

# END-TIMES ISSUES



**#21** The Flood and God's covenant with Noah

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1

**EVIL must be judged and punished by God.**

If God did *not* do this, he himself would be evil.

Your eyes are too **pure** to look upon evil, and You **cannot tolerate** wrongdoing.

Habakkuk 1:13a (BSB)

↪ The problem is:

- Evil people tend to not admit that evil is *evil*. They normally consider it *good*.
- They *cannot* see that their end is *not* going to be good.

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil ...

Isaiah 5:20a (BSB)

✦ **Unless we submit to Scripture, this describes us.** ✦

2

**God has warned us about the attitude people will have during the "end times." Will we be able to recognize it?**

As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Matthew 24:37 (BSB)

↪ Even "religious" people can be evil... and blind to their condition.

My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to hear your words, but they do not put them into practice. Their mouths speak of love, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for **they hear your words but do not put them into practice.**

Ezekiel 33:31-32 (NIV)

3

**What was it like in the days of Noah? (GOD's view.)**

✓ Genesis 6 gives us *God's view* of the conditions. (This is *not* how the *people* would have described it.)

Then the LORD saw that the **wickedness** of man was great upon the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was altogether **evil** all the time.

Genesis 6:5 (BSB)

✓ Further descriptions:

- **The people and the earth: Corrupt** in the sight of God; full of **violence** (Genesis 6:11-13).
- **The outcome:** To be **destroyed**; to **perish**; to **come to an end** (Genesis 6:13, 17).
- Some verses focus on the *people*; some focus on the *earth*.

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**WHAT DO THESE DESCRIPTIONS MEAN?**

The following definitions show how these words are used in Scripture: \*

✓ **Wicked / evil:** (Strong's concordance number: H7451.)

- (adjective) Bad, evil, wicked (ethically).
- (noun) Evil, distress, misery, injury, evil (ethical).
- This word is used to describe *people* and their *values*.

✓ **Corrupt / destroy:** (Strong's concordance number: H7843.)

- To destroy, corrupt, go to ruin, decay.
- This word is used in many contexts (*not* all sinful). Here, the people have corrupted ("ruined") themselves *and* the earth. In judgment, God is going to destroy ("ruin") the people *and* the earth... and then start over with eight people and a "new" earth.

\* Using readily-available public domain resources, we can learn a lot. (Available free on the internet, and often at low cost in printed form.) Here, the words are identified with the numbering system of Strong's concordance (for reference purposes); the definitions are based on Brown-Driver-Briggs' Hebrew Definitions.

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✓ **Violence:** (Strong's concordance number: H2555.)

- Violence, wrong, cruelty, injustice.
- This word is normally used to describe *people's* conduct.

**AVOIDING A MISUNDERSTANDING.**

⇒ When we see the word "violence" in Genesis 6, we tend to think of *physical* violence. This word is also used of *non-physical* acts, such as:

- Bearing false witness – Exodus 23:1; Deuteronomy 19:16; Psalm 27:12; 35:11
- General wrongdoing, being wronged – Genesis 16:5; Job 19:7
- Intense hatred – Psalm 25:19
- Leading people astray – Proverbs 16:29
- Lying – Micah 6:12
- Divorce – Malachi 2:16

⇒ In some cases, the word may be translated differently, such as: malicious, ruthless, (having been) wronged, etc.

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**What was it like in the days of Noah? (The PEOPLE's view.)**

✓ Jesus tells us the people's focus – and it *wasn't* repentance.

People were eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

Luke 17:27 (BSB); see also Matthew 24:36-37.

- They were more focused on "daily life," than on the world situation and their ignoring of God... just like people today.
- Jesus expands this list of "daily life" activities, when he continues by describing "the days of Lot." *He says this will be the same focus people have when he returns in judgment, at the end of the age.*

People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.

Luke 17:28b (BSB)

**THE WORLD SITUATION  
MAY BE BAD. BUT WE  
CAN'T LET IT INTERFERE  
WITH OUR DAILY LIVES!**

**Observations from the Flood account.**

**NOAH**

- ✓ **With God's favor** (Genesis 6:8; because he was righteous, v. 9).
- ✓ **Righteous, blameless, walking with God** (Genesis 6:9; Hebrews 11:7).
- ✓ **Faithful, trusting God** (Hebrews 11:7); this resulted in holy/godly fear and obedience; he inherited the righteousness that comes by faith.
- ✓ **Obedient** (Genesis 6:22+; Hebrews 11:7); to survive the judgment, Noah had to have the "obedience of faith" – just as we do (Romans 1:5).
- ✓ **Warned the people, apparently for 120 years** (2 Peter 2:5, he was a "preacher of righteousness").
- ✓ **Noah's family – saved on the ark on account of Noah's righteousness** (Genesis 7:1; 2 Peter 2:5); most likely, some of his family members were righteous (Shem) and some weren't (Ham).

**GOD**

- ✓ **Patient with the wicked, while the ark was being built** (1 Peter 3:20; during this time, they were being warned of their coming judgment).
- ✓ **Faithful to his word – fulfilling his promises and warnings** (everything in the account points to this).
- ✓ **Promised hope for Noah, when warning him about the coming judgment** (Genesis 6:18); he promised he would establish his covenant with Noah – which assured Noah that he (and his family) would survive the Flood.

**THE WORLD**

- ✓ **Wicked (as we have already seen) and unwilling to repent** (many verses, Genesis 6 and elsewhere).
- ✓ **Ignored Noah's message, so the flood was a surprise to them** (Matthew 24:39; Luke 17:27; Hebrews 11:7, they were condemned; 2 Peter 2:5, they were not spared).

**THE FLOOD**

- ✓ **A symbolic picture of baptism** (1 Peter 3:21).
- ✓ **A historical fact (along with Creation)**, that people will *deliberately* "forget" (2 Peter 3:3-7). Peter warns us that *their coming judgment will prove to be just as factual as was the Flood.*

Above all, you must understand that in the last days **scorners will come**, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

But **they deliberately forget** that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

2 Peter 3:3-7 (NIV)

✓ **The Flood caused ecological and geological devastation.**

- Sedimentary (water-caused) rock layers are found all over the earth.
- The entire fossil record testifies to what happens when a catastrophic global flood situation occurs.
- Life forms (both plant and animal) that are now extinct testify to the catastrophic nature of the event, as well as to the changes that took place afterwards.

✓ **Weather would have also been affected.**

- After the Flood, it probably took a while for weather to stabilize.
- The book of Job, which was probably the earliest written book in the Bible, mentions more about catastrophic weather phenomena, than does any other book of the Bible (except for prophecy related to the end times).
- Some animals that survived the flood may have had a difficult time adjusting to the changes... and are now extinct.

**THREE "WORLDS."**

**The devastation that occurred at the Flood judgment was so great, that Peter could describe it as though it resulted in a different world! He also warns us that destruction is going to happen one more time... but with fire.**

✓ **The previous world:**

... long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water,

... **the world of that time** perished in the flood.

2 Peter 3:5b, 6b (BSB)

✓ **The present world:**

And by that same [= God's] word, **the present heavens and earth** are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2 Peter 3:7 (BSB)

( The Flood judgment affected the earth. The future judgment (at Jesus' return) will affect both heaven and earth. )

✓ **The future world:**

... the day of God, when the heavens will be destroyed by fire and the elements will melt in the heat.

But in keeping with God's promise, we are looking forward to **a new heaven and a new earth**, where righteousness dwells.

2 Peter 3:12b-13 (BSB)

✓ **This fact should influence how we live.**  
(Hint: *We better NOT live the way they lived "in the days of Noah"!*)

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live **holy and godly lives** ...

So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found **spotless, blameless and at peace with him**.

2 Peter 3:11, 14 (BSB)

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## God's covenant with Noah.

✓ **This covenant reaffirms the Creation Mandate** (instructions and teachings found in Genesis 1-2).

- *Some changes are necessary*, because of the new situation.
- This covenant is made (by God) with: Noah (6:18), his descendants (9:9, which includes us who are living today), all living creatures (9:12), and the whole earth (9:13).

✓ **This is an unconditional covenant; but it places obligations on both God and people.**

- God will keep his promises. He *cannot* lie.
- We have an obligation to live according to the terms of the covenant. At the final Judgment Day, we will give account for what we have done.

✓ **The occasion: They had left the ark and were offering sacrifices to God** (probably thank offerings, not sin offerings).

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### VARIOUS DETAILS ABOUT THE COVENANT

✓ **People will continue to have corrupt natures, though created "in God's image." The covenant is made in spite of that fact.**

- The Flood may have had a "cleansing" effect on creation (especially if the pre-flood people had destroyed the environment, the way people do today); *but it could not cleanse the human heart.*

... for in the **image of God** has God made mankind.

Genesis 9:6b (NIV)

... every inclination of the human heart is **evil from childhood**.

Genesis 8:21b (NIV)

- Our *obligations* remain; but *our ability to fulfil them* has been significantly hindered, ever since sin entered the world.
- The human inclination to sin (when not submitted to the control of God) is a common theme throughout Scripture.

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✓ **The value of human life (being in God's image).**

- Because humans were made in God's image, the killing of humans is strictly forbidden – except for when it is the *punishment* for killing a human. The *reason* for this punishment is found here:
- *This punishment applies also to animals that kill humans.*

And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting **from every animal**. And **from each human being**, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being.

"Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind."

Genesis 9:5-6 (NIV)

- Before this time, murder may have become a popular way of destroying other humans – see Genesis 4:8, 23-24.

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✓ **Ruling over creation.**

The fear and dread of you will fall on every living creature on the earth, every bird of the air, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. **They are delivered into your hand.**

Genesis 9:2 (BSB)

- Dominion over the animals is *indirectly* reaffirmed. As stated in Genesis 1, humans are to rule over creation, in God's behalf.
  - ❖ The "in God's behalf" statement is extremely important. It limits what we can do with creation. Anything that dishonors God is forbidden!
  - ❖ Since creation itself is revelatory of God (Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:20), *we must treat creation well!*
- Animals will now eat meat (which they originally didn't – Genesis 1:29-30). This is one possible reason for the "fear of man" statement – it would restrain the animal's attacks on people.

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✓ **Provisions and food.**

- Animals may now be killed and eaten. The drastic changes in the post-Flood environment may have necessitated it.

**Everything that lives and moves will be food** for you; just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you all things.

But you must not eat meat with its lifeblood still in it.

Genesis 9:3-4 (BSB)

- This is a "permission," not a mandatory requirement. The "clean" and "unclean" regulations given later to the Jews are not part of this covenant. However, the eating of *blood* is forbidden (because of its association with life itself).
- Because God permits the eating of meat, Scripture condemns those who try to force people to *not* eat meat, or who claim that eating meat is sinful.

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✓ **Marriage and procreation.**

- This obligation remains. More "image bearers" are needed, in order "fill the earth."

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and **fill the earth.**"  
Genesis 9:1 (NIV); also 9:7.

- In just a few generations, the people would deliberately disobey the "fill the earth" part of the command. God would have to judge them, by confusing their languages.

"Come," they said, "let us build for ourselves a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens, **that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered** over the face of all the earth."  
 [The place] is called Babel, for there the LORD confused the language of the whole world, and from that place **the LORD scattered them** over the face of all the earth.  
Genesis 11:4, 9 (BSB)

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✓ **The context of worship.**

- In Genesis 2:2-3, God set a pattern. It was *not* a command. When reviewing that passage, we commented that *taking time to focus on God* is the natural reaction of the person who loves God.
- Here, the first thing Noah (and his family) did, after leaving the ark, was to offer sacrifices to God.

Then God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark, ..."  
 So Noah came out, along with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. Every living creature, every creeping thing, and every bird—everything that moves upon the earth—came out of the ark, kind by kind.  
**Then Noah built an altar to the LORD.** And taking from every kind of clean animal and clean bird, he offered burnt offerings on the altar.  
Genesis 8:15-16a, 18-20 (BSB)

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✓ **No more global "Flood judgments"!**

- The rest of this earth's *physical* history will be characterized by relative stability – illustrated by alternating seasons, and other cycles of nature.

"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."  
Genesis 8:22 (NIV)

- This present earth will end with the next global judgment: a judgment by *fire*, not by a global Flood. After that will be a "new heaven and new earth" (Revelation 21:1).
- This promise does *not* prevent *local* floods and environmental instability. The issue here is the *global* nature of the judgment.

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**No more global "Flood judgments"** – this is strongly affirmed throughout Genesis 9, as well as at the end of chapter 8.

[The LORD] said in His heart, "**Never again** will I curse\* the ground because of man, ... And **never again** will I destroy all living creatures as I have done."  
Genesis 8:21b, d (BSB)

\* (The "curse" in this verse is a reference to the Flood judgment, and *not* a reference to the curse that came when our first humans chose to sin – Genesis 3.)

✓ **Other judgments will occur before the end.** But, until the end, *none will be global in scope!*

- Ultimately, the *promise* God made in Genesis 3:15 (to "curse" the Serpent [the spiritual entity]) will be fulfilled.
- God will use judgments as one of the ways he thwarts the attempts of people (and the Serpent) to hinder the fulfillment of this promise.

22

**THE COVENANT AFFIRMED**

✓ **The parties involved. Who did God make the covenant with?**

- All humans (up to the present time)... but also *all of creation!*

Then God said to Noah and his sons with him,  
 "Behold, I now establish My covenant with **you and your descendants** after you, and with **every living creature** that was with you—the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth—every living thing that came out of the ark."  
Genesis 9:8-10 (BSB)

... a covenant for **all generations to come** ...  
 ... the covenant between Me and **the earth.**  
 ... My covenant between Me and **you and every living creature of every kind.**  
Genesis 9:12b, 13b, 15b (BSB); see also vs. 16-17.

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✓ **The specific Flood-related promise:**

- No more life-destroying global Flood!

"I establish my covenant with you: **Never again** will all life be **destroyed** by the waters of a flood; **never again** will there be a flood to **destroy** the earth."  
Genesis 9:11 (NIV)

**Never again** will the waters become a flood to **destroy** all life.  
Genesis 9:15c (NIV)

- Scripture testifies, *in many passages*, that it was a life-destroying *global* Flood.
- There are hundreds of Flood accounts from ancient civilizations around the world.* Most accounts have some elements that agree with Scripture. But other details have been lost, or greatly embellished (as the account passed on from generation to generation).

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✓ The "sign" of the promise:

- A naturally-occurring phenomenon related to rain: *a rainbow!*

And God said, "This is **the sign of the covenant** I am making ...

I have set **My rainbow** in the clouds, and it will be **a sign of the covenant** between Me and the earth.

Whenever I form clouds over the earth and **the rainbow** appears in the clouds, I will remember **My covenant** between Me and you and every living creature of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.

And whenever **the rainbow** appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember **the everlasting covenant** between God and every living creature of every kind that is on the earth."

Genesis 9:12a, 13-16 (BSB); also v. 17.

- Though most people have chosen to ignore it (or to pervert its meaning), this sign still exists for all to see. *No more global flood judgments. The next global judgment will involve fire.*

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What

## MISSION

can we have in these matters?

- ⇒ Perhaps some of us didn't realize that the covenant between God and Noah (and his descendants) applies to *us* – the entire human race. 🗑️
- ⇒ We can learn, and try to understand how the various aspects of the covenant should influence the way we live.

**ALSO:**

- ⇒ We can learn from the "days of Noah," so we won't be like the people of his day – often having "good" values, while ignoring "godly" values.

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