

SIN CORRUPTS

CORE PASSAGE: GENESIS 6:9-22

CONTEXT

If Adam and Eve had hoped their firstborn son, Cain, would be the promised Seed to defeat the serpent, their hopes were crushed when Cain murdered his brother Abel out of jealousy. Grieving the loss of Abel, Adam and Eve had another son, Seth—a son in Adam’s likeness. Unlike Cain’s descendants, who lived however they pleased, Seth’s descendants walked with God and hoped for reprieve from the curse of sin. While sin and violence corrupted humankind, Noah, whose name means rest, was a righteous man who followed God. God would soon enact righteous judgment against sin on the whole earth, but God showed grace to Noah.

KEY CONCEPT

Sin corrupts and must be judged, but God saves those who fear and obey Him.

As you examine Genesis 6:9-22:

- Identify ways you can live blamelessly in a world that does not value what God values.
- Reflect on times when you have experienced the blessings of faithful obedience in your own life.



TIMELINE

The Fall of Humanity and Its Consequences (Genesis 3)

SESSION STUDY: God Judges Sinful Humanity with the Flood
(Genesis 5–9)

The Effects of Sin Spread to Adam and Eve's Children
(Genesis 4)

God Scatters Proudful Humanity at the Tower of Babylon (Genesis 10–11)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Genesis 5:1–32

☐ **Day 2:** Genesis 6:1–7:24

☐ **Day 3:** Genesis 8:1–22

☐ **Day 4:** Genesis 9:1–17

☐ **Day 5:** Genesis 9:18–29

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 53



Scan this QR code to access
this session's Scripture passages.

SIN CORRUPTS EVERY ASPECT OF GOD'S GOOD CREATION (GENESIS 6:9-13).

Circle words used to describe Noah.

Then underline words used to describe the rest of humankind.

9 These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God. **10** And Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. **11** Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with wickedness. **12** God saw how corrupt the earth was, for every creature had corrupted its way on the earth. **13** Then God said to Noah, "I have decided to put an end to every creature, for the earth is filled with wickedness because of them; therefore I am going to destroy them along with the earth."

God had given Adam and Eve, and their descendants, the command to multiply and fill the earth, and they did just that. But as people multiplied throughout the earth, so did sin. Sin, violence, and depravity became so pervasive that "every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time" (Gen. 6:5). As wicked as our modern world is, it cannot compare to the widespread evil in the generations after the fall. No pangs of conscience kept people in check. They did whatever they wanted to whomever they wanted without any repercussions, and it deeply grieved the Lord (v. 6).

VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

"God is no robot. . . . Our God is incomparably affected by, even pained by, the sinner's rebellion. Rather, his feelings and actions toward men, such as judgment or forgiveness, are always inherently consistent with his essential person and just and gracious resolve."¹

—Kenneth A. Mathews

God, whose eyes test the hearts of all humankind (Ps. 11:4-5), found only one person in all the earth who even attempted to walk with Him—Noah. Noah was not perfect, of course. No one except Jesus is perfectly sinless, but Noah was different from his contemporaries in that he feared God and tried to live a righteous life (2 Pet. 2:5).

LEADER NOTE: From ceaseless wars, genocide, slavery, sexual debauchery, and more, we have only a taste of the wickedness in the time of Noah. All of those things are abhorrent to us as believers because the Holy Spirit currently works to restrain evil while allowing us to maintain free will. When we witness evil, the Holy

Spirit cries out within us, “It isn’t supposed to be this way!” Creation itself cries out, waiting for Jesus to return to redeem the earth and make all things new (Rom. 8:18-24).

How can you live blamelessly in a world that does not value what God values?

Since God saw that “every creature had corrupted its way on the earth” (Gen. 6:12), God’s judgment was inevitable. God is perfect in holiness, and all His decisions are just (Deut. 32:4; Ps. 89:14). We sometimes struggle with this balance, but God never does. How could a just and loving God allow such rampant wickedness to continue? He could not. To leave sin unpunished would be contrary to His nature. As a result of the rampant wickedness throughout the earth, He planned to destroy the wicked through a flood. Yet in His mercy, God would preserve Noah’s family and some of every kind of animal that lived on the earth.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD: There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all-powerful and all-knowing, and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience.

LEADER NOTE: Sometimes we have a hard time wrapping our minds around the fact that God destroyed the animals who lived on earth (all that breathed air) during the flood. But human beings do not sin in a vacuum. Humans were made to have dominion over the animals, and our sin has polluted the created order. Thus, the corrupted animal kingdom would need to be destroyed as well. Yet just as God spared Noah’s family, God selected the animals that He sent to the ark to preserve them (Gen. 6:20). Noah would not have to hunt down two ferrets, elephants, or lions. The animals would come to Noah, directed to the ark by the Lord.

In what ways can you still see the effects of humankind’s sin on the created order?

Notes

GOD JUDGES SIN BUT SAVES THOSE WHO FEAR AND OBEY HIM (GENESIS 6:14-22).

Highlight the commands that God gave Noah. Circle Noah's response.

14 “Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it with pitch inside and outside. **15** This is how you are to make it: The ark will be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. **16** You are to make a roof, finishing the sides of the ark to within eighteen inches of the roof. You are to put a door in the side of the ark. Make it with lower, middle, and upper decks. **17** Understand that I am bringing a flood—floodwaters on the earth to destroy every creature under heaven with the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. **18** But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives. **19** You are also to bring into the ark two of all the living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. **20** Two of everything—from the birds according to their kinds, from the livestock according to their kinds, and from the animals that crawl on the ground according to their kinds—will come to you so that you can keep them alive. **21** Take with you every kind of food that is eaten; gather it as food for you and for them.” **22** And Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him.

God warned Noah that He was going to destroy the earth and everything on it with a flood. Every creature under heaven with the breath of life would die—except those in the ark. God established a covenant with Noah that He would preserve Noah's family and two of all the living creatures. Noah's part of the covenant was to make the ark that would secure his survival. God was specific with His instructions, from the materials and specifications to the design itself. The book of Hebrews states that Noah was “motivated by godly fear” and built the ark in faith to deliver his family exactly as God instructed him (Heb. 11:7).

LEADER NOTE: Godly fear (reverential love for God) always produces obedience in the life of the believer. Jesus clearly stated that if we love God, we will gladly do what He commands (John 14:15; 15:10; 1 John 5:3). Our obedience does not stem from our desperation to earn God's favor. God loves us because we are His, not because of what we do for Him. When we understand how much God loves us (1 John 3:1), we naturally delight to do what He commands (Ps. 40:8).

How have you experienced the blessings of faithful obedience in your life?

Key Concept: Sin corrupts and must be judged, but God saves those who fear and obey Him.



Notes

Many modern movies that put their spin on this biblical account make Noah seem doubtful of God's instructions or intentions, and they often depict Noah's neighbors ridiculing his DIY project. Yet Peter described Noah as "a preacher of righteousness" by his faithful obedience (2 Pet. 2:5). Jesus made it clear that despite Noah's building of the ark and warnings of judgment, his contemporaries mistook God's patient mercy for apathy and thus were swept away (Matt. 24:37-39). Today, people—even believers—are lax about the coming judgment. Please hear the warning spoken first by Jesus and then by Peter: the day of the Lord—when Christ returns to bring final judgment on sinners—will be like a thief in the night (Matt. 24:42-44; 2 Pet. 3:10). And just as the only way to survive the flood was to be in the ark, the only way to survive the coming judgment is to be in Christ by faith (John 3:16-18; 1 Pet. 3:18-22).

LEADER NOTE: This story is as much about God's mercy as His hatred for sin. While God permitted people to multiply despite their sinful nature, He preserved a righteous remnant through the line of Seth (Gen. 5). It is also important to note that God examined not only the deeds of humankind but the thoughts and attitudes of their hearts (Gen. 6:5; Heb. 4:12). God did not judge them on a whim but based on their inability to meet or even desire to meet His righteous standard. Finally, God patiently waited to bring the flood while Noah warned his neighbors of the wrath to come (1 Pet. 3:20). We long for Jesus's return, but He tarries for the sake of those who will be saved (2 Pet. 3:8-9).

While we wait for the Lord, how should we fight against apathy toward sin?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

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As with Noah and the flood, a final judgment for sin is coming when God will condemn unrepentant sinners to eternal death and hell, but all those who repent and believe in Jesus will be saved, being found in Him—their Savior from the judgment to come.

Notes

ARRIVAL

ASK: As people arrive for the group study, ask: When is too much of a good thing a bad thing?

CONTEXT

SUMMARIZE: After Cain was cursed as a wanderer who would not walk with God, Eve gave birth to Seth. Genesis 5 recounts Seth's descendants, which included Enoch, who did walk with God and whom God took away (5:21-24). The genealogy ends with Noah, who also walked with God (see 6:9), and his sons (5:32). Genesis 6 then begins speaking of others who did not walk with God but instead roamed the earth in wickedness. It describes how the earth had been corrupted through their evil ways.

ASK: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 5: Walk with God (handout)** and then ask: “Based on these biblical examples, what would it look like to walk with God today? What might it look like not to walk with God?”

TRANSITION: Today, we will examine the pervasive nature of sin. Within a few generations after Adam and Eve left the garden, the sinful state of humankind reached a boiling point. Based on your Bible study this past week, we are going to chart what is at the core of human nature compared to the holiness of God.

RECAP

ASK: What key phrase or idea stood out to you as you prepared this week? Any questions you would like to discuss with the group?

TRANSITION: As we arrived, we discussed times when too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. Too much sugar in a dessert can make it sickeningly sweet. Giving a toddler too much freedom and too little supervision or direction can lead to trouble. In our story today, we'll discuss that human beings in the time of Noah struggled with too much sinfulness. As humanity multiplied on the earth, sin multiplied as well—to the extent that God's recourse was to send a flood. Many people today bristle at the thought of wickedness being our default setting as human beings, but Scripture paints a startling picture. Let's chart out the contrast between what Scripture says of our inherited sin nature and what it says about God's holiness.



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Key Concept: Sin corrupts and must be judged, but God saves those who fear and obey Him.

GROUP ACTIVITY

GUIDE: Direct your group to page 48 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find a table with the headings “HUMANITY” and “GOD.” Draw this table on a board in your room. Write down words and phrases in the appropriate column, along with Scripture references, as your group interacts with the text.

Humanity’s Corruption, God’s Holiness

Based on Genesis 6:9-22, write down words used to describe humanity at the time of Noah. Then based on Psalm 29, write down words used to describe God.

HUMANITY

GOD

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 6:9-13.

IDENTIFY: Encourage your group to call out phrases from the text that indicate the true state of humanity apart from God’s grace and record these in the “HUMANITY” column. Go ahead and write an example: “Every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time (Gen. 6:5).” Direct the group to likewise use the text to form their answers. Making sure to note the Scripture reference next to each answer will help instill this skill. Give them time to record the answers in their PSG.

DISCUSS: As necessary, prompt your group to discuss the following:
What images come to mind when God says that “the earth was filled with wickedness” (v. 11)? When you look at current events in the world, how do you still see our inherited sin nature at play?

SUMMARIZE: Briefly summarize the group’s conclusions under the “HUMANITY” column.

READ: Invite your group to turn to Psalm 96 in their Bibles, and call for a volunteer to read the psalm aloud.

Notes

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ANALYZE: Encourage your group to call out words and phrases from Psalm 96 that describe God and record these, along with the Scripture references, in the “GOD” column in the chart on the board. Instruct the group to record these in the chart in their PSG as well.

DISCUSS: Prompt your group to discuss how God’s holiness stands in stark contrast to humanity’s sinfulness. Ask: As believers, even we can tend to minimize certain sins as “not that bad,” but God does not treat sin lightly. Why does God have such a serious view of sin?

SAY: We often point out God’s mercy and love for us, but we cannot forget that God is perfect in holiness just as He is perfect in mercy. We as Christians have the responsibilities of examining our own hearts, confessing our sin and putting it to death in us, and striving to walk with God in faithful obedience.

DEBRIEF

What is an insight you learned about God or yourself from this activity?

If we believe Scripture that wickedness grieves God (see Gen. 6:6), then how should we gauge sin in our own lives?

SUMMARIZE

Lead the group to review the key concept, inviting them to share ways today’s group experience helped them better understand that sin corrupts but God has a plan to save those who trust in Him.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section on page 49 in the PSG. Specifically highlight the **Heart** section in this week’s study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



HEAD: Sometimes we only need to turn on a news-feed to get a glimpse of the wickedness inherent in the human condition. We grieve when we hear about violence, war, corruption, injustice, and perversion. The Holy Spirit living within believers reminds us that life is not supposed to be this way and that one day the Lord will return and restore creation to what it should be. That day will be a blessing for believers, but unrepentant sinners will be swept away like Noah’s contemporaries. As believers, it is our duty as we await the Lord’s return to boldly proclaim the gospel and the consequences our unsaved contemporaries will face if they do not heed the warning.

What are some ways we can be preachers of righteousness in our fallen world?



HEART: Some people refuse to believe that a loving God would go to such drastic extremes to rid the world of sin. But sin is drastic rebellion against the loving Creator who made us for relationship with Him and others.

Holy God cannot ignore sin (Ex. 34:6-7), so He sent the flood, but He took an even greater step to destroy sin once and for all by sending His Son to earth. Jesus took on human flesh, yet the wickedness of sinful humanity could not corrupt Him, being fully God and fully man. Even so, our sinless Savior died on the cross and rose again so that anyone who trusts in Him will not receive the punishment we deserve but will instead receive eternal life with Him.

How does it make you feel to know that apart from Christ, the human heart's every inclination is to sin?



HANDS: Peer pressure and mob mentality can be difficult to overcome.

Though the Bible does not indicate how his neighbors reacted, we know Noah lived a radically different life than everyone around him. We as Christians are called to stand out from the crowd too by pursuing righteousness. For this reason, it is important that we encourage one another daily (Heb. 3:13), especially as the day of the Lord draws near (10:24-25).

Whom can you encourage this week to walk with God in faithful obedience?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions in response to this session.

- Pray through Psalm 53, focusing on our inability to follow God on our own.
- Reflect on how sin corrupts all aspects of God's creation, yet God extends mercy to those who trust in Him.
- Share with a friend or mentor how this Bible story will shape how you view sin and repentance in your own life.

Take a few moments to ask for updates to prayer needs mentioned the previous week and celebrate any answered prayers. Encourage your group to record praises for answered prayer or any new prayer requests in their PSG (p. 49).

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Close in prayer, using Psalm 53:1-3,6 as a guide.

References:

1. Kenneth A. Mathews, Genesis 1-11:26, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 344.