



READ: Selections from Genesis 6-9 (NIV)

The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created –and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD." (Genesis 6:5-8)

God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out... I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you... Noah did everything just as God commanded him." (Genesis 6:13-14, 17-18, 22)

And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights... For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth... Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. (Genesis 7:12, 17, 23)

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded... Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done." (Genesis 8:1, 20-21)

"I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was 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." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life." (Genesis 9:9, 11, 12-15)

ENTER THE STORY:

Do you remember a few days ago when we talked about how God created Adam? He knelt down on the ground, took a bunch of dirt and mud, packed it together, and formed it into a dirt-man, but it was only when God breathed his own breath into Adam's nose that Adam came to life. He was alive because he had the breath of life in him.

In this story, God takes the breath of life away, but not because he stopped loving people. He never stops loving people. God's heart for his people never changes – it is always the heart of the people towards God that changes.

No, God was taking away the breath of life because wickedness was consuming the land.

• Hatred, violence, pain, and suffering were everywhere. People were hurting each other and rebelling against God. As
• people strayed further and further from the perfection of the garden, it showed only one thing – there is no end to how
• far man's wickedness will go. It went so far that God's heart was grieved and he was sorry he had ever made man.
• God doesn't always unleash the full force of his anger and wrath towards sin, but this time he chose to act. The result was
• a world-wide flood to punish all of mankind and to wipe the slate clean. God hit the reset button. He did this so we would
• know how serious it is to turn our backs on God and run toward the darkness, and so we would know how disrespectful
• our sin is before a perfect and holy God.

• **But God did not totally destroy his creation.** Noah found favor with God. *2 Chronicles 16:9* says, "*For the eyes of the*
• *LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.*" Everywhere God looked,
• people were turning their backs on him, but not Noah. Noah didn't care what people thought of him. His heart was
• committed to God, and in the midst of one of his greatest acts of judgment, God showed his mercy by saving Noah, his
• family, and a selection of animals that would be part of this new world.

• In this story, we saw God punish mankind for their sins and save *ONLY ONE* family. Soon, we will see God punish *ONLY*
• *ONE* man to offer salvation for all mankind. After Jesus finished the work God gave him, he returned to heaven, but he
• did not leave us without God's presence. He promised to send another helper; one who would guide us into all truth,
• convict of us our sins, and remind us of the things Jesus told us. That helper was the Holy Spirit, who is the very breath of
• God.

■ **PRAY:** *Lord, we admit that it is difficult for us to understand your anger towards sin, but we believe that you are good*
• *and always make the right decisions, so we put our full and complete trust in you. Forgive us, Lord, when our hearts go*
• *astray, and we start loving the things of this world more than you. Thank you for your mercy and grace and for sending*
• *us your Holy Spirit, who draws us close to you. Amen.*