Noah Story Notes

Adam and Eve committed the first sin and were sent out into the world to make a living. They had two sons, Cain and Abel, and Cain ended up murdering Abel. From that point on, things went from bad to worse. By the time of Noah, God was sorry he had even made people. He saw that human beings were very wicked. Their thoughts were only about evil all the time.

But Noah pleased the Lord. Noah knew God’s commands, and he wanted to obey them. That is why God chose to save Noah and his family.

“The end of all flesh is coming, for man has filled the earth with violence,” God told Noah. “Make for yourself a boat of cypress wood, and cover it inside and out with pitch to make it waterproof. Make the ark 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. Make an opening around the top of the boat. Put a door in the side of the boat. Make an upper, middle, and lower deck in it.”

God told Noah that when the ark was completed, he would bring a great flood of water upon the earth to destroy every living creature. “But with you, I will make a covenant,” God said. “We will have an agreement between us. I will save you and your wife as well as your sons and their wives. But you must bring into the ark male and female animals by their kind to keep them from extinction. Also, gather some of every kind of food. Store it on the boat as food for you and the animals.”

Noah did everything God commanded him. He was 480 years old when God told him to build the boat. Twenty two years after God’s command to build the boat, Shem was born. Japheth came a year later, and Ham a year after that. The three sons grew up around the boat from the time they were born until they were almost 100 years old. It took 120 years to build the boat. When it was finished, God sent Noah and his family inside the ark with the animals.

During the time that the ark was being built, Noah told the people to stop sinning and obey God’s commands. But, just as people today don’t like to be told they need to repent of their sins, so it was during Noah’s day. People continued to live their lives in the way they desired, with little thought or regard for God or his laws.

People before the flood lived much longer than they do today. By the time the ark was completed, Noah was almost 600 years old. It wasn’t an easy task that God had given Noah, but because he had faith in God, Noah obeyed and God was with him.

When all the work was completed, God gave Noah some final instructions. “Come into the ark, you and your family. Bring seven pairs of every clean animal, and one pair of all unclean animals. Also bring birds of the sky, males and females. In seven days, I will cause it to rain on the earth. It will rain for forty days and forty nights, and all living things that aren’t in the ark will be destroyed.”

Noah did what the Lord commanded him. Noah didn’t have to go out and catch the animals. Genesis 6:20 says that God brought them to him. Noah, his family, and the animals went into the ark. God closed the door behind them. For seven days, they sat in the ark and waited while outside, people made fun of them.

But on the seventh day, the underground water broke through to the surface and gushed up. At the same time, rain came down in a thick torrent from the sky above. The rain fell on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. The water flooded the earth. As the water rose, it lifted the boat off the ground. The water rose so much that even the highest mountains under the sky were covered by it. The water continued to rise until it was more than 20 feet above the mountains.

All living things that moved on the earth died. This included all the birds, tame animals, wild animals and creatures that swam on the earth. All those who had laughed at the idea of a flood and ignored God’s warnings were drowned as water covered everything in sight. Only those safely housed in the ark remained alive.

The water covered the earth 150 days. Inside of the ark Noah and his family praised God for his great mercy. They also spent much of their time tending to the animals that God had placed in their care.

God hadn’t forgotten Noah and all those in the ark with him. To speed up the drying process, he caused a warm wind to blow across the water, drawing large amounts of moisture up into the atmosphere. Eventually the tops of mountains began to appear. It was against one of these mountains, Mount Ararat that the ark came to rest.

Realizing that the water was still receding, Noah waited two months and then sent out a raven to see if it could find any dry place to land. But the bird flew to and fro, and found nowhere to roost.

Noah then sent out a dove, but she too found no place to rest and returned to the safety of the ark. Noah waited another seven days and then sent the dove out for a second time. This time when she came back she carried an olive leaf in her beak. That told Noah that dry land had begun to appear. After seven more days he sent out the dove again. This time the bird didn’t return, and Noah knew that he and his family could safely leave the ark.

Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked out over dry ground. Then God said to Noah. “You and your wife, your sons and their wives should go out of the boat. Bring every animal out of the boat with you—the birds, animals, and everything that crawls on the earth. Let them have many young ones and let them grow in number.” From the time Noah entered the boat until God said he could come out was about 370 days –over a year!

To show his appreciation Noah built an altar and offered one of each of the clean animals to God as a sacrifice. The Lord was pleased with the sacrifices. He said, “I will never again destroy every living thing on the earth as I did this time. As long as the earth continues, there will be planting and harvest. Cold and hot, summer and winter, day and night will not stop.”

As a sign that God would never again allow a worldwide flood, he placed a rainbow in the sky. He said, “Each time a rainbow appears, it will serve as a reminder of my promise to every living thing on the earth.”

Noah gazed at the beautiful, brightly colored rainbow, and rejoiced. Whenever we see a rainbow in the sky, we too, like Noah before us, can reflect on God’s promise.