

The sermon

Intro

What happened when the flood came?

What about the diverse flood stories in ancient cultures?

What does the flood mean for us? How should the flood affect our hearts today?

READ PASSAGE

Body

Passage Focus

We'll walk through Noah's account. Ask a few questions. We'll look at three New Testament passages that comment on the flood.

Walkthrough (7:11-8:19)

“the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened” – 7:11

The ocean floor split/tore/cracked open. Beneath the ocean floor was a water source. When the ocean floor split, this additional water source caused the oceans to cover the dry land.

Waters came from the heavens above. The window was opened and waters poured out from above.

Creation reversed. Before day one, there was just the deep (1:2). On the 2nd day, God made an expanse to separate the waters: waters above, waters below (1:6-8). On the 3rd day, God gathered the waters below into one place so that dry land would appear (1:9-10). Now God undoes the separation of the waters and the whole earth is overwhelmed with water.

The obedience of Noah

“And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him.” – 7:16

Noah's kept God's command. Verbatim compliance.

The protection of the LORD

“And the LORD shut him in.” – 7:16

Both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Noah followed God's instructions. God ensured the safety of those who entered.

Timeline

The timeline's a bit confusing.

- They enter the ark, the flood starts year 600, 2nd month, 17th day (7:11-13).
- They exit the ark year 601, 2nd month, 27th day (8:14-16). They're on the ark for **one year and ten days**.
 1. Heavy flooding for 40 days (40); fountains and windows closed after 40 days (7:12; 8:2).
 2. Waters recede for 110 days (150); ark rests on the mountain range of Ararat. (8:3-4).

Ararat = modern-day eastern Turkey. **“mountains”** = more than one mountain = somewhere within the Ararat mountain range.

3. 74 more days of recession (224); mountain tops now visible (8:5).
4. 90 more days of recession (314); the ground has dried (8:13).
5. 56 more days on ark (370); departure (8:14-16).

Extent of the flood

1. All the high mountains were covered by 22.5 feet of water.

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. – 7:19-20

2. Every living creature that dwelled on dry land, human and animal, died.

“all flesh died that moved on the earth” – 7:21

“all mankind” – 7:21

“Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died.” – 7:22

“He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground” – 7:23

“Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark.” – 7:23

There’s debate about whether or not the flood was localized or over the entire earth. If it was a localized flood, it covered every area where humans and land animals and birds lived. Because every human, every land animal, and every bird was wiped out. Evidently the rain was too intense for birds to survive. Since sea creatures didn’t need to enter the ark for preservation, it’s implied that sea creatures were able to survive the flood. Or at least the sea creatures God wanted to preserve. Maybe some sea creatures died out?

“all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered” suggests every mountain on earth which suggests a global flood.

God’s work

This is the work of God, not the work of impersonal nature. The foundations of the deep burst open, the windows of heaven opened because God opened them. They shut because God shut them. The waters subsided because ***“God made a wind blow over the earth”*** (8:1). It was God who ***“blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground”*** (7:23).

Authenticity/historicity of the Genesis flood

Genesis isn’t the only record of a cataclysmic flood that wiped out all but a few of the human race.

The Epic of Gilgamesh (2100-1200 BC)

Despairing over the death of a friend, Gilgamesh seeks to find Utanapishtim, who was given eternal life. When Gilgamesh encounters Utanapishtim, Utanapishtim tells the story of an ancient flood. The gods conspired to end all living beings, but one God secretly reached out to Utanapishtim and instructed him to build a boat for himself and all living beings. Different dimensions, different length of time, but entry was sealed, a dove was sent, a raven was sent, all humans outside the boat were turned to clay, the boat was lodged on a mountain, and Utanapishtim survived with his wife. After the flood, the gods accepted a sweet-smelling animal sacrifice.

Atra-Hasis (1700-1650 BC, but represents older traditions)

The gods were tired of work, so they created mankind to do their work. The gods then became tired of the noise caused by mankind (couldn't sleep because of the noise). After a series of judgments like withholding rain and sending diseases, the gods settle on a flood to end mankind. One of the gods tells Atrahasis of the coming flood. He's told to build a boat with bitumen pitch and upper and lower decks and to bring birds, fish, and others. Different length of time, but Atrahasis brings birds, cattle, wild animals, and his family onto the boat. The door was sealed with bitumen. After the flood, the gods accept the sweet-smelling burnt offering.

They're not the only ones. Flood stories are found among the Greeks (ark included), the Hindus (ark included), and Native American tribes.

How should we explain numerous flood accounts? Something actually happened. The simplest answer is they're referring to the same event: a catastrophic flood. How should we explain the differences within the flood accounts? After the flood people spread out again. Over time the religious details were altered (addition and subtraction) in different places.

What stands out in the Genesis account is the morality. The one true God is moral. The gods of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and *Atrahasis* are not. God cares about sin. God places moral demands on his people. These things are absent in the Mesopotamian accounts.

How would I argue Moses' flood account is the correct one?

1. Jesus' miracles, undisputed by a good portion of the Jews, tells us there's something unique about Jesus.
2. The resurrection of Christ, backed by weighty evidence, also tells us there's something unique about Jesus.

Jesus isn't merely a man. There's something supernatural behind Jesus.

3. Because of Jesus' miracles and his resurrection, Jesus' words have merit.

Jesus isn't making empty claims. Jesus' isn't simply expressing an opinion or personal preference. Jesus' life and resurrection vindicate his words.

4. Jesus spoke about Noah and the flood.
5. We can trust Moses' account of the flood because Jesus confirmed it.

If Jesus' words are credible, Moses' flood account is accurate!

Let's look at how three New Testament passages apply the flood event.

Point 1: Be ready for the 2nd coming (Matthew 24:36-39, 44)

READ Matthew 24:36-39

“that day” = “the coming of the Son of Man” (24:39).

Jesus will appear visibly with loud trumpet call and power and cosmic signs and great glory (Matt 24:29-31). Unmistakable. Can't miss it.

Jesus says no one know will know *“that day.”* Not even Jesus. Only the Father. Jesus doesn't know when he's going to return? Simplest answer. The human mind of Jesus didn't know. The divine mind of Jesus did. Jesus' human body died on the cross. Jesus' divine essence didn't die on the cross.

As Noah was entering the ark, the people of Noah's day were going about their business, living ordinary lives: eating, drinking, marrying, seeing their children get married.

The people of Noah's day didn't see it coming: ***"they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away"*** (24:39). Likewise, when Jesus returns to judge the world and relieve his people from their distress (2 Thess 1:5-10), the vast majority of the world will be caught completely off guard.

In the day that Jesus returns, people will be closing on a new home, celebrating the birth of a child, attending their child's wedding, starting a new job, going on a first date, going out to eat as a family, taking their dog for a walk, changing diapers, cleaning their toilet, playing sports, scrolling on their phone, making purchases on Amazon, etc. They'll never see it coming. Jesus' application?

Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. – **Matthew 24:44**

Like those who died in the flood, it will be too late if you're not ready beforehand.

1. There's people who have zero knowledge of Jesus' return.
2. There's people who have a different religious belief and think they're okay when they're not.
3. There's people who know Jesus will return and know they're not right with Jesus, but for some reason or another, won't repent of their sins.
4. There's people who think they're right with Jesus when they're not. And Jesus will say, *"I never knew you; depart from me"* (Matt 7:23).
5. And there's people who are longing for that day with firm confidence that they'll be rescued by Jesus. Can't wait for it to happen. Couldn't come soon enough.

The flood tells us wrath is coming. The flood tells us be ready. **Illustration:** vacation, moving.

There were people Noah told. Likewise, we need to tell people about that day when Christ returns. Are you content to let others be caught completely off guard?

Practical question: am I ready for that day? Am I telling people about that day?

Point 2: Be assured of God's rescue (2 Peter 2:4-10a)

READ 2 Peter 2:4-10a

Three examples of past sins punished:

1. The angels.

Either the fall of angels in general, or the sons of God were angels.

2. The people who died in the flood.
3. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Two examples of the righteous preserved when the wicked were punished:

1. Noah and seven others at the time of the flood.
2. Lot rescued from the incineration of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The point?

then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, – 2 Peter 2:9

In Peter's day, there were false teachers who scoffed at the 2nd coming (2 Pet 3:3-4). Peter assures Christians that these scoffers will be punished by pointing to God's past judgments in history. Peter also assures Christians that they will be rescued when the judgment comes.

God often delays his judgment and the wicked prosper. The wicked conclude, God's never going to do anything to us. The righteous get confused. Is it actually better to follow Jesus? Things seem to go well for sinners. The flood tells us following is Jesus is worth it. The wicked will be swept away to hell while the righteous are rescued. Not one sinner will escape.

Herald?

It's implied that Noah experienced trials. What trials? We're not told exactly. We are told that Noah was a "*herald of righteousness*" = a preacher of righteousness. While he was building the ark, Noah encouraged his neighbors to repent of their sins. It sounds like he had a limited preaching extent and he was disregarded for the most part. Jesus said no one saw the flood coming. Those who heard about the flood scoffed at it. What trials? Perhaps laughter when he told people about a coming flood? Perhaps anger when he told people about a coming flood? Perhaps the torment of living in a world of "*every intention...only evil continually...the earth was filled with violence*" (Gen 6:5, 11). Likewise, Lot's soul was tormented by the sensual sin in Sodom and Gomorrah.

The flood tells us God rescues his people from his judgments on the wicked. The flood tells us the torment of living in a godless age will come to an end.

Practical question: in what ways am I tormented by the wickedness around me?

Point 3: Be righteous today (2 Peter 3:1-13)

READ 2 Peter 3:1-13

In these last days, people scoff at the idea of a day of judgment. Jesus hasn't come back, so he's never coming back. They should remember the flood: God destroys the ungodly. Today God is patient, giving sinners time to repent. One day the time to repent will run out!

To the Christian, the flood and the day of judgment scream out, live righteously today. Conform your life to God's word. Live pleasing to God. Why? Because our hope is "*a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells*" (2 Pet 3:13).

The assumption is we should long for a righteous world. A world where God and his word are treasured and obeyed. A world where evil desires and murder and sexual immorality are no more. The assumption is the Christian is tormented by injustice, wickedness, dangerous people, being sinned against, being hammered with temptations.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, – 2 Peter 3:11

As with the flood, the sinful enterprises of mankind will come to an end when judgment day arrives. Doesn't it make sense to live life on earth today in the same way that we'll live in heaven then?

1. We should be tormented by the sin around us.
2. We should long for the world of righteousness to come.
3. We should long for personal righteousness today.

Practical question: does the world to come move me to live righteously today?

Conclusion

The flood tells us Christ will surely return. The flood tells us people will be caught off guard when Christ returns. The flood tells us Christ's return will be a day of rescue for God's people. The flood tells us we should long for more righteousness in our lives today.

Are you ready for that day? On that day, all the dead will be resurrected for evaluation by Jesus. The righteous will go to eternal life, the new heavens and new earth. The wicked will go to eternal punishment, unending weeping and gnashing of teeth in hell.

Jesus *"came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many... God so loved the world, that he have his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"* (Mark 10:45; John 3:16).

Like Noah was rescued from the flood waters because he trusted God's word, those who trust Jesus' words will be rescued from the day of judgment. If we truly trust God's word, we'll act on it. Like Noah did.