

The Earth After the Flood



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 4

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 9–11.

MEMORY VERSE: “First of all, here is what you must understand. In the last days people will make fun of the truth. They will laugh at it. They will follow their own evil longings [desires]. They will say, ‘Where is this “return” he [Jesus] promised? Everything goes on in the same way it has since our people of long ago died. In fact, it has continued that way since God first created everything’ ” (2 Peter 3:3, 4, NIV).

MANY YEARS AGO, A BRITISH PHILOSOPHER (THINKER) NAMED BERTRAND RUSSELL WAS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF EVOLUTION.¹ He joked about man as the “great” end of evolution: “If I were given great power and millions of years to experiment, I should not think too much of man to boast about as the final result of my work.”—Adapted from Dan Falk, quoted in *Universe on a T-Shirt* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 2002), p. 203.

Let us forget Bertrand Russell’s mistaken idea about our beginnings. But we can understand his negative attitude² toward humans. This negative attitude becomes easier to understand when we think about the Flood and afterward. We would think that after a flood, which wiped out the entire earth, people would have better understood the message about God’s attitude toward sin and rebellion. But clearly they did not. The stories that the Holy Spirit inspired Moses to write do not paint a pretty picture. Clearly, humans did not learn much. Things started to get worse quickly after the Flood.

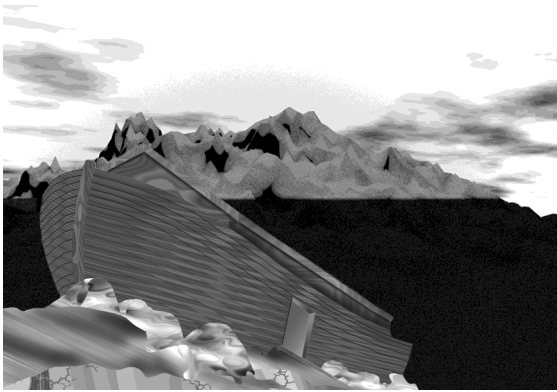
This week, we will take a look at the early days after the Flood, at the changes that came, and at the results of these changes. But, after all this killing and rebellion, we still can see the working of a God who loves sinful people. He worked hard to save people from themselves. He still is working hard today.

¹evolution—the idea that we became humans by slowly changing from a lower form of life to a higher form of life.

²attitude—how we feel or think about something or someone.

SUNDAY—NOVEMBER 5**NOAH AND THE NEW EARTH
(Genesis 9:1-3, Nlrv)**

There is no doubt that Noah and his family stepped off the ark into a new world. This world was very different from what they had known before. It is hard to imagine what must have gone through their minds. In a way, they must have been very scared when they saw the wrecked earth. Today, after thousands of years, we see proof of the Flood. But we are used to it. It is all we have ever known. Plus, nature probably has been able to adjust and heal after the first shock of destruction. But, for Noah and those with him, it must have been a heart-breaking and fearful experience.



How would you have felt if you had been Noah or one of his family?

What hope and encouragement did Noah and his family receive from God after the terrible Flood? Genesis 9:1-3.

Contrast³ Genesis 9:1-3 with God's words to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28-30. What is different between the two stories? Why are they different? What great change took place over people's relationship to animal life?



After the Flood, animals became afraid of people.

The greatest change came with the introduction of meat eating. Eating meat was not allowed before the Flood. Many of the beasts that before were their friends now were to become their meals. Something wonderful was lost to sin. For example, the Bible verses show that humans at first were not meat eaters. The animals did not eat meat either. In the Garden of Eden, humans and animals were different (Genesis 1:26, 27). But, they also were connected in many ways. God created them all. All had life. And they were to share almost the same kind of diet. Perhaps this was God's way of showing

³contrast—show how things are different.

humans that they needed to respect those creatures (living things) under their control.

List some of the wreckage you see in your own life because of sin. What steps can you take towards healing and renewal?

MONDAY—NOVEMBER 6

BLOOD AND LIFE (Genesis 9:4-6)

What do you believe Genesis 9:4-6 is saying to Christians today?

In Genesis 9:4-6, we see again the results of sin. We hear God saying what life will be like for human beings in a sinful world. It is very interesting because the command against eating blood comes before the Jews were involved with the laws of Leviticus about cleanliness and uncleanness. Many hundreds of years later, the Gentile (non-Jewish) believers were warned to not drink blood (Acts 15:20, 29). This very clearly points to what was happening in Genesis 9:4-6 (also read Leviticus 17:11; 1 Peter 1:19).

What reason does God give for the strict law against the taking of another human life?

There has been much debate over many hundreds of years about how these verses are to be interpreted and used. In every case of someone killing

another person, should that person be killed, no matter what happened? Many Old Testament laws were put in place to deal with special conditions. Read, for example, Numbers 35:11. We have many Bible verses about forgiveness, turning the cheek, and not judging. There are the stories in the Old Testament about the Israelites who, at God's command, wiped out entire cities. But one point is still without argument: Human life is sacred, and we must recognize it as sacred. God will surely have His day of judgment for those who do not treat human life as sacred (1 Corinthians 5:10).

TUESDAY—NOVEMBER 7

AFTER THE FLOOD (Genesis 9:18-29)

God has offered peace, safety, and prosperity (success). He has given warnings of judgment, destruction, and death. But people just do not seem to understand. Of course, we do not need Bible stories to prove that point. After all, we have our own selves. What more proof do we need?

Read Genesis 9. After the Flood, God established a covenant⁴ with every living thing. He promised never to destroy the world again with a flood. He even used the beauty of a rainbow as a sign of His promise. What happened after He promised never to destroy the earth with a flood again? Genesis

⁴covenant—a promise or agreement between God and His people.

9:18-29. What can this story teach us? What does it tell us that righteous (holy) Noah (Genesis 7:1) should be so heavily involved in this sad story?

Noah's words about his children were not forever sealing the future end of his family. Rather, the event⁵ seemed to show character traits⁶ already there and how these traits would be passed down from children to children. "The sin of Ham was not a planned sin. He may have seen his father's shameful condition by accident. Instead of being filled with sorrow over his father's foolishness, he rejoiced in what he saw and found delight in publicizing it. . . . Ham's two older brothers did not share his wrong feelings. Adam also had had two well-disciplined sons (Abel and Seth) and one child of sin (Cain). All three sons had received the same parental love and training. But sin showed up much more in Cain than in the others. The same spirit of sin appeared in one of Noah's children. But the older sons were raised in the same home and under the same conditions as Ham. They show a noble spirit of clean living and self-control. The evil spirit of criminal Cain was continued in his children. Ham's sinful nature showed itself in his children."—Adapted from *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 266.

⁵event—thing that happened.

⁶character traits—qualities of character such as being honest and faithful or dishonest and unfaithful.

⁷scoffers—mockers; people who make fun of truth.

⁸scoffing—laughing at and making fun of truth.

⁹principles—basic rules of life upon which other rules and laws are based.

So often we care very much about our sins being forgiven. This is very important (Romans 4:7; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 2:3; 1 John 1:9; 1 John 2:12). But what lesson should Genesis 9:18-29 teach us about the influence that our actions can have on others? Why is this lesson especially important for people who are in positions of power and influence? Think about a big decision you have to make. How will your decision influence others?

WEDNESDAY—NOVEMBER 8

SCOFFERS⁷—PAST AND PRESENT (2 Peter 3:1-11)

In 2 Peter 2, we read about false teachers who were once faithful to God. Now read 2 Peter 3:1-11, and answer these questions:

1. To what authority (power) does Peter point the false teachers and scoffers? Why is that so important?
2. What is the real reason for the scoffing?⁸ How do we see the same principles⁹ shown today?
3. What point is Peter making by pointing to the Flood? (Read 2 Peter 2:5.)

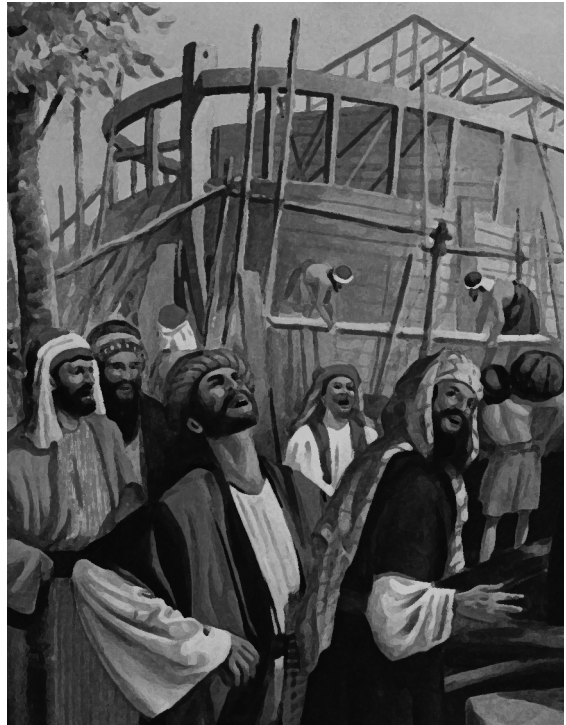
Peter's words are very interesting,

because he makes a point about the scoffers saying that all things have “continued that way since God first created everything” (2 Peter 3:4, NIV). Second Peter 2:1-11 points to a powerful fulfillment of prophecy that has been shown in the past 150 years. During those years, science has taught that life changed slowly over long periods of time. Many scientists believe this slow change explains the reason for the surface condition of the earth. They claim that things just keep on as they have before. They believe many of the large canyons and rock build-ups did not come by some sudden happening such as the Flood. Instead, they believe they were the result of things continuing to change slowly from the beginning of creation, from event to event over a long period of time.

This idea also is the basis of evolution. Evolution is supposed to be a steady process (growth) of things slowly changing from what they were in the beginning of time. Evolution does not teach a sudden six-day creation of life on earth, as the Bible teaches. It is interesting to see that long ago Peter pointed to these two areas as the subject of argument in the last days. The fulfillment of Peter’s prophecy is a strong sign that we are living in a time when we must choose between evolution or creation.

Read again 2 Peter 3:1-11. Do you see yourself in these verses—some doubts, some questioning, some scoffing? What must you do in order to get back on the

narrow path? (Matthew 7:14).



Would you have doubted Noah?

THURSDAY—NOVEMBER 9

THE TOWER OF BABEL (Genesis 11:1-10)

Genesis 10 goes on to explain how the number of people grew after the Flood. People were born. Nations were formed. And the large crowds of people spread out into kingdoms that appear later in the Bible.

What example do you see of the growth of science and what the people planned to do with this science?

Why did the people want a tower that went into heaven?

What reason does the Lord give for wanting to stop them? Also read Genesis 3:22; Genesis 6:5.

“The people living on the plain of Shinar did not believe in God’s covenant that He would not again completely flood the earth. Many of them denied that God was real. They believed nature was really responsible for the Flood. Others did believe in a God. They believed it was He who had destroyed the world with the Flood. The same as Cain’s, their hearts rose up in rebellion against Him. Their goal for building the tower was to keep them safe from another flood. By building the tower to a much higher level than a flood could ever reach, they thought they could put themselves out of danger. And as they could reach the clouds, they hoped to find the cause of the Flood. The whole project was designed to make the builders proud of their work. It also would turn the minds of future people away from God and lead them into idol worship.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 119.

Perhaps the most interesting verse in the story of Babel is Genesis 11:6. God sees that these people, by working together, are going to get much knowledge and technical skill. One would think that would be good. Look at how much good technology has done for us today. But God here clearly sees this as bad. So He stops it by confusing their language. In this way, He spreads them out and makes it

difficult for them to share their knowledge and skills to their plans. Why would He do that?

What lesson is here for us? What kind of knowledge are we looking for? What are we doing with that knowledge? What important lessons could this story have for each one of us? Also read 2 Timothy 3:7.



**Are you always learning?
Do you know the truth?**

FRIDAY—NOVEMBER 10

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, “After the Flood,” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 105–110.

“The prophecy God gave to Noah was not God’s way of showing His anger or favor. It did not make sure the character and future of Noah’s sons. But it showed what would be the result of the kind of life they had chosen and the character they had developed. It showed God’s purpose toward them and their children through their own

character and actions. Children receive the character and habits of their parents, and copy their parents' example. So, the sins of the parents are practiced by the children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, et cetera. In the same way, the sins of Ham were repeated throughout his family. This brought a curse upon them for many generations.¹⁰ 'One sinner destroys a lot of good.' (Ecclesiastes 9:18, NIV.)"—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 118.

"Geologists¹¹ claim to find proof from the earth itself that it is very much older than Moses' record teaches. . . .

"But without Bible history, geology¹² can prove nothing. Those who have faith in geology's discoveries really have no understanding of the size of people, animals, and trees before the Flood. They do not understand the great changes which then took place. Things found in the earth do give proof of conditions that are different from

those of the present. But the time of these conditions can be learned only from the Bible. In the history of the Flood, the Bible has explained that which geology alone could not discover or understand."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 112.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

❶ How does science try to create a modern Tower of Babel? The same as the old Tower of Babel, why is the modern Tower also doomed to failure?

❷ As a class, go over the question at the end of Thursday's lesson. Share your answers with each other.

❸ We can do nothing about our genes¹³ or our character traits.¹⁴ What part does the gospel have in this important work? How does the idea of the new birth¹⁵ fit in with this important idea of character development?

¹⁰generations—future children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, et cetera.

¹¹geologists—people who study the earth's rocks and rock formations.

¹²geology—the science of studying the earth's rocks and rock formations.

¹³genes—the "cells" we are born with. Genes determine what color our hair and eyes are. Genes also determine things such as what size we are.

¹⁴character traits—qualities of character such as being honest and faithful or dishonest and unfaithful.

¹⁵the new birth—receiving forgiveness and having the Holy Spirit live in your life to guide you; when God takes your life of sin, forgives your sins, then helps you not to sin.