

The flood continued for forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. (Genesis 7:17)

Almighty God, we confess that we have turned aside from you in many ways. In the midst of the floods and rain of our sinful lives, we pray that you would lift us up to the brightness of a new day. Thank you for seeing us through our troubles and bringing us to safety. May we seek the good of those around us and of all your creation. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Introduction

In the earliest days of human civilization, God saw that human beings had become wicked and sinful. He decided to send a flood to wipe all life from the earth. However, in his mercy, he promised to save a remnant of all animals and other creatures, including a man named Noah and his family, who were kept safe in a great ark.

Read: Genesis 6:5-22, 7:11-12, 8:1-4

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

The Biblical Context

There was a time in the ancient past, before writing was invented, that there was no written history. By the time the first stories and records were ever written down by human beings, the world in which we live already existed. This is what we commonly refer to as the prehistoric era — the time before history.

Ancient civilizations across the whole world (not just those in the Bible) share stories of a great flood in the Earth's past, pointing to the historical basis for such an event in our collective human memory.

According to the biblical account, after the flood, the ark came to rest on Mount Ararat, in Asia Minor (modern-day country of Turkey).

Discussion Questions

1. Why did God decide to destroy the world? What was the problem? According to verse 6:6, how did this make God feel? Does it surprise you to know that God feels emotions? Why or why not?
2. From what substance did Noah build the ark? A cubit is about 1½ feet. What were the ark's measurements? How many levels did the ark have?
3. According to verse 6:18, what people did God save from the flood? How many human beings were saved on the ark?
4. Why did God want Noah to save a male and female of every animal? What was God planning for the future? What else did God tell them to bring?
5. How did Noah respond to God's command? Do you think that it was easy for Noah to trust God? Why do you think that Noah listened?
6. According to Genesis 7:11-12, for how long did it rain on the earth? Besides the rain, from where else did God produce the water of the flood? According to Genesis 8:3, after the rain stopped, how long did it take for the water to recede? On what mountain did the ark come to rest?
7. Read 1 Peter 3:20-22, in which Peter compares Noah's flood to the promise we have in Baptism. How did God use the waters of the flood to clean the world and lift Noah to safety? How is this like what God does for us in Baptism? What is God cleaning in us, and how are we like Noah?
8. Because of this story, most people think an ark is a type of boat. Literally, an ark is a box used to carry something, like a treasure chest. In the Bible, where else do we see an ark used, and what did it carry? How did Noah's ark serve as God's treasure chest? What does that tell us about what God values and desires to save — even when he is angry?