

“Failed Reboot” (Noah) // Gen 6–9 // *The Whole Story* #4

Transition from Vision Report/Prayer

Amen? That report didn't include nearly 2K people that came out this past Tuesday to say, “Here am I, Lord. Send me.” A lot to be thankful for...

Go Panthers? I know you want to know what is going on with the shirt. We have a Summit church plant in Denver, and one in Charlotte now, and the two have been talking trash to each other all week... They have a wager going... whoever wins, the other has to wear the jersey. This is my prophetic statement... I got them to add... if Charlotte wins, which they will...

GEN 6... For those reading through the Bible... We will catch up...)

If you had to list **3 Bible stories that everyone** in America knows, the story of **Noah and the Ark** would always make the list. But probably the biggest irony about this story is that we have turned into a cute bedtime story, where *“in come the animals two by two, the hippopotamus and the kangaroo.”* We paint it as a mural over our baby's crib as a cuddly little bedtime image.

The irony is that this is **not really a kid-friendly story** at all. It's an *incredible* story, but I think by the end of this message I might convince you that this story might not be the best one to soothe your toddler to sleep each night.

- It's a story about a global flood THAT God sends to kill every living thing.

- It's kind of like dangling the 4 horsemen of the Apocalypse from your baby's mobile. *“Mom, are those birds? No, those are locusts that God is sending to destroy the earth!”*

Noah's ark brings up **a lot of questions** for people...

- **How could a good God** do this?
- Or **historical questions**, like: When it says, “the whole world was flooded,” does that mean literally the whole world, or was it just “the known world” at the time?
- Or, **“Have they found the Ark?”** I saw some guy on the Nat Geo channel that said he had found it, but he had those crazy eyes and might have one of those bumper stickers that says, “In case of rapture this car will be unmanned.”

Or sometimes our questions are more logistical: **How could you even fit all those animals** on the Ark?” (I'll answer that one real quick: Based on the Ark's dimensions, it seems it could hold about 35,000 different animals...)

Which raises **more questions**:

- How **much poop** would 35K animals produce daily? And whose chore was it to scoop that all up?
- Or, **how did they get all the animals** on there in the first place? Did Noah just whistle and they all come?
- And **how did Noah figure out which ones were girls** and which ones were boys? Like, how do you tell the difference in a boy dove and a girl dove?
- And **why didn't he screen** the two cats from getting on? Spirit-filled people have always had a disposition against cats, since they remind us of Satan.

These are **ALL great questions**... but they are not the main focus of the Noah account, and thus not the focus of this sermon, either. The story of the flood is **about God's rebooting of creation** after it had gone terribly wrong.

I have **one solution for every computer problem** I encounter. Reboot it. If that doesn't work, reboot it again.

- The worst moment is when I've rebooted it for like the 4th time and the problem hasn't gone away... because then I know it's going to be a long painful process on the phone with somebody in India that ends up with me buying another computer.

The flood was God's reboot of creation, but it's going to fail... not because God failed, of course, but because God was trying through that to demonstrate something to *us* about the human race.

4 words I think summarize what happens in this story:

"GRIEVED"

⁵The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

⁶And the LORD *regretted* that he had made man on the earth, and it *grieved* him to his heart. ⁷So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am *sorry* that I have made them." ⁸

- Sometimes when people hear stories of judgment... it bothers them... but **not as much** as it bothered God.
- He is **literally heartbroken** over it.
 - The word for "**grieved to the heart**" used there in vs. 6 in **Hebrew is a specific word** used to describe what an abandoned wife feels...
 - **Isaiah uses the same word... Isa 54:6** says that God is like "a wife who married young, only to be deserted, and her spirit filled with **pain**."

- Frankly, some theologians say, it's an **odd word to use to describe God**,¹ because it makes him sound really vulnerable. It means literally, "unfulfilled longing" or "despairing frustration."
- **Imagine a young bride filled with anticipation on her wedding day** when this guy who said he loved her, made her feel special, said he would spend the rest of her life with him, suddenly runs off with her best friend... or it turns out he is not who he said he is.
 - It leaves this **hollow, sick feeling**.
 - This is what **God feels about** our sin.

Sin, like a disease, had consumed the human race. Their thoughts were "only evil continually."

- **Vs. 12** says they were **violent**. The strong used their position to oppress the weak.
- It included **sexual perversion**: There is a **really strange reference** at the beginning of chapter 6 that says, "the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were attractive" and they had sex with them. **Scholars are not sure what that means**. Some think it refers to some kind of demon/human sexual relationship (since "sons of God" in Scripture can refer to angels). That's a little too **Twilight** or "**Buffy the Vampire Slayer**" for me.
 - I'm pretty sure it just means that the godly people got sucked into ungodliness, families dissolved... and sex just became whenever and with whomever.

So God determined to stop that, and he was going to do so by sending a flood to literally cleanse the earth.

- **You say, "Well, that doesn't sound very loving."** It's like if someone you love is being eaten up with **cancer**, you take radical measures (like chemotherapy) to cleanse them from the cancer. That's what God does with his creation.

¹ From Tim Keller sermon, "Lord of the Storm," on Gen 6.

- There is an **interesting wordplay** in Hebrew: The word used to describe human wickedness in vs. 12–13 is “**mash-heet**,” (they are destroyers). It is the same word used to describe what God did to the human race. He *mash-heet*s the *mash-heeters*. He destroyed the destroyers.
- **A lot of people in American society feel like God should never judge... love means he always just lets things go.**
 - **Miroslav Volf, a personal hero** who lived through the oppression and genocides of Croatia, said that the only way anyone ever says that is if they’ve lived in the suburbs all their life and never experienced true injustice.²
 - *Came on scholarship to UNC and think they can save the world through blogging...*
 - He said **when you watch family and friends murdered—when you watch your parents have their throats slit—as**

² *Born in Croatia, Miroslav Volf came of age in communist Yugoslavia, where he witnessed the ethnic tensions between the Croats and Serbs. After the fall of communism in 1991, those tensions escalated into a bloody war. “My thesis that the practice of nonviolence requires a belief in divine vengeance will be unpopular with many Christians, especially theologians in the West. To the person who is inclined to dismiss it, I suggest imagining that you are delivering a lecture in a war zone (which is where a paper that underlies this chapter was originally delivered). **Among your listeners are people whose cities and villages have been first plundered, then burned and leveled to the ground, whose daughters and sisters have been raped, whose fathers and brothers have had their throats slit.** The topic of the lecture: a Christian attitude toward violence. The thesis: we should not retaliate since God is perfect non-coercive love. Soon you would discover that it takes the quiet of a suburban home for the birth of the thesis that human nonviolence corresponds to God’s refusal to judge. In a scorched land, soaked in the blood of the innocent, it will invariably die. And as one watches it die, one will do well to reflect about many other pleasant captivities of the liberal mind.” ***Exclusion and Embrace by Miroslav Volf, 303–304.****

he had, the only way you can keep it from driving you insane is by knowing that there is a God who will one day bring justice.

- He said upon coming to America he discovered a **deeply held American myth**, that belief in a God of judgment leads you to be violent. In actuality, he said, exactly the opposite.
- If you **believe in a God who is all love and no justice**, you will seethe and rage with vengeance and end up taking matters into your own hands. Only when you believe that God will one day execute perfect justice can you lay the sword down and be free from hatred and bitterness and the driving desire to avenge the wrong.

Many of you have a lopsided view of God, which is why you struggle with stories like this one...

- *WORKOUT illus – guy who only works out one set of muscles. ‘Last time I saw legs like that they were hanging out of a nest.’*
- *Many of you have a lopsided view of God, which is why you struggle with stories like this one, and with a lot of what God does in the world*

Believe it or not, there is something on earth that God loves more than individuals in the human race; it is his glory in the universe.

- ***He loves his creation too much** to let it persist in wickedness; and*
- ***He loves glory and justice too much** to let the wicked go unpunished.*
- *The sin of man **grieves God because of what it did to his creation and his glory—the devastation it was causing in the human race—so he decides to **do something** about it.***

Here’s your second word...

“FAVOR”

⁸ But Noah found favor (or grace) in the eyes of the Lord.

Why? What was special about Noah? Nothing, really.

Vs. 9 tells you he was a righteous man, *blameless* in his generation. Is that because he had no sin in his heart?

- No, he had **plenty of evil** in his heart—you'll see that at the end of the story.
- He was part of the same evil human race.

Heb 11:7 says that he *was righteous because he responded* to God's offer of salvation.

By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he... *became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.* (Hebrews 11:7 ESV)

Noah's righteousness was the **righteousness that comes by faith**—gift righteousness; the **righteousness that comes not from being perfect**, but righteousness that God gifts to you when you believe what he says and receive it with surrender.

In other words, **God didn't save Noah because he was** righteous; Noah became righteous because he received God's offer of salvation.

That's always the way people become righteous. God grants righteousness, as a gift, to all who will believe and respond in faith and surrender to it.

All God ever asks of us is that we give an unqualified, unconditional "yes" to him.

- **I've described it before like waking up in an ambulance.** You have to consent fully. They are not asking you to get up and assist... that would hurt. The EMT will do all the work; your role is just to go along with it.

Is this the posture you are in with God?

You say, "Well, I am mostly surrendered to God."

- **No such thing as mostly surrendered!**
 - Opt: pilot that lets me land)
 - My **Driver's Ed teacher** who had a brake on his side of the car. **(Did you have that or was that special for me?)** I remember he asked, "So, J.D., we are coming up to a yellow light, what should you do?" And I was like, "Punch it!" and he slammed on the brake. He had let me sort of be in control, but he really was.
 - THAT'S HOW WE ARE WITH GOD
 - God accepts only one set of terms: **absolute surrender.**
- So **Noah sets out, in faith and obedience and surrender**, to build... **As Heb 11:7 says**, this was one of human history's greatest acts of faith... Think about it: **How ridiculous must this have all seemed?**
- He lives in the mountains and he took over 100 years to build a big **500 foot long** boat.
 - **Can you imagine the ridicule?** His buddies were probably like, "You going to build an F-350 so that you can tow that thing to the beach too, Noah? Because you know we don't live anywhere near the beach."

But Noah endured... even when no one else came along and everyone else ridiculed, because that's what faith does.

It's **not the initial "yes"** that shows you have faith. It's the **follow through** that determines if you have faith. Heb 11: not his "yes, Lord" but his endurance for 100 years.

- I say that because **many of you prayed this prayer** and got baptized, and you think, "Ok, I'm good."
- It's **not the initial yes**; it's the follow through that counts as faith.
- So the **question is not, "have you stood in a baptismal tank** at some point and declared that Jesus is Lord;" but does **your life**

today declare he is Lord? It's not what your mouth says that determines if you have faith, but what your life says.

Well, finally the day came where God said, "**OK, Noah... Now is the time.** Take the animals and go in." (And I'm sure there was supernatural direction involved in all that...

- **You say, "How?"**
- Look, the Bible is full of miracles. Surely if you can believe God created the world with a word, you can believe this...

After the last one was in, Noah walked on, "[16] And the LORD shut him in."

And then it says the **fountains above and below the earth** were opened up, which means torrential rains from above and some kind of underground flooding, or a tsunami, or continental shifts. **However it happened**, by the time it was over flood waters covered the highest known mountain at the time by more than 45 feet, and the floodwaters remained on the earth for **another 5 months**.

And **every living thing**—every man, woman, boy, girl, and all the animals—who were left outside the ark, drowned.

Is that in **your mural**?

(People say, "What about the kids? Even if the adults were bad, weren't they innocent?")

- *Scripture always urges us to think about situations like this **in light of eternity**.*
- *God is **perfectly just** (much more so than we are!) and he won't hold them accountable for sins they didn't commit.*
- *The **joys of heaven vastly outweigh any temporary suffering** any of us through on earth, and so you **think of situations like this where the innocent get caught up the destruction of justice as basically **God collecting them early to that eternal happiness**, a***

happiness that more than makes up for any temporary suffering they experienced on earth.)

Well, eventually the **floodwaters receded** and the Ark comes to rest on Mt. Ararat, and **Noah emerges**, with his 3 sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, and their wives, Hermione Granger and a couple of B-list actresses, and, of course, Noah's wife, Joan... of ark.

8:20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. (He had taken 7 of all the sacrificial animals) 21 And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done... Never again... shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

9:1 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth..."

9:12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: 13 I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh."

3rd word...

"REBOOT"

With these **8 people**—Noah, his wife, their sons and their wives—God starts over. Two agendas define this reboot.

1. God's care for the whole creation

- Did you notice that the **covenant is not just with Noah** and his sons but with *all* of creation? "...the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations." (9:12)
- God certainly loves humans the most in his creation, but he cares for all of it.
- Furthermore, as one theologian I was reading points out, "God never calls anyone into a covenant relationship unless it is a saving relationship."³
- **So that begs the question**, "What is God saving the earth from?"
 - **Chapter 8:20-22** tells us. Human sin. "Never again will I curse the earth again because of man." God is going to save the whole earth from human sin.
 - The Apostle Paul says in **Romans 8:19**, For the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God... [21] the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
 - Nature is chomping at the bit to be restored to its ultimate purpose.
- **God had a purpose for each created thing, and it was to declare his glory. Psalm 19** tells us, "*The heavens declare the glory of God.*"
 - That is not just poetry. It means that if you listen, they have voices.
 - If you listen to a waterfall, or music, or the sea; if you gaze up at the stars, it will speak to you and say, "*A God of beauty and infinite power and boundless creativity stands behind all of this. You are created in his image and you can know him.*"
 - **SLJ**: "God wrote 'I love you.' He wrote it in the sky, and on the earth, and under the sea. He created everything in his

world to reflect him like a mirror—to show us what he is like, to help us know him, to make our hearts sing."⁴

- **Human sin mars that.**

And what that means for us now is that one of **our jobs as stewards of creation is** to help it keep speaking clearly, to make the creation reflect the glory of God.

The **Christian worldview gives us a vision of the world** that urges us to love and care for it in ways totally beyond other faiths.

- It **doesn't teach us that the world is trash**, to be **discarded one day** when we go to heaven (like Islam); or that it is **unimportant or evil and should be shunned** (like Hinduism).
- It teaches us that **creation is an expression of God's goodness**, and creation can't wait until we quit sinning so it can be what it was created to be.
- **Elisabeth Elliot says, "A clam glorifies God more than we do because it is being the clam it was created to be."**
 - Ladies and gentleman, **even the clams** are preaching you to hurry up and get with it.

2. The extraordinary value of human life

- ⁵And for your (man's) lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. [6] "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image."
- The value you place on something is shown **by the price you pay for it**, and God here tells us that human life is SO valuable that there is nothing on earth that can equal it. The **only thing equal to human life on earth** is other human life.
 - **I'm not attempting to get into all the questions** about the death penalty. Clearly, some form of it is advocated here...

³ Tim Keller, Lord of the Earth, Gen 6–9

⁴ Sally Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, chapter 1.

but I'm **not attempting here to get into the practice** of the death penalty today to determine if it is just...

- **What I want you to see here is the extreme value**—above all other things on earth—that God puts on human life.
- **God is pro-life in every possible way**, which means that those who know him protect innocent life at every possible level.
- **Every human being**—of whatever race, color, age, economic status, level of intelligence or level of development—bears his image and is precious in his sight.
- **That means when there is someone is being mistreated**, or abused, or being deprived of due processes of law, it grieves him and should grieve us.
 - If we **see someone being treated unequally in the eyes of the law** because of their race or their economic status, it should grieve us and move to us to action because they are in the image of God just like us.
- **It's why Christians care about**, and advocate for, the unborn. **Unborn babies bear the image of God**, and ought to be treated as such. The question we have to consider in abortion is this:
 - **Is the baby inside the womb a human life**, made in the image of God?
 - And, if so, is it **ever right to willfully take** human life?
- Someone says: **"My rights, my body."**
 - **The unborn child is not part of your body.** The baby has her own DNA, her own brain waves, and her own blood type. It's not part of your body.
- People say, "Well, what about **rape and incest?**" Tragic and painful situation.
 - But... is the child at fault for how they got there? Are they not still made in the image of God... innocent human beings?
 - What they mean by this question is usually (if it is a sincere one and not a red herring), "This baby came to me through one of the most painful and tragic events of my life. Why

should I be forced to bear the burden of something that only reminds me that pain?"

- And that **certainly is a heart-rending** situation. But here's the most important question:
- How **does a civil and just society treat innocent human beings** that remind us of painful events? By killing them? Could we do that with a two year old that reminds us of a painful event? Again, the question is whether this is a human being made in the image of God.⁵
- **What about cases of babies we know will be mentally disabled or have some kind of significant deformity?** Are they not still made in the image of God? If so, then they deserve our protection.

The elderly, the invalid, the immigrant—all people made in the image of God deserve our love and protection. The greatest atrocities in history have always come when some group has been regarded as less than human.

- How did a sophisticated German society go along with the holocaust? Easy. Saw Jews as less than human.
- How did the Founding fathers who talked so eloquently of freedom and justice and equality under the law go along with slavery? Easy. They regarded those they enslaved as less than human.

It must make us ask the question: Who is there in our society today that we don't regard as fully human? The unborn? The refugee?

This is also why we get involved with things like Compassion and devote energy to ministries like HOPUD. Because **these are individuals** just like you and me... each made in the image of God just like we are; they feel the same emotions we feel—**each feels the same kinds of pain, fear, and love** that we experience.

⁵ Adapted from Scott Klusendorf

Never forget that... don't turn it into a statistic.

- Stalin... "The death of one is a tragedy; the death of a million is just a statistic." Chilling coming from him. What he meant was that when you look into the eyes of one, you see the image of God (he was an atheist and wouldn't have called it that, but that's what he meant).
 - To God, world poverty is not a statistic. 100K kids die of hunger each week... God feels each one.
 - To God, 2.2 billion people outside of Christ are not statistics...
- We can't turn a blind eye... Mother Theresa to Bill Clinton and the National Prayer Breakfast in 1994 (barely tall enough to see above the microphone)... "Don't kill unwanted children; send them to me." That should be the **posture of every church and every Christian** about every supposedly unwanted human.
- Refugees: I know the state has it's own questions about protecting and keeping us safe... but as the people of God, we have other questions to consider, too.
 - When someone shows up in our vicinity that is made in the image of God, we love them regardless of how they got there...
- To the girl who had an abortion... and feels unwanted, we say, "Jesus wants you; he died for you. We want you."

So, we who live are given two agendas in this reboot: Care for and develop the creation; put extreme value on human life.

How do you feel like we, as a society, are doing with those two since Noah?

Which leads to the 4th word...

"FAILURE"

God already knows this is not going to work. You can see that from the first thing he said in vs. 21: **"I will never again curse the ground**

because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth." (8:21)

- That **sentence doesn't make much sense**, does it?
 - You'd **expect him to say**, "I'm not going to destroy the earth again because I know man's gonna **do much better** this time around."
 - **Instead, he says**, "I know man is still evil, so I won't destroy the earth again. I'll **have to pursue a different solution.**"
 - **Destroying the wicked won't work; first, that would be everybody; second, it won't rid future generations of evil, either.**

Plus, if you read to the end, you'll see that the story Noah, the father of the new creation, ends pretty badly. **You ever do that—read to the end?** The last scene we have of him is him getting stone-cold drunk and wandering around the village naked...

- **I'm pretty confident** that part didn't make into your nursery wall **mural, either**: "Mom, who's the **crunk guy** over here in the corner? 'Oh, **that's Noah, after he got off the Ark.**" THAT'S NOT IN YOUR PRECIOUS MOMENTS BIBLE, I'M PRETTY SURE

But here's the question you are supposed to ask yourself as you read that. It's not included in there to embarrass Noah. But to teach us something... It's to make us ask the question. *This—crazy drunk Noah, crunk—is the father of the new creation?* This is the reboot? The **virus is still there.**

So God in this story **points to the need for a completely new kind of salvation.** The clue is in vs. 13, "I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

- Charles Spurgeon pointed out that the word for "bow" used here is not the word for "rainbow."
 - **It is gesed:** a war bow or a battle bow.
 - **A rainbow, of course, is shaped like a war bow.**

- What God says is that the rainbow shows us that God has laid down his war bow in the heavens.
 - **IOW, God won't accomplish ultimate salvation** by shooting the arrows of his wrath into men.
- In fact, Spurgeon, pointed out, **if you look at this rainbow like a bow**, you'll see it is pointed back toward heaven. God will one wipe out evil from the earth by taking the arrows of his own wrath into himself.

And that's where you start to see hints about Jesus all through this story...

Jesus will one day come, like Noah... just better.

- **Like Noah**, he will **obey God**, even though **no one understands him**, and **through his obedience he will** provide an ark of salvation;
 - But unlike Noah, he will succeed all the way to the end. His life won't end in a drunken stupor, but in him saying to God, "Not my will, but thine be done."
- **Like Noah's Ark**, he will shield us from the storm of God's wrath and lift us up above the waters of judgment.
 - **But unlike Noah, that ark** that shields us from the wrath of God will not be gopher wood, but his own torn flesh.
 - **We'll be lifted up above the waters of judgment** because Jesus will be submerged into them.
- **Like Noah**, he will emerge from the storms of God's judgment and begin a **new creation**—but unlike Noah, this **new race will not have hearts whose thoughts are only evil continually**. We'll be **new creations**; formed in his image and likeness and reflecting his glorious love!

The **question for us is this**: Have you entered into the Ark of safety? Jesus!

- There's **only one door!**

- And **one day, just as he did in Noah's generation**, he will shut that door and no more chance will be given.
 - **2 Peter uses the story of Noah** to warn you not to delay repenting and surrendering to God...
 - **Everybody in Noah's day** thought he was crazy.
 - **It was 100 years** between when Noah started preaching and the flood waters came, and everybody assumed Noah was just a crazy old loon.
 - **But Peter** said that was because he was giving men just another day to repent. Another plea, "Please, turn from your ways so I don't have to destroy you."
 - And even though it took what seemed like forever, **the promised judgment came**.

And then Peter warns, **2 Peter 3:9**, "*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*"

- The reason he takes so long to return today is that he wants YOU to have a chance to repent and enter into Jesus.
 - *Don't use what God intends to be space to repent with God's absence.*
- **He's coming back**. He may be slow; but he's just giving you a chance to flee to Jesus for safety, but he will return.

SUMMIT: Our mission is now like Noah's. We have to tell people that there is another storm of God's wrath coming; and that whosoever will, may enter into the Ark. They may think we are crazy. They probably will. But we have to believe and endure, like Noah did.

Have you fled to the Ark of Jesus for safety?

Are you warning others?