portions of the animal belong to the Lord alone since they represent the "best" portion of the animal ([Exod 29:13, 18; Lev 3:1-3, 9-11, 14-16](#)). Although no such mandate or requirement exists here in Genesis, Abel established a precedent in his **offering** and provided a model for all to follow when he made giving a priority and gave his best!

Conversely, the text simply states that Cain **brought an offering of the fruit of the ground** (v. 3). The Hebrew word translated **fruit** in this context is not the same as "firstfruits" used later in Scripture to describe the very first part of the harvest; therefore, it does not seem that Cain **brought** the first part of his harvest to the Lord like his brother did. On the other hand, it doesn't mean that Cain **brought** a bad offering of rotten or defective **fruit**, such as the people did in Malachi 1:8; it likely only indicates that he didn't bring the first portions of his harvest to show gratitude to the Lord. Therefore, the reason the Lord rejects Cain's **offering** seems to be based on his attitude toward giving rather than the type of **fruit offering** that he **brought**. Abel had given first of the choicest portions whereas Cain simply gave an **offering** from some of the produce from the land.

How does giving of our first and our best indicate our trust in the Lord?

Question
3

In many ways, the attitude of the giver is more important than the type or amount of the gift. Scripture bears this out not only in this passage, but in others as well! For example, Paul encourages the Corinthians to give generously, sacrificially, and cheerfully to the work of the Lord to aid ministry in Jerusalem ([2 Cor 8:2; 9:6-7](#)). Jesus commends a widow who sacrificially gave all she had while castigating the wealthy religious leaders for giving what amounted to a pittance for show ([Luke 21:1-4](#)). Giving is an act of worship in which we honor the Lord for the many ways in which He has blessed us. Certainly, a precedent and a mandate have been established in which we should regularly give our tithes and offerings unto the Lord, but the manner in which we give reflects our true attitude in worship and is what gives the Lord pleasure! Far from being miserly and stingy, the Lord has blessed us beyond description—even if

Instruct

that doesn't entail many physical resources and possessions as the world often defines blessing. Consequently, we should worship the Lord with our offerings because we love Him and want to honor Him for everything that He has done for us, particularly in Christ—not merely because we are legalistically bound to give, but because we want to show gratitude for His gracious gift. When we make giving a priority and give sacrificially and generously, therefore, we acknowledge that our provision comes from the Lord and we place our trust squarely in Him to continue to provide.

How would you evaluate your attitude in giving to the Lord? Does the way that you give show you trust Him to provide?

Question
4

Genesis 4:5b-7

THE OPPORTUNITY:

Next, we learn of Cain's reaction to this rejection whereby he ultimately allows **sin** to dominate his life and influence his actions. The text reveals that he became **very angry** and **his countenance fell** (v. 5b). The phrase translated "**was very angry**" literally means that he "burned exceedingly." Perhaps, the English words furious or irate best capture the meaning in this context. In one sense, Cain flew into a rage when God rejected his **offering**, but in another he was also depressed and sadden as indicated by his sullen face or **countenance** because his **offering** lacked sufficiency and revealed his true heart and attitude toward the Lord.

How does the adversary use our emotions and feelings to tempt us to sin?

Question
5

Nevertheless, Cain's fury and depression are misplaced; rather than look introspectively at his own attitude and motives, he focused on the external circumstances which eventually led him to a murderous rampage against his brother. Although Cain didn't explicitly blame others for his **sin** like his parents did, his actions indicate that he still found no fault in himself and accepted no blame. Instead, he had become **angry** with the one who had done what was right; thus, Cain's inadequacies were clearly revealed when compared with his brother ([John 3:19-21](#))! Therefore, it became easy for him to project his rage upon his brother which led him to hate and ultimately seek revenge ([1](#)

[John 3:12](#)).

Like He did with Cain's parents, God asks him a series of questions in order to bring him to a point of contemplating and understanding his actions; God wants him to look introspectively at his life so that he can mature and realize that he alone is responsible for his choices regardless of what others may do or say. Unlike Adam and Eve, however, Cain doesn't answer any of the questions. Nevertheless, God begins by asking him the source of his anger and depression: "**Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen**" (v. 6)? He follows with an even more pointed question: "**If you do well, will you not be accepted**" (v. 7)? In Hebrew, this question translated literally is "if you do well, will you not be lifted up?"

Through this question, God wants Cain to understand that if he does what is right then he will have no shame for his actions—that is a **fallen countenance**—because he will be in right standing with Him and literally his face will be lifted up with joy! As a result, he will find joy and honor in serving the Lord with the right perspective and attitude. Even now, he can find forgiveness and restoration in the Lord, so that he doesn't have to live with shame and regret which can fester and lead to much more sin in his life. The Lord stands ready to forgive and restore if only he would acknowledge his need and seek forgiveness in Him!

Next, God outlines the two choices that Cain can make. He can allow **sin** to seize control and dictate his actions or he can overcome it and do the right thing. First, God states that **if** he does **not do well**, then **sin lies at the door** (v. 7). In other words, God teaches us that we ought to do what is right and not give **sin** the opportunity to seize control of our lives which causes us to enter a dangerous downward spiral toward

enslavement and addiction. The word translated **lies** pictures an animal lying in wait or crouching ready to pounce upon its prey. The allusion here doesn't really present a picture of being caught off guard or unaware by **sin**, but rather the ferocious grip that **sin** has on one's life! When caught in the mouth of the hunter, it's difficult for the prey to escape. Likewise, the



addictiveness caused by the desire of **sin** leads us down a path from which it is difficult

Instruct

to escape—and truly impossible to overcome on our own apart from Jesus Christ (1 Cor 10:13).

How does sin enslave or seize us like prey in its grip?

Question
6

Most of us probably have developed habits or routines over the course of our lives. Some may be healthy and beneficial whereas others may not. For example, most of us likely have a routine when we get up in the morning, one before bed, certain days on which we do certain chores, and much more. Sometimes, however, we have bad or unhealthy habits that we want to change. Yet, think about how hard it is to actually change them! We get into a routine which we almost do automatically without even thinking; before we even know it, we're doing it out of habit! It simply becomes a way of life with which we have become so familiar. **Sin** functions much in the same way when it gets ahold of our lives; it refuses to let go without a fight and enslaves us. We may think about the ramifications of **sin**, but we still find ourselves participating in it anyway; we may even rationalize that the pleasure outweighs the penalty! This doesn't mean that we aren't held responsible for our choices or that we can't overcome **sin**, but it shows the power and danger of **sin** which can dominate our lives if we don't seek help from the Lord.

How does Christ help us to overcome temptation and sin?

Question
7

Second, God warns Cain that sin's **desire is for** him, **but he should rule over it**. The phrasing God uses here reminds us of the results of the first couple's disobedience which demonstrates how sin can easily destroy relationships. To Eve, God specified, "Your **desire shall be for** your husband and he **shall rule over** you" ([Gen 3:16](#)). Rather than spelling out the problem of **sin** for Cain which He does for Adam and Eve, God gives him a mandate. Cain must master sin and control his urges and impulses lest they bring ruination upon his life and relationships. We accomplish this by surrendering to Christ and placing Him first in all our relationships and in everything we do. When we fail to make Christ the priority, then our own desires become our focus which skews how we view our lives and our relationships. Obviously, Cain looks forward to Christ,

but the principle remains the same since the Lord speaks with him directly. If Cain would only humble himself and seek the Lord, then God would indeed guide his path and lead him to righteousness!

How can relationships apart from Christ easily become self-centered?

Question
8

Genesis 4:8-10

THE OFFENSES:

Unfortunately, Cain doesn't take God's instruction to heart and rejects His advice. Rather than asking for forgiveness and doing the right thing, Cain continues seething in anger which gives **sin** the opportunity to seize control of his emotions and leads him to commit more **sin**! As he **talked with Abel in the field**, Cain **rose up and killed him** (v. 8). His failure to deal with his frustration, solve his anger without harboring bitterness and animosity, and take responsibility for his own role in the rejection of the offering has **now** led to murder. Rather than accept responsibility for his role in God's rejection of his offering, Cain selfishly kills **his own brother**. At the heart of sin, therefore, lies self-centeredness and covetousness. Cain covets the relationship that Abel had with the Lord because he had done what was right; he wanted the same approval from God even though he hadn't done what was right! Instead of working on his own relationship and seeking restoration with the Lord, Cain decided to eliminate his problem!



Anger, as we see in this instance, consumes Cain to the very core of his being and clouds his judgment, leading him to commit more **sin**. Sometimes people may not find the harm in what they consider "little sins" until they truly see the bigger picture of how devastating and destructive **sin** is. **Sin** doesn't just affect one area of our lives, but rather it affects every area and subtly influences us in every aspect even when we don't realize it. One **sin**, therefore, will always lead to another. For this reason, Paul explains, "Be angry, and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath nor give place to

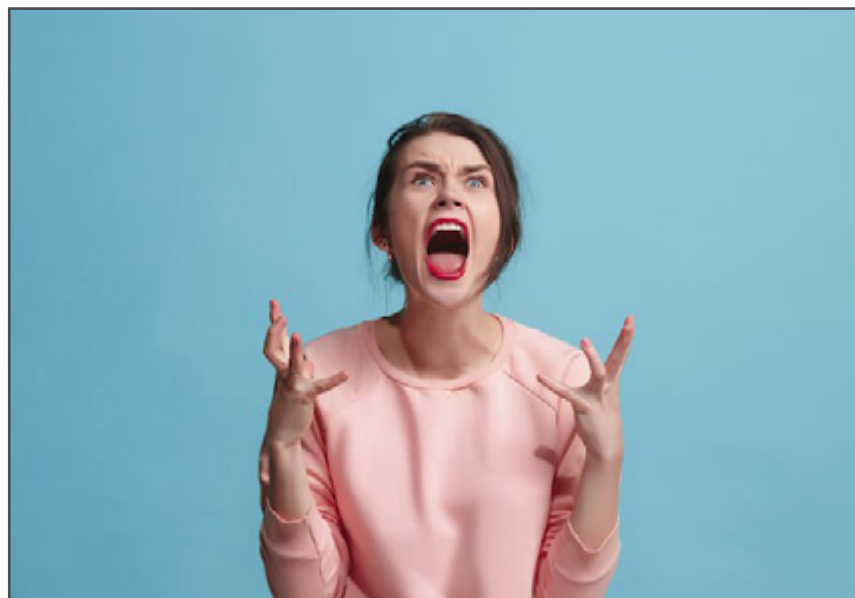
Instruct

the devil” ([Eph 4:26-27](#)). In his letter, Paul relates the same teaching that God has given Cain albeit with a slightly different nuance. When we allow **sin** to enter our lives, it gives the enemy opportunity to exploit other areas which in turn drives us further from God by virtue of the bad choices we make! Therefore, we must exercise great caution and make sure that we intentionally walk in righteousness rather than allowing **sin** to infiltrate our lives and influence our choices.

What examples can you cite of how one sin causes us to commit more sins?

Question
9

When God confronts Cain about his actions, we begin to see a pattern of sinfulness exposed; we clearly see how one sinful choice led to a multitude of sinful choices! Cain sinned by becoming irate when God rejected the attitude in which he gave his offering which in turn led him to kill **his brother in the field** and now leads him to



lie to his Creator! Once again, God approaches Cain to ask a question to which He already knows the answer: **Where is Abel your brother** (v. 9)? In response, Cain lies: **“I do not know? Am I my brother’s keeper?”** In more modern terms, Cain impetuously asks, “How should I know? Am I responsible for my brother?” But God does know he’s responsible

for his brother’s murder when he interjects, **“What have you done”** (v. 10)? With this question, God immediately tells him what he’s done! He knows because Abel’s **blood cries out to Him from the ground**.

With recent events that have confined us to our homes due to the Coronavirus, we have seen a dramatic rise in domestic violence on all levels between all family members. A cursory search on the Internet at the beginning of this period found many organizations, news agencies, and sociologists warning of the danger. The self-centered and self-indulgent lifestyle that many live has become even more heightened in close confinement. In many ways, we’ve forgotten as a society how to resolve our

differences peacefully, how to deal with our frustration properly, and how to control our desires persistently. Instead, many think, “How can I get what I want right now?” This type of attitude leads to a whole host of problems because it is rooted in sin—just as Cain discovered! We, however, must live and think like our Savior—not about what we can get, but how we can give. Let us not focus on our own desires, but on the desires and plans He has for us. Above all, let us think about how we can honor Him with our very lives as a living sacrifice, seeking to do what is right and refraining from our own sinful desires ([Rom 12:1-2](#)).

How has Christ given you wisdom to deal with a tense situation in your life?

Question
10

Genesis 4:11-15

THE OUTCOME:

Finally, we see the outcome of his actions. Cain brought a curse upon himself because he failed to heed God’s advice. Therefore, God declares that he is **cursed from the earth** in two primary ways: **the ground will no longer** be fruitful for him and he will be **a fugitive and vagabond** (vv. 11-12). Through his sin, Cain lost his livelihood (the ability to farm) and his home (he is a nomad now); essentially, by allowing sin to rule in his life, it has cost him everything upon which he depended! Even worse than these two things, he has become gripped with fear because of the relationships which he has destroyed. For this reason, Cain objects, “**Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me**” (v. 14). Like with Adam and Eve, we see that sin has separated him from the Lord (God’s **face shall be hidden**), but it has also destroyed his relationships with other humans as indicated by his fear that some will seek to **kill** him. Ironically, the one who took the life of his brother now he fears the penalty of death being exacted upon him! Although the consequences for Cain’s sin remain, God extends grace and mercy in dealing with his objection to the punishment. With reassurance, the Lord promises that **if anyone kills Cain** then He will enact **vengeance upon him sevenfold** (v. 15). Moreover, He places **a mark** or sign **on Cain** so that those who may find him **should not kill him** without consequence. Speculation about the type of **mark** or the origin of these other people is not important because it obscures an important principle: God’s grace. Just as He had done with Adam and Eve, the Lord acts in grace by providing Cain

Instruct

a way to have life and find restoration in Him despite his sin. Certainly, God could have immediately issued the death penalty for Cain's sin, but He didn't; instead, He showed great patience and tremendous mercy to afford Cain protection.

How does God show us grace and mercy despite our sin?

Question
11

God extends this same grace and mercy to us today. The consequences of our choices and the results of our actions will continue to be manifest in our lives, but we don't have to allow them to determine our ultimate course! We need not resign ourselves to death and defeat, rather we can turn to the Lord for forgiveness and salvation no matter what we may have done! The remnants of our bad choices in life may become evident at times, but we can still have hope in Christ if only we would turn to Him and seek Him daily. Let's not follow the path of Cain and allow our relationships to become strain by envy and unbridled emotion; let us seek to follow the path that Christ has blazed before us and imitate the righteousness that can only be found in Him.

Relationships strained by envy may not always result in violence or murder as in the case of Cain and Abel or Mark and Jonathan. Yet, failure to have the right perspective or attitude as well as to control our emotions can lead to a whole multitude of problems. Envy can lead to a spirit of competition which induces a lack of self-control in many areas of our lives. It can cause resentment and bitterness which lead others to seek revenge rather than offer forgiveness when they feel they've been wronged. It can contribute to severed relationships in which people refuse to talk and even act civilly toward one another. Rather than allow these sinful emotions and actions to control our lives, we must seek righteousness in the Lord and imitate Him.

To avoid the same pitfalls as Cain, we can practice four principles through which we can temper our emotions and tame the temptations that may come in our lives. First, we shouldn't react immediately; we should remove ourselves from the situation to give us time to calm down and to think. Second, we need to take time to pray and read Scripture; we can't do this if we don't remove ourselves from the situation first, however. Third, we need to look at the situation from God's perspective which includes obtaining and evaluating all the facts before we make a decision. Fourth, we need to seek godly counsel if needed. We shouldn't just turn to anyone for advice, however; we should seek godly advice from those who are mature believers and well-versed in Scripture. When we do these things, we will develop healthy relationships which aren't strained by sinful practices because we will seek to implement the righteousness by which God has called us to live through Christ. Therefore, let us remove anything sinful in our lives, seek Christ first, and follow the path in which He leads us toward healthy relationships with the Father and those around us!

Incorporate

What attitude should we have as we bring our tithes and offerings to the Lord? How does one's attitude ultimately affect the gift?

How does sin in one member affect the whole church? How does this give the enemy opportunity to destroy the church?

How can we as a church encourage one another to do what is right while at the same time help to restore those who are sinning?

Journal: Document God's Work

May 17, 2020



*Relationships
Saved by Grace
Genesis 6:1-22*

Focal Verse:

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

back to
Table of
Contents

Genesis 6:8

Introduce

On April 30, 1863, during the height of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln made a proclamation declaring a National Day of Prayer and Fasting to encourage the citizens to reflect upon and confess their sin, acknowledging their dependence upon the Lord. What he wrote in that declaration, however, applied not only to people in the nineteenth century, but it applies to every generation—including the one in which we live today! President Lincoln lamented,

“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity.

We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by

some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!”

Lincoln’s words should resonate with us loudly today because many people have not only “forgotten” the Lord, but they have outrightly rejected Him to live unabashedly and unashamedly in wickedness and debauchery. Just as throughout the history of mankind as recorded over the centuries in Scripture, people today have a skewed sense of morality as much as the generations that have preceded. As in the days of Noah, God looks down upon mankind today and sees “the wickedness of man [is] great on the earth” ([Gen 6:5](#)). Like in the days of the Judges, truth has become relative and subjective to own’s own interpretation and people do what is right in their own eyes ([Judges 17:6](#)). The world today fulfills Isaiah’s prophecy that one day people will confuse good and evil; they will label good as evil and designate evil as good ([Isa 5:20](#))! The secular world resembles the people in Jeremiah’s day who weren’t ashamed of the abominable acts they committed ([Jer 6:15; 8:12](#)). Paul, in [1 Timothy 4:1-2](#), warned us long ago that the day would come when people would turn to false teaching and reject



Introduce

the truth because their consciences would become seared with a hot iron and unable to distinguish the truth from a lie.

Fortunately, as Abraham Lincoln rightly acknowledged, we serve a gracious God who desires to save us from ourselves! Through grace, the Lord has provided a way that we can have restoration and salvation through His Son; in Christ, we can move from death to life through what He did for us on the cross. Yet, in every generation, God responded with such grace to save a people who would turn to Him as we will see here in [Genesis 6](#). In comparison to the world, Noah was a “just man,” but he still needed “grace” from the Lord to attain salvation ([Gen 6:8](#)). Noah wasn’t perfect, but he turned to the Lord and walked with Him. Just as we look back to the crucifixion and resurrection, Noah looked forward to that day and walked with the Lord by faith and God rescued him from the flood waters that would inundate the earth ([Heb 11:7](#))! Therefore, let us never forget the grace of our God, but turn to Him for salvation as He has prescribed in Scripture according to the sacrifice of His Son.

Key
Question

How does the world compare to Noah’s day? How does God still extend his grace?

In Reference



Abraham Lincoln, “[Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day](#)” (April 30, 1863), available from [abrahamlincolnonline.org](#).

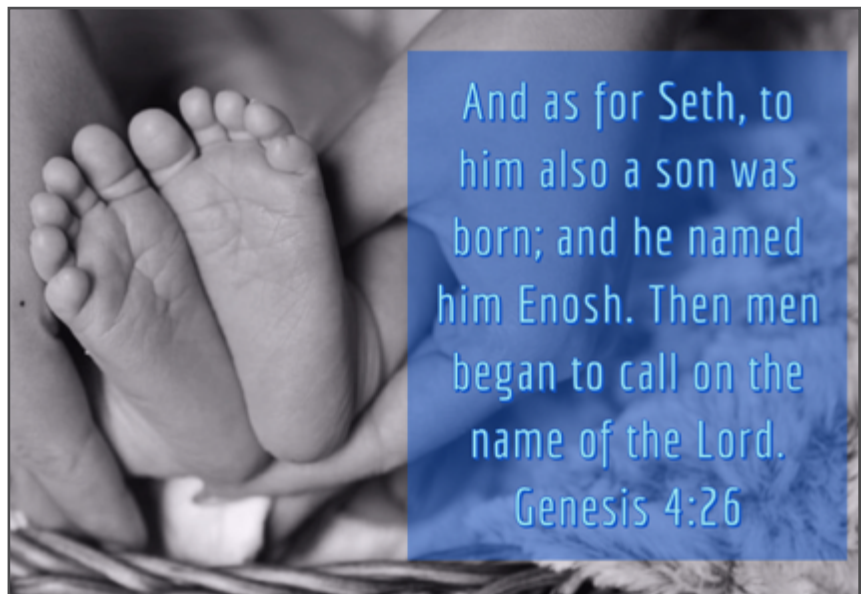
Genesis 6:1-7

THE GRIEF CAUSED BY WICKEDNESS:

As we turn the pages of history forward from Cain's murder of Abel, we find people fulfilling God's command to "be fruitful and multiply" as depicted through the genealogies of the early families recorded in [Genesis 4:16-5:32](#). Most of us probably skim these verses when we read them in a yearly Bible study plan or only pay attention to the long lifespans of the people, but in doing so we miss the fact that these genealogies describe two clear paths that people choose to take in life. Some, like Enosh and Enoch, worship, serve, and walk with the Lord ([Gen 4:26; 5:24](#)) whereas others, like Lamech, commit atrocious acts which perpetuate a self-centered lifestyle of sin ([Gen 4:23-24](#)). Acts, such as Lamech's murderous retaliation for someone injuring him, become even more pronounced during the days of Noah until the whole "earth [is] filled with violence" ([Gen 6:11, 13](#)). In this setting, Genesis chapter six opens.

In summary fashion, the text reveals how **men began to multiply on the earth** and started bearing **daughters** (v. 1). As the families on earth started to expand, **the sons of God** noticed the beauty of **the daughters of men** and began to intermarry (literally **took wives for themselves**) as **they** so **chose** (v. 2). Although much speculation exists about their identity, based upon contextual evidence **the sons of God** most likely refer to those who walked with the Lord and had a relationship with Him. For example, [Deuteronomy 14:1-2](#) describes Israel as the "children (literally sons) of the Lord your

God" who are called to be holy and set apart from the other nations as a "special treasure." In many places throughout Scripture, we see those who have a relationship with the Lord and walk consistently in His righteous ways called His children ([Exod 4:22; Jer 31:20; Psalm 82:6; John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:1](#)). In Gen 6, this would refer to the godly descendants of Adam, namely Seth, Enosh, and Enoch ([Gen 4:26; 5:24](#)).



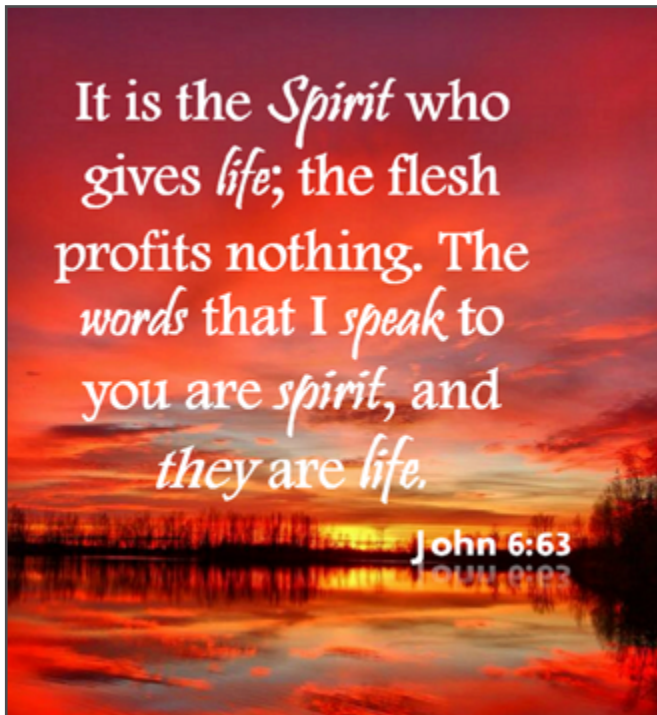
Instruct

Unfortunately, the descendants of godly parents sometimes make poor choices which place them in jeopardy. In Genesis 6, **the sons** of those who followed the Lord intermarried with **the daughters of men**; the phrase **the daughters of men** most likely refers to those families which did not have a relationship with the Lord and did not walk in the fellowship of His righteousness. Scripture warns us countless times of the danger of intermarriage between believers and non-believers and instructs us not to become involved in such unions because it has the propensity to turn our hearts from the Lord ([Deut 7:3](#); [1 Kings 11:1-4](#); [2 Cor 6:14](#)). Rather than evaluate their potential spouses based upon their spiritual relationship with the Lord, these **sons** looked at the outward physical appearance. Just as Eve had found the physical appearance of the fruit appealing to the eyes, **the sons of God** also looked only to the physical beauty of those whom they chose to marry. By assessing only physical beauty, it turned their hearts from the Lord and filled the earth with all types of wickedness when they intermarried as we shall see.

Why is it important to be equally yoked in our close and intimate relationships (marriage, friendships, business partnerships, etc.) with believers rather than unbelievers?

Question
1

Before we arrive at the reason for all the turmoil created by these intermarriages, God outlines His response when He announces that His **Spirit shall not strive with man forever** because **he indeed is flesh** (v. 3). The word translated as **strive** actually means remain or abide; thus, God's **Spirit** will **not** remain **with man forever**. In this sense, God will remove His life-giving **Spirit** from mankind which ushers in a sentence of death ([John 6:63](#)). In the beginning, God's Spirit hovered over the formless world to bring about life ([Gen 1:2](#)), but now God will remove His **Spirit** from mankind which will result in divine judgment through a catastrophic world-wide flood.



Therefore, mankind will no longer receive the blessing of divine support and protection because he has refused to repent and turn to the Lord, so God abandons him to his own devices which ultimately lead to his demise and destruction (see [Rom 1:18-32](#)). Although God affords us many opportunities to repent and be restored, a day will come when we will no longer have that chance and face the consequences of our rebellious acts!

Why should we have an urgency to repent and surrender our lives to the Lord?

Question
2

The reason that God cites for this divine judgment is that man **is indeed flesh**. **Flesh**, understood in this context, means mankind's sinful nature or his selfish inclinations and desires. The subsequent verses in this chapter warrant this interpretation because we see mankind described as utterly wicked and violent ([6:5, 11, and 13](#)). As a result of mankind living according to his fleshly desires and refusing to repent, God limits his **days to one hundred and twenty years**. Whether this limitation means that God has capped man's lifespan at 120 years of age or that He graciously gave those in Noah's generation 120 years to repent and return to Him before sending the flood, the point remains the same: a day of judgment will come to all ([Heb 9:27](#)). Even in His infinite love, boundless mercy, and matchless patience, a time will come when He will judge the world for their sin and disobedience! God graciously calls all to repentance and life; we must take advantage of that call while we have the opportunity!

Once again, we see how rapidly mankind multiplies upon the earth, but verse 4 has some very difficult things to understand. In the NKJV, the text interjects that **there were giants on the earth in those days**. This does not refer to dinosaurs, but to a group of human beings known as the Nephilim. The understanding of these people as **giants** likely comes from the use of the same term in [Numbers 13:33](#) to describe how a group of people made the men of Israel look like "grasshoppers" during the period of conquest to inherit the Promised Land under Joshua's leadership. The people in Numbers, however, couldn't have descended from those in Noah's time because they all perished in the flood! Rather, our understanding should come from what the name means. Nephilim means something akin to "fallen ones"; hence, here in Genesis it seems to be used with respect to their character. They were wicked and had completely forsaken the Lord; in this way, they were literally fallen, unregenerate people.

Next, **the sons of God** who wed **the daughters of men** also began to have **children** who became known as **the mighty men of old** who were **of renown**. With these references, it depicts them as a warring people who brought conflict and violence upon the earth. Therefore, the phrase **men of renown** doesn't mean that they were righteous by any standard, but simply that they were well-known; in other words, they had an ominous reputation for ferocity and violence! Taken together, then, the Nephilim (**giants**) and **the mighty men of old** paint a broad picture of a wicked sinful world filled with violence! With this, verse 5 opens with a declaration about why God has chosen to send a flood upon the earth.

As the Lord surveyed **the earth**, He saw the pervasive **wickedness of man** whose **intents of his thoughts continually** dwelt upon **evil** (v. 5). God's observation shows why it is vitally important to have a renewed mind ([Rom 12:1-2](#)) and to focus on righteous thinking ([Phil 4:8-9](#)). We can't think evil or sinful thoughts without eventually acting upon them! Today, media (whether television, movies, video games, the Internet, or printed books and publications) bombards us with all kinds of ungodly material from selfishness to sexual depravity to violence which influences our thoughts. In almost every way, it challenges our understanding of righteousness and morality according to god's standard. Some may not see the harm in watching, reading, or surfing questionable material because it merely produces a harmless fantasy. However, we must be cautious of the things upon which we choose to dwell in our minds! Eventually, we will start to think, talk, and act like the secular world.

How do our thoughts influence our actions even if we can distinguish "reality" from a "fantasy?"

Question
3

Finally, we see the punishment that God levies against such **wickedness** and **evil thoughts**. As God looks upon the earth, He grieves; He **was sorry that He had made man** and **He was grieved in His heart** (v. 6). Whereas man devises evil schemes and entertains wicked thoughts **in his heart**, God grieves **in His heart** over sin! In our English translations, the way we interpret this sentence seems to indicate that God **was sorry** and grieves over making mankind in the first place; however, this is not the case. God grieves over man's **wickedness** or sinfulness ([Mark 3:5](#)). When He formed man on the sixth day, He made him in His image, but man rebelled and abandoned that relationship by his own choice. The creation of the world and mankind was no

mistake on God's part; it was "good," holy, and perfect until man corrupted and ruined it ([Gen 1:10, 12, 18, 25, and 31](#)). Therefore, God grieves what man has become by his own choice—not the perfect way He had created him!* As our sovereign Creator, God has given us free will to choose how we will live: we can either follow His plan which leads to life or we can follow our own plans which lead to destruction.

In Reference



For a good discussion, see Kenneth A. Matthews, Genesis 1-11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), p. 341-344.

Moreover, God doesn't lament or grieve the punishment that those who inhabit the earth have chosen to bring upon themselves. In His declaration of punishment against mankind, God doesn't labor like a parent who interjects, "This is going to hurt me more than it will hurt you." On the contrary, what hurts God and causes Him to grieve is man's sinful and wicked intentions that have caused him to turn from the One who loves him the most! Because man has willfully turned from the Lord and stubbornly refused to repent, God



will enact the punishment for the path he himself has chosen: death and destruction. Therefore, God reveals that He **will destroy man whom** He has **created** as well as every living thing upon the land (**beast, creeping thing, and birds of the air**) because He grieves over the wickedness that has seized control of His perfect creation.

Although we are not God who can enact punishment, why and how should we grieve over sin in the world?

Question
4

Genesis 6:8-10

THE GRACE EXTENDED TO THE RIGHTEOUS:

What a gloomy and tragic way to start chapter six with the looming destruction of the entire world! When all hope seems lost and we have nothing that we can do on our

own, God steps in and offers **grace** (v. 8). Despite the wickedness of the unregenerate world, one man and his family find **grace in the eyes of the Lord**. Noah wasn't a sinless man as we will discover through his actions after the flood nor did he do anything to earn or merit God's **grace** or favor. Conversely, he has one thing that sets him wholly apart from the rest of his generation—a relationship with the Lord who saves and gives life. The text describes Noah as **a just man** who was **perfect in his generations** because he **walked with the Lord** (v. 9). Although his walk with the Lord transformed his character, his salvation still entirely depended upon God's grace which then enabled him to live in a righteous manner that set him apart from a wicked generation. In other words, Noah is like us; we're not saved by our good works, but by God's **grace** we're restored in a relationship which then enables and leads us to do good works ([Eph 2:8-10](#)).

How has God's grace transformed you?

Question
5

Again, our modern understanding of these phrases used to characterize Noah in verse 9 can mislead our thinking if we don't pay attention to their original context. First, the text identifies Noah as **a just man**; the word translated **just** actually comes from the Hebrew word for righteous which means that Noah had right standing with the Lord based upon a relationship whereby he **walked with God** daily. Consequently, he practiced righteousness by imitating the character of the Lord because of his relationship! As we learn from [Ezekiel 3:20-21](#), however, to be righteous doesn't mean that one never sins, but rather that one seeks repentance and forgiveness so as to be restored into right fellowship with the Lord! When we have right fellowship with the Lord and maintain it through prayer and by reading Scripture, we will always practice righteousness ([1 John 3:9](#)). Trouble comes, however, when we lose sight of the Lord and focus on our fleshly desires.

Second, the text describes Noah as **perfect in his generations**. In this context, the term **perfect** is better translated as blameless or upright. Again, this doesn't mean that Noah has no faults or foibles, but that he walks consistently in the righteous pattern God has established for us. [Psalm 84:11](#) will help us better understand this term when the psalmist sings, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk **uprightly**." The word translated uprightly is the same word used here in Genesis 6:9. Noah cultivated his relationship

with the Lord by believing, obeying, and living a transformed life which stood out in great contrast to his generation. Moreover, God uses this term to contrast Noah with the current vile generation. We shouldn't compare ourselves to others in the world, but we should compare ourselves to Christ; at the same time, however, we should stand out from the secular world like a sore thumb because we behave uprightly and walk blamelessly as God has called us to live in Christ!



What is the danger of comparing ourselves to the world?

Question # 6

In verses 8-10, the emphasis lies not on Noah's righteousness, but on God's **grace** to save him, his three sons, **Shem, Ham, and Japheth**, and their families. Certainly, Noah and his family had to respond to God's **grace**, but it was His **grace** from the beginning that compelled them to serve Him and walk obediently in His ways. We serve a loving and gracious God! Unfortunately, those who reject His **grace** receive His wrath upon their sins—not because God doesn't love them, but because they have chosen to follow their own path. God must punish sin and wickedness because He is righteous and holy, but He has lovingly given us a way to escape that wrath upon sin just as Noah and his family did. God desires every person in every generation to find salvation in Him, yet He doesn't force us to accept it. Our "ark," so to speak, is the blood of Jesus Christ shed upon the cross and His triumphal resurrection that defeated sin and death once and for all! God has demonstrated His **grace** and love in an unmatched way, giving us hope for salvation and life in His Son!

How has God revealed His grace to you and your family?

Question # 7

Genesis 6:11-13

THE GUILT ASSOCIATED WITH CORRUPTION:

After comparing Noah with the rest of his generation, God returns to the problem at hand—the corruption perpetrated by mankind. In verse 11, we observe the extent of this corruption; it portrays **the whole earth as corrupt before God and filled with violence**. To emphasize the point, the text repeats how **God looked upon the earth** to see its corruption and notice that **all flesh had corrupted their way** (v. 12). The term **earth**, therefore, depicts a world-wide or global problem. As most of us have stayed in our homes for nearly two months to reduce the spread of a global viral pandemic, there is another pandemic that's even more aggressive and even more contagious—sin. In fact, sin affects every member of the population without regard to age and health and its mortality rate is 100% ([Rom 3:23; 6:23](#)). No one is immune and no one can escape contracting it!

Fortunately, we have a cure or antidote to this pandemic through God's **grace** in Christ as we learned in the previous section. Sadly, very few people in the world will accept that cure and they will continue unphased toward their own destruction. Some may reject the cure in Christ as an "unscientific myth" whereas others may simply believe the lies of the world which claim to offer a fulfilling life, but ultimately fail miserably. Still, others may simply ignore the warnings and continue living life as they want, recklessly disregarding their own futures and eternal life. Others, however, may put their stock into fake cures, such as religion, ritual, and philosophy.



We see these same attitudes in Noah's day just as we do our own! Therefore, God announces to Noah, "**The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth**" (v. 13). God's **grace** certainly remains, but judgment has now come to those who refuse to repent! In the same

way, judgment will come in our own time when Christ returns, collects His bride (the church), and slams the gavel of guilt sentencing those who have refused to repent to a second eternal death separated from Him. We pray that everyone who reads this has found the cure in Christ; if not, it's not too late to find life in Him!

What is the danger about becoming complacent in terms of judgment and guilt for sin? How should we as believers respond to the world around us?

Question
8

Genesis 6:14-22

THE GIFT OFFERED BY GOD WHICH SAVES:

In the last verses of this chapter, God gives Noah specific instructions for building **the ark** as a sea-worthy vessel. In a sense then, **the ark** becomes a vehicle of God's grace and a gift that saves Noah and his family! God begins by commanding Noah to **make** the ship from **gopherwood** which we do not specifically know to which type of tree it refers (v. 14). Research has proposed any type of tree from cedar, pine (Douglas Fir and Englemann Spruce) or even cypress. We simply know that it must have been a dense, coarse wood that would float! Once constructed, he was to **cover it inside and outside** with a type of tar or resin that would seal the wood and make it watertight. Inside, God told Noah to construct compartments or **rooms** (literally **reeds**) which most likely would have housed the animals, provided storage for food and water, and offered a residence for him and his family. In all, **the ark** would be a massive vessel

with three **decks** much larger than anything built until modern cruise and cargo ship behemoths (v. 15)! The dimensions are listed in **cubits** which correspond from 15.5 to 20.25 inches on a modern scale. Therefore, the ship stood at **300 cubits** long, **50** wide, and **30** high which using an average of 18 inches means it was approximately 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45



feet high according to modern standards. Next, God instructs him to **make a window** and **finish it a cubit from above** (v. 16). The word translated **window** is actually

Instruct

unknown in ancient Hebrew and based upon its origin and root it mostly likely refers to a pitched (i.e. slanted) roof with ventilation through which fresh air could pass underneath. Thus, the pitched roof would allow the rain to run off while providing the occupants with needed air to survive.

After giving Noah specific instructions, God informs him exactly what He will do and establishes **a covenant** with him and his family. For the first time, God specifically states that He will bring **floodwaters** upon **the earth** and **destroy** every living thing that breaths (v. 17). Yet, in His grace, God has made provision to rescue mankind and restore the earth through Noah and his descendants. So, God establishes a **covenant** or makes a promise to him. Noah, his **wife**, his **sons**, and their **wives** will **go into the ark** and **bring with** them **two of every** kind of animal (**birds**, all land **animals**, and reptiles or **creeping things**) both a **male and female** so that life may continue post flood (vv. 18-20). In addition, He commands Noah to **gather** and stockpile **food** which would be used for both human and animal consumption (v. 21). Chapter six thus ends where chapter seven begins with Noah doing **all that God had commanded him**—a subject which we will examine in detail next week (v. 22).

God gives us specifics about His plan for our lives because He wants us to be rightly informed and not misled by our own faulty wisdom. Although we do not know what the future holds or what may happen to us specifically because of our finite human perspective, God has given us a plan and told us the very end if only we would listen to and trust in Him! To borrow a colloquial pun, God doesn't want to leave us high and dry, so He's revealed everything we need to know in His Word! Let's model ourselves after Noah. Let's live transformed lives in clear distinction from the world; let's pattern ourselves after God's character and respond in faithful obedience to God's grace according to everything which He has commanded us to do.

How would you evaluate your obedience to God's plan for your life?

Question
9

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln rightly assessed how the world, particularly the United States, had forgotten the grace of God. In many ways, our own culture exceeds that ignorance! People have turned from the Lord to find pleasure and contentment in every kind of wicked thought and perverted action. Moreover, they take pride in human achievement and what they consider as human benevolence and goodness. As a nation, we enjoy a wealth of knowledge and unparalleled riches in physical luxuries and possessions as few nations in history have ever truly known. Instead of recognizing God's blessing and the prosperity He has endowed, many have rejected Him altogether and removed Him from their lives! For them, judgment is swiftly approaching. Yet, as believers, we need to always remember the source of our blessings, our lives, and our salvation. We must remember God's grace! Even though we're all sinners by nature, God has rescued us from that lifestyle and freed us to live a transformed life in Him, characterized by righteousness and obedience. As we conclude our study this week, let us evaluate our lives in terms of God's grace. Although we don't earn merit through our good works, let us perform good works and live righteously because we have a relationship with Christ and walk with Him daily. When we truly recognize how blessed we are by God's grace, we will want to have fellowship with Him and imitate His Son so the world around us can see Him reflected in our lives! To God be the glory for His grace, His mercy, and His gift of salvation not through a mere ark, but through the blood of His Son shed for us on the cross.

Incorporate

How would you evaluate how the church today compares to secular society? What should our focus as the church be?

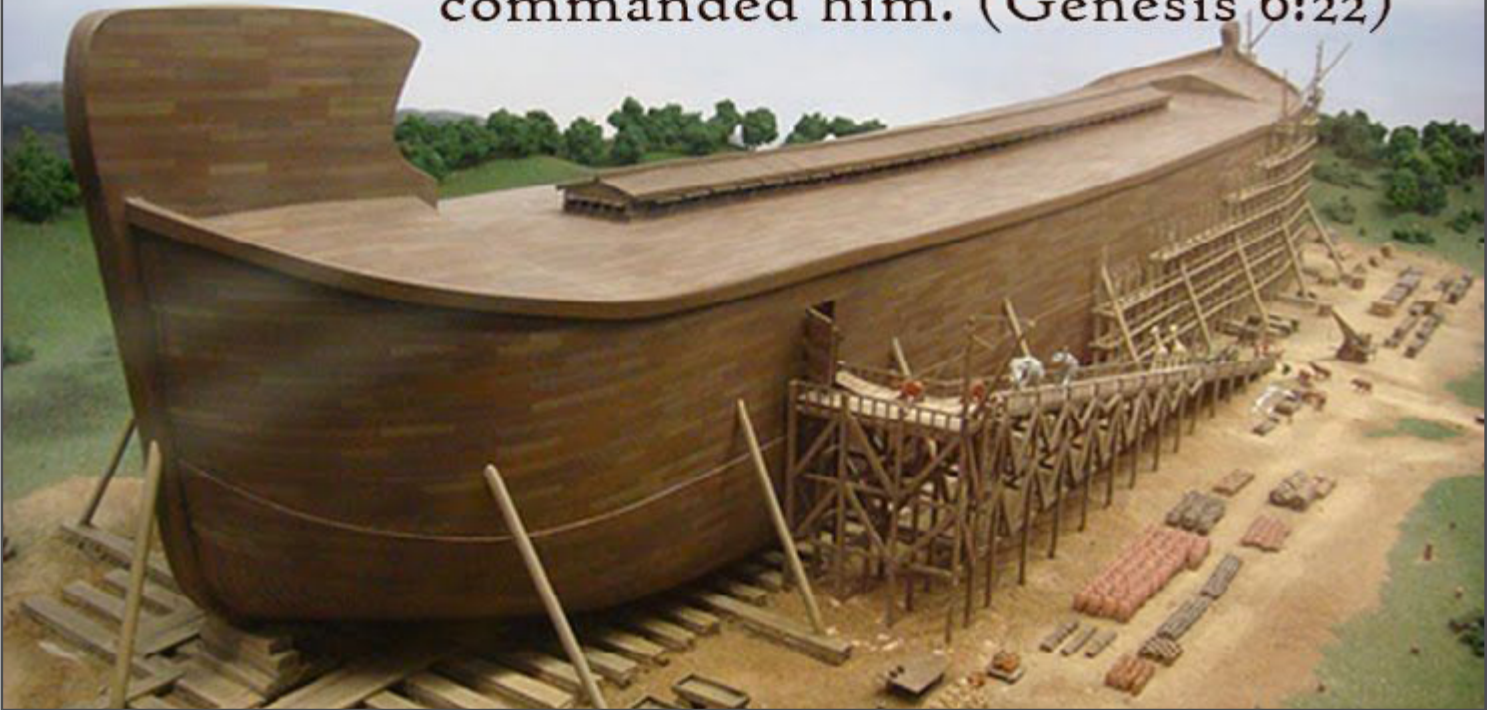
How can we as a church share God's grace with our community?

What has God commanded us as a church to do? How well are we fulfilling God's commands?

Journal: Document God's Work

May 24, 2020

Noah did everything just as God commanded him. (Genesis 6:22)



*Relationships
Sustained in Obedience
Genesis 7:1-24*

Focal Verse:

“And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him.”

back to
Table of
Contents

Genesis 7:5

Introduce

Setting sail from a remote port in the South Pacific on a fishing expedition of a lifetime, two friends suddenly found themselves in peril as a fierce squall developed causing their boat to stray off course in the unforgiving gale. The sharp coral of that area obliterated their boat as they blew ashore on a tiny island. Although both men made it to shore, they could only find bits and pieces of wreckage from their boat as it washed on the beach. After the tempest ceased, the men began to survey the tiny island, which they discovered was uninhabited and far from commercial shipping routes. However, the island had an



ample supply of resources, including fresh water and fruit. The first man immediately began to pray and seek the Lord for salvation from this deserted isle. The other man simply began to live like he was in a tropical paradise—eating the luscious fruit and lying on the beach napping as he listened to the waves crashing ashore. As the first man prayed, God revealed that he must listen and act obediently in order to get off the island; he would need to leave that tropical paradise because it would soon be inundated by a tsunami caused by a great earthquake. This man continued seeking the Lord in prayer, so God gave him a detailed plan to build a vessel from the natural resources on the island. He had a simple, yet sharp pocketknife with him that could cut vines to lash bamboo poles together; He also learned how to use the knife as a sort of axe which he could wedge into the bamboo and cut it into something usable. As he assembled these resources, God led him to a tree which produced a thick, gummy-type substance that could make the vessel waterproof and seaworthy. So, the man worked diligently for months following the step-by-step directions God had given him. The other man watched from the beach, using his knife to bore into coconuts and drink the sweet nectar while he ate bananas and mangoes. The first man, however, tried to warn his friend that danger was coming and urged him to seek the Lord, but the man continued unphased and enjoyed life as it came. He even laughed at the rough, homemade vessel and mocked his friend saying, “That’ll never float. You’ll be shark bait

Introduce

once you get out there and sink. Besides, we've never even had storms on this island any worse than the one that shipwrecked us. Just enjoy life here!" No matter what the friend said or did, he couldn't convince the other to seek the Lord in obedience. As the months passed, the vessel—one could hardly call it a boat—was finally completed and the man waited upon God for further instruction. One day, the Lord told him to go and sit in the vessel. It was a beautiful day with no clouds in the sky and a gentle breeze making the humidity tolerable. The man sat in the vessel for a few hours and nothing happened; the ground never shook and nothing changed, so the friend began to mock him. Suddenly, the water along the shore drifted back for several yards, revealing a tremendous more amount of coast. Then, with a thunderous roar, a wall of water more than 200 feet high approached with deafening speed. It swept over the entire island in a matter of seconds; every plant was washed away along with the man's friend. Yet, that tiny vessel rose in the wave and never overturned. It was flung far into the ocean. Within hours of the tsunami, ships scoured the area for stranded people and the man was rescued!

As in this story, we can have two responses to God: we can repent, listen, and obey or we can do our own thing and believe we're okay or even immune to judgment. Through Noah's encounter with God, we see these two different responses first-hand. From Scripture, we aren't told much about the people in Noah's day, except that they were wicked and consumed with violence. The Bible doesn't really detail how they interacted with Noah except that he preached to them and they simply went on their merry way and continued to live apart from the Lord without repentance (2 Peter 2:5). Noah, on the other hand, walked with God obediently and acted in faith (Heb 11:7). Therefore, let us live as Noah did; let us pursue a relationship with the Lord through repentance and sustained in obedience!

Key
Question

How do you express your obedience to the Lord? Are you obedient in every area of your life?

Genesis 7:1-6

THE COMPLIANCE EXERCISED WITH GOD'S COMMANDS:

After Noah obediently constructed **the ark** according to exact specifications, God summoned him and his family to board the ship. With a direct command, the Lord bids him to **come to the ark**, announcing that he has received grace **because** God has **seen** him as **righteous in this generation** (v. 1). When God looked upon the world, He saw wickedness, corruption, and violence in the heart of man; when He looked upon Noah, however, He saw a righteous, faithful, and obedient servant who walked with Him. As we learned last week, Noah's righteousness is predicated upon his relationship with God borne out in his faithful obedience; thus, Noah lived righteously because of his relationship with the Lord ([Eph 2:8-10](#)).

We must not forget that Noah's salvation from the coming deluge depended solely upon God's grace and not his own righteousness. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, we also get a clear picture of the inadequacy of our righteousness apart from the work of the Lord. Even a humble servant of the Lord like the prophet Isaiah recognized his own inadequacies when he identified himself as "a man of unclean lips" and later affirmed that one's personal righteousness is not enough to obtain favor with God: "But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" ([Isa 6:5; 64:6](#)). To understand the events in Noah's day as well as the nature of our own salvation through Christ properly, we must focus on God's grace which saves, redeems, and restores rather than our own righteousness!



What is the danger of focusing on Noah's righteousness aside from God's grace?

Question
1

Instruct

Although he had the exact specifications to build **the ark**, Noah still had to accept God's gracious invitation to **come!** Even if he had lived an exemplary life according to human standards, performed religious rites and rituals, and built **the ark**, it would not have mattered if he didn't respond to God's plea to **come!** He merely would have had a good reputation and accomplished some great feats, but he would have perished in the flood like the rest of his generation. Perhaps, we have never thought of the events in Noah's life this way. Yet, this event establishes the precedent that we too must respond to God's invitation to **come** and find salvation in His Son, the crucified and resurrected Messiah! We must **come** to Christ, repent of our sins, surrender our lives totally into His control, and follow Him.

If we've already accepted that offer of salvation, then we need to live like it! It needs to show in our lives! From the beginning, we see Noah not only live righteously in contrast to the culture of his day, but he also lives obediently. Verse 5 emphasizes that **Noah did according to all that the Lord had commanded him.** Too many times, people view salvation like a cruise ship. They have their ticket punched and board the ship to be served and pampered in every way. In this way, some pray to the Lord for their own personal desires and never seek His will; some vociferously complain when circumstances in life get tough or things go wrong, but they never rejoice in the Lord when He provides and sees them through. Some want God to meet all their needs, but they don't serve Him devotedly by living righteously and obeying the principles in His Word. On the contrary, salvation entails that we serve the Lord with our very lives because we love Him; therefore, we will find ways to show our love through our obedience and faithfulness to Scripture ([Rom 12:1-2](#); [2 Cor 8:5](#)).

In what ways did Jesus provide a model for us to live as a devoted servant?

Question
2

As customary with Hebrew writing, the text expands upon a theme previously mentioned by developing it and explaining it in greater, more specific detail. For example, God has already announced that a pair (**male and female**) of each the land-dwelling animals and birds would enter the boat ([Gen 6:19-20](#)). In the current text, we discover more specific information about these animals. Here, we learn that Noah will **take seven of every clean animal**, both **male and female**, in addition to **two each** of the **unclean animals** (v. 2). He will also specifically **take seven each of the**

birds of the air (v. 3). With these instructions, God now states the reason: **to keep the species alive on the face of the earth**. Although we aren't told why **two** of some and **seven** of others, presumably in His foreknowledge God looks forward to the regulations which He will give Moses about Israel's diet and the offering of sacrifices. Noah, however, doesn't have these same concerns because God allows him to eat freely from any living animal upon the earth at this point ([Gen 9:3-4](#)).



In all this, Noah doesn't question God, but simply obeys and allows Him to act sovereignly as He has decreed!

In our modern minds, we often ponder things that the text assumes and doesn't address specifically; when we do, we miss the actual point it is trying to make. For instance, some may ask: How did the animals assemble and did Noah have a part in herding or rounding them up? In remaining silent on the specifics, the text inherently demonstrates God's prerogative. He did it! Just like He invited Noah to **come**, so He also likely issued a similar command to the animals. We can't afford to overlook or miss God's role and activity in every step of the process! As Creator, God designed animals innately with instincts and the ability to reason at some level. During natural disasters, for example, we often find animals behaving differently even before we as humans ever detect a problem. God could have divinely used instincts in some animals to guide them to **the ark**. It's not beyond scientific logic and reason! The God who designed this complex universe is in control of it!

How would you explain and defend the truth in this story to someone who regards it as a myth?

Question
3

Next, we learn more about the flood itself. God now reveals a specific timetable for when it will begin and how long the deluge itself will last. First, He announces that **after seven more days He will cause it to rain on the earth for forty days and nights** (v. 4). The number **seven** not only gives Noah and his family a definitive timeframe to finalize their preparations, but it also harkens back to the **seven** days of creation—this connection will become more evident in the next section. Whereas God brought

Instruct

forth life in a week and rested on the seventh day, He will now end **all** life in judgment of sin at the conclusion of the very same time period! Second, the Lord reiterates the judgment that He has already espoused to Noah; He **will destroy every living thing** that He has **made upon the earth**. Although the punishment for eating the forbidden fruit has now been fully realized for Noah's generation, hope still exists through God's infinite grace that had a plan to rescue His creation!

Genesis 7:7-16

THE CARE ESTABLISHED BY GOD:

After reading the judgment against a wayward and unrepentant creation, we see the care established by God for His creation! Noah, his family, and the animals respond immediately to God's command to come. First, we observe that Noah, **his sons, his wife, and sons' wives**, enter **the ark** because of the imminent **flood** (v. 7). Second, the **clean and unclean animals, the birds, and everything that creeps** filed into **the ark**



in pairs, both **male and female**, just as the Lord had commanded (vv. 8-9). Although not in the exact same order, this procession mimics the reverse of the creation story! Man, whom God had formed last as the pinnacle of His work, boarded **the ark** first ([Gen 1:26-27](#))! Then, the **clean and unclean animals** akin to the cattle and beasts of the field made prior to

man on day six came aboard ([Gen 1:24-25](#)) followed by the **birds** created on day five ([Gen 1:20-21](#)) and finally the creeping things in a slightly different order from their creation on day six (Gen 1:24-25).

Man, through his sin and disobedience, ruined God's perfect creation and subjected it to judgment and destruction. In this way, he had corrupted what God had made good! Grieved over man's rebellious and evil disposition, God now ushered in a comprehensive judgment upon all mankind through a **flood**. Whereas man destroyed God's creation, the Lord ultimately sought to rescue and restore it through this divine

judgment! Despite the death that gripped the world as the penalty for sin, God brought life and regeneration to those who followed His plan!

Certainly, He destroyed all His creation except eight individuals and the pairs of animals onboard the ark, but in [chapters 8 and 9](#) we see the renewal of life that God brings when in a sense He “re-creates” the earth and fulfills His promise to deliver Noah. In Christ, we too can become part of that new creation in which the old things pass away and God creates in us everything new ([2 Cor 5:17](#))! Though we may live in a wicked and depraved generation, those who have a relationship with Christ should shine brightly and look forward to the day when God establishes His promises in full to bring about a new heaven and new earth restored to its perfect glory in His image ([Phil 2:15; Rev 21](#))!

In what ways has God called us to be part of His new creation as we live here on earth awaiting the fulfillment of His promise?

Question
4

With everyone safely on **the ark**, judgment commenced as the **floodwaters** began to inundate **the earth after the seven days** which the Lord had specified (v. 10). With great precision, the deluge started in **the sixth hundredth year of Noah’s life on the seventeenth day of the second month** (v. 11). Once again recalling the second and third creative acts of the Lord, **the fountains of the deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened**. On the second and third day of creation,

God separates the waters in the firmament (sky) from the earth below it and then He divides the waters upon the earth and places boundaries upon them to form dry ground ([Gen 1:7-8, 9-10](#)); thus, He created the atmosphere and water covering the entire face of the earth (day 2) which He then separates to form oceans and land masses (day 3). In a sense, God



was returning the earth to its formless and void condition at the dawn of creation ([Gen 1:2](#))!

The text doesn’t reveal exactly how **the fountains of the great deep were broken**

Instruct

open. It likely means vast underground reservoirs like aquifers contributed to the inundation by overflowing. However, it could also logically refer to the melting of polar ice caps to some degree. Just think how much discussion exists on this topic today which warns of the significant rise in ocean levels and the loss of enormous amounts of coastline with only a few inches of melt per year! It doesn't make it any less miraculous and divine to establish logical reasons. In fact, God designed nature with such logic in mind and uses it to fulfill His purposes!

In addition to the rise in ocean levels, it began to **rain** persistently and constantly for **forty days and nights** (v. 12). The word for **rain** used here refers typically to



Localized Flooding from a Few Days of Rain!

downpours associated with heavy rainfall in the winter in Israel. From our own experiences here in the Spring, most of us can probably comprehend how such persistent and heavy **rain** would lead to cataclysmic flooding. Just from occasional thunderstorms that drop heavy **rain** in a localized area for a few hours or maybe repeatedly over a few days, we can understand the devastation

of such rain occurring over the whole earth for twenty-four hours over **forty days and nights** straight—an entire calendar month plus approximately ten days!

This section concludes with a summary reminding us of God's divine grace to rescue His creation! In procession, Noah, **his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Noah's wife,** and **the three wives of his sons** preceded the animals (v. 13). In verse 14, this time we have the exact reverse order of creation among the animal kingdom: **beast, cattle,** and **every creeping thing after their own kind** and **every bird! Two by two** every living creature marched into the safety of **the ark** (v. 15). Both **male and female entered** just as the Lord **had commanded** them (v. 16). Only one new detail is added at the end of this paragraph from what we've heard previously: God **shut** the door!

We don't have any detail about life on **the ark** itself. But one thing we know for sure is that the Lord provided and cared for His creation. Noah didn't shut the door; God

did! Just the simple act of the Lord shutting him inside speaks volumes! God sealed the inhabitants in with His divine promise of protection and care. Like he had when building **the ark**, Noah continued to trust the Lord and seek guidance from Him during the storm and God graciously delivered him! Through Christ, God offers us that same provision, protection, and care in our daily lives. We simply need to remain obedient and trust Him in everything. We may experience difficult times, heartaches, and persecution, but God promises to deliver us through these perilous circumstances. Whether this deliverance comes in the form of respite here on earth or calling us in death to join Him for eternal life, we find peace, hope, comfort, guidance, and life by the One who seals us with His promise ([Eph 1:13](#)).

How has the Lord demonstrated His care and provision in your life?

Question
5

Genesis 7:17-24

THE CURSE ENACTED FOR MANKIND'S SIN:

As the **flood** grew more intense over the **forty days**, **the ark** began to float and **rise high above the earth** (v. 17). Dry ground increasingly became swallowed by rising water until eventually the highest mountain peaks **were covered** and **the ark** floated freely over the top of them upon **the surface of the waters** (vv. 18-19). The text even tells us that the tallest peak eventually became submerged to a depth of **fifteen cubits** or around 22.5 feet (v. 20)! All Noah and his family could see were waves and water; every living thing on earth had perished!

Having been at sea in 2018 on a cruise with our Legacy Adults and experienced the edge of Hurricane Michael which formed suddenly near the Yucatan peninsula, it's still hard to fathom such a deluge! We certainly felt a few days of waves and turbulence at sea as we circled the storm in the Gulf, but we always knew we had dry ground to which we could return and we always had some place where we could escape its clutches! Although it brought



Clouds from Hurricane Michael from Carnival Freedom

Instruct

intense flooding, devastating storm surge, and was fairly large in size, it pales in comparison to what happened in Noah's day. Unfortunately, people did perish during this storm and tremendous damage was inflicted upon the panhandle of Florida which bore a direct hit from the eye, but in all Noah still experienced and endured something much more catastrophic and significant than this category five hurricane!

With the **waters** covering the entire surface of **the earth** to a depth of 22.5 feet above the highest mountain, inevitably every living thing **died**. Verses 21-23 speak to the totality of that destruction. During these **forty days, all flesh died: birds, cattle and beasts, every creeping thing, and every man** (v. 21). Any inhabitant of the **dry land** that depends upon oxygen for **life died** (v. 22). Just as He had warned Noah, the Lord had **destroyed** all life except **those who were with him on the ark** (v. 23). In all, the **rain** and the effects of the flood lasted for **one hundred and fifty days** before the **waters** completely receded (v. 24). In other words, in total it rained for **forty days and nights** and the floodwaters covered the earth for 110 days more before **dry ground** began to appear and produce vegetation again!

The last few verses depict a grim, yet necessary, reminder of the consequences of sin and the refusal to repent and find restoration in the Lord. Through his willful disobedience, Adam introduced death into the world and subjected all creation to a curse. Everyone since that day has chosen to enslave himself to sin and incur that same penalty of death. Although we have a gracious and loving God who has paid the penalty for us and offered renewed life as a gift, many people still choose to reject it and live their own lives apart from salvation in Christ. To them, judgment has already come ([John 3:17-18](#)) and will be enacted in full unless they repent and turn from their wickedness ([Eph 2:1-5](#); [Rev 2:11](#); [21:8](#)). Those in Noah's day did not repent and continued to reject the Lord! Thus, we see the curse enacted for man's sin. To God be the glory, however, He has offered life to those who trust in Him and place their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ! Therefore, let us obediently follow the only path which leads to salvation through a relationship with Christ which restores life out of certain death!

How would you explain to someone that God's judgment for sin is not unloving, unethical, or immoral even by human standards?

Question
6

In the introduction, we saw two different responses to the circumstances that life dealt two men after they were shipwrecked. One man obediently sought the Lord and responded in faith to receive life whereas the other continued to live on his own terms and experienced death in the end. Throughout this week's lesson, we have witnessed how Noah responded faithfully to the Lord's call and found deliverance in Him just like the first man in this fictional shipwreck.

During his lifetime, Noah experienced many firsts, but he always trusted God for His care and provision. Never before had someone constructed such a large sea-worthy vessel to navigate the oceans, but it floated because God had revealed its exact specifications! Never before had someone had to gather enough food and provisions to last 150 days, but they lasted with the Lord's help! Never before had such a prolonged and catastrophic storm rained down destruction upon the earth, but Noah and his family survived because the Lord shut them in the ark and sustained them!

Although we could continue to list other things, one theme becomes dominant here: the Lord delivers and saves! Apart from Him, Noah would have received the same fate as those in his generation, but God had graciously established a relationship with Noah which he accepted and obediently walked with Him. Some of us reading this lesson may be encountering some difficult storms in life at this time or know someone who is. Apart from the Lord, navigating these storms is hopeless and impossible. We don't know what to do, where to turn, and how to move forward. We're floating aimlessly on a vast sea which seems endless with no land in sight. We don't have to fret or fear, however, because the One who created us wants a relationship with us and He has already taken measures to deliver us in Christ.

If you're enduring a difficult time in life and feel hopeless, first ask yourself: Do I have a relationship with the One who saves and redeems? If not, then today is the day that you can begin one with Him and He will guide your life and get you back on course. If you do have a relationship with the Lord and still worry and feel hopeless, ask: Have I trusted Him completely and have I surrendered my life fully into His care? Sometimes, even when we know better, we attempt to fix things on our own through our own wisdom and power. Instead of trial and error, let us fully surrender to the Lord and sustain our relationship with Him by obediently following the path on which He guides us. He'll never lead us astray and he'll always provide everything that we need to navigate life with hope and confidence when we trust in Him!

Incorporate

As a church, why should we focus on obedient and faithful service to the Lord? How does the secular culture sometimes skew our view of such service?

How has God demonstrated His care for us as a church? How should this affect the way we live?

How can we encourage others who may be facing a storm in life right now and may feel hopeless?

Journal: Document God's Work

May 31, 2020



Relationships Sealed with a Promise

Genesis 9:1-29

Focal Verse:

“Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

Genesis 9:11

back to
Table of
Contents

Introduce

On January 22, 1944, Allied forces embarked on a mission to liberate Rome and the Italian peninsula from the Axis powers in the Battle of Anzio. In a battle that would last nearly six months, both sides would experience heavy human casualties with 7,000 Allies killed and over 36,000 wounded or missing. Among the many Allies that would serve valiantly were two Americans, Harold Huggins from Albany, Illinois and Mack McClain from Marysville, California, who forged a friendship that would end all-too-suddenly, but would continue through a life-long quest to fulfill a promise.



On the Italian coast in April of 1944 before they joined the battle already in progress, McClain shared the fear that he would not survive with his friend Harold Huggins to whom he gave some personal items along with some instructions. Handing “him some photographs and the web belt he was wearing,” McClain requested that Huggins relay these to his sister Grace Jennings upon his death.* Reluctantly, Huggins accepted these items and stored them safely for transport throughout the remainder of the war. The very next day he learned that McClain had nobly given his life in battle. Serving the rest of his enlistment, Huggins eventually returned home to Illinois, but he never forgot his promise to his friend. Through a diligent, but unsuccessful initial search, he tried to locate Grace whose name had changed to Eckart because of a divorce. Yet, he never gave up his search. In 2001, after years of searching, Huggins’ daughter urged him to conduct his search using some of the newly burgeoning online resources available to him. She even helped him to search many different databases, records, and websites. Finally, she found McClain’s name listed on the Yuba-Sutter memorial near Marysville, California. Through a series of contacts and a story featured in Marysville’s local newspaper the *Appeal-Democrat*, they located Grace and made arrangements to meet nearly fifty-seven years after the promise was made! In 2001, Huggins delivered the items personally to a tearful, yet joyous reunion with Grace. At the reunion, he mentioned how he had written “a letter explaining his

Introduce

promise and mission and put it with McClain's personal items so that if he ever died, the person who found the items would know to carry on his search."* Huggins had completed his mission and faithfully fulfilled his promise to his friend regardless of the time or challenges that stood in the way.

Many years ago, God made a promise to mankind which He has faithfully kept ever since. Never again would he inundate the entire world with a flood and destroy mankind. Every time we see a rainbow in the clouds we can be assured of God's promise to us. Therefore, let us not forget God's promises to us as we also remember the privileges and responsibilities He has afforded to us. May we ever be grateful for such a covenant and relationship with the Lord sealed with a promise; let's live with gratitude which always seeks to honor Him!

Key
Question

How have you seen God faithfully fulfill His promises in your life?

In Reference



Jen Cooper, "[WWII Vet Keeps 57-year-old Promise Honors Wartime Buddy's Last Wish](#)," *Appeal-Democrat* (August 2, 2001) available from www.appeal-democrat.com.

Genesis 9:1-7

THE RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNED:

In [chapter 8](#), many parallels exist between creation and the order of the “re-creation” or renewal of the earth after the flood. Out of the chaos, confusion, and destruction of the flood, God once again brings life to a barren world! Just as the Spirit of God hovered over the waters of a formless earth at the dawn of creation ([Gen 1:2](#)), He now sends a “wind” to begin restoration by causing the floodwaters to recede ([Gen 8:1](#)). The “fountains of the deep” return and the rain stops, restoring order like the second day of creation when God separated the deep from the firmament ([Gen 1:6-7; 8:2](#)). Just as He had fashioned dry ground on the third day ([Gen 1:9](#)), dry land starts appearing as the mountaintops become visible and the ark comes to rest upon Mount Ararat ([Gen 8:4-5](#)). Sending out a succession of birds to survey the land, a dove eventually returns to Noah with vegetation in its beak, signaling that the land had begun to produce just as on the third day of creation ([Gen 1:11-12; 8:7-11](#)).

Finally, the dove did not return at all because it had found a place to reside and all the staples it needed for life ([Gen 8:12](#)). At this point, God informed the occupants of the ark that they could leave and take up residence on the earth ([Gen 8:15-19](#)). After exiting the vessel, Noah

built an altar and offered sacrifices from every clean animal to the Lord in an act of worship ([Gen 8:20](#)). God then establishes a covenant with him and all creation in which He asserts that He would never again curse the ground or destroy all life ([Gen 8:21-22](#)). The promise that He had made to Noah in [Genesis 6:18](#) was now fulfilled! With this



Possible location of Mount Ararat in modern Turkey

covenant, chapter 9 begins and explains it in further detail. As He had with Adam ([Gen 1:28](#)), God blesses Noah and **his sons**, instructing them to **be fruitful and multiply**

and fill the earth, and then outlines the boundaries by which they must live (v. 1).

Why should worship be our first response to God's grace and benevolence

Question
1

After commanding Noah and **his sons to be fruitful**, the Lord explains that the **fear and dread** of humans **shall be** upon **every beast, every bird, all that move on the earth**, and **all the fish** (v. 2). In the beginning, God charged Adam with having dominion over every creature, but no **fear** existed between the animal kingdom and mankind ([Gen 1:28](#); [Gen 3:15](#)). In Genesis 9, God reiterates this same charge to Noah by giving the animals **into his hand**. Therefore, it marks mankind's responsibility to exercise good stewardship over God's creation; yet, sin will often cause its exploitation, putting enmity between man, animal, and natural resources. This charge to care for creation introduces a subtle point which we may often overlook in this passage. Although God had destroyed the earth and restored it, the original curse of sin upon the world still exists after the flood. Indeed, God sent judgment upon mankind, rescued Noah, and restored life through those on the ark, but the consequences of the original sin remained.

How can we be good stewards of the natural resources that God has given mankind to use?

Question
2

Next, God outlines the benefits and boundaries for living upon this renewed earth.



For Adam, God gave every fruit-bearing tree and herb as food with only one restriction; he wasn't to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil with the stipulation that he would die on the day that he ate from it ([Gen 1:29](#); [2:16-17](#)). Now, He affords Noah the ability to eat **from every moving thing that lives** in addition to the **green herbs** (v.

3). Again, He gives only one condition that he should **not eat flesh with its life—that**

is its blood (v. 4). Since God has graciously given man an ample supply of food from which he may choose to eat, he should not abuse the Lord's generosity by misusing and mistreating the animal kingdom. Rather than eat greedily and glutinously, man should eat responsibly and care for God's creation; therefore, he should eat only what he needs and refrain from consuming the **blood** of the animal which had given its life to provide for him (see [Num 11:1-34](#); [Lev 17:11](#)).

Although Noah may eat freely of any animal, God adamantly prohibits the taking of any human life by either **beast** or **man** (v. 5). This prohibition comes as a direct response to the unrestrained violence that had filled the earth prior to the flood and a stern warning not to return to such a culture ([Gen 6:11, 13](#)). For any animal that kills or human who murders, therefore, God **will demand a reckoning for their blood**. That **reckoning**, as He now explains, is the death penalty. In an allusion to the first murder, He notes that **from the hand of every man's brother He will require the life of a man**. Just as He had called on Cain to give an account for Abel's murder and issued a swift penalty, so will He require any man to give and account for the murder of another and hold him responsible.

God clarifies what He "requires" by emphasizing that **whoever sheds man's blood** will also have **his blood shed by man** (v. 6). When the Lord specifies that retribution will occur **by man**, He envisions due process conducted with witnesses to substantiate the charges ultimately with government oversight. It doesn't give us the right to carry out vigilante justice like we envision in the "Wild West" or to seek family retribution like the Hatfields and McCoys. This type of attitude would only lead to cyclical revenge and cause violence to spread uncontrollably throughout the earth. As He protected Cain with a mark to prevent vigilante justice ([Gen 4:15](#)), God later establishes boundaries for man to exercise such justice in truth through a controlled process ([Deut 17:6; 19:15](#)).



What is the danger of taking "justice" into our own hands? What Scriptures can you cite that talk about justice and / or vengeance?

Question
3

Instruct

God now explains why He will exact such great punishment upon those who murder. Man stands as the pinnacle of creation because **God made him in His image**. This separates us from anything else that was made! All other things in the world God spoke into existence. But for man, He fashioned him from the ground in His own **image** and breathed life into his nostrils—an intimate act of creation that we share with nothing else! God certainly cares for all creation, but He values man above anything else as His most-prized possession with whom He can have a personal, intimate relationship. For this reason, God sent His Son to die for us and restore that broken relationship because He loves us that much and wants to have fellowship with us!

Through the flood event and the subsequent restoration of the earth, we can learn two key principles. First, God established His covenant with Noah by grace ([Gen 6:8, 18](#)). Noah didn't work to earn God's favor or obtain these promises. Even though God initiated the covenant, it still necessitated that Noah respond. Because Noah had a relationship with the Lord and walked with Him ([Gen 6:9](#)), he obeyed out of love ([Gen 6:22; 7:5](#)). Second, the covenant which God made with Noah and his family gave them responsibilities for how they should conduct themselves. We can learn from these responsibilities and apply them in our own lives.

God has given us many natural resources in the world to use for our provision, but He



wants us to respect them, care for them, and use them wisely. We are the chief stewards of His creation! More importantly, we should value human relationships above all. We should honor others and treat them with respect because we are all created in God's **image**. We cannot allow the sin of jealousy, animosity, and revenge to turn into all kinds of dysfunction which can

even lead to violence. We are to love one another as God loves us!

What responsibilities has God given us in Christ to follow?

Question
4

THE REASSURANCE AFFORDED:

After giving Noah and his family the boundaries and responsibilities by which they should live, God details His part of the **covenant** or promise. Speaking directly to **Noah and his sons**, God defines the recipients of this gracious new **covenant** (v. 8). He will **establish** it **with** Noah and his **descendants** as well as **every living creature** (**birds, cattle, and beast**) **that** have come **out of the ark** (vv. 9-10). God's promise is comprehensive and universal; it still applies to us today! Specifically, God promises that He will **never again cut off all flesh by waters of the flood** or **destroy the earth by flood** (v. 11). In this, God doesn't negate localized flooding that threatens a particular region, but He emphasizes that there will never be another world-wide **flood** again! In fact, as this current age comes to a close when Jesus returns again, the world will be destroyed by fire not **flood** ([2 Peter 3:10](#)). God will always keep His promises—even in judgment!

Not only does God make the promise verbally, but He also provides a **sign of the covenant between** Him and Noah as well as **every living creature for perpetual generations** (v. 12). He will **set** His **rainbow in the cloud as a sign between** Him and the rest of **the earth** (v. 13).

Scientifically, we know that a **rainbow** forms when sunlight refracts through droplets of water to display the color spectrum and God works in accordance with the principles that He has designed in nature. Whenever God brings a **cloud over the earth** the **rainbow shall be seen** therein to remind Him of His **covenant** with all



creation (vv. 14-15). For emphasis, God describes how He will **look upon the rainbow** and **remember the everlasting covenant** that He has **established** with **all flesh** upon **the earth** (vv. 16-17).

Ironically, we tend to think of a **rainbow** as a way for man to **remember** God's promise to us, but the text emphatically designates it as a **sign** for God Himself to **look upon** and **remember**! God assuredly is omniscient and never forgets as humans have the

Instruct

propensity to do, but the way the text is phrased gives us steadfast hope that He will always remember His promises and He will never fail. The word **remember**, therefore, connects this passage to God's promises to Noah which become realized in Genesis 8:1 where He "*remembered* Noah" and all those on the ark! In other words, God saw them through the storm; He provided for them, protected them, and guided them every step of the way. Even in the midst of the storm, He never forgot them nor did He ever forsake them; He always remembered and cared for them!

How has God revealed Himself to you in the midst of storms in your life?

Question
5

The **rainbow** always appears in a storm! Whether it appears before, during, or after a storm, a **rainbow** depends upon it to form. Some storms may appear suddenly and without much warning; some storms may be a garden-variety thunderstorm while others may be violent with torrential rain, wind, and destruction. Yet, calm and peace return immediately after the storm passes as the sun begins to shine and the clouds dissipate. Storms in life can be the same way. Regardless of the size of storm in our lives, they all have one thing in common: God remembers and cares! God doesn't promise to deliver Noah from subsequent storms that may ravage the land; instead, He promises to remember and see him through! Likewise, God will see us through storms in our lives whatever we may face. When we're faced with a storm or the recovery from its aftermath, we must realize that we're not alone; God hasn't abandoned us, but He's right there providing, protecting, and guiding. We simply need to trust and rely upon Him when these inevitable storms in life come!

Through what promises in Scripture do you find comfort and reassurance?

Question
6

Genesis 9:18-23

TWO RESPONSES ADMINISTERED:

After God had **established** His **covenant** with Noah and his family, they began to exercise their responsibilities obediently. They first began to "be fruitful and multiply" ([Gen 9:1, 7](#)). Although we don't see Noah and his wife bear more children, Shem, Ham, and Japheth do. Verse 18 even points out that **Ham was the father of Canaan**. The

text then continues to reveal how Noah's **three sons populated the whole earth** (v. 19). Noah, like Adam, became a steward and caretaker of the earth; he began farming and **planted a vineyard** (v. 20). At this point, everything seemed to be going well, but trouble was brewing on the horizon and another "storm" quickly approaching! Rather than eat and drink responsibly as a good steward of God's creation, Noah gorged himself on the produce from his **vineyard**. The text relates that **he drank of the wine** and became **drunk** (v. 21). In his inebriated state which caused him to lose self-control and awareness, Noah **became uncovered in his tent**. The overindulgence of **wine** caused him to lose shame and inhibition in contrast to Adam and Eve who tried to cover their nakedness in shame ([Gen 3:7](#))! At some point, Ham became aware of his father's **nakedness**, but rather than act with decency and respect he went to tell **his two brothers outside** (v. 22). Rather than respond in like manner, Shem and Japheth acted nobly with the utmost humility and honor. They placed **a garment on their shoulders** and entered the dwelling **backward** to cover **the nakedness of their father** (v. 23). All the time, they **turned away their faces**, so they **did not see** the condition of **their father**.

We have only a brief description of the events with little detail, but nonetheless we see an abundance of sin in this passage. First, Noah sins by becoming **drunk** and acting with immodesty and indiscretion which provides the opportunity for dysfunction to seize his family. Second, we see that Ham sinned by acting disrespectfully toward his father's inebriated condition. Although we're not informed what Ham actually **told his brothers**, the text seems to imply that it involved mocking and ridicule of his fathers' condition and perhaps even an invitation to come and **see** for themselves so that they too could laugh. Like Adam and Eve, the people involved in this incident had a choice with how they would respond to the world and events around them! Noah didn't cause Ham to sin, but his own sin certainly provided the opportunity; Ham chose to sin on his own, especially since we can see the **two other brothers** behaving totally oppositely and appropriately given the circumstances.

What is the danger in taking sin lightly or making fun of it in the world around us?

Question
7

As believers, we can have two responses to sin. We can find it amusing and entertaining in which we overlook it or even take delight in others committing indecent and disrespectful acts. On the other hand, we can treat it seriously with

Instruct

the utmost caution so that we will always respond in a godly manner. The danger of treating sin lightly with contempt is that we can easily become desensitized to it. Even if we aren't participating in sin at the moment, we will likely find ourselves caught up in it eventually when we consistently disregard the gravity of sin. Instead, we ought to respond like Shem and Japheth who recognized the magnitude of sin and responded in a godly manner. Rather than looking upon it with curiosity and even glee, they took solemn steps to resolve it—literally cover it in this case! The New Testament tells us that those who are guided by the Spirit should seek to restore those caught in sin, but first they must prepare themselves lest they find themselves embroiled in that same sin ([Gal 6:1](#))!

How should we respond to sin in the world around us as followers of Christ?

Question
8

Genesis 9:24-29

THE RESOLUTIONS APPLIED:

As Noah awakes from his drunken stupor, he discovers **what his youngest son had done to him** (v. 24). Rather than express remorse first over his own actions, he immediately utters a **curse** upon the youngest son of Ham—**Canaan** (v. 25; see also [Gen 10:6; 1 Chron 1:8](#)). In pronouncing this curse, he says that **Canaan** will become a **servant of servants** to **his brethren**. Then, he directs his praise not toward Shem and Japheth, but to the God whom they serve! Noah interjects, "**Blessed be the Lord**" of Shem and Japheth (vv. 25-26). In seeking to cover their father's shame, these two sons had imitated the Lord! Therefore, the Lord deserves the praise for guiding them in righteousness! They had done what was right, but God was to be praised for guiding their paths rightly!

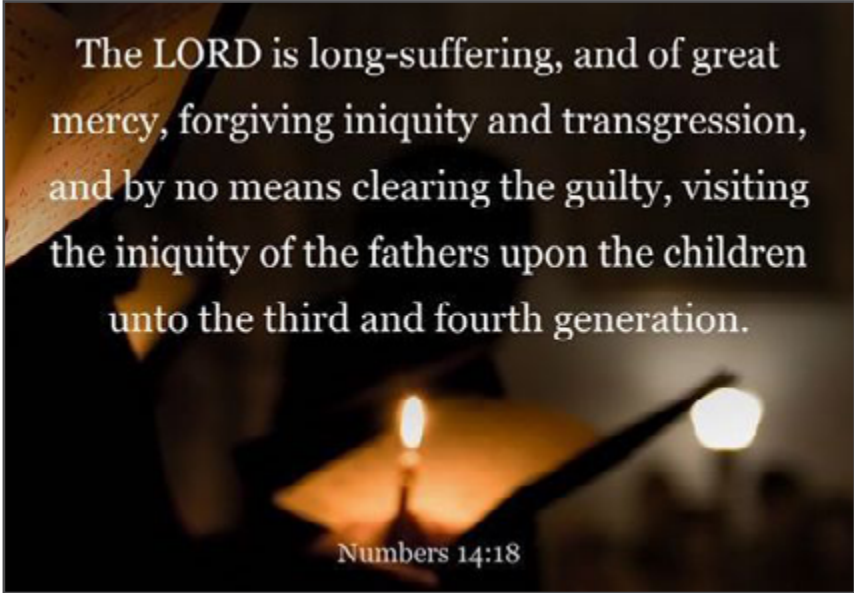
After praising the God whom his two oldest sons serve, Noah issues a blessing for Japheth followed by a reminder that **Canaan** would **be** their **servant** (v. 26). For Japheth, he prays that God would **enlarge** him and that he might **dwell in the tents of Shem** (v. 27). In other words, he prays for him to have a great posterity through many descendants and to live peacefully with his other brother under his protection. We shouldn't read too much into Noah pronouncing a specific blessing upon Japheth; in reality, he wanted both his sons to have many descendants and live in unity with one

another, but they will ultimately have family dysfunction because of Noah's sin and Ham's casual treatment of it! With this, the story of the flood comes to a close as well as Noah's time here on earth. Living **350 more years after the flood**, Noah lived in all **950 years** before **he died** (vv. 28-29).

How does sin create dysfunction and disunity in our families?

Question
9

Why Noah chooses to **curse Canaan** instead of Ham we do not know. However, it does illustrate two principles about sin. First, sin—any sin—causes dysfunction in relationships and seeks to destroy families! God designed families to bring order and stability to the world, so that we would all serve His purpose. For this reason, the evil one and sin desperately seeks to destroy the family and cause dysfunction amongst its members. Second, sin can become perpetuated generationally when we don't raise our children and lead our families to follow God's plan and have a relationship with Christ ([Exod 34:7](#);



The LORD is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

Numbers 14:18

[Deut 5:9](#); [Num 14:18](#)). In this way, sin becomes cyclical; although people can overcome it through Christ, it becomes harder in a family that has few, if any, relationships with Christ and fails to practice righteousness!

Sin, therefore, is serious and it has serious, even deadly, consequences when we treat it cavalierly. We must recognize the danger that it poses in the lives of others as well as our own and prepare to respond with righteousness rather than scorn and ridicule. In remembering the promises of God, we must also remember that we have responsibilities to respond obediently unto His call; therefore, let us resolve to imitate Him and live righteously! God will certainly deliver us through the storm if we resolve to trust Him, but what we do after the storm shows how much we rely and depend upon Him for guidance!

In what way can sin become a generational curse in a family? How can we overcome that cycle?

Question
10

In the introduction, we met Harold Huggins who faithfully kept his promise to a comrade in arms who had fallen in battle. Although it took him many decades and much research, he was eventually able to fulfill that promise! He did it because of the profound love and respect that he had for his friend. God has such profound love for us to an even greater degree! He has made a promise to restore us and give us life even in the midst of a dysfunctional creation. After the flood, God made a promise not only to Noah, but to every future generation upon the earth—including our own! Never again would He destroy the world with a flood! Yet, God didn't say that He would never again exercise judgment or destroy the world. In fact, a comprehensive judgment will come once again when Christ returns to establish a new heaven and a new earth which are free from sin and death.

Just as Noah walked with the Lord and had a relationship with Him, God made a gracious covenant with him and his family to save them from the flood and give them life on a renewed earth. For those of us who have a relationship with Christ, we have something to which we can look forward—a promise which leads to salvation and life! Frequent storms will visit us here upon the earth because we still live in a world affected by sin. How we respond to those storms shows in whom we trust! Do we trust in ourselves, in others, or in human philosophy or do we trust in the Lord for all our life and provision? The only way we can endure such storms and overcome the pitfalls of this life is through the Lord. Let us turn to Him, trust in Him, and serve Him because just as He remembered Noah and his family upon the ark, so also will He remember you and me. He will be faithful to fulfill that which He has promised in His Word when we trust in Him!

Incorporate

As a church, what responsibilities has God given to us? Overall, how would you assess our (and your) faithfulness in fulfilling those responsibilities?

What promises has God given us as His children / the church?

As a church, how should we biblically respond to sin and deal with it? What plan(s) does Scripture give for dealing with sin?

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