

## THE FLOOD

... the day God "changed"  
Genesis 6 – 9  
WEFC November 23, 2008

We often assume that we fly under God's radar, definitely unnoticed on His screen.

That is how we feel, but nothing could be further from the truth.

The content of **Genesis 6-9** is about The Flood of History, but there is more. Here we find out about the God behind the Flood.

Our worst brought out His best.

These chapters are NOT myth, but historically true. There has been a WORLDWIDE FLOOD ... an event verified by Jesus.

These chapters explain the "why" behind some of the more difficult responsibilities we have been given as God's followers. They answer some of life's harder questions:

- What is the "deal maker", that which breaks through an impasse in a relationship gone bad?
- Why doesn't God deal quickly and forcefully with people who sin greatly?
- What do we do with impossible people?

These chapters may require us to think "outside" our established "God-box".

### Setting

**Genesis 6:5** takes us back to the nostalgic opening page or two of the book where we read, "**And God saw that it was good.**"

... but here there is a twist:

**"The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time."**

It is obvious that people were on a collision course with God ... and the results, though were surprising, not at all what we expected.

*Key Thought:*

**God "changes" because we are not ready to change.**

Creation, in particular its inhabitants - the likes of us- had rebelled and broken away from God.

Now God was in a difficult spot. He had to figure out how to get through to people who couldn't care less, wouldn't listen, and wouldn't lift a finger to make any changes.

God breaks new ground ... He "changes" so that we might get back in touch with reality.

God is one tough God.

*Nothing gets by Him.*

### **1. When betrayed, God reacts**

Take a minute to complete the sentence.

When betrayed, God reacts ... with anger? ... swift retribution?

Humanity refused to listen to its Creator.

Essentially we trashed God's office, staged a protest, refused to cooperate, yet we were more than glad to personally use up for ourselves God's benefits.

Plain and simple, things had gotten out of hand and God had not done enough about it ... at least that is how it seemed to the observing eye.

It would have appeared that God either didn't care about what was happening or that He had left humanity to fight it out among themselves.

But God was still around ... and He did care, though He was extremely "uneasy" with the whole earth scene.

But then, who would not be uneasy after being betrayed?

Read the text of God's Word carefully. Scripture highlights for us what is important ... and it is much more than a water event.

### **Genesis 6:5**

**"The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time."**

In the mind of the population of the day, God was definitely NOT number one in influence.

They had long ago moved Him off the main stage in their lives and relegated Him to some remote and forgotten storage box in the basement of their soul.

God was nowhere to be found.

**Just because humanity does its own thing and ignores God, God still remains in the center of the picture.**

**Genesis** records ...

**6:5 The LORD saw ...** Facts collected

**6:6 The LORD was ...** Response registered

**6:7 So the LORD said ...** Action taken

**God had noticed everything and missed nothing.**

**God was on top of things ... He always is.**

**He gives an accurate assessment of people, even when it is unflattering ... for He remains a God of integrity and truthfulness.**

Everything in creation had been done with excellence, then it had been stuffed with goodness, and topped with His blessing ... and humanity trampled over it ... then tossed it aside ... ignoring the Giver.

Sin had so corrupted the world that it filled every nook and cranny. God had been betrayed to the worst level.

We would have **Genesis 6:6** to read ...

***The Lord was furious, beside Himself with anger and rage. Humanity had given into evil so completely that it was time to teach the entire human race a lesson that they would never forget.***

Instead we have written ...

### **Genesis 6:6**

**The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.**

### **When betrayed, God reacted with grief followed by judgment.**

The astonishing Creator who knew that everything He had accomplished was “good”, is crushed by the response of those He has made.

It is evident from Scripture that **God is definitely not heartless, ... but neither is He spineless.**

### **Genesis 6:7**

**So the Lord said,**

**“I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth – men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds that move along the ground, and birds of the air – for I am grieved that I have made them.**

This part we understand and expect.

The God of holiness and justice is about to give everyone a lesson in DIVINE JUDGMENT 101

**God’s judgment is severe** (the death of the world’s entire population) **because humanity’s sin had spiraled out of control.**

This severe action is taken for the following reasons:

- **God is not going to give up on His creation reaching its intended purpose.**

God made this world to be a special place under the management of people like you and me.

But if we go about doing what WE think is best, where we get the most kicks, having this inbuilt tendency for evil, THEN God’s priorities, His great purposes will never be realized.

God is not ready to throw in the towel, pack His bags and walk away.

So God informs us that the world’s inhabitant were about to be destroyed.

- **When His purposes are resisted, God does become “impatient” with people.**

Scripture does not give us an angry God, but a grieving and troubled Heavenly Father. Here is God backed into a corner with seemingly no room to maneuver.

In agony, God sets the wheels in motion for the coming flood.

*Transition:*

Into this bleak picture we abruptly get reintroduced to an individual, one single person out of the whole-wide world who was of a different cut.

## Genesis 6:8 – 9

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

**Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God**

*Nothing gets by God.*

### **2. When followed, God responds with life-protection that leads to a new life**

God is not just picky on evil and wrong. He is equally as alert to spot those who make room for Him.

Noah did not work his way into God's good books.

Rather, **Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.**

The details are missing, but Noah was the one person who made room for God.

Noah had earned nothing. He had been “gifted” or “graced” by God Himself.

What made Noah stand out is that when God had offered him His goodness, Noah accepted; everyone else rejected the same offer.

Having been accepted by God, Noah became a new man. God transformed him so that Noah became responsive to the voice of God.

When God spoke, Noah listened and acted. It was obvious because Noah was recognized as being **righteous** and **blameless**.

Facing the daily pressures he did not crumble, but instead chose what was right. He was alert to what was happening. His critics had little to say against him that was true.

Fred Craddock, in an address to ministers, caught the practical implications of consecration. “To give my life for Christ appears glorious,” he said.

“To pour myself out for others ... to pay the ultimate price of martyrdom—I'll do it. I'm ready, Lord, to go out in a blaze of glory. “We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking \$1,000 bill and laying it on the table—‘Here's my life, Lord. I'm giving it all.’

But the reality for most of us is that he sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000 for quarters. We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid's troubles instead of saying, ‘Get lost.’ Go to a committee meeting. Give a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home.

God singled out this one man who had time and room for Him and gave him the assignment of building an ark – a boat-like structure of considerable size.

### **Genesis 6:22**

**Noah did everything just as God commanded him.**

God issues Noah and his family with advanced boarding passes, which Noah distributes to his family. Noah gets the small group together along with all the animals and moves them onto the ark.

**Genesis 7:5**

**And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.**

This is what God had been looking for all along.

He had not issued His creation directives to make life miserable, but to lead us into the best of life.

God was not looking for those who would make amendments to His Word, re-interpret it, twist its meaning and intent, but for those who recognized its wisdom, power, truthfulness ... and would live by it.

Noah did not see God's commandments as being restrictive.

They were the very reason he got into the ark and was saved!

Following them had not hurt him at all. Rather, the very opposite had occurred.

**God's command turned out to be God's promise.**

**God brought Noah onto the stage to show everyone His "new creation", what could be if they chose to line up behind God.**

God's offer still stands.

It is still valid.

Noah was saved by the ark. Today we find safety in the Cross of Jesus Christ ... in the person who offered His body as a sacrifice to the God who had enough of our sin.

In His death at the Cross Jesus paid for every sin everyone has every committed ... and He offers to us complete and absolute forgiveness ... for free ... but it will cost us our life.

It's like getting married. When the man and woman stand before their family and friends and say, "I do." ... that is what we do when we accept Christ.

We say, "I do." ... that's what "believing" or "accepting" Jesus means.

It costs you your life ... and there is nothing better.

**When followed, God responds with life-protection that leads to a new life.**

*Transition:*

Through the flood one man and his family are saved. That is all.

It isn't that it was that hard to get saved, it was that no one else wanted life-protection. No one else wanted God.

So what does God have to do to get His creation to its intended goal – where this world is transformed into being a safe, honest, peaceful, true society that honors God and willingly listens to Him?

God desires that we, His creation, respond to Him, but He does not force us to do so.

He wants to see us recognizing the benefits of what He has done, that we would accept His leadership and follow His directives, ...

but He will not make that happen by going over our heads and ramming it down our throats.

**God is determined to see His creation changed.**

**It will happen.**

**God will one day see it respond to Him.**

But what has to change for this to become real?

**God needs to “change”.**

**But is not God “unchangeable”?**

Is He not rather a rigid, no-bend God?

Here is why we have the Flood Account.

***Fast forward through the account.***

God spares Noah and his family.

The waters recede. Noah, family and animals enter into a “new creation”.

Pick up the account in **Genesis 8:20-22**

**Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and ... he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.**

**The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of**

**man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood.**

*Note how life starts in the “new world”.*

***In the “new” creation life starts at the altar – a place of sacrifice - before the LORD.***

*God becomes the center ... once again.*

The author of Genesis, under the directing hand of the Spirit of God, gets the human author to insert a subtle point for our benefit.

This is AFTER the flood.

**Genesis 8:21**

**The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart ...**

Compare this with **Genesis 6:6**

**The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.**

In both statements THE HEART OF GOD is highlighted.

God’s heart is “different” from what it earlier was.

God is going to do things differently and these are the realities that God wants us to get.

... in conclusion ...

**1. Nothing has changed. Humanity ... creation ... is hopeless.**

“ ... every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood.”

Even though this is a “new day” a “new and cleansed creation” so to speak, nothing has changed when it comes to people.

People are still sinful on the inside.

Positive thinking, self-actualization, and any other human strategy do not work.

Even the terror of judgment – whether that be a flood ... or flames – will not be sufficient to bring about change in the human heart.

The answer to life is not to be found among, in or through people.

Left to ourselves, life is hopeless.

There is no change, no benefit from people having the flood in the repertoire of their minds.

... and that is why we need to look to God. The flood did something in God.

**2. God will not abandon His creation**

**As long as the earth endures ...**

Though people sin and sin and sin ... and left to themselves are lost, God promises to never abandon them up to the very end.

He will hang in there with us, endure, put up with, stay with, provide for, care for, watch over, pay for, and do what needs to be done for us ... even if we cause Him grief and rip out His heart.

God becomes more obviously gracious than He was at the beginning.

Do not get it wrong.

**God was committed to His creation before the flood, but “now that commitment is intensified.”**

**This is the first time that God’s commitment is found in the company of His grief and pain.**

**This means that for God, commitment will now be very expensive.**

**God will now love even if it makes Him bleed, and takes even the life of His one and only Son.**

We have a God whose heart is in pain and a world that couldn’t care less. The world will not change ... God already has.

This is why the God of the Bible stands out from every other so-called god in the universe.

Here is what we find out about God:

**Betrayed, God reacts with grief and hurt, but not moping, sulking or pouting.**

**God resolves that even in His grief He will extend grace.**

God will love even when things are not going well, when people are not loving toward Him. He will not withdraw when rejected.

One of the most tragic events during the Reagan Presidency was the Sunday morning terrorist bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, in which hundreds of Americans were killed or wounded as they slept. Many of us can still recall the terrible scenes as the dazed survivors worked to dig out their trapped brothers from beneath the rubble.

A few days after the tragedy, I recall coming across an extraordinary story. Marine Corps Commandant Paul X Kelly, visited some of the wounded survivors then in a Frankfurt, Germany, hospital. Among them was Corporal Jeffrey Lee Nashton, severely wounded in the incident. Nashton had so many tubes running in and out of his body that a witness said he looked more like a machine than a man; yet he survived.

As Kelly neared him, Nashton, struggling to move and racked with pain, motioned for a piece of paper and a pen. He wrote a brief note and passed it back to the Commandant. On the slip of paper were but two words—"Semper Fi" the Latin motto of the Marines meaning "forever faithful."

With those two simple words Nashton spoke for the millions of Americans who have sacrificed body and limb and their lives for their country—those who have remained faithful.

Children at Risk, J. Dobson & Gary Bauer, Word, 1990, pp. 187-188.

**God is able to move past His own grief and pain ... to accept us.**

**3. There is no going back on God's creation goals; God pushes on**

Skim through **Genesis 9:1-7**.

The old orders are re-issued.

While there has been a "delay", there has been no rescinding or dumbing down of God's goals.

God does not scale things back ... because sin has caused a moral recession. He does not lower expectations or diminish the once promised dividends.

**Sin is stubborn; the Lord is "stubborner".**

God is going to get to the finish line with His creation.

Though " ... **every inclination of (their) / his heart is evil from childhood.**" ... God becomes increasingly determined to show people just who He is, that they can experience transformation through His grace, and with Him, come to the end and celebrate at the finish line of glory.

To help us in this process, in the midst of sin's pervasiveness, God highlights one matter:

**The value of human life is accented.**

When we might think that God was ready to knock us down a few notches, God instead confirms the worth of His people.

**God brings in LAW – a good thing - ... and enacts CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.**

**The reason: To preserve life in the face of human depravity.**

Before the flood people seemingly killed at will and without fear of punishment ...

God moves in to protect life.

**God gives humanity a moral foundation upon which to order itself.**

God Himself confirms the worth of every person.

**4. God compounds His assurance (“never again” & covenant)– indicators of an immeasurable grace**

Along with the word **COVENANT** being prominent in these verses (9:8-17), are also the words ...

**9:11 ... never again ... never again ...**

**9:15 ... never again ...**

The two come together in **Genesis 9:11**

**I will establish my covenant with you. Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.**

No matter how bad things get in creation, no matter how much we get under God’s “skin” with our wickedness, God will not march out against us with His weapon of the flood.

To impress this on this help us remember this change of increased commitment God gave the rainbow as a sign.

God will never again be “impatient” with us as the human race ... even though we are our same old selves - impatient, wafflers, selfish, exacting and stingy.

**God now approaches us with EXTENDED PATIENCE, ENDLESS GRACE, BOTTOMLESS MERCY, UNFLINCHING FAITHFULNESS and LIMITLESS LOVE.**

(See: 2 Samuel 7:15-16)

*Key Thought:*

**God “changes” because we are not ready to change.**

He goes beyond reasonable duty, exceeds expectations of responsibility, pays for what is not His debt, and does it all while we twist the knife in Him still another time.

He becomes even more obviously the gracious God who does everything rightfully possible to bring us back to Him.

**\* The core of these message comes from the exceptional insightfulness of Walter Brueggemann in the Interpretation Commentary - Genesis.**