

TEXT Genesis 6:5-22; 7:1-24

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE Matthew 24:37-39

OBJECTIVE The students will realize that wickedness, unless repented of, will bring judgment. They will further see, through the example of Noah and his family, that God provides a way of escape from judgment for those who turn to Him.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER The seed of the righteous shall be delivered. — Proverbs 11:21

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. — Isaiah 26:20

ANSWER TITLE: Where Have You Been?
SEARCH TITLE: The First Plan of Escape

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Noah’s ark is referred to in Matthew 24:38 and Luke 17:27 as a warning of coming judgment; in Hebrews 11:7 as an example of faith; and in 1 Peter 3:20 as an example of the “long-suffering of God,” followed by disaster for the disobedient, but salvation for the few who entered the ark. Noah was tenth in descent from Adam in the line of Seth. When he was 480 years old, he was warned of God that the world would be destroyed by water. He was then given exact instructions for building the ark.

The ark had room for about 7,000 animals. It is esti-

mated that the building of it took 120 years. The ark’s measurements are taken from Genesis 6:14-16: 547 feet long, about 91 feet wide, 54 1/2 feet high. In the English system, the cubit is 18 inches.

The Flood occurred in approximately 2350 B.C. The floodwaters began in Noah’s 600th year, increased steadily for 40 days, maintained their mountain-covering depth for 110 more days, and then subsided sufficiently for Noah to disembark in the mountains of Ararat after another 221 days. Noah, his family and the animals were in the ark about a year. See Genesis 7:11 and 8:13.

YOUR OPENER

The First Plan of Escape

TEXT: Genesis 6:5-22; 7:1-24

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: Matthew 24:37-39

KEY VERSE: Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. — Isaiah 26:20

RESPONSES

1. The earth was to be destroyed by a flood, but the ark would provide a way of escape for those inside. God gave Noah explicit dimensions and directions for building the ark. Ask your students what kind of labor and time went into building the ark? How does this correspond to the effort on man's part toward his salvation? God freely gives His salvation, but there must be considerable diligence and effort on man's part to act and live as God would have him. Noah probably felt almost overwhelmed when confronted with his task, but knew it was well worthwhile when the Flood came. In like measure, people sometimes feel that it is almost more than they can do to live a Christian life, "but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." It will be well worth any effort demanded if, at the end of life, the person can see Jesus and enter into eternal life.

2. The ark was made of gopher wood, sealed within and without with pitch, three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, by thirty cubits high. The ark was to have three stories with a door in the side and a window at the top. Noah had faith that if he followed God's directions the finished product would accomplish the purpose that God intended. In order to build such a large vessel, where did Noah and his sons obtain so much lumber and of such huge sizes as would be needed? He could not order it from the lumberyard; he had to go to the forest to hew it. The purpose of this question is to bring out the enormity of the project that faced Noah and his family in order to be spared from the Flood.

3. God gave Noah seven days to get his family and the animals into the ark. It seems that God gave the people a last chance to repent. Have your students rehearse the events just before the Flood came. Though the people had not believed Noah's warning of the impending flood, one might expect that they would have felt some curiosity when they saw all the animals going into the ark. The Bible tells us that men are willingly ignorant concerning the things of God (2 Peter 3:5). Ask your students to identify some of the events happening in the world today that point to Jesus Christ's imminent Second Coming to earth.

Just a few generations after Adam's sin, God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Being grieved with this condition, God decreed judgment upon corrupt mankind, but "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" and he and his family were spared from destruction. Thus we find from the beginning of God's dealings with men that His love provides, for those who repent, a way of escape from judgment.

1. Why was Noah told to build the ark, and from what source did he receive instructions to build such a vessel?

2. Give a description of the ark. How did Noah know that it would be seaworthy, or even float?

3. What took place as soon as Noah was finished building the ark? What space of time came between this event and the actual Flood? What significance can be placed upon this circumstance?

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ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Who shut the door when Noah and his family were in the ark? Why?

5. Because Noah was a righteous man, he was saved from the Flood. Do you feel that God will eventually destroy the righteous with the wicked when He sends judgment upon the earth again? Why or why not?

6. Explain how the earth will eventually be destroyed. See 2 Peter 3:10.

7. What similarity is there between the days of Noah and the days in which we live? Matthew 24:37-39.

YOUR WRAP-UP

4. God shut the door of the ark. Have the students talk about the finality of a God-closed door (Revelation 3:7). Perhaps the cries of the people perishing on the outside of the ark caused pity in the hearts of the family inside, but Noah could not open the door to admit anyone. Ask your students to parallel this to God's warning which comes to mankind today to enter the door of mercy while it is open. They should conclude that the day will come when it will be closed forever. See Luke 13:24-25.

5. God will never destroy the righteous with the wicked, because He has pledged that He will not do so. Bring out the fact, with your students' participation, that some righteous people have died along with the ungodly in times of crises such as fires, floods, and wars. Jonathan was an exemplary man, yet he died in war along with his backslidden father, but there was a difference. No doubt Jonathan's soul went to eternal bliss, while King Saul's soul went to a lost eternity. Scripture shows us that God will not destroy the righteous with the unrepentant wicked. Refer to Genesis 18:23-25 and the key verse. Point out that death for the Christian is not destruction but, rather, a transition to eternal life.

6. The earth will be destroyed by fire. What was destroyed in Noah's time? God was grieved with the sins of men, so He destroyed mankind and all the animals that did not go into the ark. In the last days "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Emphasize the truth that the sins of men are under God's judgment. The only place of safety is in God's grace through repentance and forsaking of sin.

7. "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Ask your students what characterized the hearts of men in Noah's time? Discussion should bring out the fact that the sins of men were great and their hearts were only evil continually. Jesus taught that just prior to His coming back to earth, the actions of men would be much the same. He emphasized that people continued living their lives just as if no judgment had been pronounced. As the antediluvians found no reprieve from the Flood after the door of the ark was shut, so those who refuse to repent while God's love is calling will find no place of repentance after the door of mercy has been closed—only a lost eternity.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Why did Noah and his family escape destruction?

How old was Noah when the Flood came?

How long did it rain upon the earth?

What were some of the characteristics of Noah that caused him to find favor with God? Why might these characteristics be important to people today?

Noah was given very specific instructions. How important is it to follow directions in order to escape judgment or to reach desired goals?

What are the directions for escaping sin and judgment?

Think how it must have been for Noah to build the ark. How would you feel if you did not understand boat building yet were directed to build a craft with which you were not familiar?

What is coming upon the earth soon, that God compared to the time of the Flood?

Noah escaped by obeying God. What must we do to prepare for Heaven?

What comparisons might be made between conditions on the earth today and those in Noah's time?

Do you think God will again destroy man from the face of the earth? Why or why not?

In the ANSWER story, Kim disobeyed her parents. What did she do to cover up for her disobedience? Will a "cover-up" keep one from being punished? Why or why not?

THINGS TO DO

Using the alphabet as a guide, ask each student to name an item that went into the ark; for example, A — aardvark, B — baboon, C — cat. If a student cannot think of something, just go on to the next person.

Show your students pictures of the ark and a cross. Explain them in this way: ARK — The ark was prepared

to save Noah and any who would believe and follow him into it. Eight people, in all, were saved from that destruction. CROSS — God sent Jesus to die for us. If we will believe and follow Him we will be saved from the end-time destruction. How many people, in all, will be saved?

Bring a road map and a Bible to class. Have your class look at the map and help you choose a starting point and a destination. Decide the best road to travel. Now that you know the best way, it would make no sense to start traveling on back roads or streets that go in the opposite direction. The same is true when we know we want our destination to be Heaven. The Bible is our road map and it tells us that the only way to get there is to repent of our sins. How foolish to think we can get to Heaven in any other way.

Answers for ANSWER

A Way of Escape

Sin will always bring punishment, but God has made a way for us to escape His punishment. He sent Jesus. God has always provided a way of escape for those who love Him. Over four thousand years ago He made a way for Noah to escape. Answer the questions below to find out why and how. The numbers at the end of each question are the chapters and verses where the answers can be found. They are all from the Book of Genesis.

1.	Why was God going to destroy the earth and the people in it? (6:5)	<i>They were filled with violence</i>
2.	Why did God save Noah and his family? (6:9)	<i>He was a just man and walked with God</i>
3.	How many people were saved in the ark? (7:13)	<i>Eight</i>
4.	What kind of wood was used in making the ark? (6:14)	<i>Gopher wood</i>
5.	How many stories (decks) did the ark have? (6:16)	<i>Three</i>
6.	How many doors and windows did the ark have? (6:16)	<i>One door — One window</i>
7.	How long was Noah in the ark before it began to rain? (7:10)	<i>Seven days</i>
8.	Who closed the door of the ark? (7:16)	<i>The Lord</i>
9.	How long did the waters last upon the earth? (7:24)	<i>150 days</i>
10.	What two birds were sent out from the ark? (8:7,8)	<i>A raven and a dove</i>