

“Every Living Thing on the Earth”



SABBATH—APRIL 10

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 3:6; Genesis 6:5, 11, 18; Genesis 9:12–17; Isaiah 4:3; Genesis 7:23.

MEMORY VERSE: “But Noah pleased the LORD” (Genesis 6:8, ERV).



God chooses to stop this war against His government and His law of love.

ADAM AND EVE eat the forbidden fruit. Their sin changes everything. Now sin and death become part of human history. Humans are born on an earth that is no longer perfect. Evil fills hearts that were made to love God. Soon evil and sin fill the whole earth.

What do we know about the people who live before the Flood? They are strong. They are much stronger than we are today. They also are full of energy and life. They are super smart, too. They do not get sick easily. They have the gifts of health, powerful minds, and long lives. God gives them so many precious gifts. But almost all of the people use their gifts in selfish ways. The people stop worshiping God as the One who made them. They worship gods that they make. They forget all about God. God gave them wonderful powers. But they use them to do evil. They love sin. They sin in every way possible. They enjoy spending their time thinking of new ways to sin more and more. They refuse to stop sinning against God. They will not turn back to Him in their hearts. Almost everyone living on the earth at that time fights against God in his or her heart. God chooses to stop this war against His government and His law of love. He sends a Flood that will drown the whole earth with water.

AN IMPORTANT RULE ABOUT SIN (Genesis 6:5)

God finished making the earth and the sky. He looked at all that He made. He saw that everything “was very good” (Genesis 1:31, ERV). Then sin changes everything. Things are not “very good” anymore. Sin spoils everything. Awful things happen. Humans fully turn against God. They sin more and more. By the time of Noah, evil fills the earth. The Bible does not give us much information about this time. But we can see that God will not allow the evil to continue.

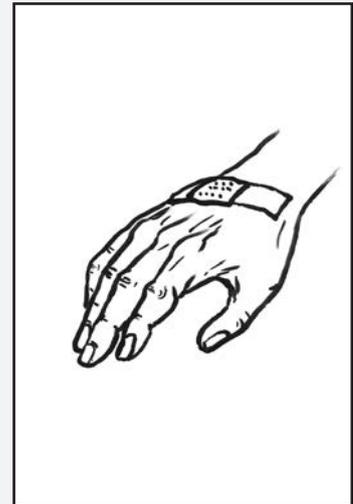
How do things get so bad so fast?

Read the verses below. What do you learn from each one? Write down your answers on the lines below. Do you see how sin grows worse and worse with each verse?

1. **Genesis 3:6** _____
2. **Genesis 3:11–13** _____
3. **Genesis 4:5** _____
4. **Genesis 4:8** _____
5. **Genesis 4:19** _____
6. **Genesis 4:23** _____
7. **Genesis 6:2** _____
8. **Genesis 6:5, 11** _____

Genesis 6:5 and Genesis 6:11 happen for a reason. This awful happening has a cause. A history of sin leads up to this time. Sin gets worse and worse. That is how sin works. Sin is not the same as a cut. When we get cut, our skin starts to heal the cut right away. But sin does not work that way. If sin is left alone, it continues to grow until it ends in ruin and death. Sin works the same way today.

No wonder God hates sin. No wonder that sooner or later God will end it. What else can a loving and fair God do with sin? Nothing. That is why sin must “die”—because God is who He is. He is love. God wants to end sin. At the same time, God wants to save sinners: that is what His special agreement is all about.



**Sin is not the same
as a cut.**

THE MAN NOAH (Genesis 6:9)

Before the Flood, the earth is filled with sin and evil people everywhere. But there is someone who is different from the people of his time. That man is Noah. Read Genesis 6:9. What does this verse say about Noah? On the lines below write your answers about what you think each part of the verse means:

1. Noah “was a good man all his life” (ERV): _____

2. Noah “was without blame among the people of his time” (NirV): _____

3. Noah “always followed God” (ERV): _____

Noah knows the Lord as his personal Savior. Noah is someone that the Lord can work with. Noah will listen to God, obey Him, and trust in Him. That is why the Lord can use Noah to build the boat. In the New Testament, Peter names Noah “a preacher of right living” (2 Peter 2:5, NLV).



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Read Genesis 6:8. How does this verse help us understand the special connection between Noah and God?

The first time we see the word “favor” in the Bible is in Genesis 6:8, NLV. The word “favor” has the same meaning here in the Old Testament as it does in the New Testament. Another word for “favor” is “grace.” Grace or favor is the gift of mercy from God to sinners. God gives us His gift of mercy to forgive us for our sins. We can do nothing to earn His forgiveness. We must accept it freely by faith. Remember, Noah is a good man. But he also is a sinner who needs grace. So, Noah is no different from any of us who are trying to follow the Lord with all our hearts.

Noah needs grace the same as we do. Ask yourself: How am I the same as Noah? Do people say that I am good and follow the Lord? Write down the reasons for your answer.

THE AGREEMENT WITH NOAH (Genesis 6:18)

“ ‘I will make a special agreement with you. You, your wife, your sons, and their wives will all go into the boat’ ” (Genesis 6:18, ERV).

Genesis 6:18 shows us the basic parts of the special agreement that God makes with humans: God and humans enter this agreement together. Very simple, right?

Yes, but there is far more to this agreement, as we shall see. First, Genesis 6:18 shows us that the special agreement includes human obedience. God says to Noah that he and his family will go into the boat. So, they have their part to do. If they do not do their part, then they break the agreement. What if Noah says No to God? Or what if Noah says Yes but then changes his mind later? What do you think will happen to Noah and his family?

God says that the agreement is “ ‘My agreement’ ” (Genesis 6:18, NLV). What does the word “My” show us about the agreement with God? What if God names the agreement “our agreement”? How will that make things different? Why is it important that God says that the agreement is His?

A special agreement with God is always between God and humans. The word “My” helps us to see that God is showing Noah His loving-favor or grace. As we saw yesterday, grace is the gift of mercy that God gives to sinners. God gives us His gift of mercy to forgive us for our sins. So, “My” helps us to see that this special agreement is not between two equals. Humans are not equal with God. God does not depend on us for anything. That is why the covenant is His and not ours. You may ask, “But God gets something from the agreement, right?” Not in the way that we do. God can give us the gift of everlasting life when we accept His agreement. Our being saved makes God very happy (Isaiah 53:11). But the joy God gets from saving us does not mean God gets anything from the agreement.

Here is a picture story to help explain the special agreement. A man falls off a boat during a storm. Someone on the boat says he will throw a rope to the man in the water. But the man in the water must agree to grab the rope. That is how the special agreement between God and sinners works. We must accept what God gives us to save us.



The man in the water must agree to grab the rope.

THE PROMISE OF THE RAINBOW (Genesis 9:12, 13)

“And God said, ‘I will give you something to prove that I made this promise to you. It will continue forever to show that I have made an agreement with you and every living thing on earth. I am putting a rainbow in the clouds as proof of the agreement between me and the earth’ ” (Genesis 9:12, 13, ERV).

Few things in nature are more beautiful than the rainbow. Do you remember the first rainbow you saw as a child? Even as adults, our hearts can be filled with wonder as we look at all those beautiful colors of the rainbow in the clouds. No wonder so many people today use the rainbow as a sign or word picture for so many things. (Just for fun, look up the word “rainbow” on the Web and see how many different groups and people use it to mean different things.) The beautiful colors of the rainbow continue to touch our hearts and minds.



Do you remember the first rainbow you saw as a child?

Read Genesis 9:12–17. As these verses show us, what does the Lord say that the rainbow will be proof of?

The Lord says that the rainbow will be proof of “ ‘My agreement’ ” (Genesis 9:15, NLV). The meaning of the word “agreement” is different in this verse from what it means in other places in the Bible. The agreement that God makes with Abraham or with Moses at Sinai includes things that Abraham and Israel must do. But in the agreement with Noah, God does not ask humans to do anything, not even Noah. God announces His promise to all humans everywhere. God also makes this promise to “ ‘every living thing on the earth’ ” (Genesis 9:15, ERV). This promise will “ ‘continue forever’ ” (Genesis 9:12, ERV). The promise of God is worldwide. His promise includes everyone. What about the people who choose not to obey God? The promise includes them, too. That is why the idea of the word “agreement” is different in Genesis 9 from what it means anywhere else in the Bible.

How does the agreement with Noah show the loving-favor of God to sinners? Who started this agreement? Who gets all the good things that are promised?

How can Bible truth about the rainbow and what it promises help us to be obedient to the Lord?

ONLY NOAH WAS LEFT (Genesis 7:23)

“So God destroyed from the earth every living thing that was on the land. This was every man, animal, crawling thing and bird of the sky. All that was left was Noah and what was with him in the boat” (Genesis 7:23, ICB).

In this verse, we see the idea of a “remnant” for the first time in the Bible. A remnant is a small group that is left over or saved from a larger group. The words in Genesis 7:23 that are written as “was left” come from another word in Hebrew that is used many times in the Old Testament to show the idea of a remnant. Let us look at some examples. The words in the verses that show the idea of a “remnant” are written below in **bold print**:

Joseph says to his brothers: “ ‘But God sent me ahead of you to keep **some of you alive** on earth’ ” (Genesis 45:7, Nlrv).

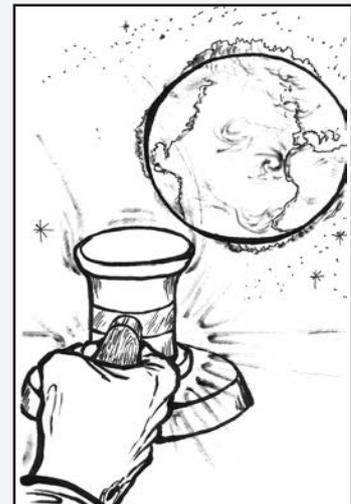
“And all those [people] **who are left** in Zion and Jerusalem will be called [named] holy. Their names were on the list of people in Jerusalem who were allowed to live” (Isaiah 4:3, ERV).

“At that time the Lord will reach out his hand. He will gather [save] his people a second time. He will bring back those [people] **who are left alive**” (Isaiah 11:11, Nlrv).

Look at Genesis 7:23 and the other examples we just studied. What do they show us about the meaning of the words “who are left” or “remnant”? What causes God to make a remnant? What is the connection between the special agreement and the remnant?

At the time of the Flood, the One who made this earth becomes the Judge of the earth. The Flood will be worldwide. Who will live? Who will be destroyed? Who will be part of the small group, or remnant, that lives?

The answer is: Noah and his family. The life of Noah is connected to the agreement he has with God (Genesis 6:18). This agreement started with God, who gives mercy and forgiveness. Noah and his family live only because God saves them. Yes, Noah must work together with God. But Noah can do nothing to save himself or his family. Their only hope is to trust in God to show them mercy.



At the time of the Flood, the One who made this earth becomes the Judge of the earth.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Flood,” pages 90–104, and “After the Flood,” pages 105–110, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

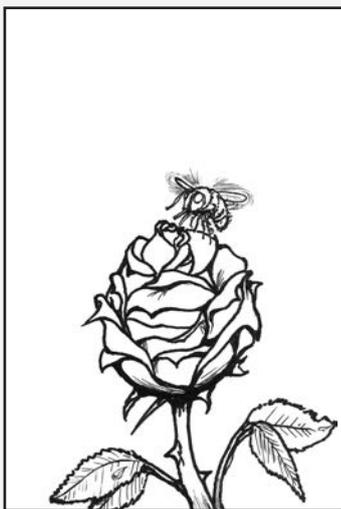
“God promises not to destroy the earth again by a flood. The rainbow is a fitting sign of this promise. The Flood will cause awful changes to the whole earth. Rain will replace the dew that made the ground wet. So, God needs something to help humans after the Flood not to fear each time rain starts to fall. The spiritual mind can see how the beautiful things of nature show us God (read Romans 1:20). That is why God chose to give the rainbow as proof of His promise. The rainbow shows the one who believes in God that the rain will bring blessing, not worldwide ruin.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 1, page 265, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① “In those days the earth is filled with many people. More and more people continue to fill the earth. The people behave wildly and make a lot of noise. They act the same as a noisy, wild bull. The noise wakes up the top god Enlil. Enlil says to the other gods, ‘The humans on earth are making too much noise. We can no longer get any sleep.’ So the gods agree to destroy humans with a flood.”—“The Story of the Flood” in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, written in English by N. K. Sanders (London: The Penguin Group, 1972), page 108, adapted. Compare this reason for the Flood to the reason the Bible gives us. How are they the same? How are they different?

② Noah does more than warn the people in his day about the coming Flood. Noah also helps them see their need of forgiveness for their sins. Why is the Bible truth about being saved from sin not very popular with most people, then or now? Make a list of things that stop people from accepting the saving plan of God for their lives. Talk about your ideas in class.

Summary: God wants to save us, just as He saved Noah. Noah has faith. His faith in the mercy of God saves him and his family from the worldwide Flood. “God wants the rainbow in the clouds to make our faith strong. He gave us the rainbow to help us trust Him. The rainbow shows us the mercy of God. Sin causes God to destroy the earth by a Flood. But the mercy of God continues to fill the earth.”—Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption*, page 71, adapted.



“The spiritual mind can see how the beautiful things of nature show us God.”