

The Catastrophe (Flood)

THE STORY #2 - Pastor Gary Combs - February 8, 2026 - Genesis 6-9

INTRO: Good morning church! We're continuing with part two of our series called THE STORY: How the Bible Explains Everything. We're taking a 12-week journey through the meta-narrative of Scripture. We'll see that the Bible is one unified story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration, and that story explains everything: our world, our pain, our purpose, and our hope. From creation to consummation, the Bible tells one great story of a good and holy God rescuing His broken world through Jesus.

Today, we're going to be looking at the story of Noah's Ark and the worldwide flood. Now, a lot of people think this is a story about a big boat, but it's actually a story about a big God and how the Bible reveals both His justice and His mercy to us. So let's understand that this isn't a myth or a fairy tale. It isn't just wallpaper for your kid's nursery. It's a true story. The prophets quoted it. The apostles affirmed it. And more importantly, Jesus believed it.

Matthew 24:37-39 (ESV) ³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

I believe that the flood was a literal, global deluge that destroyed life and reshaped the Earth's geology. I don't have time today to offer all the scientific reading I've done on this, but I would like to offer a book that helped me take a stand in my college classes in the late 70s against atheistic professors: "The Genesis Flood" (1961) by Henry M. Morris and John C. Whitcomb.



Need: People doubting the flood account is not the only thing people question today. Have you ever looked at the world and wondered, "How bad does it have to get before God does something?" Violence, corruption, moral confusion... it can feel like evil is winning and God is silent.

Trans: Genesis 6-9 shows us that God is never indifferent to sin, but He is also never absent in mercy.

BODY: In Genesis 6-9, Moses recorded how God judged the sin and rebellion of humanity by sending a worldwide flood to destroy all the living, yet preserved a remnant by providing an ark of salvation for Noah and his family. We can see how God reveals both His justice and His mercy in the account of the Flood. How does God reveal both His justice and His mercy in the account of the Flood? The text gives three ways the Flood account reveals both God's justice and mercy.

Text: Genesis 6:5-8, 13-19 (ESV) 5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 7 So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. ... 13 And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14 Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. 15 This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. 16 Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. 17 For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female.

THE FLOOD ACCOUNT REVEALS BOTH GOD'S JUSTICE AND MERCY...

1. By showing the depth of our sin and height of His grace.

EXP: Note that the "Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great." (5). See His response: Regret (6), grief (6), sorrow (7). Yet also see His mercy and favor (8). This is the first mention of God's grace (unmerited favor).

"**Lord saw**" (6:5) (בְּרִאָה יְהוָה, Yahweh *ra'*) - to see, look at, inspect, perceive, consider

"**Wickedness of man**" (5) (עַמְلָה, *ra*) - bad, disagreeable, malignant, evil (giving pain, unhappiness, misery)

"**Evil**" (5) (עַמְלָה, *ra*) - same word as above.

"**Lord regretted**" (6) (נָאַחַם, *nāḥam*) - to be sorry, repent, regret. KJV says, "And it repented the LORD that he had made man." How can God regret or repent? Perhaps "as a potter, when he has formed a vessel that does not please him, and he repents that he has made it, he takes it and breaks it in pieces." (John Gill)

"**Grieved**" (6) (עָזַב, *āṣab*) - to hurt, pain, grieve, displease, vex.

"**I am sorry**" (7) (נָאַחַם, *nāḥam*) - same word as above.

The Catastrophe (Flood)

THE STORY #2 - Pastor Gary Combs - February 8, 2026 - Genesis 6-9

"Noah found favor" (8) (חָן, *hān*) - favor, grace, charm, acceptance. "This is the first place where grace is mentioned in the Bible... Jehovah's purpose was not extermination, but regeneration; and with Noah a higher and better order of things was to begin." (*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*)

"I will destroy" (13) (תְּמַתֵּשׁ, *šāħat*) - to destroy, corrupt, go to ruin. God destroyed all through the flood.

"Ark" (14) (תְּבָה, *tēbāh*) - mentioned 18 times: a box, basket, ark. Noah is saved in the ark, Moses is also saved in an ark (Exodus 2). A cubit = 1.5 feet. Ark length: 450'; width: 75'; and height: 45'. Photos: The Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky



"I will bring a flood" (17) (מַבּוּל, *mabūl*) - in the sense of flowing; a deluge, flood.

"I will establish my covenant" (18) (בְּרִית, *bərīt*) - covenant, alliance, pledge. Lit. "To cut" (cut a deal). "Here is the first appearance of a covenant between God and man on the face of Scripture." (*Barnes' Notes*)

ARG: The depth of our sinfulness:

Romans 3:10-12, 23 (ESV) "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

Romans 3:23 (ESV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

The height of God's love and grace for us:

Romans 5:8 (ESV) but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Keller says the gospel comes bearing the news of both truths:

"The gospel is this: we are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope." — Tim Keller

ILL: Have you ever bought a diamond ring at a jewelry store? The salesperson gets the ring out of the glass and lays it on a black cloth. A diamond shines brightest against a black velvet backdrop. The darker the background, the more brilliant the diamond appears. The black backdrop is sin. The diamond is Christ!

APP: We will never treasure God's grace until we stop minimizing our sin. The Flood calls us to stop blaming culture, parents, or circumstances and admit, "The problem is in me." But it also calls us to run to the ark of Christ, where judgment falls on Him and His grace and mercy carries us safely through.

Text: Genesis 7:11-21 (ESV) 11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. 12 And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. 13 On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, 14 they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. 15 They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. 16 And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in. 17 The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. 20 The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. 21 And all flesh that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind.

2. By showing the certainty of His judgment and the security of His provision.

EXP: The text emphasizes that the waters "prevailed" (3x - 19,20,21) and covered everything. God's judgment is thorough; no one escapes it on their own merit. Yet, the same passage that mentions judgment mentions the "door" and that "the Lord shut him in" (16).

"Six hundredth year of Noah's life" (7:11) (שֶׁשׁ-מֵאוֹת, *šēšmē'â*) - Gen. 5:32 tells us Noah was 500 years old when he fathered his sons and God first commanded him to build the ark. 100 years has passed.

"Second month ... seventeenth day" (11) - this is the Hebrew month of *lyar* (a spring month falling between April and May. This is very specific, God sent a flood on the 17th day of this spring month.

"Fountains of the great deep" (11) (מַעַיִן, *ma'yan*) - fountain, spring. Of the great deep (תְּהוּמָה, *təhūm*) deep, depths, abyss. "Dr. Henry Morris noted that the Flood did not begin with rain, but with the 'fountains of the great deep.' This suggests a massive volcanic and tectonic upheaval where pressurized subterranean waters literally 'burst' through the earth's crust. This geological explosion likely triggered the

The Catastrophe (Flood)

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collapse of a 'vapor canopy'—a layer of water vapor that previously suspended in the atmosphere—resulting in the forty days of torrential, global rain." (Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 196-198).

"Windows of the heavens" (11) אָרֶבֶת, 'āruba - window, sluice. The sky opened up with rain.

"Forty days and forty nights" (12) - the length of the time of rain, not the entirety of the time of the flood,

"Lord shut him in" (16) סָגָר, sāgar - to shut, close. "Closing the ark's door signals the divine protection that kept out the raging seas... the covenant LORD sealed the door" (Kenneth A. Matthews, *NAC Matthew*, 378).

ARG: **God is able to judge sinners and save believers.**

2 Peter 2:5, 9 (NLT) And God did not spare the ancient world—except for Noah and the seven others in his family. Noah warned the world of God's righteous judgment. So God protected Noah when he destroyed the world of ungodly people with a vast flood. ... So you see, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while keeping the wicked under punishment until the day of final judgment.

ILL: The Ark is a "type" of Christ. Just as the Ark took the battering of the waves so those inside were safe, Jesus took the "storm" of God's wrath on the cross so those "in Him" are secure. As we read in ...

Romans 8:1 (ESV) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

APP: Are you "in the Ark"? There was only one door into the Ark, just as Jesus said, "I am the door" (John 10:9). There is no middle ground. You are either in Christ or you are still under God's judgment.

Text: Genesis 8:1,6-11, 18-21. 9:8-9, 12-15 (ESV) 1 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. ... 6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made 7 and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. 8 Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. 9 But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. 10 He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. 11 And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ... 18 So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. 19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark. 20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ... 8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 9 "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, ... 12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: 13 I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

3. By showing the faithfulness of His covenant and the patience of His mercy.

EXP: Genesis 8 begins with the most beautiful words: "But God remembered Noah." This isn't God forgetting and then suddenly remembering; it's a covenant term meaning He "acted on behalf of."

"God remembered Noah" (8:1) זָכַר, zākar - to remember, recall, call to mind. "God is said to remember his people, when after some delays or suspensions of his favor he returns and shows kindness to them" (Jameison-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary)

"God made a wind blow" (1) רָעַף, rūah - wind, breath, spirit; often the Spirit of God.

"Waters subsided" (1) שָׁבַע, šābā - to subside, abate, decrease

"Raven" (7) עֶרֶב, 'ōrēb - a raven (from its dusky hue). Some have noted that this unclean bird didn't return because it could feast on the floating carcasses of the judged world.

"Dove" (8) יוֹנָה, yōnâ - dove, pigeon. "The dove is a clean bird, and she could not rest upon the carcasses... so the Spirit-led soul finds no rest but in the Ark, which is Christ" (Spurgeon).

"Olive leaf" (8) - Early Christian writers like Tertullian and Augustine associated the olive branch brought by the dove as representing "perpetual peace."

"Noah built an altar" (20) מִזְבֵּחַ, mizbēah - the first altar mentioned in Scripture but not the first sacrifice of its kind. Similar to the sacrifices of Abel, God was pleased with Noah's sacrifice on the altar.

"I will never again curse the ground" (21) קָלַל, qālal - to curse, despise. God made a promise.

"I establish my covenant" (9:9) - a repeated phrase from Genesis 6:18.

"Sign of the covenant" (12) אֹתֶת, 'ōt - sign, signal, a distinguishing mark, banner, remembrance.

The Catastrophe (Flood)

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"Bow in the cloud" (13) (תְּשִׁקְעָה, qešet) - of bending; a bow; rainbow. The rainbow (the "bow") is a war weapon pointed away from earth—a sign of peace.

"Never again become a flood" (15) - God reiterates His promise to never flood the earth again.

ARG: **Scoffers will come in the last days, but God's faithfulness and patient mercy hold back judgment.**

2 Peter 3:3-7 (NLT) ³ Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. ⁴ They will say, "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created." ⁵ They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. ⁶ Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. ⁷ And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed. ⁸ But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. ⁹ The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

ILL: The "bow" in the clouds is the Hebrew word for a literal archer's bow. To hang it up in the clouds is to say the "war" is over for those under God's covenant.

APP: We live in the "rainbow" years, the time of God's patience. He is giving the world time to find His Ark (Christ) before the final restoration of all things.

CONCLUSION: When we began today we asked, "How bad does it have to get before God does something?" Now we know. The Flood shows us. God does act. But before He brings judgment, He provides a way of mercy.

The story of the Flood shows us...

1) The depth of our sin and the height of His grace. God saw that every intention of the human heart was only evil continually. If we're honest, we see the same bent in ourselves. But Noah found grace. And today, we find grace not in an ark of wood, but in a Savior who died on a wooden cross, where judgment fell and mercy triumphed.

2) The certainty of His judgment and the security of His provision. The waters prevailed. Judgment came exactly as God said it would. But there was a place of safety, and the Lord shut them in. Salvation was not Noah holding onto God. It was God holding onto Noah. In Christ, we have that same security.

3) The faithfulness of His covenant and the patience of His mercy. "But God remembered Noah." The rainbow still appears in our skies as a sign that God keeps His promises. We are living in days of mercy, time God is giving people to repent and come to Him before the final judgment.

So how should we respond? If you have never trusted Christ, today is your day to enter the Ark.

If you are already in Christ, then live like Noah, believing God when others doubt and warning others while there is still time.

Because just as the ark once had a door that closed, there will come a day when the door of grace closes again. Today, it is still open.

Let's pray.