

Land!

SESSION 7

Genesis 8:10-22

Memory Verse: Genesis 8:17

Restoration awaits those who trust God.

“In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.” You probably learned that saying in elementary school. In that year, land was sighted by the three ships sailing under the command of Christopher Columbus. No doubt this produced great excitement among this group of explorers. That same excitement probably ran through Noah’s family when they realized that dry land had reappeared after God’s devastating flood had cleansed the earth of wickedness. For Columbus, seeing land meant finding the New World. For Noah and his family, it meant a “new start” for the human race.

In your preparation for teaching this session, consider how you can convey to your group the new start that God makes available in Jesus Christ. Reflect on your own salvation experience and think about ways you can integrate that testimony into this session.



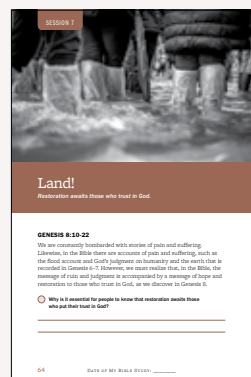
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We are constantly bombarded with stories of pain and suffering. Likewise, in the Bible there are accounts of pain and suffering, such as the flood account and God’s judgment on humanity and the earth that is recorded in Genesis 6–7. However, we must realize that, in the Bible, the message of ruin and judgment is accompanied by a message of hope and restoration to those who trust in God, as we discover in Genesis 8. (PSG, p. 64)

Why is it essential for people to know that restoration awaits those who put their trust in God?



Understand the Context (Genesis 8:1-22)

Genesis 8 emerges from the darkness of Adam and Eve’s sin, the murder of Abel by his brother, the sordid characters in the lineage of Cain, the total wickedness of humanity, and the devastation of God’s judgment upon His creation. Each step from Eden to the flood illustrates the dark picture of continuing disobedience and rebellion against God’s design.

Finally, in chapter 8, we see glimmers of hope. Two words stand out in verse 1: “God remembered.” This doesn’t mean that God somehow forgot about Noah and his family. Instead, these words provided a verbal signal that God was stepping forward to fulfill His covenant promise to Noah.

These same words are repeated in Exodus 2 when the Israelites cried out to God in the misery of their slavery (Ex. 2:23-24). In response, God stepped forward to bring the deliverance in fulfillment of His covenant promise given to Abraham.

Genesis 8 also includes many parallels to the beginning of the flood and even to the initial creation of the earth. The deluge began with the watery depths bursting up and the floodgates of heaven opening wide (Gen. 7:11-12). Water covered the earth for 150 days. This process is reversed in chapter 8 as the water began to recede. The underground waters stopped flowing and the floodgates of heaven were closed. Just as there was an initial period of waiting in the ark before the flooding began, so there is a period of waiting once the flood waters were gone.

We can compare the re-creation of the earth in Genesis 8 with the initial creation in Genesis 1. The wind (*ruach* in Hebrew) blew over the flood waters (8:1) in the same way that the Spirit of God (also *ruach*) hovered over the surface waters in the beginning (1:2). Water and dry ground were separated next in Genesis 1. In Genesis 8, dry land began to appear as the water receded. In both accounts, vegetation appeared, with birds, animals, and humans following in ranked order. In each account, the same command is given: “Be fruitful and multiply” (1:28; 9:1).

As the flood waters receded, the ark settled on the mountains of Ararat. Standing along the border region of modern-day Armenia and Turkey, Ararat was the designation given to the northwestern part of ancient Mesopotamia. After sufficient time, Noah began testing to see if the ground was dry enough for exiting the ark.

As you read Genesis 8:10-22, consider what it reveals about God as our Savior and Lord of all creation. (PSG, p. 65)



PREPARE: Prior to the session, attach three large sheets of paper to a focal wall and label them: *River; Lake; Sea/Ocean*. Provide a variety of markers.

INTRODUCE: As the group arrives, direct attention to the sheets of paper. Direct adults to write/describe their least favorite experience and/or their favorite experience on water for the categories on each sheet of paper.

REVIEW: After most adults have arrived, review the responses on the papers. Select several responses and allow volunteers to share more about their experiences. Summarize the opening paragraph on page 64 of the PSG. Remind adults that this session is the second of three related to Noah and the ark. *It's hard to imagine how anything we've experienced even comes close to his life on the ark. Plus, he was operating on God's timetable, so he had to be patient.*

ASK: **When have you had to wait a long time for something?**
Agree that sometimes we have to wait for an answer or resolution. Point out the summary statement for this lesson: *Restoration awaits those who trust God.*

DISCUSS: **Why is it essential for people to know that restoration awaits those who put their trust in God?** (PSG, p. 64)

TRANSITION: *We live in a time where we constantly see stories of pain and suffering. Yet God offers a message of hope and restoration to those who trust in Him.*

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Music

Distribute copies of the *Baptist Hymnal* (2008) and direct the group to turn to Hymn 96, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." Lead the group to sing the hymn together. Ask: ***How does this hymn relate to what Noah and his family went through? What does this hymn suggest in relation to understanding God's protection and our need for patience?***

Wait (Genesis 8:10-14)

10 So Noah waited seven more days and sent out the dove from the ark again. **11** When the dove came to him at evening, there was a plucked olive leaf in its beak. So Noah knew that the water on the earth's surface had gone down. **12** After he had waited another seven days, he sent out the dove, but it did not return to him again. **13** In the six hundred first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the water that had covered the earth was dried up. Then Noah removed the ark's cover and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. **14** By the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the earth was dry.

(v. 10) Dove: Two different types of birds are mentioned in this narrative, a raven (v. 7) and a **dove** (vv. 8-12). The release of these birds was an effort to determine if the water had receded enough to allow the inhabitants of the ark to exit. The raven was an unclean animal and not fit for food or sacrifice. The dove, on the other hand, could be used for both.

The raven, as a scavenger, would live on whatever was found from the devastation—including animal carcasses. Being the stronger bird, the raven could range far from the ark and find a resting place. There is no record that the raven ever returned to the ark. The dove was released three times in verses 8-12. Twice, the dove found no resting place and came back to the ark. The third time, it did not return.

Bible scholars identify symbolism in these two birds. The raven represented the wickedness of the world before the flood and departed from the ark so a new day might begin. The dove, identified with purity, played a key role in this story.

Key Term

Olive leaf

The picture of the dove with the **olive leaf** in its beak has long been a Christian symbol of peace and of God's Spirit. It points to the redemption and restoration that God enacted through the rescue of Noah. It also points to the coming of new life in Christ. For Noah, the olive leaf was a signal of hope that the water had receded enough for plant life to emerge.

(v. 12) Seven days: The waiting period observed by Noah could point backward to the **seven days** of Creation. It also could echo the seven days between Noah and his family entering the ark and the beginning of the flood.

(v. 13) Six hundred first: Moses, the author of this account, was very precise in his dating of the events in chapters 6-9. In the 601st year of Noah's life, he removed the covering of the ark so that he could see with his own eyes the condition of the land around the ark. Obviously, the earth was not totally dry because Noah waited a few more weeks—the 27th day of the next month—before the text declared the earth dry. The dating of the first day of the first month speaks clearly of the new beginning that was taking place on the earth.

(v. 13) Cover: This **cover** was different from the window mentioned in verse 6. The window did not afford Noah any opportunity to see the condition of the ground. Such a detail has led many to assume that the window in the ark was in the roof. However, the covering was apparently a hatch-like opening that allowed Noah and family to finally see the land surrounding the ark. It was also distinct from the door in the side of the ark (6:16).

(v. 13) Saw: This term does not refer to a passing glance. It suggests that Noah took a longer look to comprehend all that he saw. The word could also be translated "inspect," and this would have been an appropriate response to this newly recreated earth.

(v. 14) Twenty-seventh day of the second month: Calculating from 7:11 and 8:13, Noah and family spent one year and eleven days in the ark with the animals. Notice verses 13-14 put strong emphasis on the condition of the ground being dry, mentioning it three times in those two verses.

EXPLORE Genesis 8:10-14



APPLICATION POINT: Believers can patiently wait, knowing God's redemptive plan is unfolding.

CONTEXT: Briefly review the key points in the previous session. Use Understand the Context (PSG, p. 65) to set the context for the first part of Genesis 8. Review copies of **Pack Item 7** (*Handout: Genesis Time Line*) to review how this lesson fits with the previous lessons. Supplement the discussion as needed with **Pack Item 12** (*Handout: Characteristics of Noah's Ark*).

ASK: **When have you had to wait for something? What is the hardest part about waiting?**

READ: **Invite a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 8:10-14**, as the group listens for the final thing Noah did while in the ark.

OVERVIEW: Explain that Noah's family and the animals were inside the ark for more than a year. Refer to Genesis 7:11 and 8:14. *They were in the boat from the 17th day of second month in one year until the 27th day of the second month the next year.*

EMPHASIZE: Using pages 66-67 of the PSG, explain the difference between ravens and doves. Also note the meaning of the olive branch. Explain why Noah waited seven days to release the dove.

ASK: **Why does God put us in situations where we have to wait?** (PSG, p. 67)

TRANSITION: *Once it was clear that the ground was dry, Noah, his family, and the animals were free to leave the ark.*



NOTES

Group Activity Option

Natural

Obtain some olive leaves from a grocery store or print online images of olive leaves. As you're discussing Genesis 8:10-14, distribute the leaves as a visual aid during the discussion. Discuss Genesis 8:20-22, directing attention to the olive leaves again. Point out that they are a visual reminder that God keeps His promises and restores all those who trust in Him.

Exit (Genesis 8:15-19)

15 Then God spoke to Noah, **16** “Come out of the ark, you, your wife, your sons, and your sons’ wives with you. **17** Bring out all the living creatures that are with you — birds, livestock, those that crawl on the earth — and they will spread over the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” **18** So Noah, along with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives, came out. **19** All the animals, all the creatures that crawl, and all the flying creatures — everything that moves on the earth — came out of the ark by their families.

(v. 15) God spoke: This is the third time that God gave verbal directions to Noah. First, He commanded him to build the ark and gather the animals (6:13-22). Next, He instructed Noah to enter the ark and take the animals with him (7:1-4). This time, God told Noah and his family to exit from the ark with the animals. Noah and his family were the new humanity on earth. The animals with them were the beginning of a new day in God’s created order.

(v. 16) Come out of the ark: These words parallel the command in 7:1 to “enter the ark.” In both instances, Noah was completely obedient to God’s command. In fact, throughout the entire flood narrative, Noah’s obedience illustrated the testimony given about him that he was righteous and blameless (6:9).

While the precise meaning of Noah’s name is difficult to determine, it is most likely related to the Hebrew word for “rest.” In Noah’s obedience, God provided rest—albeit temporary—from the wickedness of the world.

(v. 17) All the living creatures: It is refreshing to realize that God’s plan from the beginning included the animals. The customary word for the species of animals was *min*, which is translated “kinds” in Genesis 1:24-25; 7:14. Moses used a different Hebrew word (*mishpachah*) in verse 19. This Hebrew term refers to “families” and suggests that offspring had been born on the ark. It also signals a new beginning for the animals.

In addition, the narrative anticipates the human family that will develop from Noah’s sons. This term is also seen in the covenant that God established with Abraham. In that situation, God promised that all the “peoples” of the earth would be blessed through Abraham (Gen. 12:3).

(v. 17) Spread over the earth: God gave two instructions in relation to the animals. They were to **spread over** the earth and repopulate it. These directions were also given to Noah’s family. To this point, all of God’s commands had been addressed to Noah, but the

members of Noah’s family were included in the command to repopulate the world. Noah’s sons and their wives were also to be fruitful and multiply, echoing the words of God in Genesis 1:28.

Key Background

Be fruitful and multiply

As noted, God issued this command for both the people and the animals coming off the ark. However, while the animals followed this command, humans were more stubborn. It took God’s work in confusing people’s languages at Babel (Gen. 11:1-9) before they finally obeyed His directions and spread across the earth.

(v. 18) His sons . . . and his sons’ wives: Again, the population of the world would be rebuilt through this single family. Genesis 9–11 illustrate how obedience to the command replenished the earth.

(vv. 18-19) Came out: Four times in verses 15-19, readers see the repeated action of coming out (vv. 16 and 17, as well as twice in v. 18). This is not boring repetition; instead, it represents a strong emphasis on the obedience of Noah and his family. In writing the narrative, Moses wanted to highlight the righteous obedience of Noah in sharp contrast to the wickedness of the fallen world that had been destroyed.

EXPLORE Genesis 8:15-19



APPLICATION POINT: People find restoration through a trusting obedience to the Father.

READ: Call for a volunteer to read aloud **Genesis 8:15-19**, directing the group to listen for how everyone came out of the ark.

EMPHASIZE: Read aloud verse 15 and use the information in the PSG (p. 68) to explain what it means. Allow volunteers to discuss times when God has spoken to them.

RESEARCH: Divide the group into teams of two or three. Instruct half the groups to study the information for verse 16 (PSG, pp. 68-69), while the other half does the same for verse 17 (PSG, pp. 68-69). Encourage each group to determine who left the ark and what God's expectation was moving forward.

ASK: **How important was it for the people and the animals to spread out and multiply?** (PSG, p. 69)

MEMORIZE: Lead the group to read aloud Genesis 8:17 together. Point out that this is the memory verse for this session. Lead the group to read the verse aloud and to start memorizing it. Encourage the group to think about how this verse should affect the way people think about God's creation. Challenge the group to trust God's leading in their lives.

TRANSITION: *After Noah and his family left the ark, Noah determined to worship God for all that He had done.*

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Object Lesson: Calendar

Display a wall calendar. (If you still have a previous year's wall calendar, you could use it to point out some of the things your family had planned.) Ask: ***Do you have a calendar like this at your house? What is a calendar like this typically used for?*** Discuss what Noah and his family may have put on their Ark Calendar for the year they were on the ark. Discuss how many times they might have projected a "Get Off the Ark" day and how they likely felt when that day finally arrived.

Worship (Genesis 8:20-22)

20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD. He took some of every kind of clean animal and every kind of clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. **21** When the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, he said to himself, “I will never again curse the ground because of human beings, even though the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth onward. And I will never again strike down every living thing as I have done. **22** As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night will not cease.”

(v. 20) Altar: This word, used 401 times in the Old Testament, designated a place of sacrifice. In fact, the Hebrew wording literally means “slaughter place.” While Cain and Abel brought offerings to God (Gen. 4:3-5), this is the first mention of an altar in Genesis. Most likely this was a primitive altar made from earth and stone. This was an altar “to the Lord.” At this altar Noah gave thanks for God’s protection and favor.

(v. 20) Clean animal . . . clean bird: In Genesis 7:2-3, Noah was instructed to take seven pair of clean creatures into the ark. From these clean animals and birds, Noah chose some to offer as a sacrifice. God’s command no doubt anticipated this sacrifice and the provision of eating meat (Gen. 9:2-3). Moses’s original Israelite readers were familiar with the law and would have needed no definition for clean animals.

Key Doctrine

God

To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. (See Exodus 15:11; Jeremiah 10:10.)

(v. 20) Offered: In Hebrew, this word means “to ascend,” “to go up,” or “rise up.” This contains a two-fold meaning. First, altars were often built on hills or other elevated areas. In several Old Testament passages, places of worship are called a “high place” (see Ezek. 20:29), though they often involved pagan altars condemned by God’s prophets. Second, the smoke and aroma from the sacrifice ascended toward heaven, seen as God’s dwelling place. In some regard, the sacrifice restored God and man and foreshadowed the ultimate mediator, Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5).

(v. 20) Burnt offerings: This fiery animal sacrifice pointed to the burnt offerings in the law (Lev. 1). The fact that the entire animal was burned is significant since it represented worshipers giving their entire being to God.

(v. 21) Smelled the pleasing aroma: This language is found throughout the Old Testament to describe God’s favor. For God to refuse to smell the aroma of a sacrifice was a sign of His displeasure (Lev. 26:31). The phrase **pleasing aroma** speaks of satisfying God’s requirements or avoiding His wrath. Because God was satisfied after the devastation of the flood, He made a pronouncement concerning future judgment.

(v. 21) Said to himself: These words were not spoken to Noah. Instead, God spoke them to His own heart in response to all that had transpired—the wickedness, the flood, and the sacrifice by righteous Noah.

(v. 21) Curse the ground: God had initially cursed the ground in Genesis 3:17, and He further cursed the ground following Abel’s murder (Gen. 4:11-12). Most Bible scholars believe these words relate to the judgment pronounced in Genesis 6:7. God’s intention to never again destroy humanity through a flood is reinforced in His promise to Noah in Genesis 9:9-11.

(v. 21) Inclination of the human heart: God affirmed the reality that the sinful condition of the world had not changed after the flood. The consequences of Adam’s sin continued. While the days after the flood ushered in a new beginning, they could not signal the end of humanity’s sinful heart. While Noah was righteous and favored, he still harbored the sin nature common to all people.

(v. 22) Will not cease: The flood had interrupted the natural order of the world, including seasons and the patterns of the sun and moon. God said that would never happen again.

EXPLORE Genesis 8:20-22



APPLICATION POINT: Believers should acknowledge and celebrate God’s redemption and restoration.

READ: Call for the group to read silently **Genesis 8:20-22**, looking for Noah’s response in worship and God’s reaction to Noah’s worship.

ASK: **Why do you think Noah built an altar to the Lord?**
(PSG, p. 70)

EXPLAIN: Direct attention to **Pack Item 10** (*Handout: Covenants in Genesis*). Emphasize that part of the Noahic covenant is God’s promise to never destroy the earth again by flood. Point out that this promise was made in the context of worship. *Noah honored and celebrated God’s grace and restoration, and God responded with a promise that extends to us today.*

EMPHASIZE: Using information for verse 20 (PSG, p. 70), highlight the information about burnt sacrifices. Lead the group to discuss how sacrifices related to complete devotion to God and how that might look in our lives today. Use information for verses 21-22 (PSG, pp. 70-71) to discuss the promise God made.

ASK: **How do you celebrate God’s goodness in your life?**
(PSG, p. 70)

TRANSITION: *God brought Noah, his family, and the animals through the flood. He was faithful to protect them and to restore them. We can trust His promises to us.*

Covenant	Participants	Significance	Key Verse
Adamic	God and Adam	God promises to protect Adam from Satan's temptations.	Gen. 1:26-28
Noahic	God and Noah	God promises never to destroy the earth again by flood.	Gen. 9:1-17
Mosaic	God and Israel	God promises to be a Father to the fatherless and a Father to the widow.	Exod. 22:22-27
Abrahamic	God and Abraham	God promises to be a Father to the fatherless and a Father to the widow.	Gen. 15:1-21

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Bible Skill

In discussing Genesis 8:20-22, share that while Noah’s offering is not the first recorded in Genesis (see Gen. 4:4), it is the first to be called a “burnt offering.” Encourage adults to look up the terms “sacrifice” and “offerings” in a Bible dictionary to gain a better understanding of the types and purposes of the several offerings in the Old Testament. Then read Hebrews 9:13-15 to gain a perspective on the sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf.

CHALLENGE

- SUMMARIZE:** Review these points from Apply the Text on page 72 of the Personal Study Guide:
- *Believers can patiently wait, knowing God's redemptive plan in unfolding.*
 - *People find restoration through a trusting obedience to the Father.*
 - *Believers should acknowledge and celebrate God's redemption and restoration.*
- REVIEW:** Lead to group to suggest ways Noah and his family expressed patience during their experience.
- ASK:** **What is one action you might take in light of each statement?**
- DISCUSS:** Guide the group to discuss the second question set under Apply the Text (PSG, p. 72): **Where do you find it difficult to wait on God? What should you do as you wait on God's plan to unfold? How does this Bible passage give you hope?**
- PRAY:** Close in prayer, acknowledging and celebrating God's redemption and restoration.

After the Session

Reinforce the session by emailing or texting the group and encouraging them to take time to privately worship the Lord this week. Suggest that they could do this by singing a song to the Lord, listening to a worship CD or YouTube video, or writing a poem or paragraph of praise to the Lord. Challenge them to thank God for the restoration He offers through Christ.

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