

GENESIS

Lesson 17

The Flood Part 2: The Survivors

The Animals

At the end of the previous lesson in this study I posed the question: "How did Noah and his three sons encourage the animals to come into the ark?" In this lesson, we will discover the answer in Genesis 6:19-21. In essence, God led them to Noah. Noah and his sons did not have to travel the earth to find two of each animal; they came to the ark on their own as God led them. Also, remember that, at this time, the animal world was not at odds with one another—or mankind. As a result, all creatures lived in harmony in the ark until after the flood. (Genesis 9:1-6)

Noah did all that God commanded, and the animals—"everything with the breath of life in them"—came to the ark.

1. What else was Noah commanded to do before the pending flood? See Genesis 6:22.
2. How many animals would have been on the ark?

The animals living in the ark were provided food and care as God instructed and survived what would have been a horrible worldwide flood—a cataclysmic event that is hard for us to imagine. Critics would argue that animals from all over the world could not have made the long journey to the ark, and that the ark itself was not big enough to hold all of the species of every kind of animal. However, consider the following:

- Today we have many breeds of animals. This would not have been the case that early in history. For example, I think today that we have over 350 breeds of dogs. In contrast, at that time, they would have had only one or two. So, it is not that crazy to imagine two dogs on the ark. The same logic would apply for birds, reptiles, and even insects.
- In terms of the animals traveling across the world to be in the ark, consider that salmon travel 1,800 miles back to the very spot that they were born each season. Furthermore, humpback whales travel 6,000 miles to feed and breed at the same location every year—not to mention migrating birds, and so on. Clearly, if God was leading them, they were very capable of making the journey, especially in the pre-flood world.
- Finally, God is sovereign and reigns over all of his creation. He frequently used animals to accomplish His purposes, as recounted in the Bible. He used hornets to help Israel in battle. He controlled nature, as well as frogs, lice, and mice in the plagues of Egypt, and He brought quail (manna) to feed the tribes of Israel as they wandered in the desert.

It should come as no surprise then, that God led the pairs of animals to the ark and had them enter into it in order to survive the coming judgment. In terms of the dinosaurs—also something that critics focus on—they were clearly pre-flood creatures, given all of the skeletal and fossil evidence available. While the theory is that a meteoric event eliminated them from the earth, why didn't that same event also eliminate all the other animals as well? A more probable explanation is that due to the post-flood change in environment and the loss of their natural food sources, they simply became extinct over time. In terms of their presence on the ark, it's also likely that the animals that God led to the ark were young, healthy, and capable of reproduction once they matured. If we think of young, even baby, animals, it is not inconceivable that the same would have been true for dinosaurs, and the ark would easily have accommodated them. God saved the animals that he wanted saved from the judgment, and He put them all on the ark. God did it. God put it in His written word to us, and that is what we, as Christians, should continue to believe today.

God did another thing that we often forget: not only did He lead the animals, Noah, and his family into the ark, He did one final thing before the floods came.

3. Read Genesis 7:16 and note what God did.

Regarding fossil evidence, consider this:

- There are billions of fossils all over the world—everywhere.
- These fossils represent animals that were covered up very quickly, and then died—a catastrophe like a worldwide flood.
- Whale fossils found in 1987 were found in a mountain. How would whales end up in the mountains? The only logical explanation is a worldwide flood.

In summary, the flood was real, it was worldwide as supported by the evidence, and only those animals and humans on the ark that God had Noah build survived.

Mankind

Read Genesis 8:1-2, which reminds us of how the flood happened. (See also Genesis 7:11.)

4. What does this passage tell us regarding the mechanics of how God flooded the earth?

5. Read Genesis 7:6 and 8:3-14. How long did it take from the first day of the flood until the day the earth was dry, at which time God had Noah and his family step out into the post-flood earth? Where was the ark when the flood was over?

Have you ever walked outside after a good long spring rain and smelled the air? Have you ever considered that that is what Noah and his family would have experienced, and in a world that likely wasn't anything like the one they previously knew? They saw geography changes, the boat was on a mountain, and animals began to fear man (Genesis 9:2-3) the minute that they are allowed to leave the ark (Genesis 8:15-18). Finally, there was the realization that no one else was alive on the entire earth due to destruction like no one had ever witnessed before. They encountered a blue sky, fresh clean air, and a totally new beginning. Imagine what ran through their minds as they realized the awful judgment that God had just applied to the sin of the world. It would certainly make everyone on the boat realize that God was a God of judgment who hated sin—and yet we will see that sin also survived the flood.

So, everything had to start new: new housing, new gardens, and new birth for both animals and mankind as they began to repopulate the earth. They had no one but themselves to help them with this work. The existing domestic animals would have needed to be tended to as well, e.g., sheep, goats, etc. Farming became their primary chore as they began a new life in a new earthly environment. And all of this with the backdrop of an extremely close relationship with God, as He had brought them through this judgment, displaying His awesome power and sovereign reign over His creation.

Noah recognized all that God had done both in judgment of the earth and in saving Noah's family. We know this because the closing verses of Chapter 8 tell us that Noah built an altar to the Lord and made sacrifices on it. Worshipping God was the first thing Noah wanted to do as soon as he had gotten all the living creatures off of the ark. Just as his life before the flood served as a witness to his family of his faith in God, this act of worship would have also testified to his walk with God. God was pleased by Noah and promised to never again "curse the ground because of humans" (Genesis 8:20-22).

So how do we know that sin survived the flood?

6. God also noted something else at the close of Chapter 8. Read Genesis 8:20-22 and note what else God said about the human heart.

God's love and grace is so great that we cannot really comprehend it. Knowing that even after the great flood, man's heart was inclined to evil, He still promised to not destroy us. Rather than completely destroying mankind, He provided His one and only son Jesus as our redeemer, and He included the redeemed in his eternal plan. As God is "kind to the ungrateful and the wicked," we should be as well. The world around us is lost and dying. A final judgment is coming, but as we live in this post-flood world, we are to mirror God's love for all of us. Luke 6:35 tells us we are to do good to our enemies, just as God loves us in spite of our evil ways.

As with Noah and his family after the flood, consider that Jesus is our fresh start. Filled with the Holy Spirit, we begin to see the world differently. As we mature in our walk with Christ, our vision of God's plan and His will for our lives becomes clearer, as we progress from one day to the next.

I am praising God today that Jesus overcame the world, and that through him we can as well.

In the next lesson, sin makes its first appearance in the post-flood world.

In Christ,

Wes