Bible Stories for Adults
The Flood and the Tower of Babel
Genesis 5 - 11

Opening

Gathering: Give an example of how God’s judgment and grace have been evident to you.

Today’s Focus: To recognize that while God is just and must punish sin, He is also merciful and freely offers His undeserved grace.

Key Verses:

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Romans 3:23

Without faith it is impossible to please God. … By faith Noah … condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. Hebrews 11:6-7

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Generations (Genesis 5; 11:10-32)

What was the typical lifespan during the first 1656 years of human history? = See Genesis Timeline

Genesis 5 = (just have class skim, don’t read) around 900 years

How and why was this changed? = Rampant sexual immorality

Genesis 6:1-4 = God decided to limit man to 120 years; World-wide wickedness

Sons of God/daughters of men = angels/humans; kings/regular; Seth desc/ Cain desc; Godly/wicked

What was the typical lifespan between Noah and Abraham and beyond?

Genesis 11:10-32 = 200-600 yrs N-A, 100-200 A-Joseph, 70-80 past Moses

How many generations were born by Adam’s death?

Genesis 5 = 9, Lamech had been born

What is significant about the description of the birth of the second generation?

Genesis 5:3 = in his own image … likeness – born as sinful human, original sin

How did Enoch die, and why?

Genesis 5:24 = Enoch walked with God, never died, God took him away

Lamech, 7th from Adam through Cain was condemned as evil (Genesis 4:19-24)

Enoch, 7th from Adam through Seth was commended as pleasing God (Heb 11:5; Jude 14)

How did Methuselah die?

Genesis 5:25-29, 7:11 = He drowned in the flood at 969 yrs old

NOTE: Methuselah means "when he is dead, it shall come"

World-Wide Wickedness (Genesis 6:5-13)

How had the disharmony of sin affected God’s creation?

Genesis 6:5 = every inclination of man’s heart was only evil all the time

What did God decide to do as His judgment?

Genesis 6:6-7 = I will wipe mankind from the face of the earth

How did God follow this judgment with His grace?

Genesis 6:17-18 = He saved Noah and his family

Why did God save Noah?

Genesis 6:8-9 (also 7:1) = He walked with God (like Enoch)

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Preparations (Genesis 6:14-21)

What preparations did God tell Noah to make? = Perfect proportions for seaworthy vessel  
Genesis 6:14-16, 19-21 = Build an ark, bring 2 of each animal & bird, bring food  
Wood - Hebrew says to make ark of *etz-gopher*, *etz* means wood, *gopher* is unknown word  
Literal translations (KJV, RSV) just say gopher wood = Doesn’t mean English gopher  
If a typo (scribo?), could be *etz-kaphar* or resinous wood (Living Bible)  
Since unknown, NIV uses cypress = typical for ships and Egyptian coffins (looked like coffin)  
Pitch - Hebrew is *kaphar*, same as word for atonement (*kippur*) = Both saved mankind from death  
One door to enter the ark for salvation – Jesus is the only door for salvation (John 10:9; 14:6)

Noah’s Response (Genesis 6:22)

What did Noah do in response to God’s instructions?  
Genesis 6:22 = Noah did everything just as God commanded him  
Why did Noah build this huge boat on dry land?  
Hebrews 11:7 = By faith Noah built the ark

Entering the Ark (Genesis 7:1-16)

How old was Noah when the flood began?  
Genesis 7:6-7 = 600 years old, 8 people entered ark – Noah + 7 (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5)  
At his age, how did Noah gather all of the animals?  
Genesis 7:15 = They came to Noah and entered the ark (God sent them)  
How did Noah close the door of the ark?  
Genesis 7:16 = The Lord shut him in

The Flood (Genesis 7:17-24)

Where did the floodwaters come from? = rain & ground, all sources  
Genesis 7:11 = Springs of the great deep & Floodgates of the heavens  
How long did the floodwaters come? = 40 means *generation* to a Hebrew – a new beginning  
Genesis 7:17, 24 = Floodwaters came 40 days; Stayed flooded 150 days (5 months)  
What is the importance of verse 20? = waters covered the mountains over 20 ft  
Genesis 7:20 (18-23) = Every land was covered, there was no way to survive

The Waters Subside (Genesis 8:1-14)

How did God end the flood? = Reminder in Hebrew does not mean that He had forgotten  
Genesis 8:1 = He sent a wind  
When was dry land first visible? = Mountains of Ararat (Urartu – Turkey/Iran) – mountain range  
Genesis 8:3-5 = 1st day of 10th month - 225 days from start  
Why did Noah send out birds? = He did so after 40 days  
Genesis 8:6-9 = To see if there was dry ground – only window was in roof (Genesis 6:16)  
Ravens have great endurance over distance = Noah checking for land even in distance  
What did Noah learn from the dove’s next two trips? = Olive trees don’t grow at high elevations  
Genesis 8:10-12 = Waters had receded, plant life was growing  
How long had Noah and his family lived on the ark?  
Genesis 8:13-14 = Until 27th day of 2nd month - 371 days
Back on Dry Ground  (*Genesis 8:15-20*)

- How did Noah know when to get out of the ark?
  - *Genesis 8:15-17* = God told him to come out

- What was the first thing Noah did after leaving the ark?
  - *Genesis 8:18-20* = He built an altar and sacrificed to God

- Wouldn't Noah eliminate species by sacrificing clean animals?
  - *Genesis 7:2-3* = Noah took 7 pairs of each clean animal & each bird

God's Response  (*Genesis 8:21-9:7*)

- How did God respond to Noah's worshipful sacrifice?
  - *Genesis 8:21* = Decided to never again curse the ground or destroy animals

- What else did God commit to sustain?
  - *Genesis 8:22* = All creation - nature's cycles and seasons

- How did man's relation to animals change?
  - *Genesis 9:2-3*; 1:29 = Animals will fear man, man can eat animals; Man before only ate plants

- Since man could now kill, what did God command against and why?
  - *Genesis 9:5-6* = Cannot kill another man since he is made in God's image

- What did God command to restore his creation?
  - *Genesis 9:7* (see 1:28) = *Be fruitful and increase in number*

God's Covenant  (*Genesis 9:8-17*)

- With whom did God make a covenant?
  - *Genesis 9:8-10* = Noah, his descendants (all people) & all creatures

- What was God's promise under the covenant?
  - *Genesis 9:11* = There will never again be a flood to destroy the earth

- What sign or signature guaranteed this covenant?
  - *Genesis 9:12-17* = God's rainbow in the clouds

- What other covenant did God make that was symbolized by Noah's ark?
  - 1 Peter 3:18-21 = Promise of salvation through baptism into Christ's resurrection

Family Ties  (*Genesis 10*)

- What humans were left after the flood to rebuild civilization?
  - *Genesis 8:18-19* = Noah, his wife, his 3 sons & their wives

- With all humanity descending from this small group, what is described after the flood story? = see pg 5
  - *Genesis 10:32* (1-32) = How nations of the world arose from Noah's offspring

The Ziggurat of Shinar  (*Genesis 11:1-4*)

- When does the Tower of Babel story take place?
  - *Genesis 11:1* = Within chapter 10, one language, about 30,000 people on earth

- Where did this story take place? = Show on map; Ruins are at Birs-Nimrud
  - *Genesis 11:2* = Shinar, Hebrew for Sumer (region of Babylonia); Iraq

- What did they decide to build?
  - *Genesis 11:4* = A ziggurat, stepped pyramid with temple on top, bridge to the gods

- What were the building materials? = Used for ordinary buildings, not temples TO God
  - *Genesis 11:3* = Brick & tar, man-made; inferior to God-made stone

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Sin Number One  (Genesis 11:4)

What is the first reason that the people decided to build this ziggurat?
   Genesis 11:4  =  Make a name for ourselves
What sin were the people guilty of?  =  Pride - An undue sense of one's superiority; arrogance; conceit
   Proverbs 29:23  =  A man's pride brings him low, but humility gains honor
When is pride okay?  =  Pride in what God has done for us
   Galatians 6:14  =  May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ

Sin Number Two  (Genesis 11:4)

What was the second purpose of building the ziggurat?
   Genesis 11:4  =  We won't be scattered over the face of the whole earth
How did this oppose the command God had given Noah?
   Genesis 9:1  =  Be fruitful & increase in number and fill the earth

The Judgment  (Genesis 11:5-8)

How effectively were the people able to build a tower that reaches to the heavens?
   Genesis 11:5  =  The Lord had to come down just to see it
How did God respond when He saw what the people were doing?
   Genesis 11:6  =  They will get out of control if they continue
What was the danger of a unified humanity at this time?
   Deuteronomy 8:17-18  =  You could say, I am prosperous by my own power & strength
What did God do in judgment of this sin?
   Genesis 11:7-8  =  Confused their language, scattered them over the earth

God's Place and Time  (Genesis 11:9)

Why is the Ziggurat of Shinar called the Tower of Babel?
   Genesis 11:9  =  Called Babel because God confused the world's language
   Babilu - Akkadian for  =  Gate of God (Akkadian was language of area)
   balal - Hebrew for  =  to mix, to confuse
When did all of this happen?
   Genesis 10:25  =  During Peleg's life, 100-300 yrs after the flood (Genesis 11:10-18)
How random was this scattering?
   Acts 17:26-27  =  God decided exact times and places for all people

The Grace  (Genesis 12:1-3)

How did God respond in grace to this incident?  =  Speak further next week
   Genesis 12:1-3  =  He blessed Abram to be a blessing, all nations to be blessed
When will this dispersion and separation be completely reversed?
   Revelation 7:9-10  =  In the end, men from every nation & language in one voice
Have we experienced any of this reversal yet?
   Colossians 3:11  =  In Christ, there are no differences
When did this begin?
   Acts 11:15-18  =  When the Spirit came upon the early Christians - esp. Pentecost

Closing Prayer
Response

1. How does it feel to find favor in the eyes of the Lord? (Genesis 5:24; 6:8; 19:19; 39:2-5; Exodus 33:12-23; Ruth 2:2; 2 Samuel 15:25-26; Luke 1:30)
2. What can I do to find favor in the eyes of the Lord? (Micah 6:8; Ephesians 5:8-10, 17; Colossians 1:10-12; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2; Hebrews 11:5-7; 13:20-21; 1 John 3:21-24)
3. When have I responded to God without concern for what others might think? (Genesis 6:14-16, 22; Job 2:7-10; Matthew 6:5, 16-18; Acts 4:18-20; 5:29; 1 Thess 2:4; Hebrews 11:35-40)
4. How has pride affected my relationship with God? (Leviticus 26:19; Proverbs 3:34; 8:13; 11:2; 15:25; 16:5, 18; 21:4, 24; Romans 12:3; Galatians 6:3)
5. Which of God’s commands to me have I directly and clearly disobeyed? (Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5:17-32; Galatians 3:10; James 2:10-11)

Next Week - God Calls Abram (Genesis 12 - 14)
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Jewish Timeline of Genesis

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