

Reflection Questions: Selected Texts from Genesis 6-9

For the message, "Humans Breaking Bad & the Stubborn Determination of God" given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on October 7, 2018

These reflection questions are designed to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life. You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion. To review the message, go to MercyHillBCS.org/resources/messages.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read these verses from Genesis: "The 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. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So 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." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord... (6:5-8).

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 the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth... (6:11-13).

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: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth." (9:12-16)

A summary of the message: God cares about this world. Deeply cares. That's because he loves this world. It grieved his heart at the time of Noah to see humanity spreading evil and violence everywhere instead of love and flourishing. When God created the world, he declared that it was very good (Gen. 1:31). Now he looks at it and sees no alternative than to cleanse the world of it's evil. God entered into a covenant with Noah to preserve humanity and the world for his future purposes.

Key Points:

- Because God so loves the world, He must stand against evil.
- Because God so loves the world, judgment does not have the last word.

Bottom Line:

- God so loved the world that he entered into a covenant of grace with Noah. He also so loved the world that God sent his only Son, Jesus, that whoever believes in him might not perish but have eternal life.

1. Let's think about how this text applies to our lives as individuals.

- Genesis tells us that God sees the wickedness that happens upon his good earth as humans rebel against his reign and their design, thus filling the world with corruption and violence. It also tells us that the Lord was sorry / regretted that he made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart (or as the

New Living Translation paraphrases it, “it broke his heart”). What do you learn about God from these verses? Does it bring you comfort or discomfort? Encouragement or discouragement? Relief or grief? Share your thoughts.

- Scripture paints a complex image of humanity. On the one hand, it tells us that humans have immense dignity (God crowned humanity with honor and glory — Psalm 8) and are capable of amazing things. On the other hand, it paints a picture of the depravity of humans as at the time of the great flood (“every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually) and more generally (“the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live” —Ecclesiastes 9:3).
 - Which is easier for you to embrace, the inherent dignity or the corrupt depravity of humanity?
 - Why is it essential for us to hold to both of these at the same time? What happens when one view of humanity one becomes dominant at the expense of the other?

2. Let’s think about how this text applies to us as a community of Jesus’ followers.

- In light of this difficult passage about the judgment / justice of God, how can we help our culture understand that God must be both loving and just? Or to put it another way, that God is just precisely because he is loving?
- How does this text inform the kind of lifestyle we are called to live in this world? In other words, How does this text help us to grow deeper in humility AND in hope (remember the trajectory of the Scripture’s story)?

3. Let’s think about how this text applies to our city.

- How could you show someone that this passage about God caring / loving the world enough to do something about the wickedness of humanity actually points us forward to the Good News about Jesus?

CONCLUSION QUESTION

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

PRAYER

What are some ways you can turn what you are learning into prayer? List them as bullet points....

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- _____
- _____