

# Noah Pt 1: Judgement Comes

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[ 0 : 00 ] You get loads of Noah's Ark type toys, don't you, complete with pairs of lions and giraffes and hippos and all the rest. Just coming back from our holiday last week, we drove past Noah's Ark Nursery in Woking, which looked like a nice place.

I'm not sure if they were saying the children were like animals or if it was just the decorations on the wall. But it's a familiar story, isn't it? This is a famous part of the Bible.

But what do all of those things have in common? Well, they're all to do with children, aren't they? Children's Bibles, children's toys, children's nurseries.

And I think so often in our mind, the story of Noah, our initial thought is perhaps of it as a children's story. Something that is great for kids' church, great for songs and games and all the rest.

Well, we're actually going to spend three weeks in our service with Noah over the next few Sundays. And our goal in that, and perhaps this week most of all, is to move this section of the Bible out of the stories for kids bracket.

[ 1 : 11 ] And to see that actually this is a serious event, speaking about serious issues and with serious consequences.

And you'll have probably picked up on some of that even just as we've read through the passage there. The flood is not primarily about animals walking two by two. It's about God's judgment on a wicked world.

That's where the primary focus is in this first section. But it's also about God's rescue. It's also about God's new world. It's also about the way that God works to bring about the world that we all long for.

So it is a serious bit of the Bible. It's a great bit of the Bible for us to get our teeth into. It's a great bit of the Bible to approach as adults rather than as little kids.

And as I said, it really leads off with this emphasis on judgment. And actually, that's where we're going to spend the bulk of our time this morning. And if that doesn't thrill you, the theme of judgment, I can empathize with that.

[ 2 : 18 ] I've had to resist the desire this week to kind of compress the flood story a little bit so we could maybe just squeeze in judgment at the beginning and then move on and do other stuff.

It was either that or get James to preach this week, which is my other option. If I'd known about the James Bond thing, I would have gone for that option. But actually, no, we're going to go through this. We're going to take our time here so that we can do judgment justice, if that makes sense.

I want us to be able to spend that bit of time to see why this fundamental part of the Bible's message, the message of judgment, which if we're honest, is perhaps something we'd rather wasn't there or we'd rather just skip over or we'd rather our friends didn't know about it or certainly that our friends wouldn't ask us about it.

Or perhaps if you're here this morning and you're not a Christian or you're still not convinced, still kind of asking questions, as always, we're so glad to have you with us. But perhaps the idea of judgment is maybe a bit of a turnoff.

But I want us to spend this time this morning to see why actually it is so crucial, why actually it is good news, why actually this is pointing us to the goodness of the God of the Bible, which this passage and the whole of the Bible is revealing to us.

[ 3 : 43 ] So we're going to have three quarters this morning on judgment, the need for judgment, the source of judgment, the inevitability of it. And then that final quarter on the rescue that this story is pointing us to the hope.

So there is that kind of light at the end of the tunnel as we make our way through this morning. So first up then in this passage, the need for judgment, the need for judgment.

A quick reminder of what we've seen in Genesis so far. We've been introduced to the perfect and powerful creator God. We've seen humanity created in his image to be in a perfect relationship with him in a perfect world.

That perfection running right through Genesis chapters 1 and 2. And yet we've seen that all go wrong in chapter 3, where humanity has rejected God's perfect rule and that relationship with him.

And sin has entered the world, the fall, as we often call it. And from then on, things have spiraled downhill pretty quickly. Violence, pride, murder, death are kind of writ large throughout chapters 4, 5 and into chapter 6.

[ 5 : 03 ] And that's where we pick up the story of Noah. You might notice verse 9 there where we started reading. We have one of these section headings. It says, these are the generations. This time, these are the generations of Noah.

Throughout Genesis, that's a marker. As we've said, that we're in a new block. There's going to be a new focus on a new event, a new people. But we see very quickly that actually the situation remains the same.

Verse 11. Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt. For all flesh had corrupted their way on earth.

We get an echo of those words, and God saw. We've heard that previously, back at the end of Genesis chapter 1, as God looked out over his creation. In that case, we read, and behold, it was very good.

What a contrast here. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt. We get that word corrupt seven times in this section.

[ 6 : 10 ] It means to spoil, to disfigure. Sin has twisted that very good creation out of shape. It's now characterized by violence, with the strong, oppressing the weak.

It's this ugly, ugly scene. And yet still, we've had this hint, haven't we, that this isn't going to be the end of the story. Actually, when we got to Noah in that long family tree a couple of weeks ago in Genesis chapter 5, we read that he was named Noah, for this one shall bring us relief, it said.

And the name Noah, it literally means rest. And so the question that hangs over the opening chapters of Genesis, and still, that is so pertinent in our world today, is how are we going to get back to that perfection shown to us at the very beginning?

How will this rest? How will this relief come? Well, the story of Noah and the flood shows us that for that to happen, judgment is needed.

For perfection to come again, first the evil and the wickedness of our world needs to be washed away. And that is what the flood is all about.

[ 7 : 28 ] There's that need for judgment to undo what's gone wrong. And actually, we look around our world, don't we, and we can say in countless instances that it is still corrupt, that it is full of violence, that the word violence that's used here can mean both a kind of physical force used against others.

We see that on a huge scale at the moment, don't we? Whenever we look at the news and we see missile attacks in Israel and Gaza and bombings in Ukraine, we see that in a big picture.

But the meaning of that word also encompasses the rich or the powerful, oppressing the poor or the weak. The meaning of that word encompasses and includes so many of the things that we probably don't see in the world around us.

The abusive relationships that happen behind closed doors. The desperate situations that people are too afraid to escape from.

The me-first attitude where people will do whatever they want to get ahead at the expense of others. It would take a real naivety to think that corruption and violence, in the widest sense of those words, are not a major characteristic of our world today.

[ 8 : 49 ] In fact, probably one of the few things that does unite people today, all people, is the fact that something is wrong with our world. People might differ on the nature of that or on the solution to that.

But that there is corruption and violence is clear to see. We too long for a renewed world.

And the truth is that what's needed to bring about that newness is first this judgment, is wickedness being dealt with, is evil getting what it deserves and being purged from our world.

So many of our human efforts in seeking to deal with the symptoms of a broken world.

And it's right that we do that. But actually, without judgment, we're still leaving the seed or the root of those things, the evil that brings them about, just ready to come forth again.

[ 9 : 52 ] A great example of that, I think, is that need for judgment, is the work of an organization we've spoken about before at church, called International Justice Mission.

They work to free people from modern-day slavery. They work with human trafficking in various forms. But one huge element of their work, and you'll very much find this kind of front and center on their website about what they do, a huge element is not just helping survivors, but also bringing the criminals behind that to justice.

It's also working to strengthen justice systems. Because there's that recognition that without that judgment, the wickedness will simply continue, and that cycle will go on and on.

So we see, actually, the need for judgment. We understand that. Judgment is kind of the gateway into the renewed world that we're looking for. And that's what the flood, then, is all about, wiping away wickedness in order to return to what is good.

And so, as I said at the beginning, hopefully, we shouldn't be ashamed about that. We don't need to try and hide the message of judgment in the Bible story. Actually, it is really good news because there is this need for judgment so that things can be put right.

[ 11 : 14 ] And that, then, leads us on to our second point here. Where, ultimately, then, does this judgment come from? Where does this judgment come from? And we see here in these chapters, where does it come from?

Well, it comes from God himself. Judgment is God's work. Our second section, then, the God of judgment. Now, when God is speaking to Noah about building the ark, it's not just a warning, is it?

Saying, watch out. You know, I've checked the weather. It looks pretty grim. I've heard there's a flood coming. But here's a way. You should build a boat, and you could be safe. No, God makes it abundantly clear that he is the one who's going to be sending this flood of judgment.

That it is his work. Verse 13, Verse 22, just near the end of our section, it says, Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died.

He, that is God, blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground. Man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens.

[ 12 : 30 ] Again, this is a challenging part of the story, isn't it? This is a good reminder, as we said, that we're not here in a story that is just for kids. If you've got little ones, those probably aren't the verses you read as you kind of tuck them up into bed.

He blotted out every living thing. You know, sweet dreams. In fact, even as adults, you know, we don't really like that either. We find that uncomfortable. Okay, there needs to be judgment.

There needs to be justice. We get that. But really, we fancy ourselves to be the judge. Actually, we can sort things out. We can choose what's reasonable.

This perhaps seems a bit over the top. But actually, we see here that only God is able to truly bring the judgment and justice that's needed. That God is the God of judgment.

And again, we want to see here that actually that is good news. And that the God of the Bible isn't a God who saw or still today who sees the wickedness that is corrupting our world and says, Well, that's nothing to do with me.

[ 13 : 36 ] You know, you broke it. You fix it. No, it's the fact that God cares about his world. That God cares about his people. That God isn't just prepared to give up on things.

That is why God has to be a God of judgment. That is why it's good news. But perhaps you might be thinking, as people often suggest, Well, isn't that actually, though, an Old Testament thing?

Isn't God a God of judgment back then, like here in Genesis? But now, he's much more a God of love. Now that we've had Jesus, now that we've had the New Testament, God's not still a God of judgment, is he?

Well, let me read you some words from the New Testament written by the Apostle Peter. We'll read later from words from Jesus himself that kind of say a similar thing. But Peter writes this.

He says, He's looking back here, isn't he, to the flood in Genesis that we're talking about.

[ 14 : 41 ] But then he goes straight on to say, The Bible tells us very clearly from beginning to end, Old Testament and New, that God will again judge the earth.

That there will be this judgment day. That God remains a God of judgment. That's not because he isn't a loving God.

It's precisely because he does love. We'll see over the next couple of weeks that the kind of reset of the Genesis flood, it doesn't actually solve all the problems of the world.

That's why we can still look outside today and see that violence and corruption around us. That actually even this monumental flood can't reach deep enough to transform the problem of the human heart.

But God promises that there is a future judgment to come, which will do just that. Which will put things right once and for all. That's because God is a loving God who cares for his people.

[ 16 : 00 ] Who cares for his world. That he will do that. That he alone will judge. So that we can know a true and perfect restoration.

And again, I want us to see how is this good news? How does this affect us? Well, actually this is good news. This is so important for us to know. That God will judge fully.

And finally. Because there are so many areas of life. There are so many stories we know of and hear. So many situations. Maybe big kind of famous things that made the headlines.

Think back to the Jimmy Savile case. That all blew up only after he died. So much awful stuff that he seemed to have got away with. But again, there are far, far, far more that will never make the news.

There are far more personal secret situations or incidents. Perhaps there are things that only you know about. That have gone on in your life.

[ 16 : 58 ] Or that you know of in the life of people you know and love. Where earthly justice isn't done. And earthly justice, it seems, will never be done.

And if we don't have a God of judgment. If your idea of kind of the good life or a loving God doesn't include a judgment day.

Well then those things will always haunt us. Those injustices will always haunt us. We will never be satisfied. They could make us do dangerous things in trying to take justice into our own hands.

Or they could make us hard and cynical about the world. That actually justice doesn't prevail. That bad guys don't always get what's coming to them. So just what is the point?

Or they can make us angry at God. Well how on earth could that happen? How could they get away with that? They didn't get what was coming to them. The truth of God as the God of judgment.

[ 18 : 02 ] Is that nobody will get away with that. The truth of God as the God of judgment is that the day of judgment will come. That even the grave will not be a hiding place.

That justice will be done. That doesn't mean that we don't still strive after justice here and now. That doesn't mean that seeing or experiencing injustice in the present isn't still hard.

Or it doesn't make us angry. But actually it's only knowing the truth of God's judgment to come. And resting in that.

That enables us to find that relief and rest here and now. Even in the midst of injustice. Because God remains a God of judgment. And that really leads us to the third thing that we see here.

On judgment from the Bible's treatment of the flood story. Because we have a God of judgment. Who the Bible says will come again to judge. Thirdly we can know the inevitability of judgment.

[ 19 : 11 ] It's good perhaps here just to kind of take a break. A pause and just allow ourselves to be honest with ourselves. And recognize that actually it's quite easy isn't it?

To kind of sit here and talk about this judgment. Or I can talk about it. Or we can look at our Bibles that speak about. Well Jesus is going to come back one day. That's when this judgment will happen.

That's such a key aspect of the big picture of the Bible. Of what God is doing. And how God will restore a perfect. Restore perfection as he's promised to do.

It's good actually to stop and think. We can talk about that. And yet if we're really honest with ourselves. It can all actually seem a little bit distant.

Or vague. Or perhaps again if you're not a Christian. It just seems incredibly unlikely. Surely if it was going to happen. It would have happened by now.

[ 20 : 09 ] We can think of judgment. Like we think of Jupiter. Or one of the other planets. You know it's kind of out there. But we don't really think of it. And we don't consciously expect it to affect our lives.

In any meaningful way. If as we're kind of looking at this. There's perhaps that disconnect. Between what we know the Bible says. What we actually expect or feel.

We can take heart here. That we're certainly not the first people. To think like that. Because Jesus himself speaks about the flood. To people in his day. Who had that same attitude.

About the judgment he promised. Jesus says this in Matthew's gospel. For as were the days of Noah. So will be the coming of the Son of Man.

For as in those days before the flood. They were eating and drinking. Marrying and giving in marriage. Until the day when Noah entered the ark. And they were unaware. Until the flood came.

[ 21 : 09 ] And swept them all away. So will be the coming of the Son of Man. It's incredible parallels there isn't it. Just as in Noah's time.

Just as in Jesus' time. Just as in our time. Judgment seems so distant. So unlikely. That's absolutely the case.

For kind of the world. Who don't believe in Jesus. If we're honest with ourselves. It can often seem the case for us as well. There's just so much more stuff. That is more pressing.

That seems more significant. That fills our vision. And fills our lives. And our diaries. Jesus reminds us. That the judgment to come.

The ultimate final judgment. Will come. And that it is inevitable. That nothing is more significant. Than being prepared for that.

[ 22 : 03 ] And so perhaps. You hear this morning. You think. Well actually I'm very. I'm quite young. I'm fine. Or actually I'm very busy. Or I'm at this stage of life. I've just got so much on my plate.

At the moment. I'll just get over this hurdle. And see what's next. Jesus says. That the people of Noah's day. Had so much. To be getting on with. But then judgment came.

And suddenly none of that mattered. Because they weren't ready. Judgment came. And they were too late. Because of the need for judgment. Because we have a God of judgment.

There is also the inevitability. Of judgment. And more than anything else. For each one of us here. For our kids. For our family. For our friends.

The most important thing. For all of us. Is to be prepared for that. And so what does that mean?

[ 23 : 00 ] How do we prepare for that? How do we take that seriously? How do we live in light of that? Well that leads us to our final point. This morning. Which is the rescue from judgment.

The rescue from judgment. Now. We'll speak more on this. Next week. As James focuses on the second section. Of the flood story. But right from the beginning here. Right in the verses we've been reading.

The rescue God provides. In the midst of this judgment. Is front and center. Isn't it? God announces this judgment. Verse 13. Behold. I will destroy them from the earth.

He also immediately. Simultaneously announces the rescue. He will provide. Verse 14. Make yourself an ark. He says to Noah.

And a significant amount of these verses. Are about the detail of that. It is the ark. That provides the rescue. Through this judgment. It is the ark.

[ 23 : 58 ] Which means that the God of judgment. Can simultaneously be. The God of salvation. We saw back in.

Verse 8. Of chapter 6. But Noah found favor. In the eyes. Of the Lord. We read in. In verse 9. This morning. That Noah was righteous. Blameless. Walked with God.

It's important. We get this right. This isn't saying that Noah was saved. Because he was perfect. It's saying that Noah was saved. Because he was seeking. After God. It's telling us.

That God will rescue those. Who look to him. Noah was a man who trusted in God. And his trust then. Is seen in his obedience.

We read it in chapter 6. Verse 22. After the instructions. On how to build the ark. It says Noah did this. He did all. That God commanded him. And we see that idea.

[ 24 : 53 ] Kind of punctuating. Chapter 7 as well. Verse 5. Verse 9. Verse 16. That emphasis. On Noah's obedience. Just as God commanded him. Noah finds favor with God.

He trusts in God. He lives out that. In obedience to God. And through that. Finds the rescue. From judgment. That God provides. Through that. He and his household.

Are saved. And again. We'll see the outworking. Of this rescue more. Next week. But it's good for us. As we come to a close. It's good for us.

As we've spent a lot of time. Thinking this morning. About judgment. As we've seen. Actually. The story of Noah. And the flood. Is a serious event.

It is good. That we would leave here. Remembering that still. There is a rescue. From the judgment. That God provides. And what is that rescue?

[ 25 : 51 ] Well that rescue is. The cross. Of Jesus Christ. Again. Like Noah. Those who trust. In God. Demonstrate. That trust.

Through obedience. To him. In terms of. The means. Of the rescue. He's provided. For Noah. That meant obedience. In building the ark.

As God had instructed him to. Noah did all. That the Lord had commanded him. It's the ark then. That saved them. For us. It's the obedience. Of putting our faith.

In Jesus Christ. As the Lord has. Commanded us to. It is coming to the cross. And saying actually. That judgment. That is coming.

Is something. That I deserve too. Because actually. That seed. Of corruption. And violence. Has taken root. In me. As well. That coming to the cross.

[ 26 : 48 ] To recognize. That there. Jesus takes. That judgment. Upon himself. As he dies. In our place. In order that we can find. Forgiveness.

In order that we can find. That path. Through judgment. Not because the judgment. Doesn't happen. But because. Jesus takes it for us. Noah didn't. Kind of look at the water.

Think of the flood. To come. And say. You know what. I'm a pretty good guy. I think actually. I'll be fine. No. He knew that. Despite his trust. In Jesus.

In fact. Because of his trust. In Jesus. He and his family. Needed. That rescue. From judgment. That God provides. We've spoken this morning.

Hopefully. Trying to see. How. That judgment. Is needed. That having. A God of judgment. Is a good thing. But it is vital. That we don't come.

[ 27 : 41 ] To the end of that. And think. Yeah. We need that judgment. To come from God. And you know what. You know. We're pretty good people. You know. We'll probably be fine. It will be those guys.

Out there. Who suffer. No. We too. Need that rescue. That God provides. That rescue. That is only. Found.

In Jesus. Our friends. Our family. The people we know. Need that rescue. That God has provided. In Jesus. That is. So important. That we are quick. To speak about him.

And all he's done. Because nothing. Is more important. Our passage this morning. Closes with a kind of vision. Really. Of the completeness.

Of that. That judgment. Verse 24. And the waters. Prevailed. On the earth. 150 days. This whole kind of flood. Is the kind of. The undoing. Of creation.

[ 28 : 34 ] Stripping things right back. To the very beginning. The God who'd given life. And breath. Taking back. That life. And breath. And yet.

On that sea of judgment. Sails this arc. Of salvation. The only. Rescue. From judgment. God promises.

That judgment. Will come again. And God promises. Again. That he will bring. That salvation. For those. Who live out. The obedience. Of faith. Trusting.

In Jesus. And the rescue. He provides. Not because we deserve it. But because of God's. Great love. Because of his grace. Because. Through his mercy.

We have found. Favor. In his eyes. Let's. Let's pray together. Let's pray together.