

# Noah - Part 1

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[ 0 : 00 ] This passage we read from Genesis 4 sets the backdrop before which the Noah story will play out, and it does so by tracing for us the effects of our self-centeredness in a world out from under God's reign and away from his presence.

This is the world that we're born into. And very few, I expect very few, would dispute it. If there's one thing that we can agree on, it's that we enter the world thinking that we are the masters of our ships, the captains of our souls.

And the only question is whether there's a God that makes our claims to autonomy and our desires for autocracy and our lives marked by anarchy wrong.

The only question, us in here, them out there, the only question is, is there a God that makes our self-centeredness wrong?

Genesis 4 traces out for us life as the captain of our souls, a world where culture and development and technological advances climax in a man's tyranny over his wives and his threat towards fellow humanity.

[ 1 : 36 ] Did you hear that? Did you hear that? When he says, Adah and Zillah, listen to me. Wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me.

Absolute injustice. His sons are the ones that work iron and are the ones who live in tents, the culture makers. And it climaxes.

I have killed a man for wounding me. Does that sound familiar? Does that sound familiar? A world where technology and culture and beauty are perverted and warped around the pleasures of the masses and the power struggles of the few.

Does that sound familiar? This is our world. Don't ever be so naive. Don't ever be so naive as to think the intentions of our hearts can ever by themselves make the world what it was meant to be.

We can't ever overcome it. Advance as we may. We can never get there to bringing it back to where it was. Our problem is not that we haven't brought it forward enough.

[ 2 : 47 ] Our problem is that we haven't brought ourselves back to where we were in the beginning. So whether you're in classes or working in a lab somewhere or in a hospital, you have to check yourself to make sure that you're not becoming a pawn to others as they struggle for power in this world.

And make sure that you're not yourself buying into the story that this is a dog-eat-dog world and that you need to defend yourself and progress and advance.

Because everything we do from the splitting of the atom to the splitting of the cell has the potential of becoming a weapon of mass destruction. Advancement is not our problem.

You have to see that. In a world like this, in a world like this, the only thing left to do is to call on the name of the Lord.

This is what happens at the end of chapter 4. In the midst of all the domineering and all the profiteering, we've got to see that it isn't, it isn't, this isn't the way that we were meant to live.

[ 3 : 59 ] This isn't what it was supposed to be. And the only thing left to do is to call on the creator. Hope dawns when creatures who can't fix the created order call on the creator to do only what he can do.

It's the beginning of the story of Noah. It is a story of hope. Because it begins with calling back. Calling on the only one who can fix it.

Genesis 4 then sets the backdrop to the story. And if Genesis 4 sets the backdrop to the story, where someone, somewhere is finally calling on the only one who can fix this thing.

Genesis 5 then, where we're going, sets the stage. The stage on which the story plays out. So we're going to pick up in Genesis 5 verse 1.

And what you've got to see is that where in the days that Seth had his son Enosh and people began to call on the name of the Lord, when we call on God, he's already in the process of answering our calls.

[ 5 : 16 ] Isn't that great? This is our gospel. That when we turn to God, he's already at work answering our calls. And this is how he answered their calls back then.

Chapter 5 verse 1. This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them, male and female, and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them, he called their name, man.

He called them Adam. So it was in the beginning, and it was good. And even though all had gone wrong in the world, not all was lost. When Adam had lived 130 years, we're told he had a son in his own likeness, passing on the likeness of God to his child.

Born in his own image, though a tainted, a cracked image. Distorted. He no longer held the place in creation rightly that he was meant to be.

The image of God set up in creation. The presence of God in creation. But there was hope that maybe this would be restored. So the image is passed on, and Adam named his son Seth.

[ 6 : 31 ] And after Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, but then he died.

When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of, or perhaps with the footnote, he became the ancestor of Enosh. And after he became the father of the ancestor of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters.

Altogether, Seth lived 912 years, and then he died. When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan.

And after he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

Kenan lived 70 years. He became the father of Mahalalel. After he lived 840 years, had other sons and daughters, Kenan lived 910 years.

[ 7 : 40 ] And then he died. Mahalalel lived 65 years. Fathered Jared. Lived another 830 years and had other sons and daughters.

And at 895 years old, he died. You see the pattern? It's not a great pattern.

It's the darkness of the story. Someone once described death like a plow. A plow that we push.

It turns up all that lies in its path. And we're the ones that push it. We push and push and push. And we make a few babies. But eventually, we fall under the very plow that we drive forward.

Another generation gets behind the plow and pushes and pushes and pushes. Only at some point to fall under themselves. Turned up, turned over, and forgotten. We want so much to think that what we do here on earth is important.

[ 8 : 44 ] Right? We all want this sense that what we're doing and what we're spending the vast majority of our time is going to outlast us somehow. But the truth is that we're just another person behind the plow.

Pushing and pushing and pushing. Have a few babies and die. This is the darkness of the story, right? There's no hope in our pushing and pushing and pushing.

You see, death is the great equalizer. Death is the great leveler. In a way, even, this is a ray of hope, though.

And this is an interesting thing to see. Because death was a curse, right? Death was brought on because we did wrong things, right? But even death is a ray of hope.

In the midst of a very dark story. You see, listen to this. Adam and Eve, the first death that happened wasn't of a man.

[ 9 : 48 ] Wasn't of a woman. The first death that happened was when God killed an animal to clothe Adam and Eve. They were running around in fig leaves and they weren't doing the job.

They were running around in their shame. And God killed an animal to make clothes for them. It was God that did it.

And then when he pushed them out of the garden, listen to his words. He says, now lest they reach out, right? They've sinned. Now lest they reach out in his hand.

Lest Adam reach out and take from the tree of life and eat and live forever. Therefore God drove them out of the garden. And then they die.

They're driven out because we can't live forever in sinfulness. Could you imagine a world in which you lived forever? Left to yourself.

[ 10 : 46 ] Left to your sinful self. I mean everybody in here, every kid in here knows that if we had eternity to live, this is sort of like the picture of Wolverine, right?

If we had like a life that wasn't ending, do you think it would look all that happy if we're left to ourselves, if we're never saved? Could you imagine Stalin living forever?

Or Hitler living forever? Death is the great equalizer. If death didn't come, if we didn't naturally degenerate and deteriorate in our bodies, if our strength never left us, we would destroy ourselves.

So in the midst of death, God is actually perpetuating life. We have other sons and daughters and then we die so that we don't destroy ourselves, so that the strong don't continue in strength.

God actually works through the problems of our world. God actually works through the curses that we've brought on ourselves. And the only question is, back here at the beginning of the story, in the story of Noah, is how will God weave death into the answer to the problem?

[ 12 : 09 ] When will death become part of the solution? And rather than destroy the punchline by jumping to Jesus, let me just look a few verses ahead of this, okay?

The regularity of life continues. After Jared, we pick up then in the life of Jared at the end of it.

Verse 18. It says, when Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. Jared lived and had other sons and daughters and then he died, right? He dies too.

But then something strange happens. Listen to this. This is one of the grippers of the Bible. Something strange happens in verse 21.

When Enoch had lived 65 years, Enoch's Jared's kid, he became a father as well, like his father before him, this time of Methuselah. But after he became a father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God.

[ 13 : 10 ] 300 years. And had other sons and daughters. Enoch walked with God.

And then he was no more because God took him. In the middle of all the death, one man walks with God. When all the Lamechs of the world are out taking wives for themselves.

This is the word for marriage. It's literally to take. When all the Lamechs are taking wives for themselves and defending their territory with their swords. One man walks with God.

And is taken by him. One man. One man. Not because he died. Not because death took him.

But because God took him. You see, there's only one way around death. There's only one way around death.

[ 14 : 13 ] You can't cheat death. You can't defend yourself against death. Death isn't God's means, right? Death is God's means of perpetuating life and accomplishing his plans to save us.

Death's there for a reason. And the only way out from under death's reign is if you walk with him and find your place in his plans. And you've got to understand, as a church, as ministers, as elders, over you, our one desire here is that you would walk with God.

Our one desire is that you would walk out of here every week further encouraged to walk with God.

That death would no longer have its way in your life. But that you would find the God who's already there waiting for you.

I've been home a lot recently. Catherine's been sick. She's been in bed with heart issues. And so I found myself in the very precarious position of taking care of the kids much more often than I would hope on a weekly basis.

[ 15 : 42 ] And like any good father, I think, I've been at a loss for ideas on what do you do with these days. How do you fill up time taking care of these children?

And, I mean, I can do fine just coming home and wrestling them until they're tired and put them to bed. Do fine on that schedule. But a whole day, I don't know what to do. And so the best I've come up with is, you know, you get them ready.

You put their shoes on and you give them, you know, your coat, zip them up and all that and get them ready. And you send them on their way, set them off walking around the block. Right? And we've gotten very used to our block.

It's very, you know, common now. We go 24, 22, 20, 18, just down. It sort of reads like a genealogy, right? 24, 22. We go round and round.

I mean, this is our life now. But secretly, in my heart, there's only one reason why we really go on a walk. It's so that by the time we come down the street and curve around the corner, and by the time we're walking up the other side, the kids are so tired that they don't know what to do that they finally reach up.

[ 16 : 57 ] They can't walk any further, and they just reach up. And when they do that, they find that my hand has been sitting there the whole time waiting for theirs. It's the only reason I set them out on that little journey.

It's the only pleasure. I don't think God is too different. Walking with God, I don't think he's too different. I don't think we're set off on this journey through this life, through this monotony of genealogies in whichever one we show up in, for any different reason.

That when we get worn out and tired, at some point we reach up. And we find when we do that his hand is sitting there waiting for ours. And I'm sure there's some in here today that are like me.

I'm like this. The problem is you're grown-ups now. That's easy enough to say for a four-year-old. But we're grown-ups now. We have responsibilities.

We have things in our hands that we can't let go of. I've got to tell you that going around that block of ours, 24, 22, 20, like a genealogy, I've got to tell you, I come back home the other side almost every time looking like a rummage sale.

[ 18 : 29 ] But I'm much better at carrying things than they are. I'm waiting for them to hand me the things. I'm waiting. I don't think God's much different.

Whether it's the job that we clutch or the schoolwork or the grades or the sword that we take to defend our own little piece of this world.

I don't think he's much different. Waiting for us to hand it over. God's the God who's there answering their calls before they're even on their lips.

A God of grace. God is the God who will use even the curse to accomplish his plans and someday weave it in to the most beautiful mosaic that you could ever imagine.

That death is no longer the problem, but now it's the solution as he sends someone to take it for himself. What we deserved. A God of grace.

[ 19 : 39 ] And God is the God who when they sit there and finally get it in them and somebody among them says, I'm going to walk with God, finally does it.

And the Bible says it. How he does it, right? The Bible fleshes it out. It says, by faith Enoch pleased God. Walked with God.

It says in the next verse it's impossible to please God without faith. It's impossible. And faith is believing that God is and that he'll reward those who seek him.

A God of grace. I want to take five minutes. Five minutes to walk through eight of the hardest verses in the Bible.

And I just want to pretend for a minute that they're not as difficult as they really are. And you have no choice but to follow me. So five minutes to just sum up this gospel according to Noah.

[ 20 : 48 ] The world was bad, really bad, and unable to fix itself, right? But against the backdrop of man's self-centeredness, their degeneration, in verse, in chapter four, a generation appears that is marked in its opening stages by those who called on the name of the Lord.

And God is there to hear them. Still death reigned like the ticking of the clock, marching ever on, consuming everything in its path.

One man, though, could be said to have walked with God, just, not just calling on him once in the problem, in the thick of it, but walking with him for 300 years, and God was there to be walked with.

It wasn't the longest life in this genealogy, but it was certainly the fullest, and it seems like its abundance never came to an end.

one man escaped death. So you start thinking, surely this is the generation, this is the lineage that we can hope in.

[ 21 : 57 ] But look at verse one of chapter six. When man began to increase in number on the earth, and daughters were born to them, when all these family trees were budding, sadly, the sons of God, the godly ones, the hopeful ones, the ones who had called on God's name, they saw the daughters of men, the daughters of other men, they saw that they were beautiful, literally, that they looked good, like the fruit looked good to Eve, and they took it, just like she did.

They married any of them they chose. It didn't matter if they likewise cared to call on the name of God, just as long as they looked good and were breathing, right?

These are often our standards. As long as they look good and they're breathing, they're alright in our book. Yeah? This is what we degenerate into.

And listen to what God said in the sight of this. Then the Lord said, My spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal. His days will be 120 years.

Perhaps this is talking about the number of years that they will now live. No longer these huge numbers of years, but 120, perhaps.

[ 23 : 25 ] And it says, the Nephilim were on the earth in those days. The Nephilim. This is something like the fallen ones. Not fallen from grace, but the fallen ones. Those who fell.

Maybe these are the ones who fell in love or fell all over everybody that they saw, right? These are the ones. You ever wonder where we get that saying, fall in love? You ever wonder that?

I started wondering about that. Because these guys were falling in love with whoever was around, yeah? And I find it hard because I often have to convince Catherine that I've fallen in love.

But this isn't that great of a thing, right? Because the ones that are best at falling in love are the ones who've had the most practice. And it's not really a great thing to have practice in, right? Falling in love.

These are the Nephilim, the fallen ones. The ones who were falling in love with anything that was breathing around them. Can you imagine? This is the ones. It says, the Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterwards when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them.

[ 24 : 29 ] These were the heroes of old, it says. The mighty men. The men of power and of influence. The men of renown. Literally, these were the men of the name.

That's what's being translated here, renown. The men of the name. Do you hear this? I think this is something that we should shake at as a church. The men of the name.

See, they were calling on the name of the Lord in the thick of this degeneration, this self-centered degeneration. And in some sense, they came to be known by the name of the Lord.

Those are the ones that have taken on themselves the name of the Lord. And these are the ones that don't care enough about what God's doing.

They only care to go and get what's beautiful in front of them. You ever, this is the reason, anybody who's wondering, this is the reason, yoking yourself, coupling yourself with somebody who doesn't care about the God you supposedly care about.

[ 25 : 40 ] This is why this is wrong, right? We are, the church, God's people, the ones that God has graciously met and worked through, God's people are the hope of the world.

There is no hope outside the church because the church brings the gospel that transforms. And when the church couples itself, it can be in marriage, I mean, this is a very obvious example, but we couple ourselves in all sorts of ways with the world around us.

If the church couples itself with the world, I'm not talking about loving your neighbor. I'm talking about doing the same things that they do, partnering with them to get ahead, to make your own, to fence off your own plot in this world.

If the church couples itself with the world, how are we then to stand against it and tell it that it doesn't know anything of the hope we know about? How can you, if you shack up with a girl who doesn't give a rip about the gospel, then turn to her and tell her that she's in an awful lot of need?

We lose our prophetic voice. And when you lose your prophetic voice, when God's people lose their prophetic voice in the world, the only thing that's left is to destroy it.

[ 27 : 13 ] This is what God says. It's not surprising. Verse 5, The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, even his people are wrapped up in it, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time, every one of them.

The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth and in his heart was filled with pain. And it's interesting, right? We think the pain of the curse is the main thing that needs fixing.

We never really think of the pain of God's own heart. God is pained over this. So the Lord said, I will wipe mankind whom I have created from the face of the earth, men and animals and creatures and move along the ground and birds of the air for I am grieved that I have made them.

And listen to this, but, but, there's always a but in the gospel, but Noah, where if you were to look at the reflection in God's eyes as he looked at the rest of humanity, you would have only seen wickedness all the time, but, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

You see, the story of Noah is ultimately a story of God's grace. Noah was just a normal dude and every day screw up like the rest of us.

[ 28 : 41 ] It's not until afterwards. We'll read about where his life goes afterwards, but it's intentional that the first thing we hear about him is that the grace of God was there.

And it's, it's probably really wise to follow Alex Mateer. He says, you know, you gotta read this backwards. It's not that Noah found grace.

It's that grace found Noah. And isn't it interesting in the Hebrew, Noah's name is grace backwards. Grace found Noah.

Noah. Grace is the foundation of the gospel according to Noah. It's a gospel for screw ups.

It's a gospel for the, for the unlovely. A gospel for those who need a God who's answering before we call and using the worst of our world to save it and there to walk with us when we finally see the world as he sees it.

[ 29 : 53 ] We're gonna stand and sing the rest of, the ending of that psalm. we're gonna sing again from Psalm 78 and this time from verses 65 to 72.

We began with the grace that God had toward his people feeding them in the wilderness. We'll end with the grace he had in bringing them into the land and ultimately giving them a shepherd that foreshadowed Jesus.

Psalm 78 and sing psalms verses 65 to 72. We'll stand and sing. Then the Lord awoke from slumber as a man with wine replete wakes recovered from his tupper then he made his foes retreat like a rubble they became for to everlasting shame.

He passed by the tents of Joseph and the tribe of Ephraim but he chose the tribe of Judah and Mount Zion loved by him.

there he built there he built his dwelling sure like the earth to stand secure so he chose his servant so he chose his servant David bringing him from tending sheep to be shepherd of his people God's inheritance to keep faithfully by David fed they with skillful hands were led God

[ 32 : 45 ] I just want to leave you with three things first I want to say if you're in here today again if you don't know a God of grace if your God is just a vindictive judge that sits up in heaven and waits to blast you with his laser beams you don't know the God of Noah you don't know the God of Enoch or the God that looked forward in all of this to weaving death into the story and sending his son to die what we deserved to bring us back to himself and don't look at God's people don't make us what you look to and say because they're such screw-ups I can't believe in the God they follow we're following the God we follow precisely because we are who we are if you on the other hand are already walking with

God and deepening your relationship with him I just want to commend to you that when opportunity arises whether with the movie that's going to be showing in a month from now and talk will be going around on who this guy Noah was or maybe it's something else don't commend people don't commend people to look to us it's okay in certain ways and that's okay but what happens when we show our true colors or we degenerate back to what we once were it's a lot like David said today put up the sign ask for patience point to Jesus point to God point to the gospel point to grace not to us because we're not the best testimony of who this God is except if you're pointing to all of our need and that he's the only one that fixes it secondly

I want to ask you leave you with a question the fundamental question of life are you still picking up a sword and defending your little box in this world thinking what you do is very important and that you need to defend this because if you don't who will have you bought in to the world's dog eat dog mentality get or be gotten catherine tonight is going to be speaking at yf on cory ten boom cory ten boom became a leader in the underground in holland during world war ii and cory would always point to the faith of her father and her sister as the impetus for all of their actions it was their faith and she recounts the last time she saw her father after they had been captured and they were going to be imprisoned they're walking up to the prison to be put before the officers and an officer who's sitting down at table waiting for them calls out who's that man who is that what's that old man doing here this is no place for an old man get him home set him free put him back and then the officer started to address cory's father what are you doing here this is no place for an old man we're gonna set you free we're gonna send you home we're gonna put you back just cooperate and don't make trouble cory's father turned to the man and said dear sir you can send me home you can put me back you can set me free but let me assure you that if

I go home anybody who comes to my door in need is gonna be helped nothing can be added to the gospel of grace but for those by whom are marked by it those who live under it nothing can be taken away Paul ends every one of his letters almost every one of his letters the same he begins grace to you he gives his letter and he says at the end grace be with you wherever you go grace be with you wherever you go