

When Oceans Rise Cloudy With a 100% Chance of Rain

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TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture:

Genesis 6:9–13 (NLT)

9 This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. 10 Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. 12 God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. 13 So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!"

Genesis 6:14–22 (NLT)

14 "Build a large boat from cypress wood and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. 15 Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. 16 Leave an 18-inch opening below the roof all the way around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper. 17 "Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. 18 But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. 19 Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. 20 Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. 21 And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals." 22 So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

Genesis 7:1-5 (NLT)

Hebrews 11:7 (NLT)

Matthew 24:37-39 (NLT)

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Have you been caught in a flood? Were you in your home or a car? How did you feel as you saw the waters rising?

Start **sharing**. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- Why do so many people doubt the account of Noah and his ark? Do you believe it happened? If so, why?
- **Read Genesis 6:9-13.** According to v.9, what caused Noah to be saved from the flood?
- **Read Genesis 6:14-22.** Have you ever been to the Ark Encounter? What was your impression of it? How did all the animals of the world fit into the ark?
- What did God mean in v.18 when He said that He would confirm his covenant with Noah? Do you have a covenant with God?
- **Read Genesis 7:1-5.** Discuss the phrase, "Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him." What challenges did Noah face in obeying God's command? What challenges are you facing today in doing what God has told you to do?
- **Read Hebrews 11:7.** By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith. What does that statement mean?
- Put yourself in the ark about a week after the rain started. How do you think Noah felt in that moment? How did his wife and sons feel? Relate their feeling to your salvation today.
- **Read Matthew 24:37-39.** What was the mindset of the people of Noah's day before the flood? How is that similar to today?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Each day, recommit yourself to your obedience to God in following His commands for your life, even amidst trials, waiting, and discouragement.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, we praise you and thank you that you have revealed yourself to us and given us a way to be forgiven for our sins. Please help us to boldly share this message of hope and salvation with others, that our words and actions are full of salt and light, and that we are ready when you return. Amen.

Question: "How was the flood in the time of Noah just?"

Answer: The global flood of Noah's day was the direct judgment of a just God. The Bible says the flood wiped out "people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds"—everything that breathed air (Genesis 7:23). Some people today are offended by the flood story, saying it is proof of God's injustice, arbitrariness, or just plain meanness. They accuse the Bible of promoting a temperamental God who judges indiscriminately and say that only a bully would drown everyone, including children and all those innocent animals.

Such attacks on the character of God are nothing new. As long as there have been sinners in the world, there have been charges that God is unjust. Consider Adam's subtle shifting of blame. When asked about eating the forbidden fruit, Adam said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit" (Genesis 3:12). That is, it was the woman's fault, and God's, since He made the woman. But blaming God did not mitigate Adam's sin. And calling God "unjust" for sending the flood will not lessen ours.

The flood of Noah's day has many counterparts in history. God judged the people of Canaan with a command to wipe them out (Deuteronomy 20:16–18). He similarly judged Sodom and Gomorrah, Nineveh (Nahum 1:14), and Tyre (Ezekiel 26:4). And the final judgment before the Great White Throne will result in all the wicked from all time being cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11–15). The plain message of the Bible is that God does judge sin, whether by an invading army, by fire and brimstone, or by a catastrophic global flood.

The flood was just because God commanded it (and God is just). "The LORD is upright . . . and there is no wickedness in him" (Psalm 92:15). "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of [God's] throne" (Psalm 89:14). God always does what is right. His decrees and judgments are always just. If He decreed that the whole world be flooded, then He was just in doing so, no matter what human skeptics say. It is not surprising that we tend to define *justice* in a way that will benefit ourselves.

The flood was just because mankind was evil. "The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time" (Genesis 6:5). We cannot fully imagine the extent of the wickedness of that day. We have never seen the like. The evil was "great," and *every* thought of everyone's heart was *only* evil *continually*. There was no goodness in the world; every person was wholly corrupted. There was nothing within them that was *not* evil. The people of Noah's day were not dabblers in sin; they had taken the plunge, and *everything* they did was an abomination.

But what about the children who drowned? The fact is that sin affects *all* of society, not just those who intentionally engage in evil. When a society promotes abortion, babies die as a result. When a father or mother begins taking meth, their children will suffer as a result. And, in the case of Noah's generation, when a culture gives itself over to violence and aberrant sexuality, the children suffered. Humanity brought the flood upon themselves and upon their own children.

The flood was just because all sin is a capital offense. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). We should not be shocked that God swept away the world's population with the flood; we should be shocked that He hasn't done something similar to us! Sinners tend to have a light view of sin, but all sin is worthy of death. We take God's mercy for granted, as if we deserve it, but we complain about God's justice as if it's somehow unfair, as if we *don't* deserve it.

The flood was just because the Creator has the right to do as He pleases with His creation. As the potter can do whatever he wants with the clay on his wheel, so God has the right to do as He pleases with the work of His own hands. "The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths" (Psalm 135:6).

Here is the most amazing part of the flood story: "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). God's grace extended into His damaged, sin-stained creation and preserved one man and his family. In so doing, God preserved the whole human race through the godly line of Seth. And, in bringing the animals into the ark, God also preserved the rest of His creation. So, God's judgment was not a total annihilation; it was a reset.

It took Noah up to a hundred years to build the ark. We can assume that, if other people had wanted to board the ark and be saved, they could have done so. But that would have required faith. Once God shut the door, it was too late; they had lost their chance (Genesis 7:16). The point is that God never sends judgment without prior warning. As commentator Matthew Henry said, "None are punished by the justice of God, but those who hate to be reformed by the grace of God."

The global flood of Noah's day was a just punishment of sin. Those who say the flood was unjust probably don't like the idea of judgment to begin with. The story of Noah is a vivid reminder that, like it or not, there is another judgment coming: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:37). Are you ready, or will you be swept away?