



# Land!

*Restoration awaits those who trust in God.*

## **GENESIS 8:10-22**

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.

- Why is it essential for people to know that restoration awaits those who put their trust in God?
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# UNDERSTAND **THE CONTEXT**

## **GENESIS 8:1-22**

In Hebrew, Genesis 8:1 begins with the word, “but” or “then.” These words, “but God” in the Bible often communicate that no matter how dismal or difficult circumstances may be, God makes all the difference. Here, “but God” contrasts the devastating and cataclysmic judgment of God on the earth and sinners with the grace of God to save Noah and his family and to restore all of creation, communicated with the words, “But God remembered Noah.”

This statement, “God remembered Noah,” does not mean God had forgotten about Noah, nor does it mean God merely called Noah to mind. When God “remembers,” it means He is faithful to keep His promises. For instance, when the psalmist declared that God “remembers his covenant forever” in Psalm 105:8, the meaning is that God faithfully keeps His covenant forever.

God’s remembering is often closely related to His miraculous saving acts on behalf of those to whom He had made prior covenant commitments. God saved Lot when He “remembered” Abraham (Gen. 19:29), God “remembered” Rachel and enabled Rachel to conceive and give birth to Joseph (30:22-23), God sent Moses to save Israel from Egypt when He “remembered” His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 2:24; 6:5), and God “remembered” His people Israel as they headed to the promised land (Num. 10:9). Moreover, it was God’s “remembering” His covenant that led Him to be faithful to Israel when Israel had become unfaithful to Him (Lev. 26:42,45). God took the initiative with Noah when He promised to make a covenant with Noah. Therefore, the statement, “But God remembered Noah” means that God was keeping His promise to Noah by saving Noah and his family from the flood.

Moses originally wrote this when the children of Israel had just been delivered from Egyptian bondage. Israel needed to remember the One who had saved them and learn from Noah’s example what it meant to live in covenant relationship with the Lord.



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

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# EXPLORE **THE TEXT**

## **WAIT** (GEN. 8:10-14)

<sup>10</sup> So Noah waited seven more days and sent out the dove from the ark again. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> After he had waited another seven days, he sent out the dove, but it did not return to him again. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> By the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the earth was dry.

## **VERSES 10-11**

Verses 10-11 are located in the second of three sections describing the stages of how God saved Noah and his family. Verses 1-5 record the receding flood waters, verses 6-14 describe the earth drying, and verses 15-19 describe the disembarkation of Noah and his family from the ark. After the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, located in northern Mesopotamia, Noah sent out a raven and a dove. The raven did not return, continuing its flying back and forth (v. 7), probably from mountain peak to mountain peak. But the weaker dove did return.

The much stronger raven is able to fly without rest for longer periods of time and often makes its home in the rocky crags and ledges of mountains. It is one of the most intelligent birds. Therefore, it makes sense that it was the first bird that Noah sent out of the ark. Rabbinic tradition asserts that Noah sent the raven out first because it was expendable, neither good for food nor allowed for offering a sacrifice.

Doves, on the other hand, are weaker than ravens, and though they are intelligent, they are not as intelligent as ravens. They were often included in rites of purification and were permitted in the Mosaic law to be used by the poor to make burnt offerings and sin offerings (Lev. 1:14; 5:7; 14:22). A dove was included in the offering that was made when God established His covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:9). And when Noah offered his burnt offering to God after finally exiting the ark, a dove was included in it (8:20).

Verse 10 describes how Noah ***waited seven more days*** before sending out the dove again. When the dove returned this time, it had ***a plucked olive leaf in its beak***. This indicated that the earth was finally

yielding its herbage again. It also indicated that God’s judgment of the flood on the earth was complete. It is for this reason that the dove with an olive branch in its beak has become a symbol of peace.

The olive leaf in the dove’s beak may have gotten the attention of the Israelites who first received this account from Moses, given that the law God gave them through Moses dictated they were to bring pure olive oil to the tabernacle to fuel its lamp regularly (Ex. 27:20; Lev. 24:2-4). Also, God commanded that the priests use olive oil to anoint the tabernacle and the holy items in it (Ex. 30:24-29). Both the dove and olive oil would become symbols in Israel that represented the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit in connection with the coming Messiah (1 Sam. 16:13; Ps. 89:20; Isa 61:1; see Matt. 3:16). The point is that even though the flood had a purifying effect on the earth, it did not purify the human heart. From Adam to Noah to the descendants of Noah, every human heart is stained by the depravity of sin, and the stain cannot be removed apart from the cleansing of the heart by the blood of Jesus Christ by grace through faith in Him (Eph. 1:7).

#### VERSES 12-14

Noah ***waited another seven days*** and then ***sent out the dove*** from the ark again. This time the dove did not return. This indicated that the land once again was inhabitable. ***In the six hundred first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month*** of Noah’s life, the waters were finally dried off the earth. The flood lasted twelve months and eleven days—one solar year. It was a momentous occasion when Noah was able to hoist the ark’s cover and witness for himself that ***the surface of the ground was drying***. Noah apparently saw that the ground was still too wet to step out on, but by the ***twenty-seventh day of the second month***, fifty-seven days later, the earth was completely dry.

 **Why does God put us in situations where we have to wait?**

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 **When you wait patiently on God, what does that communicate to others? What does it communicate to God?**

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## EXIT (GEN. 8:15-19)

<sup>15</sup> Then God spoke to Noah, <sup>16</sup> “Come out of the ark, you, your wife, your sons, and your sons’ wives with you. <sup>17</sup> 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.” <sup>18</sup> So Noah, along with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives, came out. <sup>19</sup> 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.

### VERSE 15

This verse is only five words but is a powerful statement considering all that had transpired from the time that Noah and his family entered the ark until the earth was completely dry and inhabitable again. There is no record that God spoke to Noah during the cataclysm of the flood, yet Noah remained faithful to the Lord during the entirety of that turbulent year. Because of God’s protection and provision for Noah and his family, they experienced peace in the midst of the storm. Even though God had not directly spoken to Noah during the entire time, God had not forgotten Noah (8:1). God communicated His faithfulness to Noah and his family by what He did for them, by being faithful to His promises.

When God appears to be silent, it is good for believers to look at how He communicates to us by what He has done, by what He is doing, and by what He has promised to do in the future. Believers grow in their faith when they learn to wait patiently for God and to trust in His wisdom to speak to them when and how He chooses to do so.

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### VERSES 16-19

In Genesis 7:1, God instructed Noah to enter the ark with his family. By faith, Noah did all that God told him to do. Here, God instructed Noah to lead his family to ***come out of the ark***. It is similar to what believers experience in life. In this world, we experience threats and suffering, but the Father has provided everything we need in Christ to endure its dangers (John 16:33). Those who are in Christ need not fear, because

by His Son the Father has saved us from judgment. Noah and his family went into the ark to save themselves, but Jesus went on the cross to save us. What's more, just as Noah and his family surely longed for the day when they would hear God calling them out of the ark, those of us who are in Christ long for the coming day when the Lord will call us out of this world to be with Him. At that time, we will see Him "face to face" and "know fully" as we are "fully known" (1 Cor. 13:12).

God also instructed Noah to bring out *all the living creatures* that were with him on the ark. Echoing the wording of Genesis 1:22 and 28, all of the animals and birds would become numerous and spread out over the entire earth, multiplying, and filling it as God commanded in the beginning when He created them. God's purposes for them remained the same. As nothing can derail God's will, the wickedness of humanity and its negative effects on the creatures of the earth could not thwart God's purposes for them.

Verses 18-19 emphasize again the kind of man Noah was—"a righteous man" who "walked with God" (6:9). Noah did what God told him to do. Would to God that this could be said of every believer, that we would faithfully do what God has told us to do in His Word. It is interesting to note that just as Noah's family came out of the ark, all of the animals and birds came out of the ark by their families also. This scene not only anticipates the growth of the families of Noah's sons, described in the genealogies of Genesis 10, but it also anticipates the multiplication and repopulation of these creatures all over the earth.

**How important was it for the people and the animals to spread out and multiply?**

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**Is there something God has told you to do that is still undone?**

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## **WORSHIP** (GEN. 8:20-22)

**<sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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.”<sup>22</sup> As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night will not cease.”

## VERSE 20

As soon as everyone had disembarked from the ark, Noah ***built an altar*** to worship God with a burnt offering in response to all that He had done. Noah’s sacrifice included every kind of ***clean animal*** and ***clean bird***. This means every kind of mammal that chewed cud and had split hoofs and every kind of bird that did not eat carrion. With this “reboot” of humanity on the earth, Noah demonstrated what the proper response should be of every person to God. Burnt offerings were totally consumed by fire, symbolizing total devotion to the Lord. Noah’s sacrifice of a burnt offering highlights the call to be completely devoted to God and symbolically anticipates the person and work of Christ on the cross, our one and only true sacrifice who by grace through faith cleanses believers of their sin (Heb. 9:11-15).



**Why do you think Noah built an altar to the Lord?  
How do you celebrate God’s goodness in your life?**

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## KEY DOCTRINE: God

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

## VERSES 21-22

God was pleased with Noah’s offering. He promised to ***never again curse the ground*** or destroy ***every living thing*** on the earth because of human sin, acknowledging that human beings come into this world with a sin nature. We are sinners by nature and by choice. God’s promise to not destroy the earth and its inhabitants comes on the heels



of His acknowledgment of humanity’s inclination to sin. Therefore, this is God’s promise of mercy and grace. Even though humanity deserves God’s judgment because of its inclination to sin, God instead would provide a way of salvation through the “seed of the woman,” Jesus Christ (3:15; see Rom. 16:20).

***Even though humanity deserves God’s judgment because of its inclination to sin, God instead would provide a way of salvation.***

The promise of the seasons in verse 22 promises the reestablishment of God’s created order. It is also an expression of His mercy and grace in spite of the sinfulness of humanity. It highlights God’s commitment ***as long as the earth endures*** to bless His “very good” creation until the time of final judgment (Gen. 1:31; 2 Pet. 3:3-7).

**BIBLE SKILL:** *Use a Bible Dictionary to explore sacrifices and offerings.*

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.” 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. Record your findings. Then read Hebrews 9:13-15 to gain a perspective on the sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf.

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# APPLY THE TEXT

- + Believers can patiently wait, knowing God’s redemptive plan is unfolding.
- + People find restoration through trusting obedience to the Father.
- + Believers should acknowledge and celebrate God’s redemption and restoration.

**○ Discuss as a group what this week’s Bible passage teaches us about God. What are tangible ways the group can acknowledge and celebrate God’s goodness in each other’s lives?**

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**○ 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?**

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**○ Memorize Genesis 8:17.**

## *Prayer Needs*

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