

REAL PEOPLE, REAL GOD:

Noah

REAL PEOPLE Grow Weary

Let's start at the very beginning of Noah's life...how his father named him.

"He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed." **Genesis 5:29**

So, Noah's story begins with a father (and possibly a whole extended family) who are growing weary of working the cursed ground. And Noah was their hope for gaining comfort in their toil. Even in this more "righteous" line of Seth into which Noah was born, we see them placing their hope in a human to deliver them and bring comfort rather than looking to their Creator for comfort and relationship. There seems to be a little bit of that "chip on the shoulder" attitude that we felt with Cain.

REAL PEOPLE Grow in Wickedness

As the story continues, we learn that men have been growing exceedingly more wicked:

"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."
Genesis 6:5 (*emphasis* added)

Wow! That's a lot of 100% words. *Every. Only. All.* Yikes. We aren't told exactly how humanity devolved to this state, from Seth who sought the Lord, down through Enoch who walked faithfully with God until God took him away, to now the whole of humanity being found wicked in God's eyes—except for Noah.

- Was it that "chip on the shoulder" attitude?
- Was it because they looked for comfort in humanity rather than in God?

What Our REAL GOD Does...

Our Grieving God

When our REAL GOD looks down on the state of wicked humanity, He doesn't yell and stomp and bring a fury of fire and brimstone...No. He grieves.

Even though this story is about our REAL GOD sending a flood to destroy REAL wicked PEOPLE—first, He grieves. He is pained.

“The Lord regretted that He had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled.” **Genesis 6:6**

Another translation says:

“It grieved him to his heart.”

Imagine our God looking upon his creation and weeping, sobbing, deeply pained and grieved by the wicked actions of all mankind. It’s hard to fully grasp what our REAL GOD felt in this moment, but wouldn’t it be something like our own feelings of betrayal, unrequited love, disappointment, anger, etc.? Since we were created in God’s image—including the scope of our emotions—imagine God’s grieving multiplied to infinity and filled with righteousness.

His Wonderful Sovereignty

While we think of our REAL GOD grieving deeply over His wayward creation, ponder this important question: Was God surprised by it?

No. Not at all. Our omniscient REAL GOD knew humankind would become thoroughly evil before He spoke light into being on the first day of Creation—yet He created anyway.

Why?

Because THAT’S the lengths He’s willing to go to be in *relationship* with the people of His heart and bear with our choices. Consider the *scope* of His sovereignty. Our REAL GOD gave us freewill knowing that no matter what choices we made, He can still carry out His perfect plan.

Praise God that my stupidity cannot override His sovereignty. 🙏

Our REAL GOD knows how to bring good even out of our worst — out of humanity’s worst. And that’s exactly what He does in the story of Noah — He creates good from the bad.

Destruction for a Purpose

Our REAL GOD tells Noah He’s going to wipe the slate of creation clean and start again...except for 8 people and two of every animal (plus 7 pairs of clean animals and 7 pairs of birds — but we’ll get back to that).

But even in this plan for destruction, we can see His protection and provision for His people. While it is a horrific event, we must remember that God did it to destroy EVIL from the world.

God's wrath isn't like human quick-tempered whims of anger, revenge, and hate. We see in our REAL GOD a perfect and righteous anger guided by perfect knowledge. By destroying this deeply evil human race, God protects humanity from spiraling further into wickedness.

Our REAL GOD Instructs. The REAL PEOPLE Obey

When our REAL GOD plans to wipe out evil, He also plans to save a remnant of righteousness to start fresh. He chooses to **reveal** Himself and His desires to Noah and His family by giving specific instructions for making the ark

Although REAL PEOPLE in God's creation haven't had a great track record of listening to instructions, Noah breaks the mold and does as God says! Go, Noah!

“And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.” **Genesis 7:5**

When you have extra time, count how many times Genesis 6-7 says that Noah “did everything just as God had commanded him.” God must have wanted to impress that on our hearts to repeat it so many times, right?

When Noah, his family, and all the animals are on the ark, the Lord shuts them in. Then the rain—and the waiting—begin...

One Long Year...

When I read this story I was struck by the waiting, waiting, waiting that Noah and his family endured on the ark.

- Rain for 40 days
- Waited 150 days (about 5 months) for water to recede so the ark could rest on mountain.
- Waters continue to recede for three more months (until the mountains were visible).
- A month later, Noah opens a window, sending out birds to check for land. Finally, one comes back with a branch, a sign of life in lower regions. Then he sends one that never returns.
- A little while later, Noah takes off the ark's covering and sees that the ground is dry.
- All in all, it was a year that Noah and his family were on the ark.

So much waiting!

Our REAL GOD's Perfect Timing

As I read about Noah and his family waiting and waiting, even I got impatient with God! Then it dawned on me...He was keeping them safe. Why was I anxious and angry at Him for keeping them safe in the ark with all the food and provision they needed?

And then something else dawned on me (a lot of dawning going on)...it was the same choice God gave Cain: “sin is crouching outside your door.” Cain, too, had a choice to stay within the safety and protection of God’s provision or to go out on his own and risk exposure to the lurking evil.

Cain chose poorly. Noah and his family waited...and God honored their obedience.

REAL PEOPLE Offer Up Sacrifices — Our REAL GOD Offers a Covenant

Noah discovers God’s intended use for those extra animals (those 7 pairs of clean animals and 7 pairs of birds) as soon as he and his family leave the ark...

“So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives. All the animals...came out of the ark...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.” **Genesis 8:18-20**

Then our REAL GOD enters into a covenant with Noah.

“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...Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears...I will remember my covenant [and]...Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.’” **Genesis 9:12-15**

See how the new relationship between our REAL GOD and REAL PEOPLE is starting off on the right foot again? It’s always God’s desire to reveal Himself and relate to His people...

So our REAL GOD lays out instructions to Noah and his family much like He did with Adam and Eve.

“Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.’” **Genesis 9:1**

Do these REAL PEOPLE do any better?

REAL PEOPLE Hope for Something Better

What's the next thing Noah does after the sacrifice and the covenant?

“Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent.” **Genesis 9:20**

He was a “man of the soil” and the next thing ya know...Noah drinks too much wine and gets drunk. God's righteous guy already falling down on the job? Why?? Think about your REAL life. What happens when you build and build toward something new, and then the reality of “new” wears off?

Noah spent all that time building, building, building the ark. Then the rain began, the trauma of the event, and more waiting and waiting. Add the aftermath of the flood, obedience, and more waiting. Now imagine how Noah felt when that vineyard still produced weeds and thistles, and the soil was just as toilsome as it had been before the flood.

Dashed hopes. Reality hits. Life happens.

Remember Noah's name: “He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed.”

His father had looked to him as the hope for comfort from hard labor. Maybe Noah even held out some hope that the “cursed ground” would be easier for him to work after the flood. But the ground didn't change.

Was Noah more focused on improving his circumstances than deepening his relationship with God? Each day provides new opportunities to deepen our relationship with the Creator—or we can focus on circumstances and pour all our energy into this broken creation. It's our choice.

REAL PEOPLE Bless and Curse

How did Noah's sons react to his drunkenness and nakedness? His second son, Ham, saw his father lying drunk and naked and told his brothers, exploiting their father's shame. The other two sons, Shem and Japheth, walked backward into Noah's tent and covered their father without looking at his disgrace.

Noah responds with blessings and a curse according to his son's actions. Up to this point, only our REAL GOD has laid out consequence and punishment, but here we see a human being acting in God's image in a new way.

Noah pronounces a curse on Ham's son Canaan and all his offspring. On Shem and Japheth, Noah pronounces a blessing — that Canaan would be the slave of both, that the Lord would extend Japheth's territory, and that Japheth would live in Shem's tents. These blessings and curse become important as we look at the next character in our continuing story—Abraham.

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