

# God's judgement



Lessons from the flood

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## What has Noah's flood got to do with me?

The disciples of the Lord Jesus were naturally curious about the end of the world (Matt. 24:3). When will it happen? How will it happen? Will there be a warning? What will it be like?

The Lord Jesus gave an extended answer which can be found in Matthew 24 and 25. In this extended answer, the Lord referred to the flood of Noah (Matt. 24:36-41). The destruction caused by the flood was a picture of the final destruction and judgement at the return of Christ (Matt. 24:37). Just as the flood was God's judgement against the world so many years ago, so the second coming of Christ will result in the ultimate and final judgement of the world, where all people will be assigned their eternal destiny in heaven or in hell (Matt. 25:31-46).



The flood therefore provides valuable lessons about the manner in which the end of the world will come. This booklet will not be able to deal with all that the Bible teaches about the coming day of judgement. We will only consider the lessons the Lord Jesus drew from Noah's flood regarding the end of the world.

## They did not see it coming!

*But about that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.*

*For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. At that time there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left. (Matt. 24:36-41)*

The main point of this short passage is that the people at the time of Noah were taken completely by surprise. They did not see it coming! They were carrying on with daily life when the flood waters hit them.

Specifically, the Lord Jesus highlighted the fact that at the time of Noah, people were caught unprepared because they were immersed in things like the humdrum of daily life and family occasions.

(i) *The humdrum of life*

The people at the time of the flood were engrossed in the humdrum of daily life, as indicated by the phrase “eating and drinking”. They had bills to pay, housework to do, children to tend to, businesses to run, friends to visit, vacations to plan and the like. They just got taken in by all these activities so that they never stopped to seriously consider the warnings that were given. They did not feel it necessary to lift their thoughts above their daily routines to consider if life was always just going to carry on like it had.

The flood therefore took them completely by surprise and swept them away.

(ii) *Important family occasions*

Noah's generation were also taken up with the family issues and occasions that form part of life, represented by "marrying and given in marriage". What could be more important than a wedding? Such excitement and anticipation! So much planning! The rings, wedding cake, decorations, invitations and the venue. And then don't forget the wedding dress! But because of this 'busyness', everything else tends to be out of

focus and in background. A wedding is also a promise of a life together and anticipates a future. For the people getting married at the time of the flood,



however, there would be no life together, and no future. It all came to an abrupt end. These people at the time of the flood were so distracted by the events that normally characterise the development of families: marriage, the birth of children, birthdays, anniversaries, the marriage of children and grandchildren etc., that they forgot to consider that their lives could be interrupted at any time.

They never stopped to think that there was a much more significant, dramatic event that was about to devastate their lives.

## But were there not warnings before the flood?

God did send warnings to the people at the time of Noah. He sent a preacher and a boat.

### (i) *A preacher*

Noah is described in the New Testament as a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5). This means that he spoke to, and warned, those people around him of the coming doom. His life, which was characterised by righteousness, would have been in stark contrast to the people around him:

*Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Gen. 6:5)*

*Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.<sup>12</sup> God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. (Gen. 6:11-12)*

Noah's life would also therefore have stood out and been a witness to his generation.

### (ii) *A boat*

Then there is also the warning of the Ark. This boat was remarkable, in that it was of massive proportions. It is estimated to have been 4 storeys high and one-and-a-half football fields long. You could not miss it. And when people saw it, they would have asked



what it was for. And Noah, as a preacher of righteousness, would have told them! So, everyone must have been talking of the crazy nut down the road who was building a massive boat because a great flood was coming; and then rolled their eyes at these religious fanatics! Thus, they were certainly made aware – and even warned – of God’s impending judgement.

### How did people respond to the warnings?

People are essentially the same throughout the ages. Although we are not specifically told in the Bible, there can be little doubt that Noah and the boat were a source of amusement for many. “Noah jokes”, “Ark jokes” and “flood jokes” were no doubt doing the rounds. Much like people today make jokes about hell: “It won’t be so bad, at least I will be with my buddies! Ha ha!”

Others would no doubt have mocked and scoffed at Noah, as his righteousness and preaching against their sin would have incensed them. I am sure not a few, but many, stones were thrown at the boat and at Noah.

### A God of grace: an ark of salvation

In the midst of this ancient crooked and perverse generation, we are told that Noah found grace and favour in God’s sight (Gen. 6:8). Grace means undeserved kindness and mercy.

God’s grace to Noah was seen in two ways.

Firstly, God worked in Noah’s life to give him a new heart, so that he could believe and live a life of righteousness, different to the people

around him. Noah, like all people, was born with a sinful nature and alienated from God (Eph. 2:1-3), until God's grace transformed him.

Noah therefore became a man of faith. He was not perfect, but he truly believed and trusted in God, and all that God said. That is why he obeyed so promptly when God told him of the coming destruction, and the need to build an ark. Noah and his family (eight people in total) were therefore spared.

Secondly, the Ark was a way to escape the destruction. Noah did not come up with the idea himself. Rather God provided a way of salvation, and directed Noah, giving him detailed instructions on how to build it (Gen. 6:14).

So the account of the flood in Genesis 6 speaks not only of judgement and destruction, but also grace and salvation.

### A God of patience: the Ark was being prepared

It is estimated the Ark took 55 to 75 years to build. That is quite a long time! We are told in the New Testament that this lengthy period was deliberate from God's side, in that He was showing patience towards that generation (1 Pet. 3:20). They had 55 to 75 years to consider their ways and heed God's warning. For us, that is a lifetime!



## A God of judgement: the first drop fell!

God's patience towards the ungodly is not infinite, and it did not last forever in the days of Noah. On a particular day, Noah and his family entered the Ark, the door was closed, and then the first drop of rain fell. The days of grace and patience from God were over. When the door was closed behind Noah, the door was shut on any hope of salvation. Massive destruction followed. People had wasted their opportunity to repent, and now there was no second chance.



So, what has all of this got to do with us?

## The second coming of Christ

As mentioned before, the Lord Jesus used the flood at the time of Noah to describe and teach that the second coming of Christ will have the following characteristics

- The Lord will come unexpectedly.
- People will be eating and drinking and caught up in the humdrum of life – then Christ will come suddenly.
- People will be attending weddings and caught up in family affairs – then Christ will come suddenly.

With the coming of Christ will be the final judgement (Matt. 25:31ff). The outcome of this judgement, however, will be more catastrophic than the flood of Noah. It will have eternal

consequences. Those who have not trusted in Christ will receive eternal damnation. This is far more horrific than Noah's flood.

*"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the **eternal** fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels..."*

*These will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt. 25: 41, 46)*

## What are you doing with the warnings?

As in the days of Noah, you have plenty of warnings. This booklet is one of them. There are other warnings that God gives to people to turn from their sin and to trust in the only Saviour, Jesus Christ:

- The Bible
- Christian friends and families
- Faithful churches who preach the gospel

What are you doing with these warnings?

Are you scoffing, or mildly amused by all this talk of coming judgement and hell?

Are you a person who tells jokes about hell? Are you perhaps agitated by friends and family who tell you about Jesus?

Or are you simply so caught up with life that you don't stop to *really* consider the claims of the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ?



## Today is the day of salvation!

As in the days of Noah, God has prepared a way of escape. The Lord Jesus came to earth to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10). He died in the place of sinners, so that we can escape God's coming anger. All those who trust in Jesus and put their hope in Him for eternal salvation will never be put to shame (Rom. 9:33).

Jesus is the only Saviour. There is no other way back to God but through Him:

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me. (Jn. 14:6)*

God's patience will not last forever. The day of judgement will certainly come. Because we don't know when this day of judgement will be, the Bible tells us to make use of today to be saved:

*And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— for He says,*

*"At a favorable time I listened to you. And on a day of salvation I helped you."*

***Behold, now is "a favorable time," behold, now is "a day of salvation". (2 Cor. 6:1-2)***